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VETERAN TEACHERS ARE LIKE A ROOTED TREE

Veteran Teachers Are Like A Rooted Tree: Comprehensive Formal Mentoring as a Mitigating
Factor for Stress, Burnout, and Attrition for K-8 Public School Veteran Teachers

by
Heidi Akin

Claremont Graduate University

2021

VETERAN TEACHERS ARE LIKE A ROOTED TREE

Approval of the Dissertation Committee

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Heidi Akin as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Abstract

Veteran Teachers Are Like a Rooted Tree: Comprehensive Formal Mentoring as a Mitigating Factor for Stress, Burnout, and Attrition for K-8 Public School Veteran Teachers

By

Heidi Akin

Claremont Graduate University: 2021

Teaching is known to be a highly stressful occupation. Experiences of prolonged stress can lead to teacher burnout and attrition. Veteran teacher attrition, primarily teacher migration, negatively impacts students with the greatest needs and does not address antecedent factors driving the pattern of attrition. Comprehensive formal mentoring has been documented as a mitigating factor for stress, burnout, and attrition for new teachers. Although veteran teachers also face several salient causes of stress and burnout, there appears to be very little research on, or programs of, comprehensive formal mentoring designed specifically for veteran teachers. Therefore, this qualitative, phenomenological study explored the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers who participated in a rarely offered comprehensive formal mentor program.

This study involved twenty K-8 public school teachers from six different school districts in the Southern California area. Veteran teachers were defined as those who had a minimum of ten years of experience in the classroom. The findings of this study suggest that comprehensive formal mentoring does address the needs of veteran teachers, may mitigate attrition, and may have sustainability. In addition, this study identifies positive administrative support as a necessary component for the success of comprehensive formal mentoring programs. Implications

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include changes in policy, suggestions for additional support for veteran teachers, and comprehensive formal mentoring as mitigation of teacher migration in urban, Title 1 school settings.

Keywords: stress, burnout, comprehensive formal mentoring, veteran teachers, attrition, teacher migration, urban, Title 1 school settings, administrative support, Phenomenology

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Dedicated to

Olivia Marilyn Akin Jensen

believe in yourself,

passionately follow your heart

&

strive to make your dreams come true, honey

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The twenty-three veteran teachers who contributed their time to this dissertation and pilot study, who opened their hearts, and shared their experiences of participating in comprehensive formal mentoring, I am touched and honored to tell your story

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Teaching is ranked as one of the top most stressful occupations—both physically and psychologically (Farber, 1991; Johnson et al., 2005). Up to 93% of teachers report teaching as highly stressful or extremely stressful (Herman et al., 2018). In addition, 30% of teachers report moderate to high levels of burnout in their positions (Herman et al., 2018). Stress and burnout are serious concerns and also strong predictors of teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Odell & Huling, 2004). Much of the literature points to stress and burnout negatively impacting new teacher attrition. It is well documented that as many as 50% of new teachers leave the teaching profession within the first five years (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001).

Attrition creates a revolving door of teachers that negatively impacts student achievement and well-being, particularly in urban, Title 1 school settings (Ingersoll, 2001). However, not only are new teachers leaving; veteran teachers are also leaving. There are several forms of attrition common to veteran teachers. One form of veteran teacher attrition is migration to other schools or districts (Allensworth et al., 2009). Another form of attrition is mid-career attrition, when veteran teachers leave the profession altogether mid-career (Glazer, 2018a). Finally, veteran teachers may leave the profession through early retirement, even when staying for a few more years could potentially be more financially and professionally beneficial (Alvy, 2005). These forms of attrition are costly to states and districts.

Retaining strong, valuable teachers should be of utmost importance when considering the efficacy and impact of our teaching force (Darling-Hammond, 2003, 2010). Veteran teachers, defined as those with ten or more years of experience, are a valued assets to further student achievement, increase student well-being, and contribute to school community, and culture

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(Ladd & Sorensen, 2017; Papay & Kraft, 2015; Wiswall, 2013). Veteran teachers with at least 10 years of experience make up the majority of the teaching workforce (Day & Gu, 2009; Evans, 1989). A comparison of NCES data comparing teaching experience between the 1999-2000 and 2015-2016 school years found that veteran teachers make up 61% of the teaching force in the United States. A closer examination of the data reveals a 10% increase in veteran teachers with 10 to 20 years of experience in the 2015-2016 school year, compared to the 1999-2000 school year. However, in that same time period, there was a decrease in teachers with 20 or more years of experience, from 32% down to 22% (Digest of Education Statistics, 2017). Two implications we might draw from this data are that veteran teachers with ten or more years of experience are a significant population in the teaching workforce. Second, the significant decline of teachers with 20 or more years of experience may point to a spike in attrition by way of early retirement.

Retaining veteran teachers has a positive impact on the community, culture of a learning environment, and outcomes for students (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). Veteran teachers bring tremendous strength to the education community via their experience, wisdom, healthy dose of skepticism, and courage to ask hard questions (Clark et al., 2014). Veteran teachers have many years of experience; that experience has been linked to higher returns in the areas of productivity and student achievement (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017; Papay & Kraft, 2015). In recent literature, researchers have recognized the value of experienced teachers' contributions, such as decreasing achievement gaps in urban school settings with high concentrations of low SES and minority students (Podolsky et al., 2019). When schools value veteran teachers' wisdom and honor their experience, it can contribute to positive school culture, help to build morale, and increase positive outcomes for school staff and students (Alvy, 2005).

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Not only do we need to retain valuable veteran teachers, but we also need to support their well-being. Teacher stress and burnout contribute to an array of health issues, ranging from poor mental health to cardiovascular disease and even shortened life span (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Poor mental health can manifest as decreased student access to the classroom teacher due to absenteeism or presenteeism. While *absenteeism* is a habitual pattern of absence from work, *presenteeism* is the practice of continuing to work while sick or emotionally detached (Aronsson et al., 2000). Both absenteeism and presenteeism can also have detrimental effects in the form of monetary costs to districts as well and a negative impact on student well-being.

Students pay a high price when their teachers experience burnout and teacher attrition. The experience of teacher burnout is associated with emotional strain and inability to meet the emotional needs of children during critical developmental stages (Lang et al., 2013). Burnout occurs when teachers are unable to provide emotional or behavioral support due to experiencing prolonged teacher stress. As a result, their students also suffer emotionally and academically (Arens & Morin, 2016). The severity of stress experienced by teachers makes the negative student outcomes that result from teacher burnout and attrition a serious concern.

The problem of the high rate of new teacher attrition has been addressed through research, policies, and programs specifically designed for that demographic. New teachers are provided with comprehensive formal mentor programs in an effort to mitigate the known consequences of stress, burnout, and attrition (Heider, 2005). In response to research findings that formal mentoring is vital to successful reduction of teacher stress and attrition, new teacher induction policies often mandate a formal mentor as a component of teacher induction (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Nevins et al., 2009). Formal mentor programs that offer more comprehensive teacher support have increased in prevalence over the last two decades due to their success in

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reduction of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition for new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012). However, policies and programs often overlook the needs of veteran teachers.

While new teachers are supported through formal mentoring that helps mitigate teacher stress, burnout, and attrition, in contrast, there are very few policies in place that offer comprehensive support to veteran teachers. Veteran teachers must navigate their way through the most salient causes of stress and burnout, such as student stress, loss of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and stress caused by lack of administrative support. Other than traditional staff meetings and one-size-fits-all professional development, there are very few sources of support for veteran teachers as they carry the burden of these stressors (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Ehrich, 2016).

A high stress environment has been normalized in the teaching profession and the impact of excessive education reform may be particularly stressful for teachers who are not receiving the support they need. With the latest major education reform of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), many districts rolled out the remaining areas of the initiative (e.g., English Language Development, Science and Social Studies) while increasing accountability by adding standardized assessments to each content area. In a sense, as a result of these major reforms, veteran teachers experience the feeling of being a novice once again without the benefit of the support offered to novice teachers. Additionally, it does not appear that this climate of high stress will change for teachers in the near future. In fact, it appears that the most salient causes of stress (e.g., student stress, loss of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support) are ones that can be expected to worsen (Hargreaves, 2005; Herman et al., 2018).

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If provided with proper support, highly experienced, veteran teachers can be our greatest asset in education in terms of positive correlations to student achievement, student well-being, and positive contributions to school staff and culture. Veteran teachers strive to succeed in an environment of continual change, and yet they are given little to no comprehensive mentor support to guide them through the stress and burnout they may encounter throughout their careers. Increased teacher support has been found to mitigate teacher burnout and help teachers to remain in the teaching profession longer (Clark et al., 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Glazer, 2018a). The stress and burnout literature indicates that the current level of teacher support is not comprehensive enough to mitigate the levels of stress, burnout, and attrition experienced by teachers. Therefore, the needs of the veteran teacher population are not being met.

Although rare, a small number of schools and districts have expanded their view on mentoring and now offer comprehensive formal mentoring to experienced, veteran teachers. Unlike induction programs that are exclusively aimed at new teachers, a small number of schools and districts in the Southern California area do offer comprehensive mentoring programs that are inclusive of teachers who have many years of experience in the classroom. One such comprehensive mentor program that inspired later programs originated from the Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching.

The mentoring framework for the Cotsen mentor program was comprehensive and incorporated trained, full-time mentors who were released from their classroom obligations. Mentors and veteran teachers were matched on the same campus or in close proximity. Veteran teachers who received the comprehensive formal mentoring participated in a coaching cycle that included goal setting, lesson planning, coteaching, modeling, and a reflective debrief. Veteran teachers were also provided paid substitute days where they could be released from their

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classroom to observe exemplary instruction in the subject of their choice. Mentors facilitated an after-school collaborative group, sometimes referred to as an *inquiry group*, where participants were given opportunities to collaborate with colleagues. Nearly all components of this comprehensive formal mentoring framework mirror new teacher formal mentor programs that are sometimes referred to as *intensive mentoring* (Nevins et al., 2009).

Recommendations from the stress and burnout literature specify a need for greater teacher support; however, veteran teacher participation in comprehensive formal mentoring is extremely rare. Veteran teachers who have participated in a comprehensive formal mentor program pose a unique opportunity to explore their perceptions of the benefits of such a program. Therefore, this study aims to explore veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences regarding their participation in a comprehensive formal mentoring program, and the potential for the mentoring program to act as a mitigating factor for teacher stress, burnout, and attrition.

Importance of the Research for Theory, Practice, and Policy

Veteran teachers spend decades on the front lines of education, in a position to make the greatest impact on the children of our future. Yet, they are experiencing stress, burnout, and attrition, not unlike new teachers in their first few years of teaching. There is very little research, theory or policies directed at mitigating these stressors for veteran teachers. Researching the unique experiences of a group of veteran teachers who have participated in comprehensive formal mentoring may shed light on how we might better support veteran teachers who are a significant population in the teaching workforce (Digest of Education Statistics, 2017). As such, this study has great importance for research, theory, practice, and policy.

There is also a gap in the literature in terms of clear frameworks of teacher support needed to reduce stress, burnout, and attrition for veteran teachers. The literature often vaguely

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mentions additional teacher support as a recommendation. However, the theory or framework underlying support for veteran teachers is obscure and inconsistent. There is a dearth of literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers to support them and meet their specific needs in a climate of high stress and burnout. However, there is a group of teachers who have the rare experience of receiving comprehensive formal mentoring as a veteran teacher. Therefore, it is important to research the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of these veteran teachers after their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring in an effort to add to the body of knowledge on meeting the needs of veteran teachers.

The growth in popularity of comprehensive formal mentoring for new teachers is the result of policies put into practice to successfully reduce new teacher burnout and attrition. Policy makers included mentoring as a significant component of new teacher support in an effort to reduce stress and burnout and increase retention (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). As new teachers navigate the stress of their first few years of teaching, induction programs that offer highly structured formal mentoring provide greater success in supporting and retaining new teachers compared to informal mentor programs (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Nevins et al., 2009). Similarly, veteran teachers may benefit from future policy to mitigate stress, burnout, and attrition of veteran teachers. This study may contribute to a body of knowledge and guide future policy that will provide additional supports needed for veteran teachers.

Purpose of the Study

Very little is known regarding teachers' perceptions on formal mentoring or what aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring may be beneficial to veteran teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this phenomenological inquiry is to explore the perceptions of veteran teachers who experienced this phenomenon. The central purpose of a phenomenological study is to discover

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the essence of a lived experience within a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). This phenomenological study aims to discover the essence of the perceptions, thoughts and lived experiences of veteran teachers and the degree to which the teachers perceived mentoring to mitigate stress and risk of burnout or attrition. This study may also provide additional insight into the aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that veteran teachers found most helpful. This phenomenological study may also pave the way for future studies on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers and increased teacher retention in urban, Title 1 school settings. In addition, this study may lead to future studies on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers and correlations to increased student achievement.

Significance of the Study

Teacher stress, burnout, and attrition have a significant negative impact on teacher and student outcomes (Herman et al., 2018; Klusmann, Richter, & Lüdtke, 2016; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). These problems that negatively impact students are not unique to new teachers. They are also experienced by veteran teachers. Comprehensive formal mentoring programs for new teachers continue to increase in prevalence due to their success in reducing stress, burnout, and attrition for new teachers. However, comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers has so far been almost non-existent. Therefore, this study is significant as an effort to discover the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers regarding stress, burnout, and attrition after participating in a comprehensive formal mentoring program.

First, the perceptions of veteran teachers may shed light on specific methods to support the critical needs of the large veteran teacher population (Brundage, 1996; Day & Gu, 2009). Additionally, the perceptions of veteran teachers may suggest that formal mentoring is not only beneficial for new teachers, but also beneficial for veteran teachers, for whom it may be a

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mitigating factor for teacher stress, burnout, and attrition (Danielson, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

In addition, the perceptions of veteran teachers may add to the body of knowledge regarding a comprehensive framework for supporting veteran teachers and address the current gap in the literature. Last, by identifying effective supports for veteran teachers, student achievement and well-being may be improved (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017). A review of the literature identified a dearth of studies on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers. The gap in the literature is likely due to the current lack of existing comprehensive formal mentor programs for veteran teachers.

Answers to the following research questions may be found in this phenomenological study on veteran teachers who have experienced a high level of comprehensive formal mentoring in their later years of teaching. The research questions below refer specifically to these teachers who have received such mentoring.

Research Questions

1. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?
2. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?
3. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?
4. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?

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5. In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools?

Conceptual Designs and Frameworks

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 indicates that comprehensive formal mentoring may mitigate the five most salient causes of stress and burnout, thereby reducing teacher stress and burnout. Teacher retention may increase as a function of reduced teacher stress and burnout, leading to positive outcomes for both teachers and students. Teachers may experience transformation and rejuvenation as a positive outcome of reduced stress and burnout. Students may experience increased engagement and increased student well-being as a result of increased teacher retention and teacher well-being.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Mentoring Reduces Stress and Burnout and Increases Positive Outcomes

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The high levels of work-related stress experienced by teachers (Johnson et al., 2005), over a prolonged period, leads to teacher burnout (Farber, 1991; 2000). Teacher stress and burnout are strong predictors of teacher attrition by way of teacher migration, mid-career attrition, and early retirement (Boyd et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003, 2010; Lankford et al., 2002). Teacher burnout and attrition also lead to negative student outcomes, such as decreased achievement and decreased well-being (Arens & Morin, 2016; Herman et al., 2018). These are significant, ongoing problems that may point to a need for comprehensive formal mentoring programs aimed at supporting veteran teachers' needs.

Comprehensive formal mentoring within new teacher induction programs has been a mitigating factor for teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. The success of new teacher mentoring, and the shared stressors between new and veteran teacher populations, suggests that comprehensive formal mentor programs for veteran teachers may mitigate the most common salient stress factors for teachers (e.g., student stress, lack of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support). The coaching cycle, collaboration, collegiality, and shared responsibility with a mentor may also serve to reduce teacher isolation.

Comprehensive mentor support has the potential to provide opportunities for collaboration support for teachers experiencing poor student-teacher relationships. The mentor may act as a conduit to relay effective positive and proven classroom management strategies. The mentor may also relieve some of the stress that results from excessive education reform. The heavy burden and disappointment of excessive education reform and loss of teacher autonomy, which may be more specific to veteran teachers, might be reduced by aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that support individual concerns. Reflection and discourse with mentors may

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mitigate disappointments and frustrations of autonomy loss and may open up fresh perspectives and solutions regarding professional decision making that still exists at the classroom level.

There are many unknowns about how this experience of comprehensive formal mentoring may benefit veteran teachers. Along with increasing teacher retention, comprehensive formal mentoring may impact positive teacher outcomes and student outcomes, such as increased teacher and student well-being. The arrows within the conceptual framework are also bidirectional in that as positive teacher and student outcomes increase, teacher stress and burnout and attrition may decrease (Arens & Morin, 2016).

Teachers often experience additional positive outcomes as a result of comprehensive formal mentoring. After experiencing mentoring support, veteran teachers often report a reawakening in their practices, receive affirmation of their own individual growth, and receive validation of their career stage (Danielson, 2002). Teachers may gain a sense of renewed enthusiasm and commitment to their craft (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Mentoring can also foster reflection on teacher practices and professional growth. Experienced teachers may benefit from the support, modeling, and coteaching from their colleagues, gain insight into new teaching practices (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000), and receive positive feedback, encouragement, and renewed commitment (Danielson, 2002; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004).

Theoretical Framework of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

In addition to the conceptual framework, this study also utilizes a theoretical framework. Due to the lack of literature on theoretical frameworks for supporting veteran teachers, the Theoretical Framework of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring in Figure 2 was adapted from the literature on new teacher mentoring by the researcher for the purpose of this study.

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Figure 2

Theoretical Framework of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Note. Theoretical Framework of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring was adapted from Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching, Intensive New Teacher Mentoring (Stanulis et al., 2012), and the Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (Martin, 2008).

This framework is a synthesis of three other frameworks. One framework documented in the new teacher mentor literature on intensive mentoring emphasized time spent with the mentor, ongoing mentor training, coaching cycle, and inquiry groups (Stanulis et al., 2012). Another framework designed by the Santa Cruz New Teacher Center emphasized administrative support and the coaching cycle (Martin, 2008). Finally, the third mentoring framework came from the

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Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching and was specifically designed with veteran teachers in mind. The Cotsen mentoring framework emphasized fully released mentors (i.e., mentors who are released from their classroom obligations), mentor training, the coaching cycle, collaboration, observation of exemplary instruction, and professional development.

The theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring acts as the driver of the conceptual framework in Figure 1. In theory, if all components of the theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring are offered as support, then the five most salient causes of teacher stress will decrease, teacher retention will increase, and positive outcomes for teachers and students will also increase.

The comprehensive formal mentoring framework for veteran teachers sets up the core requirements for the program. Administrative support, mentor training, fully released mentor, the coaching cycle, collaboration, observations, and professional development are all components that work together. Administrators act as a support for participating veteran teachers. However, they provide a hands-off approach. Administrators encourage participating teachers while providing the time and space teachers need to explore new practices. Mentors who are fully released from their classroom obligations, receive training on adult learning theory and a partnership approach to mentoring. Mentors utilize a coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing) to guide veteran teachers in their exploration of new teaching practices. Mentors also receive training on new pedagogy, at times, alongside participating teachers. Multiple opportunities for collaboration are embedded in the program through the coaching cycle, afterschool inquiry groups, and professional development. Finally, the mentor and participating teachers observed exemplary instruction and receive professional development on research-based teaching practices. A more detailed description of the theoretical

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framework will also be included in part three of the literature review.

The comprehensive formal mentor framework was also used to tailor the inclusion criteria when recruiting participants. In other words, all participants who were recruited participated a program that provided all five-core requirement of the comprehensive formal mentoring framework. Additionally, throughout the literature review, and later chapters, this framework is used as a lens through which to discuss comprehensive formal mentoring as a possible mitigating factor for stress, burnout, and attrition.

Organization of the Chapters

This dissertation is organized into five chapters: the introduction, the literature review, the methods, the findings, and the discussion. Chapter one introduces the background or climate of high stress, burnout, and attrition of veteran teachers who are not provided the same support of comprehensive formal mentoring as new teachers. The value of veteran teachers is addressed in terms of their significant contribution to student achievement, student well-being, and veteran teachers' positive influence on the staff and school culture. The lack of studies on comprehensive formal mentoring of veteran teachers is discussed to expose a gap in the literature. The introduction chapter then addresses the statement of objectives, the research questions, and an explanation of the basis for the hypothesis. This is followed by a description of the conceptual design and the theoretical framework of this study. Finally, terms are defined.

The second chapter serves as a review of the literature, organized into three parts. Part one addresses the literature on teacher stress, the manifestations of burnout, and five of the most salient causes of teacher stress and burnout. Part two covers the three primary forms of teacher attrition: mid-career attrition, teacher migration, and early retirement. The last part in this chapter reviews the literature on comprehensive formal mentoring as a possible solution to the problems

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of stress, burnout, and attrition for veteran teachers. Beginning with recognizing the value of veteran teachers, this section reviews the empirical recommendations in the mentor literature. This section then includes a brief history and theory of mentoring, along with reasons why informal mentoring is often an ineffective framework for both new and veteran teachers. Each of the components of the comprehensive formal mentoring framework is reviewed. This section concludes with a description of possible mitigating factors of stress, burnout, and attrition, and exposes gaps in the literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers.

Chapter three covers the theory of phenomenology and the research design, sampling methods and data collection. A brief description of the pilot study is included, along with a matrix of research and interview questions, limitations, protection of human subjects, statement of researcher bias and positionality. Chapter four offers a description of participants' responses, organized by respective research questions. Chapter five presents a discussion, analysis, and interpretation of the results, beginning with a summary and ending with recommendation for further research.

Definition of Terms

1. Absenteeism: excessive times or days of not going into work (Jackson, 2018).
2. Attrition: teachers leaving their school or district.
 - a. Attrition through migration: Teachers leaving their school or district for another school or district; often this occurs with teachers leaving low achieving schools for higher achieving schools and presumed less stress (Allensworth et al., 2009).
 - b. Attrition Mid-Career: Teachers who are invested, well past the critical new teacher years, but leave the profession altogether (Glazer, 2018a).

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- c. Attrition though early retirement: Teachers who leave the profession early even when it is not ideal for them or for their school or district (Alvy, 2005).
- 3. Autonomy: the decision-making authority of teachers in the classroom and teacher's freedom to construct personal pedagogy (Parker, 2015).
- 4. Burnout: a response to prolonged stress on the job defined by exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001).
- 5. English Language Learners (ELs): Students who are identified by families upon district enrollment that the student comes from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds.
- 6. Experience: The word *experience* implies that participants have their own observation and encounter of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).
- 7. Fully Released Mentor: A teacher who is fully released from her classroom obligations to assume the exclusive role of guiding and leading teachers (Stanulis et al., 2012).
- 8. Generic Mentoring: Informal pieces or fragments of a mentor program that are not comprehensive (Stanulis et al., 2012).
- 9. Inquiry Group: A collaborative group within a mentor cohort that meets afterschool once a month to discuss effective pedagogy (Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching).
- 10. Joint Inquiry: Collaborative approach to mentoring in which mentor and mentee approach problems together (Knight, 2009).
- 11. Mentee: New or veteran teacher receiving comprehensive formal mentoring (Mathur et al., 2013).
- 12. Mentor: A teacher who is in the role of guiding and leading teachers (Fletcher & Strong, 2009).

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13. Mitigate: to significantly decrease or lessen the severity of stress, burnout or attrition (Ingersoll, 2001)
14. Perception: The word *perception* implies that the participants have their own interpretation of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).
15. Presenteeism: The practice of continuing to work while sick or emotionally detached (Aronsson et al., 2000).
16. Sense of low personal accomplishment: When individuals perceive low motivation, lack of control, despair and even loss of self-respect (Maslach et al., 2008).
17. Teacher Isolation: Defined as the physical characteristics of the teacher's work place where teachers enter the classroom and simply shut the door (Lortie, 1975) or the concept of the lack of teacher opportunities for interacting with colleagues (Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016).
18. Teacher Stress: A negative emotional experience linked with specific environmental triggers and associated with feelings of anger, tension, frustration, and anxiety (Kyriacou, 2001; Ouellette et al., 2018).
19. Thoughts: The word *thoughts* implies that participants have their own judgments and opinions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).
20. Title 1 School: Title 1 Elementary & Secondary Education Act provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families, and high populations of English-Language Learners, based on census data (NCES, 2019).
21. Veteran Teachers: K-12 classroom teachers who have at least 10 years of experience (Snyder, 2017).

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Acronyms

1. Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
2. English Language Learner (ELs)
3. Socio Economic Status (SES)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Organization of Literature Review

This literature review is organized into three parts. Part one addresses the problem of teacher stress and burnout. It covers the impact of stress and burnout on the mental and physical health of teachers, including absenteeism and presenteeism. It also covers manifestations of teacher burnout that negatively impact student outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and perceived lower personal accomplishment. Additionally, the most salient causes of teacher stress and burnout are discussed in this chapter. Stressors are grouped by those that are common to both new and veteran teacher populations (e.g., lack of administrative support, teacher isolation, and poor student-teacher relationships) and those that are more unique to veteran teachers (e.g., excessive education reform and the loss of autonomy).

Part two addresses the problem of teacher attrition. First, the cost and impact of attrition on student outcomes are discussed, such as decreased student achievement, decreased student well-being, and a diminished sense of school site community. In this section, the case is made for attrition as not only a new teacher problem, but a veteran teacher problem as well. Part two covers various forms of veteran teacher attrition, such as mid-career attrition, teacher migration, and early retirement along with the negative impact of veteran teacher attrition on student outcomes.

In part three, the literature review concludes by shifting focus from the causes and impacts of teacher burnout to a solution-oriented view. This section highlights the contributions of veteran teachers in terms of higher student achievement, increased student well-being, and positive contributions to community and culture. Empirical recommendations from the stress, burnout, and attrition literature are included, and call for additional, more comprehensive teacher

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support. In covering more comprehensive teacher support programs, the theory, approach, and structure of mentoring programs are reviewed. Informal mentoring is then compared to more formal comprehensive mentor programs. Components of a Theoretical Framework for Comprehensive Formal Mentoring are reviewed, followed by a discussion of the possible mitigating factors for the five most salient causes of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. This last section explores the theory that the most effective comprehensive formal mentoring programs for new teachers might also serve as a model for comprehensive formal mentoring programs for veteran teachers, but tailored to the veteran teacher's needs, thereby addressing the gap in the literature regarding comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers.

Part 1: The Burnout Problem

Teacher Stress and Burnout

Teachers are on the frontlines of working with students and experience some of the highest risks of stress and burnout. There is ample literature on the connections between prolonged stress leading to burnout for both new and veteran teachers (Kidger et al., 2016; Odell & Huling, 2004; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Stress is often described as a feeling of anger, anxiety, or depression resulting from negative aspects of work (Kyriacou, 2001). Burnout is an extreme form of stress, indicating that a breaking point has been reached after a prolonged exposure to stress (Jourdain & Chênevert, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001). Leiter (2017) uses the metaphor of smothering a fire to describe the draining of energy that occurs in burnout. Where there was once energy and sufficient resources to replenish the fire, there is now exhaustion and depletion that smother an employee's capacity to maintain genuine involvement and meaningful contributions. Teacher stress and burnout are significant as they are directly related to negative student outcomes, such as lower student achievement and decreased student well-being (Brackett

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et al., 2010; Herman et al., 2018). Stress and burnout are also key predictors of attrition, and so must be addressed to increase teacher retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ryan et al., 2017; Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

Mental & Physical Health

Stress and burnout take their toll on the mental and physical well-being of teachers (Bowers, 2001; Geving, 2007; Howard et al., 2017; Kidger et al., 2016; Kokkinos, 2007; McCarthy et al., 2014; McLean et al., 2017). A quantitative study of over 500 secondary school teachers from eight different schools found that teachers experiencing mental disorders occur at a higher rate than the average population, with 19.4% of teachers showing moderate to severe depressive symptoms (Kidger et al., 2016). This study concluded that depressive symptoms are high among teachers and teacher well-being is low. This epidemic burnout is a significant risk to the mental health and well-being of our teachers.

Poor mental and physical health as a result of stress and burnout are associated with absenteeism and presenteeism behaviors in teachers (Aronsson et al., 2000; Beck et al., 2011; Dudenhöffer et al., 2017; Jourdain & Chênevert, 2015). Presenteeism is particularly concerning for teachers and students. In a culture that encourages or requires going to work at all costs, presenteeism can increase the exposure to chronic stress. In turn, this prolongs burnout and causes further damage (Jourdain & Chênevert, 2015). In contrast, absenteeism is excessive sick leave from work in an effort to cope the chronic stress (Jourdain & Chênevert, 2015). When compared to other occupations, absence rates in education tend to be higher. Absenteeism rates are even higher in low income areas and in schools with lower student achievement (Clotfelter et al., 2009). The findings of another study on teacher absences and math scores indicate that for every ten teacher absences, math scores decrease by 3.2% of a standard deviation (Miller et al.,

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2008). In this study, unexpected absences were found to have an even greater negative impact. For example, when teachers were absent last minute, without preparing proper subplans and acquiring a suitable substitute teacher, students suffered an even greater negative impact (Miller et al., 2008). Absenteeism is costly for schools and districts, negatively impacts student achievement, and it is detrimental to student well-being. Finally, teacher absenteeism disproportionately impacts minorities, second language learners, and high-needs students in concentrated areas of poverty (Clotfelter et al., 2009).

Manifestations of Burnout

Burnout can manifest in the form of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and perceived lower personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion occurs when teachers experience prolonged, chronic stress and are not able to successfully recuperate with rest and relaxation. Depersonalization occurs as a coping mechanism to the continual stress teachers experience. Teachers may depersonalize by withdrawing themselves emotionally as a protection against emotional exhaustion. They may become so detached; they no longer try to connect with students. Finally, perceived lower personal accomplishment occurs when teachers begin to exert less effort towards their job responsibilities. As a response to the burnout they experience, teachers may become unable to see or acknowledge personal accomplishments even when they do occur (Leiter et al., 2009).

Social psychologist Christina Maslach is one of the most influential researchers in the area of burnout and manifestations of burnout and the author of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Maslach's work is often used to describe the manifestations of burnout. She has conducted qualitative research on workers in the areas of emotional stress, professional identity, and quality of work. The MBI focuses on three manifestations of burnout: emotional exhaustion,

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depersonalization and lower personal accomplishment (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; McCormick & Barnett, 2011).

Emotional exhaustion refers to the experience of being emotionally, physically, and cognitively exhausted by one's work (Maslach et al., 2001). A heavy workload, time constraints, and student behavior issues can lead to emotional exhaustion in both new and veteran teachers (Kokkinos, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teachers' workload commonly extends far beyond the school day due to the extreme amount of work. Often, there is inadequate time during the workday and workweek, creating emotional exhaustion (Burke & Greenglass, 1996; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). In a study of over 2000 Norwegian teachers, the variable most strongly related to emotional exhaustion was time pressure (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Time pressure was defined as an overwhelming workload that required additional planning time on evenings and weekends, with little time for rest and recovery (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Emotional exhaustion in teachers is also linked to decreased student achievement (Arens & Morin, 2016) poor student behaviors (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Also concerning, emotional exhaustion was more strongly related to negative student outcomes in classrooms with greater concentrations of high-needs students and second language learners (Klusmann et al., 2016). In McCormick and Barnett's quantitative study on teacher burnout, 416 teachers were randomly selected from 38 schools in Australia and emotional exhaustion was found to be strongly linked to student behavior issues (2011). Teachers are burdened with the daily challenges of managing student behavior in addition to carrying a heavy workload. The unrealistic daily challenges can lead to emotional exhaustion and ultimately negatively impact student outcomes.

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If teachers are emotionally exhausted, depersonalization may be used as a coping mechanism (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998). Depersonalization is defined as the loss of concern and regard toward others which can result in treating parents, students, co-workers, and leaders as impersonal objects (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Depersonalization is a dangerous detachment from the emotional work of teaching impressionable children. It also has a cyclical effect; teacher depersonalization can create an increase in student misbehavior, which can then cycle back and lead to increased feelings of depersonalization (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Students are most likely to suffer the cost of teacher depersonalization. According to a quantitative study on the impact of student-teacher relationships and student well-being, depersonalization may negatively impact students for years to come (Lang et al., 2013).

In addition to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, burnout limits teachers' sense of personal accomplishment. Perceptions of lower personal accomplishments diminish the quality of work and the climate of the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001). In a study of 2,444 kindergarten through eighth grade teachers, perception of lower personal accomplishment was positively related to stress and burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Poor student-teacher relationships and student behavior issues were also related to lower perceived personal accomplishment (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lower perceived personal accomplishment are manifestations of burnout that lead to negative outcomes for teachers, in turn negatively impacting student outcomes.

Five of the Most Salient Stress and Burnout Causes

The causes and consequences of teacher stress and burnout are not linear and often form a constellation of different cyclical interactions. For the purpose of this literature review, these concepts will be grouped for clarity. Although many factors contribute to teacher stress and

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burnout, numerous studies point to student stress, lack of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support as the most salient causes. These stress and burnout drivers have many similarities for both new teachers and veteran teachers, although some significant differences will also be discussed (Glazer, 2018b; Ryan et al., 2017; Tye & O'Brien, 2002).

New and veteran teachers experience many similarities in the causes of stress and burnout, but some causes are specific to veteran teachers. Both new and veteran teachers may experience lack of administrative support, teacher isolation, and negative student-teacher relationship; however, veteran teachers may experience more of a loss of the autonomy they once enjoyed. While new teachers are often prepared for new education reforms before arriving to the classroom, veteran teachers have often experienced the challenges of successive waves of education reform without similar preparation. Student stress, lack of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support are some of the most salient causes for teacher stress that can lead to teacher burnout.

Student Stress

Poor student behavior and achievement gaps can act as a catalysts of stress, burnout, and attrition (Hargreaves, 2005; Tye & O'Brien, 2002; Veldman et al., 2016). Stress and burnout can negatively impact teachers' sense of personal accomplishment and contribute to poor teacher-student rapport, which again can cycle back to cause increased teacher stress (Kokkinos, 2007). In a study of 2,249 Norwegian teachers, poor student behavior was strongly related to emotional exhaustion in teachers. In this study, poor student-teacher relationships were reported as both a cause and effect of teacher stress (Dudenhöffer et al., 2017). Additional evidence stems from a three-year randomized control study on teacher well-being that was conducted with a sample of

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teachers and students from middle schools (Hinds et al., 2015). Findings in the Hinds study indicate that student behaviors, such as substance abuse, depression, and antisocial behavior negatively impact student-teacher relationships, further increasing teacher stress and teacher depression (2015). The recommendations suggest stronger support systems (e.g., social support, support from administrators, parental support, and community support) are needed to act as a buffer between teachers and the effects of stressful interactions with students (Hinds et al., 2015). Poor student-teacher relationships and student behavior issues significantly impact teacher stress.

Finally, Assembly Bill 420 states that school authorities can no longer suspend students below the fourth grade for *willful defiance*. Before this policy, willful defiance accounted for 53% percent of all suspensions in California. Additionally, new law provides no alternative to suspension or expulsion for willful defiance (Frey, 2013). Due to the new policy, student misbehaviors may have become more challenging for classroom teachers to manage and therefore, may have increased teacher stress and burnout.

Lack of Autonomy

While new teachers may experience the stress of working in a field with little autonomy, veteran teachers may experience an even greater frustration of losing the autonomy they once had (Glazer, 2018a). Teacher autonomy has been defined as the freedom to construct personal pedagogy (Parker, 2015). In Glazer's qualitative study, loss of autonomy was one of the most common reasons given for teachers leaving the profession altogether (2018b). The teachers who left the profession were invested teachers, well past the survival years, meaning they have been teaching beyond the first five years and were no longer novice teachers. These *invested teachers* had the experience of knowing their students and successfully choosing the best teaching

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strategies, only to have that autonomy replaced with prescribed curriculum and high stress accountability (Glazer, 2018a). Teachers feel a great loss of autonomy and professionalism when their professional decisions are taken away and replaced with more centralized education reform. Teachers report feeling unsupported by their administrative staff and forced into prescribed curriculum with no autonomy to make those professional decisions, leading them to seriously consider leaving the profession (Matlock et al., 2016).

Recurrent cycles of centralized education reform play a role in the shift of the locus of control away from the classroom teacher and toward centralized education (Glazer, 2018a; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005; Phillips, 2015; Riggs, 2013). Current reform movements represent an attempt to tighten what was once a more loosely connected system (Cuban, 2013). Reforms, such as the CCSS are a movement toward greater centralized education reform and a shift away from teacher autonomy. Major, centralized education reform diminishes teacher autonomy and undermines the professionalism of educators (Jeong & Luschei, 2018; Porter et al., 2015). This chipping away at teacher autonomy can lead to increased stress and burnout.

The Finnish model is often held up as an educational system that maintains decentralized education and promotes high teacher autonomy, while showing some of the highest levels of student achievement on the Program For International Student Assessment (PISA) (Ripley, 2013). However, even Finland has not avoided the global trend toward more centralized education. A threat of reduced teacher autonomy is taking place not only in the classroom but also in schoolwide decision making (Jeong & Luschei, 2018). Taking away the authority of experienced, veteran teachers, may result in teachers leaving the profession due to stress and burnout. The implication for policy makers is that education reform should weigh policy benefits against the risk of losing highly valued teachers.

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Education Reform Stress

The repeated overhauls of educational practices have harmful effects on veteran teachers. Reforms and high stakes testing create a climate of high teacher stress, burnout, and veteran teacher attrition. The most recent federal reform initiative of the CCSS, in tandem with the introduction of high stakes accountability tests, have increased the pressure on veteran teachers in an already high-pressure system. As new waves of education reform are rolled out, veteran teachers may experience the same high stress levels as new teachers, without the level support that new teachers receive (Porter et al., 2015; Rice & Malen, 2003; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). New teacher induction programs often prepare new teachers for upcoming education reform. As a result, many new teachers arrive in the classroom better prepared for the current education reform, compared to veteran teachers who receive little to no professional development in this area. Additionally, the professional development for veteran teachers may be implemented too slowly, leaving veteran teachers well behind incoming new teachers.

This passage and implementation of the CCSS was an unprecedented, nationwide, sweeping reform movement that required teachers to learn new standards, new curriculum, and new teaching practices within a short time period (Porter et al., 2015). Faced with learning entirely new curriculum and instruction, and with being held accountable for high stakes assessments, veteran teachers reported feeling like they received very little to no support at all as the reform was rolled out (Stair et al., 2017). Veteran teachers often experience a level of stress not unlike a first-year teacher. Additionally, veteran teachers are also held to expectations that they should be able to learn entirely new curriculum independent of additional teacher support and shift their instructional practice with ease (Levine, 2011; Rice & Malen, 2003). This

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assumption is far from the reality of veteran teachers struggling with little to no support for excessive or major education reform.

Teacher Isolation

The high stress and burnout within the teaching profession is intensified in a culture of teacher isolation (Ingersoll, 2012; Ladd & Sorensen, 2017). Research shows that collegial isolation under conditions of high stress increases risk of burnout, and yet teaching in isolation is often the cultural norm in classrooms (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Heider, 2005; Ostovar-Nameghi & Sheikahmadi, 2016; Rothberg, 1986). New teachers, in their beginning years, are often presumed to be experts and left in isolation to master new curriculum, instruction, and classroom management (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Kardos & Johnson, 2007). A study on depressive symptoms in teachers found that teaching in isolation exacerbated feelings of stress and led teachers to avoid reaching out to colleagues for help (Kidger et al., 2016). The researchers in this study found that 19% of teachers sampled, exhibited symptoms of moderate to severe depression, and yet those teachers were unable to open up to their coworkers for fear of appearing weak or incompetent, and therefore chose to remain in isolation. When teachers work in isolation, their job satisfaction and commitment are at risk (Danielson, 2002). The burnout that teachers experience is exasperated by carrying the burden in isolation.

Lack of Administrative Support

The lack of administrative support is a reoccurring theme for stress, burnout, and attrition (Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011; Rumschlag, 2017). In a quantitative study of traditional, public school teachers in North Carolina, school leadership was a dominant factor in teachers' decisions to stay or go (Ladd, 2009). In a mixed methods in-depth interview study, Huberman (1993) found that although administrative support may not be able to prevent stress, strong

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administrative support can intervene and mitigate the intensity and duration of that stress and burnout. In a study of teachers who left the profession, or were considering leaving the profession, lack of administrative support was listed as a top reason for leaving (Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Teacher retention rates are higher in schools where teachers view the principal as a strong instructional leader and report a high level of trust in administration (Allensworth et al, 2009). Administrative support has the power to reduce or increase teacher stress, burnout, and ultimately attrition.

Summary of the Burnout Problem

The current highly stressful climate in education leads to burnout and mental and physical health issues for teachers, that in turn, results in absenteeism and presenteeism. Burnout manifests in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a perceived lower sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 2001). The most salient causes of stress and burnout impact both new and veteran teachers. Lack of administrative support, teacher isolation, and poor student-teacher relationships are common for both new and veteran teachers. More unique to veteran teachers is the loss of autonomy and excessive education reform. A review of the literature determined that loss of autonomy is a catalyst of stress and burnout for veteran teachers, and a top reason for leaving the teaching profession altogether. Finally, excessive education reform places veteran teachers in a position where they must relearn much of what they have known and practiced for decades. The constant pendulum of change is a source of stress that can lead to burnout and attrition.

Part 2: The Leaving Problem

Veteran teacher attrition is a phrase used to describe the phenomenon of teachers leaving a school, usually for three main reasons: attrition from the profession mid-career, teacher

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migration, or early retirement (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Attrition from the profession occurs when teachers decide to leave the profession altogether. Teacher migration occurs when teachers leave one school for another school. Early retirement attrition occurs when teachers chose to leave the profession prematurely. Regardless of the type of attrition, the exodus of teachers can have a negative effect on the school community and the cohesion of teachers and students (Ingersoll, 2001b).

High stress and burnout are also strong predictors of leaving a school, a district, or leaving the profession altogether (Borman & Dowling, 2008). When teachers experience high stress levels over prolonged periods of time, they may decide to leave the profession mid-career (Glazer, 2018a), migrate to other schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2005), or choose early retirement (Alvy, 2005; Clark et al., 2014). Students suffer the greatest impact of a high turnover of teachers, as evidenced by decreased achievement and well-being. High teacher turnover deprives students of highly qualified teachers, leaving them with the least experienced teachers. The attrition problem is magnified by up to 50% in urban areas. As a result, urban students with the greatest needs are left with the least experienced teachers, adding to an existing problem of underserved minority, low SES and ELL students receiving lower-quality instruction (Allensworth et al., 2009).

Attrition rates in education are high. Studies show a spike in the early years of teaching and then again with early retirement (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2002). However, mid-career attrition and teacher migration are problematic as well (Glazer, 2018a). The literature indicates high monetary costs to states and districts, and negative outcomes for students, particularly students in urban and minority areas (Lankford et al., 2002; Ryan et al., 2017). This is a significant problem as students with the highest needs are often concentrated in urban areas.

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The Cost of Attrition

Teacher attrition is expensive and problematic due to the financial costs of losing and replacing teachers, negative outcomes for students, and the loss to the school community (Alvy, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2003). The monetary cost of losing teachers is substantial (Barnes & Crowe, 2007; Phillips, 2015; Watlington et al., 2010). In fact, in a pilot study of five different districts over a one year period, researchers analyzed the cost of teacher attrition and estimated that the cost of attrition ranges from \$15,000-\$26,502 per teacher (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Watlington et al. (2010) suggest that the cost of replacing teachers due to attrition is 2.2 billion US dollars annually nationwide. When teachers leave, districts must spend large sums of money to hire, replace, and train new teachers. There is also the loss of time and resources invested in teachers who do not remain in the profession (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In addition, findings indicate that minority and urban areas shoulder even greater costs, due to a higher rate of teacher turnover (Barnes & Crowe, 2007; Heider, 2005). Although the literature is not precise on cost-per-lost teacher, it is clear that thousands of dollars walk out the door every time a teacher leaves (Barnes & Crowe, 2007; Phillips, 2015; Rice & Malen, 2003). Therefore, it can also be argued the investment in veteran teachers, over a 10-to-30-year period, would represent a more significant loss.

Some of the costs of teacher attrition are more apparent, such as the financial loss of an investment in professional capital. Less obvious are the costs of the impact on student achievement and well-being. High teacher turnover leaves schools with newer, less-experienced teachers. Teacher quality has been shown to be correlated to student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2003) and yet attrition and teacher migration create an inequitable distribution of high quality, experienced teachers across schools and districts. A steady loss of experienced

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teachers results in lower quality of instruction and decreased student achievement (Boyd et al., 2005, 2008; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Drawing on data on 850,000 fourth and fifth grade students in New York, Ronfeldt et al. (2013) found that high teacher turnover has a significant negative impact on both math and ELA scores. In this same study, findings indicate that high teacher turnover has an even more severe detrimental effect on student achievement in schools with high-needs minority, low SES, and ELL students.

The implication is that veteran teachers are using their seniority to move into more sought-after positions, with less stressful working conditions. The literature suggests that veteran teachers may *pull rank* on early-career teachers by selecting or being assigned to positions with better working conditions, while newer teachers are relegated to less desirable and more challenging positions (Ganser, 2002). The migration of teachers from less desirable positions might imply that new teacher attrition may increase if new teachers are more frequently assigned to the most difficult postings that increase stress and burnout.

Students in urban settings suffer the greatest impact of veteran teacher attrition (Allensworth et al., 2009). Often new, inexperienced teachers are given the most difficult assignments in urban schools with insufficient funding and high populations of students in poverty (Boyd et al., 2005). Consequently, students in these areas are not provided high-quality, experienced veteran teachers when compared to students in more affluent suburban areas. The revolving door of new and inexperienced teachers lowers the quality of classroom instruction and undermines efforts to support students in urban setting and decrease the achievement gap (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The significant outcome of all teacher attrition is that students suffer the consequences and students in urban schools often suffer the greatest consequence of a

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continuation of lack of access to the most qualified and experienced teachers (Watlington et al., 2010).

Early Retirement

In addition to the high rates of new teacher attrition, we also know that there is another spike in attrition as teachers become eligible for retirement. Again, researchers use the example of a U-shaped curve, with the peaks of attrition in the beginning and end of teachers' careers (Ingersoll, 2002). A deeper understanding of the lack of motivating factors for veteran teachers to remain in the profession beyond retirement eligibility can be found in a qualitative study by Alvy (2005). Alvy suggests shaping a culture of support that honors experience and wisdom at the school site. He also suggests offering differentiated professional development and opportunities for veteran teachers to mentor and/or be mentored as a motivating factor to remain in the profession longer (2005). Veteran teachers benefit from comprehensive teacher support that encourages them to continue to make significant contributions to their students and the school community (Alves, 2005). The negative impact of veteran teacher attrition is even greater than new teacher attrition when one considers the positive contributions veteran teachers make to the school community and culture (Ladd & Sorensen, 2017). A continued lack of comprehensive teacher support will result in the loss of experienced and valued veteran teachers.

Mid-Career Attrition

Attrition near the end of teachers' careers may not be surprising, but some studies find that teachers are leaving the profession well before retirement (Glazer, 2018b; Ryan et al., 2017; Tye & O'Brien, 2002). Recent studies challenge the idea that teachers leave primarily in the early, survival years (Glazer, 2018a, 2018b). Glazer conducted a qualitative study on the reasons why invested, fully certified teachers would exit the profession well past their survival years (i.e.,

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the first five years of teaching). The study found that loss of autonomy or loss of professional authority left teachers feeling defeated. They felt they could no longer achieve the success they desired and, therefore, left the profession altogether (Glazer, 2018a).

Quantitative research on leaving the teaching profession also indicates the departure of veteran teachers may be due to excessive education reform and test-based accountability (Ryan et al., 2017). Veteran teachers are at a heightened risk of leaving the profession due to the recent large-scale education reform. In an environment of high stakes testing and the education reform of CCSS, veteran teachers may lack the training and technological experience of novice teachers (Ryan et al., 2017). The outcome of mid-career attrition is the loss of experienced teachers who deserve more comprehensive teacher support in an environment of major education overhaul. With more comprehensive teacher support during times of major education reform, veteran teachers may choose to remain in the profession.

Teacher Migration

In addition to teachers leaving mid-career, recent literature has focused on the consequences and frequency of teacher migration. Teacher migration is the flight of experienced, veteran teachers from hard-to-teach schools to schools or districts with better working conditions (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ladd, 2009). Teachers who move away from challenging positions deny students quality instruction from the most experienced teachers. The high turnover of teachers leaving schools impacts students and the professional school community. The migration of teachers is often 50% higher in urban settings than suburban settings (Ingersoll, 2001a). The students with the greatest needs experience the highest degree of teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001a; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). One of the main reasons for the phenomenon is that urban

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schools often pose the greatest teaching challenge of serving low performance, low SES, high-needs students.

Schools in urban settings often fall under the Title 1 classification. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Funds are primarily allotted based on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state (2019). Title 1 schools also have higher concentrations of second language learners when compared to non-Title 1 schools (NCES, 2019). Title 1 schools and students of poverty are often associated with higher attrition. In a study on the cost of teacher turnover in several school districts, the findings indicate the higher the poverty, the higher the turnover in urban school settings (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). The significance of teacher migration is that the outcome leaves high-needs students with the least experienced teachers who have less impact on student achievement, increasing an already existing achievement gap (Lankford et al., 2002).

Summary of the Leaving Problem

Teacher attrition is costly to states and districts. It is also costly to students in terms of loss of stability and decreased student achievement and well-being. It is estimated that schools nationwide lose billions of dollars each year, due to the cost of retraining and replacing teachers (Synar & Maiden, 2012; Watlington et al., 2010). The high cost and impact of new teacher attrition is well documented in the literature, but mid-career veteran teacher attrition, teacher migration, and early retirement are also costly. Veteran teacher attrition can also negatively

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impact student achievement and well-being, along with depleting schools of the contribution of culture and community from the veteran teacher population.

Part 3: Mentoring for Veteran Teachers

One possible approach to mitigating the problems of stress, burnout, and attrition for veteran teachers may be to provide a mentoring program similar to programs provided for new teachers. Comprehensive formal mentoring has been offered to new teachers to ameliorate stress, burnout, and attrition (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Veteran teachers are a valuable asset, so designing a program to meet their specific needs may prevent the loss of veteran teacher expertise. Therefore, comprehensive formal mentoring may also be offered to veteran teachers who also experience stress, burnout and various forms of attrition.

Value of Veteran Teachers

Veteran teachers make up the majority of the teaching force (Digest of Education Statistics, 2017; Evans, 1989). While the definition of veteran teachers varies in the literature, one thing is consistent: veteran teachers are not new to teaching. Veteran teachers are often grouped according to years of experience, age, and career stages; however, the groupings and terms vary, creating a hazy definition of veteran teachers. *Veteran teachers* is the phrase that often surfaces in the literature, but the terms *experienced teachers* or *highly experienced teachers* are also used (Alvy, 2005; Hargreaves, 2005; Levine, 2011). Another synonymous phrase is *late career teachers* (Clark et al., 2014; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). Articles and studies also vary in how veteran teachers are grouped according to their years of experience, ranging from four years of experience to more than ten years of experience.

The literature suggests that the career of a teacher can be divided up into consecutive stages with implication for teacher support and professional development (Huberman, 1989).

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However, empirical studies have not systematically explored how teachers of different stages and ages might have different needs and require specific teacher support (Richter et al., 2014). Based on the literature review, and the wide range of definitions, for this study veteran teachers are those who have at least ten years of experience. With at least ten years of experience, these veteran teachers have experienced at least one, if not several major waves of education reform. Retaining strong teachers should be one of the most important items on the agenda when considering the efficacy of our teaching force (Darling-Hammond, 2003, 2010). Veteran teachers positively impact the community and culture of a learning environment. Veteran teachers help to build morale with their experience and leadership (Alvy, 2005). They bring tremendous strength to the educational community in terms of their experience and wisdom, along with a healthy dose of skepticism and the courage to ask the tough questions (Clark et al., 2014). Valuing that wisdom and honoring that experience can contribute to positive school culture.

Veteran teacher mentoring is also related to positive outcomes for teachers. By honoring veteran teachers through mentoring, they are more likely to sustain their commitment to, and effectiveness in, the teaching profession (Alvy, 2005). Researchers recognize and discuss the value of experienced teachers and their contributions of beating the odds by decreasing the achievement gap in urban school settings with high concentrations of low SES, and minority students (Podolsky et al., 2019). According to Danielson, when veteran teachers receive mentoring support, they experience a reawakening about their teacher practices, perceive individual growth, and feel validation in their profession (2002). Teachers gain a sense of renewed enthusiasm and commitment to their craft (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Mentoring often fosters reflection on teaching practices and professional growth. Experienced teachers may benefit from the advice of their colleagues, receive positive feedback, recognition, and trust

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(Danielson, 2002). As such, mentoring for veteran teachers may offer strong positive outcomes and fulfil the void of comprehensive teacher support stated in the literature.

Recommendations from the Literature

The majority of recommendations for reducing teacher stress, burnout, and attrition point to a need for additional and more comprehensive teacher support; however, these recommendations are often vague, inconsistent, and lack a comprehensive framework. Some studies simply state a climate of additional teacher support is needed (Dudenhöffer et al., 2017). Other studies recommend goal setting, increased autonomy, teacher leadership, or professional learning communities. In a phenomenological study on the benefits of increasing the retention of teachers, researchers recommend that a highly supportive professional climate could keep teachers in the profession longer (Alvy, 2005; Danielson, 2002). One quantitative study on the manifestations of teacher burnout included a future recommendation to conduct qualitative studies that explore the content more deeply, along with a call for a more holistic approach for teacher support (Rumschlag, 2017). In addition, a pilot study on the costs of attrition in five school districts recommends investing in comprehensive teacher support programs that would be offset by the cost of reduced attrition (Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Based on the current studies and recommendations, we can conclude that insufficient support is in place for veteran teachers, and although there has not been a clear outline of how veteran teachers should be supported, it is clear that additional components of support or more comprehensive support frameworks are needed for veteran teachers.

Historical and Theoretical Approaches to Mentoring

Although the idea of a mentor has evolved, the concept of a mentor dates back at least to Greek Mythology (Antal, 1993). Odysseus was said to be searching for someone who would not

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only advise his son, but someone who was also trustworthy and a friend. Odysseus eventually found a person who could guide and support his son in a man named *Mentor*, hence the term used today to describe someone who provides advice and guidance (Antal, 1993). This supports a long history of partnership theory of mentoring (Knight, 2010).

In current education theory, mentoring incorporates trust and positive relationships, along with a collaborative component of collegial support (Peterson & Bercik, 1995). However, older theories of mentoring that only portray an expert who imparts wisdom and knowledge to the novice have since expanded to include more modern views and techniques of mentoring experienced veteran teachers (Ehrich, 2016; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Hargreaves and Fullan argue that veteran teachers require continuous learning throughout their careers, and advocate for changing the teaching profession more fundamentally by expanding mentoring opportunities for veteran teachers (2000). Expanding views of comprehensive formal mentoring to include veteran teachers, not just new teachers, is necessary to support veteran teachers through teacher stress, burnout, and attrition.

The theoretical approaches of mentoring programs guide how mentors interact with teachers. Two approaches found in literature on mentoring include the *transmissive* approach and the *collaborative* approach. The transmissive approach is most closely related to the idea that the mentors are the masters of knowledge who will transfer their knowledge and experience to teachers (Zuckerman, 2001). However, transmissive mentors, who supervise their mentees very closely and impart their ideas about teaching, do not necessarily succeed in the greater goal of fostering competence, confidence, and well-being in teachers (Richter et al., 2013). The collaborative approach describes a partnership in which the mentor and mentee journey through learning together (Knight, 2010). In a collaborative approach, the mentor and mentee construct,

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communicate, and validate their pedagogical knowledge together (Richter et al., 2013). Mentors can promote these collaborative relationships by listening to the mentee. Mentors are guided by the mentee as a fellow learner, using their shared knowledge and experience to solve problems (Johnson, 2018; Zuckerman, 2001). In addition, the collaborative approach may help to encourage innovative teaching practices rather than the transmissive approach that merely supports the status quo (Evertson & Smithey, 2000). The collaborative approach is the type of approach mentors use in the comprehensive formal mentor framework, which is described in greater detail below (see also Figure 2 in Chapter 1).

Ineffective Informal Mentoring

The organizational structures of teacher mentoring are often ambiguous, ranging from an informal, almost completely hands-off, to highly structured, such as comprehensive formal mentoring. However, researchers find that informal, piecemeal mentoring, such as meeting infrequently, with little to no coaching (i.e., teacher observations, coteaching, modeling, and debriefing) do not show strong benefits for teachers or students (Stanulis et al., 2012; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Informal approaches to mentoring are also referred to as *generic* mentoring (Stanulis et al., 2012). Focusing on generic mentoring, generic teaching skills and generic pedagogy have not been found to substantially change teaching practices or show positive outcomes for students (Jarvis et al., 2001). A hands-off, generic, informal approach to mentor programs fail to show consistent levels of support and reliability in reducing stress, burnout, and attrition (Ingersoll, 2012).

The mentor's responsibilities are at the foundation of any mentor program, yet many informal programs do not provide mentors who are fully released from their classroom obligations. Historically, a mentor's primary responsibility is first and foremost to their students

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in their own classroom, leaving very little spare time to mentor other teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Mentors who are not fully released, can often only provide minimal support to new teachers during after school hours. At times, informal mentors have been compensated with small stipends for this extra time, but more commonly, mentoring programs rely primarily on the goodwill and generosity of experienced teachers (Stanulis & Floden, 2009). Lack of time was a reoccurring theme of serious concern in the mentoring literature. In a study of 374 new teachers in Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan, researchers examined the inequities of time spent in mentoring within new teacher programs (Kardos & Johnson, 2010). Alarming, one study on new teacher mentoring showed that half of all new teachers reported that they had less than three face to face meetings with their mentor over the course of an academic year, and 40% of new teachers reported that their mentors *never* observed their instruction (Kardos & Johnson, 2007). One group of researchers found that poor mentoring can be worse than no mentoring (Ehrich et al., 2004). The outcome of informal mentoring often results in inadequate or inconsistent levels of support. When compared to more comprehensive mentor programs, inconsistent support creates an inequity for new teachers who desperately need consistent support during their survival years (Ehrich, et al., 2004). Ineffective mentoring and lack of time with a mentor is concerning when the time with a mentor is the central to supporting new teachers.

Improving structures in the role and responsibilities of mentors is a major focus in the literature. Over several decades, mentoring grew from a baseline of complete lack of mentoring to informal, or generic, mentoring. Currently, more studies are looking deeper into the quality and efficacy of all components of mentoring (Ganser, 2002). Teachers have expressed concerns with inadequate mentor training, mentors who are not on the same campus, and mentors who don't teach in the same subject area (Ehrich et al., 2004). Overall, informal or generic mentoring

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falls short of addressing the concerns of mentor training and adequate time, thereby missing the purpose of supporting and retaining new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012).

Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

The literature indicates that comprehensive formal mentoring is more effective than informal mentoring. Richard Ingersoll argues that more comprehensive *packages* or *bundles* of mentor support provided to new teachers (2012) are important to mitigate stress, burnout, and attrition. New teachers who receive more components of mentoring support showed higher retention when compared to new teachers who received fewer components of mentoring support (Sutcher et al., 2019). In other words, the more comprehensive the mentor support, the better the retention rates (Fletcher et al., 2008; Ingersoll, 2012). Another study compared a sample of teachers who received comprehensive formal mentoring to a control group of teachers who received informal mentoring. The sample included 42 new teachers from a large, high poverty district with low standardized scores in the Southeastern United States. The sample of teachers who received comprehensive formal mentoring experienced significant growth and changes in practice, compared to the control group who did not receive comprehensive formal mentoring (Stanulis et al., 2012). With the goal of reducing stress, burnout, and attrition, more comprehensive mentoring is preferable to informal, piecemeal mentoring.

The following components of comprehensive formal mentoring are discussed as a possible solution to mitigate stress, burnout, and attrition for veteran teachers.

Administrative Support

Administrative support is required as a foundational component of this framework. If teachers do not perceive that the support they are receiving from the program is in line with the administration's expectations, then the success of the program is at risk (Martin, 2008). Lack of

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administrative support is one of the most salient causes of stress, burnout, and attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Ladd, 2009; Matlock et al., 2016). Teachers are highly concerned with the support, or lack of support, they receive from administrators (McLean et al., 2017). Therefore, if teachers do not perceive that the support from the mentor program support meets the administration's expectations, then the success of the program is at risk (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Successful comprehensive formal mentoring programs require the backing of administrators to assure teachers that the mentor program is aligned with administrative and district policy.

Fully Released Mentor and Mentor Training

Fully released mentors (i.e., mentors who are released from their classroom obligations) are also a foundational component of this framework. Research indicates that fully released mentors have a significant impact on positive outcomes for teachers and students (Fletcher & Strong, 2009). The responsibilities of the mentor have been a concern for mentor research (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). One study addressed the concern of time by providing eighth-grade teachers in an urban setting with fully released mentors who could exclusively focus on the responsibilities of mentoring (Fletcher & Strong, 2009). The control group received the same training as the released mentors. This study found that teachers who had fully released mentors experienced greater outcomes and increased student achievement (Fletcher & Strong, 2009).

Historically, mentors were colleagues who also carried the responsibility of their own classroom with the consequence of not being able to provide adequate time to mentoring; however, research shows that fully released mentors have a significant impact on positive outcomes for teachers and students, allowing mentors to exclusively focus on the needs of the

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new teachers (Stanulis et al., 2019). Current programs offer more comprehensive support to new teachers that includes a fully released mentor, mentor training, a coaching cycle, observations, and before or after school collaboration (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Johnson, 2018; Stanulis & Floden, 2009). Comprehensive mentor programs that offer a fully released mentor to meet the time requirements for planning, observing and debriefing have a significant impact on the positive outcomes for both teachers and students (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Mentor training is an important component of this framework because it prepares mentors with the skills necessary to guide adult learning (Roehrig et al., 2008). It is suggested that mentor training is offered prior to and throughout the mentor program. (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Stanulis & Floden, 2009). Lack of mentor training surfaced in the literature as a common theme in studies on teacher mentoring. Mentees often perceived that mentors may have been strong teachers in the classroom, but may not have had the necessary skills or training to guide mentees in adult learning (Ehrich, 2001; Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Roehrig et al., 2008). Some studies on more formal mentoring programs, such as Michigan and Santa Cruz teacher induction programs, attempt to resolve inadequate mentor training by providing training for mentors prior to and throughout the mentor program (Martin, 2008; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Without proper training, even well-intentioned mentors may feel the frustration of being left to fend for themselves (Ganser, 2002). For these reasons, many formal mentor programs incorporate initial and ongoing training for their mentors (Roehrig et al., 2008; Stanulis et al., 2012). While some formal mentoring programs pair up with universities to train their mentors, others rely on outside companies, such as the New Teacher Training Center (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

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Coaching Cycle

The coaching cycle is fundamental to the success of the mentor program. Comprehensive programs show a relationship between positive teacher outcomes and consistent individual time spent with the mentor (Roehrig et al., 2008; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). For this framework, one to three hours per week of individual mentor-mentee time is spent in goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing, and is cyclical within the coaching cycle (Costa, 2002; Knight, 2009; Martin, 2008). Goal setting is the process of setting differentiated, long and short term goals selected by the mentor and mentee (Ehrich & Hansford, 2008; Ganser, 2002). The mentor and mentee form a joint inquiry partnerships built on trust for planning, modeling, and coteaching lessons together (Knight, 2010). When trust is established with a partnership approach, the debriefing portion of the coaching cycle provides an opportunity for reflection and meaningful feedback (Knight, 2010; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). Mentor programs that do provide a high level of coaching within the coaching cycle (i.e., common planning time, observations, and reflective debriefing) are correlated with stronger outcomes for teachers (Johnson, 2018; Stanulis et al., 2012), and stronger outcomes for students (Rockoff, 2008).

Collaboration

This framework will require a structured time for mentor and mentees to meet after school, five to ten times per year, to encourage and increase collaboration (Stanulis et al., 2012; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The literature and the new teacher mentor frameworks all include a structured component for collaboration with colleagues, often facilitated by the mentor on a monthly or bimonthly basis. The goal of these meetings with new teachers is to foster peer collaboration and provide a safe place to share growth and challenges among colleagues in the same cohort (Johnson, 2018). Some studies indicate that this time in an inquiry group was

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offered during before or after school hours (Stanulis et al., 2012; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Some studies referred to this time as *collaboration* with other mentees or colleagues. Collaboration provides a place and opportunity for teachers to share and gain new ideas of effective pedagogy.

Observations and Professional Development

For this framework, the observation and professional development component may or may not be present. Professional development can be costly to schools and districts implementing mentor programs so it may not be part of the comprehensive formal mentor framework for all participants. Some formal mentor programs have hired outside services and some have added professional development in a partnership with local universities (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Others, like the Cotsen Foundation for Art of Teaching, fund professional trainers to facilitate the professional development on specific teaching practices in math or literacy. The mentees then choose which professional development they would like to attend based on their individual goals.

Length of Mentor Program

Most commonly, new teachers participate in a two-year new teacher induction program (Ingersoll, 2012). Recently, some programs are looking at the investment of offering a three-year mentor program. This framework will require at least one full year of participation in a mentor program. Comprehensive formal mentoring includes several areas of support that all work together to provide a package of teacher support over the course of one to two years. The framework for this current study of veteran teachers will require at least one full year of participation in a comprehensive formal mentor program.

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Comprehensive Formal Mentoring as A Mitigating Factor

Formal mentoring programs have been implemented across the nation, and have been successful in addressing the problems of stress, burnout, and attrition (Ingersoll, 2012; Stanulis et al., 2012). Reducing the stress of new teachers is one of the primary goals of new teacher induction programs (Odell & Huling, 2004). Comprehensive levels of mentoring are related to reduced teacher stress, reduced burnout, and increased teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll, 2009; Stanulis et al., 2012). The following most salient reasons for teacher stress and burnout are viewed through the lens of theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring as a possible mitigating factor.

Student Stress

It is possible that comprehensive formal mentoring may decrease the stress teachers experience from student behavior issues and the challenges of serving academically at-risk students. The literature indicates that teacher stress and burnout can negatively impact student relationships, and that this relationship is bidirectional (McCormick & Barnett, 2011). If teachers experience stress and burnout, then students are negatively impacted (Klusmann et al., 2016). Conversely, if teacher stress and burnout are mitigated, then students are positively impacted, and in turn, increase positive outcomes for teachers. One cause of poor student-teacher relationships may be difficult students with serious behavioral issues or special needs that teachers are not equipped to handle (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Comprehensive formal mentoring affords collaboration opportunities with a mentor or colleagues to address student behaviors and classroom management. In turn, these collaboration opportunities might mitigate the stress that is caused by poor student-teacher relationships. Greater teacher support increases positive outcomes, such as student achievement (Fletcher et al., 2005) and conversely, the less

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supportive the professional environment, the lower the return to student achievement (Papay & Kraft, 2015). The overall findings in the literature on student-teacher relationships indicate that stronger teacher supports (e.g., social support, administrative support, parents, and the community) are needed to buffer the effects of stressful interactions with students and retain effective teachers (Hinds et al., 2015; Veldman et al., 2016).

Lack of Autonomy

Comprehensive formal mentoring may ease the stress veteran teachers experience when they lose teacher autonomy. Loss of autonomy is one the most salient causes of stress, burnout, and attrition. Educators are highly professional, yet their professional decision-making in the classroom and at their school site is decreased by major education reform. Veteran teachers may experience even greater frustration after losing the autonomy they once had (Glazer, 2018a). Veteran teachers have experienced the disappointment of having their professional decision making chipped away in a system that is increasingly moving towards decreased teacher autonomy. Comprehensive formal mentoring may provide individual mentor support to guide veteran teachers through what may be a difficult transition, and even focus on the professional decision-making that educators engage in on a daily basis.

Education Reform

There is a gap in the literature on how to support veteran teachers using comprehensive formal mentoring in to mitigate the stress, burnout, and attrition caused by major education reform. The CCSS were an unprecedented, nationwide reform as teachers were required to learn new standards, new curriculum, new teaching practices and were held accountable with new standardized testing (Porter et al., 2015). In contrast, the support and training new teachers receive allows them to arrive in the classroom, at times, better prepared for the current education

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reform than veteran teachers, who receive little to no effective professional development.

Researchers argue that reform is needed to increase student achievement (Fullan et al., 2015).

However, in the education reform literature, the phrase *apply pressure-provide support*, makes clear that where there is pressure for change, support is vital for change to be successful (Fullan, 2007). Reform leaders also argue that strong levels of support should be provided for each high expectation of change within education reform, including the allocation of resources to support the vision of change (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2015; Marzano et al., 2005). Comprehensive formal mentoring may provide the support and individual professional development needed to guide veteran teachers through the highly stressful process of adapting to major education reform.

Teacher Isolation

Comprehensive formal mentoring may be a mitigating factor for the added stress of teacher isolation. The literature indicates that teaching is a highly stressful profession. High stress and burnout are intensified in a culture of teacher isolation (Ingersoll, 2012; Ladd & Sorensen, 2017). In a culture where teaching in isolation is the norm, comprehensive formal mentoring immediately decreases that sense of isolation through the ongoing mentor-mentee interaction of goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, debriefing, and collaborating. All of these interactions are components of the comprehensive formal mentoring framework. The coaching cycle brings the mentor into the classroom on a regular basis, thereby reducing teacher isolation (Martin, 2008; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Mentoring is suggested as a mitigating factor to reduce teacher isolation, and to increase reflection, innovation, and collaboration (Danielson, 2002). A mentor is recommended for the career development of teachers because teaching and professional development are social requirements (Rinke, 2009). Additionally, a mentor can act

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as a social resource, providing guidance and development (Allensworth et al., 2009). Teacher isolation, a concern indicated in the literature may be mitigated by comprehensive formal mentoring.

Early Retirement, Mid-career Attrition, and Teacher Migration

There is a shortage of studies on the mitigation comprehensive formal mentoring may have on mid-career attrition, veteran teacher migration, and early retirement. This is likely due to the lack of comprehensive formal mentor programs for veteran teachers. However, the success of mentoring programs for new teachers suggests that comprehensive formal mentoring may have a mitigating effect on veteran teacher attrition as well.

There is also a scarcity of studies on the prevention of early teacher retirement and the possible benefits of reducing early retirement. The upswing of attrition at the end of teachers' careers is a common finding in the early retirement literature (Ingersoll, 2002; Synar & Maiden, 2012). One article suggests that early retirement might be reduced by providing differentiated professional development, mentoring support, and overall additional teacher support (Alvy, 2005). Alvy argues that mitigating early retirement and retaining experienced veteran teachers will benefit students and the school community (2005). One phenomenological study found that teachers who remained in the profession beyond their eligibility for retirement, experienced tremendous support from administrators, community members, and others (Clark et al., 2014). Due to the gap in the literature, additional studies on the benefits of retaining veteran teachers in their eligibility years, and on the kinds of supports that might mitigate veteran teachers' decisions to leave the profession early, are still necessary.

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Summary of Literature Review

This literature review addressed the problem of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition not only for new teachers, but also for veteran teachers. Stress and burnout impact the mental and physical health of teachers, including absenteeism and presenteeism. Section one of this review covered the manifestation of teacher burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and perceived lower personal accomplishments. The five most salient causes of stress and burnout were reviewed. Stress and burnout may cause negative outcomes for both teachers and students, decreasing teacher and student well-being, in addition to negatively impacting student achievement. The findings in the literature indicate that teachers require additional support to mitigate student stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support – all common to both new and veteran teachers. Education reform and loss of autonomy, two common stressors that are more detrimental to veteran teachers, were also reviewed. Mentoring is often provided to new teachers to support them through these salient causes for stress and burnout, in an effort to retain new teachers. However, there is a gap in the literature on this level of support for veteran teachers also experiencing high levels of stress and burnout.

Section two addressed the leaving problem of teacher attrition. While a concerning percentage of new teacher attrition is highly studied in the literature along with the cost of attrition, there are few studies documenting veteran teacher attrition and its various forms. This section reviewed veteran teacher attrition, such as mid-career attrition, teacher migration, and early retirement along with the cost and negative impact on student outcomes. The negative impact on student achievement and well-being was discussed throughout the literature review, as students are negatively impacted by the diminished efficacy of teachers and lack of access to highly experienced teachers.

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In the last section that reviewed possible solutions, the literature review shifted focus from causes and impacts of teacher burnout and attrition, to literature that is solution oriented. The greater contributions of veteran teachers were noted in terms of higher student achievement, increased student well-being and positive contributions to community and culture. The theory, approaches, and organizational structures of mentoring indicated a greater efficacy with more comprehensive formal mentoring structures. Each component of the comprehensive formal mentoring framework for this study was outlined and discussed. This was followed by a review of the possible mitigating factors of comprehensive formal mentoring for the five most salient causes of stress and burnout.

There were several possible limitations to this literature review. This was not an exhaustive review or meta-analysis of teacher stress, burnout, and attrition. Additionally, there is a shortage of empirical studies on comprehensive formal mentoring that present clear data on teacher retention. There are also inconsistencies in the literature on the costs of teacher attrition and teacher migration. While there are specific studies on teacher migration, the data does not differentiate new teacher from veteran teacher migration.

Overall, there is a lack of studies that examine formal mentoring as a support for veteran teachers. Comprehensive formal mentoring programs for new teachers might serve as a model for veteran teachers but must be tailored to the specific needs of veteran teachers. In reviewing the literature on new teacher mentoring as an effort to reduce student stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support, we can reason that these stressors might also be reduced for veteran teachers who receive this level of support. The stressors of excessive education reform and loss of teacher autonomy may be more detrimental to veteran teachers. With a gap in the literature, additional research is needed to discover how comprehensive formal mentoring might

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support veteran teachers through the most salient causes of stress and burnout, along with exploring whether early retirement, mid-career attrition, or teacher migration might be reduced by comprehensive formal mentoring.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for the five most salient causes of stress and burnout. This study also investigates the mitigating factors for early retirement, mid-career attrition, and teacher migration. With the degree of high stress, burnout, and attrition of veteran teachers and the negative impact on student achievement and well-being, it is important to explore the lived experiences of a group of veteran teachers who participated in comprehensive formal mentoring to learn how we might better support this valuable population of teachers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains an overview of the methodology for this study. The research design, sample, data collection procedures, and validity of this study will be discussed beginning with the research questions.

Formulating Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of a small group of veteran teachers regarding their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring. The researcher began the process by asking questions, such as:

Did teachers feel that stress, burnout, and attrition were reduced after experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring? Were teachers rejuvenated after experiencing formal mentoring? What were the specific aspects or components of the program that teachers found to be most effective for their specific needs? Were there aspects found to be ineffective? Were teachers supported enough to remain at their school, district or in the teaching profession in hard-to-teach areas or with challenging administrators?

The first research question became the overarching guiding question that encompassed the other questions of this phenomenological study. The second research question was added to determine the most effective components in the mentor program. Additional goals of this study were to ascertain teachers' perceptions about comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for stress and burnout. Therefore, the third research question was written to explore whether teachers perceive a reduction in stress and burnout after participating in the comprehensive formal mentor program. The fourth research question explored teachers' perceptions of increased teacher retention after participating in the comprehensive formal mentor

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program. The fifth and final question was added to explore the veteran teachers' perceptions of the mentor program in urban, Title 1 settings, compared to suburban, non-Title 1 school settings.

Research Questions

1. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?
2. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?
3. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?
4. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?
5. In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools?

Research Design

This qualitative study utilized a phenomenological design of inquiry in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals regarding a common phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). Data was collected and assessed using qualitative, in-depth interviews, which were transcribed, coded, and analyzed using ATLAS.ti. In phenomenology, perceptions represent the primary source of knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenon explored in this study is the lived experience of a group of veteran teachers in the Southern California area, who participated in comprehensive formal mentoring between 2006 and 2020. Unlike their new teacher peers, the fact that veteran teachers may accumulate many years of

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experience, even decades, before they receive the level of support provided by comprehensive formal mentoring is a phenomenon. For this reason, very little is known about the aspects of formal mentoring that are most beneficial to veteran teachers, or if comprehensive formal mentoring is a mitigating factor that may reduce teacher stress, burnout, and attrition.

The focus of this study was to learn the meaning or essence that the participants held about their formal mentoring experience (Creswell, 2014; Van Manen, 2016). The use of phenomenology was the most appropriate research design, as the overall aim of this study was to explore and understand the essence of the lived experiences of veteran teachers, who participated in comprehensive formal mentoring at a time when comprehensive formal mentoring is normally only intended for novice teachers and rarely offered to veteran teachers. Additionally, because comprehensive formal mentoring of veteran teachers is a phenomenon that was previously unexplored in the literature, the use of phenomenology allowed the researcher to collect data directly from individuals who experienced the phenomenon first-hand (Creswell, 2016).

Sample

Twenty veteran elementary school teachers who experienced comprehensive mentoring were purposely recruited by the researcher. Requirements for participation in the study included a) having at least ten years of experience in the classroom and b) previous participation in comprehensive formal mentoring. While the researcher initially proposed that participants must have participated in at least one year of comprehensive formal mentoring, most participants had participated in two to more years of comprehensive formal mentoring. The sample of participants was exclusively chosen to deeply explore their unique experiences and perspectives (Goulding, 2005).

Purposive Sampling

Purposive, criterion-based, and snowball selection were used to identify teachers who had experienced the same phenomenon of participation in comprehensive formal mentoring and who would be willing to participate in this study. Purposive sampling is characterized by predetermined, specific criteria met by the participants at the moment of selection (Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Creswell (2013) asserted that, in phenomenology, participants need to be carefully chosen to ensure all participants experienced the same phenomenon in question, thereby allowing the researcher to gain a common understanding. Snowball sampling is defined as the identification of participants by people who know of cases that are information-rich (Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Snowball sampling proved to be an effective method of identifying hard to reach populations of teachers who had experienced comprehensive formal mentoring. Without snowball sampling, these teachers likely would not have been identified or recruited.

This research was conducted in August and September of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participating districts were offering full or partial distance learning during this time. Most students were remotely attending classes while teachers were working, teaching, and communicating fully online from their homes rather than the classroom. Participating teachers were just beginning to use *Zoom.us*, an online video software program. It was still somewhat of a novelty. Teachers reported that participating in the study via *Zoom.us* was even more convenient than arranging a meeting in person. The use *Zoom.us* allowed the researcher to offer a variety of interview timeslots in the late evenings, as well as on the weekends, that might not otherwise have been possible had the interview been conducted in person. Many participating teachers reported that they felt the interview was personable and they felt comfortable sharing confidential information over the video platform.

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Participants

The demographics of the sample population indicating gender, age, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, grade levels taught, highest degrees earned, urban versus suburban and Title 1 versus non-Title 1 school settings are presented in Table 1. A total of 20 participants from six school districts in Southern California participated in this study. Teachers were selected from districts in Southern California, due to the rich demographics of diverse population of students and the number of veteran teachers who participated in comprehensive formal mentoring programs. The researcher sought to recruit K-12 participants for this study. However, there were no high school teachers, with 10 or more years of experience, who were identified through the snowball sampling process and who had participated in comprehensive formal mentoring. Possibly, their districts did not offer comprehensive formal mentoring at the high school level. For this reason, only K-8, schoolteachers were included in the sample of this study.

Three of the 20 participants identified as male, and 17 participants identified as female. The discrepancy between the number of male and female teachers occurred because recruiting male participants in the elementary and middle school sector, who also had at least 10 years of experience in the classroom, proved to be a challenge. Male teachers represent a smaller percentage (11%) of the elementary and middle school teacher population compared to females (89%; Digest of Education Statistics, 2018). Therefore, there were fewer male teachers to contact. With these statistics in mind, the number of male and female participants in this sample is representative of the male and female population of teachers in K-8 schools. The overall ages of participants ranged from 37 to 63, with an average age of 47.65 years. The participants' experience in the classroom ranged from 12 to 32, with an average of 22.45 years. Nine

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participants identified as White, six as Hispanic, two as Japanese, one as Korean, one as Pilipino, and one participant identified as Black.

Table 1

Demographics of Participants

Teacher	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years Teaching	Years at current school	Years at current district	Grade levels	Highest Degree	Other Certifications	Urban or Suburban	Title 1 or Non-Title 1
Ms. Aspen	F	39	White	14	9	9	1-5	MA	N/A	Urban	Title 1
Ms. Acacia	F	39	Pilipino	15	10	13	K-6	MA	CLAD	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Beechwood	F	49	Hispanic	23	5	5	K-2	MA	Admin, BCLAD	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Chestnut	F	53	White	26	26	26	K-4	MA	BCLAD	Urban	Title 1
Ms. Cassia	F	50	White	26	1	14	K-5	MA	CLAD	Urban	Title 1
Mr. Cedar	M	50	Hispanic	26	23	26	TK-2	MA	BCLAD	Urban	Title 1
Ms. Cherry	F	46	Hispanic	24	7	24	K-5	MA	Admin, Reading Recovery, Teacher Leader	Suburban	Title 1
Ms. Dove	F	50	White	24	14	20	1	MA	CLAD	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Douglas	F	47	Japanese	21	9	21	5-6	MA	CLAD GATE	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Elm	F	41	Hispanic	20	3	20	3-5	MA	English Supplemental Credential	Suburban	Title 1
Ms. Lavender	F	47	White	25	1	25	1-4	MA	National Board Certification	Urban	District
Ms. Magnolia	F	45	Hispanic	23	5	23	4-5	MA	CLAD	Urban	District
Ms. Maple	F	37	Korean	12	5	5	K-1	MA	MA TESOL	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Needle	F	50	White	28	28	28	5-6	MA	N/A	Suburban	Title 1
Ms. Nandina	F	45	Hispanic	22	5	22	K-5	MA	CLAD	Urban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Rose	F	47	White	14	5	5	4-8	MA	CLAD GATE	Urban	Title 1
Ms. Sage	F	63	Japanese	32	25	25	2-3	MA	BCLAD	Suburban	Non-Title 1
Ms. Sugarberry	F	47	Black	24	1	24	K-5	MA	CLAD	Urban	Title 1
Mr. Tacoma	M	61	White	30	30	30	2-8	MA	CLAD	Urban	Non-Title 1
Mr. Willow	M	47	White	20	17	17	K-4	BA	CLAD	Suburban	Title 1

Note: All of the participants were given pseudonyms of types of trees to protect their anonymity.

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Teaching Characteristics

All selected districts had areas with high concentrations of underserved, EL, and low SES students, and were identified on public school records as urban, Title 1 school settings. Whether teachers were located in urban, suburban, Title 1, or non-Title 1 schools was disclosed by participants on the demographic background form. Participants were purposively selected from the few districts throughout Southern California that offered comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers. The majority of the teachers (95%) had teaching experience in urban, Title 1 school settings throughout their teaching careers. At the time of the study, six teachers taught in urban, Title 1 settings, two in urban, non-Title 1 settings, four in suburban, Title 1 settings, six in suburban, non-Title 1 settings, and two served in leadership positions at a large urban district.

Sample size. The sample size was not chosen for broad generalizability, but rather for a deep exploration of the essence of the veteran teachers' experience after they received comprehensive formal mentoring (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenology typically has fewer participants and consists of more in-depth interviews. According to the literature on phenomenology, the sample size can range from less than seven participants (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007), three to fifteen participants (Padilla-Díaz, 2015), and ten to fifteen participants (Patton, 1990). Although the number of suggested participants varies, the phenomenology literature is in agreement that the sample may be small as more in-depth interviews allow for rich data (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenologists are interested in common features of the lived experience, thereby reducing the need for larger samples of participants (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). In this study, data saturation on the detailed account of the participants' lived experience was achieved. Data saturation was recognized when similar themes and subthemes were reoccurring, and no new data was found in the participants' responses.

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The Inclusion Criteria and Survey. Phenomenology is a study of the lived experiences of individuals who shared the same phenomenon. Therefore, the inclusion criteria were critical in qualifying participants (Patton, 2002). Participants must have (a) had ten or more years of experience in the classroom, and (b) have participated in at least one academic year of comprehensive formal mentoring based on the comprehensive formal mentor framework discussed in detail in the literature review.

The inclusion criteria also included the framework for comprehensive formal mentoring explored in this study. The framework is based on the synthesis of the most comprehensive formal mentoring structures in the literature, along with three formal mentor frameworks that share nearly all of the same components listed below (Martin, 2008; Stanulis & Floden, 2009). A review of the literature indicates mentor programs with more comprehensive organizational systems are more effective at reducing stress, burnout, and attrition (Stanulis et al., 2012; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Therefore, to qualify for inclusion in this study, participants must have participated in a comprehensive formal mentor framework that includes:

- a. Participated in at least one academic year of comprehensive formal mentoring
- b. Received a full-time, fully released mentor
- c. Mentor received training
- d. Participated in a coaching cycle of at least one to three hours per week that included the following attributes: goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing
- e. Participated in a collaborative after school group that met at least five times per year

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- f. Attended observations of exemplary instruction outside the classroom two or more times per year

Protection of Human Subjects

For the protection of human rights of all participants, an application for research on this study was submitted and granted approval by Claremont Graduate University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) in February of 2020. Prior to the interview, each participant was asked to sign a consent form (Appendix D) in accordance with the standards set by the IRB. Participants were assured of confidentiality in that their information, survey results, and interview responses would not be made available or identifiable to anyone other than the researcher. Confidentiality of the participants and schools was maintained throughout the duration of the study. All of the participants were given pseudonyms of types of trees, such as *Mr. Cedar* and *Ms. Aspen* to protect confidentiality. Any identifying information on original interview recordings and transcriptions will be kept for a maximum of five years in a locked box in the back of a closet in the researcher's home, inaccessible to the public. After the recordings are no longer needed, hard copy transcriptions will be shredded, and recordings will be deleted to protect the privacy of all participants. Any emails originating from the participants, or those who recommended the participants in the recruitment phase, will also be deleted permanently from online email services, thereby eliminating the possibility of discovering the subjects' connection to the study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the demographic survey, inclusion criteria survey, and the interview protocol. Adjustments for clarity were made in the demographic surveys. Adjustments to the interview questions were made to increase clarity and depth of response, which increased the internal validity of the instruments and the overall credibility and

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trustworthiness of the findings of this study. The pilot study was conducted in August 2020, two weeks prior to the dissertation study that occurred in August and September of 2020. The pilot study was identical to the dissertation, with the exception of a smaller sample of three K-8 veteran teachers, compared to the final sample of 20 K-8 teachers. The pilot sample was a purposive and criterion-based; participants were recruited using snowball sampling. For the pilot study, the data collection, approach, and procedures followed the same method as the final study. Data analysis and coding also followed the data analysis and coding approaches suggested by phenomenology researchers and detailed in this study (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). All pilot interviews were coded and analyzed, producing 56 open-ended codes and similar themes emerged as the themes in the final dissertation study. After conducting the pilot study, the surveys and interview questions were modified to bring more depth and clarity to the survey and interview questions. Revisions were submitted to Claremont Graduate University's Institutional Review Board for approval. The IRB did not require an addendum, due to the minor changes and clarifications.

Instrumentation

Phenomenology requires a truly exploratory approach (Moustakas, 1994). The primary instrument of data collection was the profound, deep interviews (Padilla-Díaz, 2015) that culminated in the essence of the complexities of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014; Goulding, 2005). The interviews in this study were 45-to-90-minutes in length and consisted of semi-structured, open questions that allowed for rich description and deep reflection on the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the participants.

The interviews were conducted during the COVID-19 Pandemic, during which in-person physical interaction was impossible. Therefore, all interviews were conducted remotely via

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Zoom.us. As discussed in the section Purposive Sampling, conducting interviews via *Zoom.us* did not have an impact on participation, demographics, or data quality. Each participant was recorded on *Zoom.us*, and with an external audio recorder. The researcher encouraged the participants to select the most convenient time and date for the interview, thereby creating a safe space for an in-depth exploration of the essence of participants' experiences (Krathwohl, 2009). Several of the participants chose to be interviewed online, in a convenient location, such as their classroom. Others chose to be interviewed online, in their own home. Timing also varied, such that some participants chose to participate in the interview after school, while others chose to be interviewed in the evening or on the weekend.

Potential participants were sent an initial participation request by email. If interested in participating in the study, they were then sent an inclusion criteria survey (Appendix A), demographic survey (Appendix B), and a consent form (Appendix D). The final question on the survey requested their participation in an in-depth interview. Teachers who met all of the inclusion criteria were sent a request for a convenient date and time for the participant to be interviewed.

The approved IRB interview protocol was followed. The researcher presented herself as the listener and asked participants to give their account of their experience of the phenomenon. The researcher also asked probing questions to encourage participants to elaborate on the details of their answers, in order to clarify and to stay close to their lived experiences. Table 2 represents a matrix of the research questions aligned with the interview questions. Sub-questions and probing questions are also identified in the matrix of research questions.

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Table 2

Matrix of Research Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
1. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?	1. As a highly experienced veteran teacher with ten or more years in the classroom when you received comprehensive formal mentoring, what are your perceptions, thoughts and experiences of receiving comprehensive formal mentoring?
2. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?	2. If you were to design a mentoring program to support highly experienced veteran teachers like yourself, what would you include or leave out?
3. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?	3. Prior to participating in the mentor program, have you experienced stress and burnout? If so... a. Have you felt stress due to student relationships? Was there a shift in your relationship with students as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support your relationships with students? b. Have you felt isolated as a teacher in the classroom prior to the mentor program? Was there a shift in your perception of teacher isolation as result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program decrease teacher isolation? c. Have you felt stress from administration? Was there a shift in your relationship with

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	<p>your administrator as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support your relationships with your administrator?</p> <p>d. Have you felt stress from education reform? Was there a shift in your level of stress regarding education reform as result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support you with education reform?</p> <p>e. Have you felt a loss of teacher autonomy? Was there a shift in your perception of teacher autonomy as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support teacher autonomy for you?</p>
4. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?	4. Have you ever considered leaving your school for a different school or district, taking an early retirement or leaving the teaching profession altogether? If so, have your perception, thoughts and experiences changed during or after participating in the mentor program?
Additional probes used during the interview process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more about that? • Can you clarify that? • Can you expand on that? • What part of that experience was significant? • What did the mentor or program specifically do to help you?
5. In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 versus non-Title 1 schools.	No additional interview questions for research question #5. The researcher used the demographic survey in combination with the interview responses to analyze this research questions.

Data Approach & Procedures

Data approach and procedures were established in this qualitative study. The interview questions were guided by phenomenological theory and the conceptual framework of this study. To draw out the essence of the lived experiences, through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, veteran teachers were asked to describe detailed perceptions, thoughts, and experiences about their participation in the comprehensive formal mentor program. The wording of the research and interview questions were carefully chosen to draw out the *perceptions*, *thoughts*, and *experiences* of the participants (Moustakas, 1994). The word *perception* implies that the participants have their own interpretation of the phenomenon. The word *thoughts* implies that participants have their own judgments and opinions of the phenomenon. Last, the word *experience* implies that participants have their own observation and encounter with the phenomenon. The researcher sought stories or explanations of how the participants interpreted, judged, and observed the phenomenon of participating in comprehensive formal mentoring (Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

Data Collection

Many of the participants completed and emailed their consent form, along with the inclusion criteria (Appendix A), to the researcher prior to the interview. Next, participants completed a brief demographic form (Appendix B) on age, ethnicity, number of years of experience, grade levels taught, type of classroom experience, highest educational level, additional certifications, and participants' identified gender. If participants did not have time to complete the inclusion criteria survey or demographic survey prior to the scheduled interview, the researcher collected the signed consent form and then guided participants through the surveys

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and recorded their responses, just prior to the interview. Guiding participants through both surveys required approximately 15-20 additional minutes.

The researcher then began the interview with one or two friendly questions to establish rapport with the participant and establish a safe environment. This also provided an opportunity to remind participants that the interview would be recorded, and to test the *Zoom.us* recording settings and the audio recorder. The interview then continued with the interview protocol of research questions and probes (Appendix C). This open, semi-structured protocol allowed the researcher to explore the breadth of factors, even beyond the ones that might initially come to the mind of the participants. On average, the interview process was approximately 45 to 60 minutes long. Three interviews were approximately 90 minutes long. All interviews combined produced approximately 240 pages of scripted text.

Interview question number one reflected the greatest fidelity to phenomenological research. This overarching question set the stage for an open-ended, semi-structured inquiry design to gather information about the participants' organic perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the phenomenon. The aim of question number two was to uncover the most effective aspects of meeting the specific needs of veteran teachers. Question three (a-e), aimed to discover whether the participants' experience with formal mentoring mitigated stress and burnout. Specifically, participants were asked about their experience with the most salient causes of stress and burnout, such as poor student relationships, teacher isolation, administration, education reform, and loss of teacher autonomy. Interview question number four explored participants' experience with comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher attrition. There were no interview questions to explore research question number five. The goal of research question number five is to shed light on the ways that mentoring could vary in its

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benefit for teachers in different contexts, such as in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools. The demographic information also provided context to analyze research question number five.

Data Analysis & Coding

Data analysis in phenomenology is used to identify the common meaning and essences of the data, by means of textual and structural analysis (Moustakas, 1994). In this methodology, data analysis and coding are an interpretive inquiry through the process of inductive decontextualization and recontextualization (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Coding data from this phenomenological inquiry was a systematic process of many layers of coding: identifying meaningful pieces of data and then adding more layers of coding of categorizing the pieces of data into clusters of meaning that represent the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). This study followed a multi-step procedure to facilitate deep engagement with the data to achieve a rich process of phenomenological analysis (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher transcribed all subjects' descriptions using *Temi.com* to conduct an initial transcription within an hour of finishing the interview. No coding was done on Temi.com; it was exclusively used to aid accurate transcription. The researcher then listened and tracked every word recorded in each individual transcription. The researcher revised the transcription as needed to ensure full accuracy. These recordings were referred to throughout the coding process.

To code the data, the researcher uploaded the interview into ATLAS.ti for open-ended coding, meaning each relevant quote was coded to give them equal value (Patton, 1990). The open coding generated 305 codes. The researcher then reviewed the data, merged similar codes, and looked for textual description of relevant topics expressed. Within ATLAS.ti, the researcher looked through the lens of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for relevant topics and

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patterns, which were then grouped and coded into 18 clusters of meaning. The researcher coded the textual description and included quotations through InVivo coding. The InVivo coding identified direct quotes from participants that ranged from single word quotes to full paragraph quotes. The researcher wrote the fundamental structural descriptions using memos and 25 clustered networking groups based on the initial codes. Finally, according to the textual and structural analysis, the researcher proceeded to identify the essence of the phenomenon, identifying the common elements repeated by each of the participants. The researcher used the networks and coding groups to identify the essence of the phenomenon. The researcher reread the transcribed interviews several times through during this process to ensure that the essence of the phenomenon was accurately identified.

Trustworthiness & Reliability

In a phenomenological study, the researcher becomes immersed in the data, and so she must be honest and vigilant about their own experience, perspectives, and beliefs (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). The researcher ensured accurate data collection and interpretive dependability using methodical and logical analysis and a sample size of 20 participants. Phenomenology is generally conducted with smaller sample sizes. In this study, data saturation of the shared essence of participants' experience occurred after 10 interviews. Data saturation was observed when themes and subthemes within research questions reoccurred across participants and no new themes were emerging from the data. However, the researcher interviewed a further 10 participants, for a total sample of 20, to increase reliability. The researcher took several measures to ensure trustworthiness, including paying close attention to the authenticity, dependability, and credibility of the study. The researcher practiced *bracketing*, recognizing but not abandoning her prior knowledge and assumptions, and kept an open mind

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throughout the analysis. To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher also practiced *member checking* by sending participants a transcript of their interview to provide an opportunity to make revisions or comments.

Reflexivity

According to Creswell (2013), a part of building a study's credibility is addressing the researcher's background and possible bias. Awareness of one's own views, experiences, and background is an essential skill of the qualitative researcher that allows them to reflect on what they personally bring to the study (Creswell, 2016). The researcher's perceptions of formal mentoring have been shaped by her own journey. The researcher has been a mentor in a comprehensive formal mentoring program. Also, in her 20 years of teaching, she has experienced teacher stress, burnout, and teacher migration out of an urban, Title 1 school setting. The researcher has also considered early retirement. Due to her prior involvement in these areas, she brings certain biases to this study, such as a deep belief in the importance of valuing and supporting veteran teachers who also have a range of specific needs that are as significant as the needs of new teachers. She made every effort to remain neutral, focus on drawing out the lived experiences of the veteran teachers participating in comprehensive formal mentoring.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The previous chapter discussed the methodological processes employed in this study. A phenomenological approach was used to describe and interpret participants' experiences with comprehensive formal mentoring. This chapter describes the rich descriptive data from semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted with twenty veteran, K-8 public school teachers concerning the following research questions:

1. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?
2. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?
3. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?
4. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?
5. In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools?

This chapter articulates an interpretation of the data that evolved throughout the research process. The chapter is organized with respect to each research question and frequency of themes and subthemes. The conceptual framework and theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring were present to varying degrees in the findings.

Themes emerged from the data and were investigated further by examining their frequency across responses. Therefore, tables on theme frequency are included for each research

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question and major subpoints throughout the chapter. There are overlaps across the categories in many of the tables as participants shared their experiences in ways that often fell into multiple categories.

However, the primary focus of this phenomenological study is the essence of the lived experiences of the participants and the meanings they made through their own perceptions, thoughts, and experiences. Therefore, the words of the participants form the backbone of the findings and are brought to light throughout the chapter.

To provide context for the results of this study, a description of common characteristics of comprehensive formal mentor programs experienced by participating teachers are presented prior to the discussion of findings in this chapter. The inclusion criteria for participants are also discussed within the common characteristics section. The table referencing participants inclusion criteria including the dates of participation, frequency, and average time spent in the coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing), the number of hours spent per year in collaboration, and the number of days participants were released from their classroom obligations for observation and professional development can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Inclusion Criteria of Participating Teachers

Participating Teacher	Participated in Comprehensive Formal Mentoring	Planning (coaching cycle)	Coteaching and Modeling instructional practices (coaching cycle)	Debriefing (coaching cycle)	Average time spent in Coaching Cycle	Collaboration/Inquiry Group	Observation & Professional Development
Pseudonyms	Dates	Frequency per week	Frequency per year	Frequency per week	Minutes per week	Hours per year	Days per year
Ms. Aspen	2019-ongoing	1	20	1	120	20	7

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Ms. Acacia	2016-2018	1	0	1	120	30	6
Ms. Beechwood	2015-ongoing	2	40 (as needed)	2	240	20	5
Ms. Chestnut	2013-2014	1	10	1	90	20	5
Ms. Cassia	2012-2014	1	5	1	180	20	6
Mr. Cedar	2013-2015	1	0	1	180	20	10
Ms. Cherry	2006-2008	2	20	1	120	30	5
Ms. Dove	2018-2020	2	20	2	180	20	5
Ms. Douglas	2014-2016	2	20	2	120	20	10
Ms. Elm	2016-2018	1	20	1	150	30	5
Ms. Lavender	2013-2014	1	20	1	90	20	5
Ms. Magnolia	2013-2014	1	20	1	90	20	5
Ms. Maple	2017-ongoing	1	20	1	90	20	7
Ms. Needle	2013-2015	1	2	1	90	20	5
Ms. Nandina	2008-2010	1	10	1	180	20	5
Ms. Rose	2016-2018	1	20	1	120	40	0
Ms. Sage	2018-ongoing	2	daily (as needed)	2	180	40	7
Ms. Sugarberry	2014-2016	1	2	1	120	20	5
Mr. Tacoma	2012-2014	1	12	1	120	20	5
Mr. Willow	2016-2018	2	12	2	180	10	7

Common Characteristics of Mentor Programs of Participants in this Study

All veteran teachers in this sample participated in a comprehensive formal mentor program that that was a least one academic year in length. All participants worked with a fully released mentor (i.e., mentors who are released from their classroom obligations) who also received mentor training. All veteran teachers in this study participated in a coaching cycle of at least one to three hours per week that included the following attributes: *goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing*. All veteran teachers in this sample participated in

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collaboration at least five times per year. Additionally, nearly all (95%) veteran teachers in this study participated in observations of exemplary instruction and professional development.

Participants were selected from six different districts in three different mentor programs. Two of the mentor programs were offered through districts and the other mentor program was offered through the Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching. The dates of participation range from 2006 to 2020. All participation in the comprehensive formal mentoring program was voluntary. However, the duration of time veteran teachers participated in the program varied quite a bit. Most veteran teachers reported participating in the comprehensive formal mentoring program for two years, others participated for three years, and yet a small number of districts offered ongoing mentor support for their teachers.

Administration

The main role of administration in a comprehensive formal mentor program is to support and encourage participating teachers. The idea is to offer teachers a mentor who serves as a non-evaluative partner to guide changes in teacher practices. Therefore, most administrators were involved to the extent of being supportive by providing participating veteran teachers time and space to explore new teaching practices. In a small number of instances, administrators were relocated to another school based on district level decisions. In that case, the new administrators who replaced them during their mentorship or shortly after may not have been as supportive or informed on the goals of the mentor program.

Mentor Training

All mentors of the teachers in this study were fully released from their classroom obligations. Most mentors were selected from the same campus and were familiar with multiple grade levels, staff, students, and families. However, one small district assigned mentors to

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multiple campuses. Veteran teachers spoke about the advantages of mentor expertise across schools, between schools, and within districts. The ideal ratio of eight veteran teachers for each mentor on the same campus was common, although one district's program allowed a greater number of teachers on different campuses for each full-time district mentor. There was not a notable difference in the findings regarding different teacher-mentor ratios.

Researching the extent of the mentor training was beyond the scope of the study; however, participants indicated that most mentors were highly trained and exhibited a high level of expertise in pedagogy and adult learning. Teachers spoke of mentors utilizing a partnership approach in addition to the coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing). Based on the number of years in the position, the majority of mentors had greater mentor expertise in working with veteran teachers and in new pedagogical practices. Some mentors had less experience in the mentor role but were provided with extensive training. A few mentors may not have been offered as extensive training as others, due to district budgets. Most veteran teachers reported experiencing a partnership approach to mentoring and the coaching cycle. One participant perceived his mentor as overbearing and overzealous, which reflects more of a transmissive approach (Zuckerman, 2001) rather than a partnership approach (Knight, 2009). Mentor approaches are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Although there were slight differences, there were many commonalities in mentor training and the coaching cycle.

Mentor and Coaching Cycle

All veteran teachers in this sample participated in the coaching cycle with their mentors. The survey data and inclusion criteria indicate that teachers reported spending on average two to three hours per week in the coaching cycle, (i.e., goal setting, planning lessons, mentor modeling, coteaching, and/or debriefing) guided by their mentors.

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Most veteran teachers reported that they began the mentorship with a goal setting session. Participating teachers selected the subject and the standard of focus during their mentorship. For example, a teacher might select the subject area of reading and the state standards, such as English Language Arts 3.1: *Students will ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for their answers.* Another teacher might focus on math and choose a standard for mathematical practice, such as SMP 3: *Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.* Once goals were established, the coaching cycle began. Most mentors and veteran teachers met weekly. They planned with their mentor, cotaught or observed a modeled lesson, and then met again to debrief their experience.

Mentors in this study utilized different aspects and frequency of the coaching cycle than other mentors. The majority of teachers reported that mentors modeled lessons several times per week or as often as needed in their classrooms. While other participants reported that modeling occurred only once a week or not at all. At least one participant reported that her mentor cotaught and/or modeled lessons daily, if needed. Many veteran teachers shared that their mentors observed their teaching and provided feedback. Whether the time was one to three hours weekly or more, it was valuable consistent time working with a mentor in the coaching cycle.

Often, veteran teachers had a choice and voice in the type of feedback and data that they received from their mentors. For example, veteran teachers might ask their mentors to collect data on the quality of questions they pose to students, data on gender equity of calling on students, and student responses. This data is then discussed in the debrief and used to plan the next lesson. In addition to facilitating the coaching cycle, the mentor may also facilitate collaborative opportunities.

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Collaboration

There were many opportunities for collaboration throughout the mentor program. The coaching cycle itself is a collaborative experience within the planning, coteaching, and debriefing. In addition, a cohort of teachers on the same campus often participated in an afterschool inquiry group at least once a month. Participants perceived this time as very meaningful, particularly if teachers shared the same subject focus. For example, teachers might choose to do a book study of a well-known author, such as Carl Anderson, who offers professional development in the subject of writing. Most participating teachers reported spending two hours each month (20 hour per year) in collaboration with their cohort. A small number of participating teachers reported spending an average of one hour per week (40 hours per year) with their grade level teachers, who were also participating in an ongoing mentor program (see Table 3). Collaborative opportunities were also offered during observations of exemplary instruction and professional development.

Observations and Professional Development

The components of observation and professional development varied among some participants in this study. Professional development from outside sources can be costly. Therefore, a small number of districts chose to utilize their own staff to lead professional development and offer observations within their own schools and district. In contrast, other programs, such as the Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching, offered observations of exemplary instruction at outside schools and districts or offered training at hotel conference centers led by outside professional developers.

In this study, the structure and characteristics of the comprehensive formal mentor programs for participants sometimes varied in respect to the frequency and amount of time spent

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in components, such as the coaching cycle, collaboration, observations, and professional development. However, there were a number of significant commonalities that stemmed from the inclusion criteria and were aligned with the theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring. Although there were small variations within the participants' experiences, all participants met the inclusion criteria, and experienced many commonalities of a rarely offered, comprehensive formal mentoring program.

Section 1: Veteran Teachers' Perceptions on Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Research Question 1: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?

The findings of veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences on comprehensive formal mentoring were positive, with twenty (100%) of participants expressing positive views. Nineteen (95%) participants expressed extremely positive views of their experiences in the program. One participant (5%) reported a generally positive experience but expressed mixed feelings about the program. There are overlaps across the categories in Table 4. The reasoning is that all participants perceived the program as an effective, positive support. For example, Mr. Willow is counted in the category of having a positive experience with the mentor program, and he is also counted in the category of having improvement suggestions. It was important to acknowledge participants who had a positive experience, but also offered insight on making the program even better.

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Table 4

Participant Response to RQ 1: Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Responses	N	%	Representative Quote
Positive	20	100%	<i>I just loved the experience of it. And almost everything was spot on that I could use. My mentor was a wonderful resource, and she was just had so much to offer me. Ms. Cherry</i>
Extremely positive	19	85%	<i>I actually think it's one of the best things in the whole entire world. Here's why. When you first start teaching, you're in like an induction program or a, BTSA program, but you are so fresh, you have no, absolutely no clue even what to ask. You have no clue what to go deeper into. You're just like, what are the rules? How do I plan all of this stuff? I think that is a brilliant philosophy to train teachers who already have that foundation down and you're going deeper into it...otherwise, what other options of opportunity do you have...Ms. Aspen</i>
Generally positive with improvement suggestions	1	5%	<i>I think that there was a kind of a spectrum of experiences and feelings about it. Overall, I would say it was a positive for my students and for myself in general. Mr. Willow</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question in the manner presented in the table.

Data coding was a systematic process of many layers of inductive decontextualization and recontextualization (Starks & Brown Trinidad, 2007). Meaningful aspects of the data were identified and then more layers of coding were added to categorizing the data into clusters of meaning that represent the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). This study followed a multi-step procedure that involved using InVivo coding and grouped themes of veteran teachers' perspectives, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring. Within teachers' positive responses, the subthemes of professional respect, transformation, and rejuvenation emerged. The positive response theme, subthemes, and the number of InVivo mentions within the transcripts are displayed in Table 5.

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Table 5

Participant Response to RQ1: Positive Response Themes

Positive Response Themes	Positive Response InVivo Codes	Number of mentions	Representative Quote
Professional Respect			
Professional Respect	<i>Respect</i>	16	<i>I feel, I feel teary-eyed about it because there's no other time in the school environment where you feel that degree of respect. Ms. Sugarberry speaking of her experience in the mentor program.</i>
Professional Respect	<i>Choice</i>	26	<i>...what I appreciated the most was the degree of respect that [the mentor] program shows toward teachers. And by that, I mean, us being allowed to select our own area of growth and us also being allowed to choose between a range of options for professional learning and basically to just chart our own course. I really thought that was just a respectful manner in which to go about professional development, definitely different than what I had ever experienced before. Ms. Sugarberry</i>
Transformation			
Transformation	<i>Transformative</i>	25	<i>...it definitely was, it was transformative. So, coming and learning through this mentorship... prior to that, I didn't even know how poorly I had been exposed to PD...Ms. Douglas, speaking of learning effective pedagogy.</i>
Transformation	<i>Empowering</i>	14	<i>I'm not going back. If they tell me I have to do something or do a scripted program that I don't agree with, I'm not, I just don't feel right about following...I feel more confident as a teacher that I can control what I'm teaching, cause I know best practice. Ms. Chestnut</i>
Transformation	<i>Amazing</i>	28	<i>...It's these amazing mentors that we have...who are empowering teachers. Ms. Nandina, speaking about the mentor expertise.</i>
Rejuvenation			
Rejuvenation	<i>Humanizing</i>	15	<i>I feel like one of the pieces of [the mentor program] that makes me feel so excited to go is just knowing that I'm going to be treated like a real human being. Ms. Sugarberry</i>
Rejuvenation	<i>Reignited</i>	11	<i>So, I would definitely say it definitely reignited my love of teaching math and then it has carried over into reading and writing. Ms. Dove</i>
Rejuvenation	<i>Awesome</i>	23	<i>So, this mentor program...gave me a two-year awesome experience in honing-in on a craft of reading... Ms. Needle</i>

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It was clear that veteran teachers had given a great deal of thought to their individual experiences in the comprehensive formal mentor program. They offered lengthy, thoughtful responses about their experiences with the phenomenon of receiving comprehensive formal mentoring as experienced, veteran teachers. The essence of the findings indicates that veteran teachers in this sample perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as an overwhelmingly positive and supportive experience for veteran teachers. Professional respect, transformation, and rejuvenation emerged as reoccurring major themes of teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experience with comprehensive formal mentoring.

Professional Respect

Teachers often expressed deep emotion when speaking about the level of respect they experienced in the program. Ms. Sugarberry, a specialist in an urban district, along with several other teachers felt the experience was very different from anything they had experienced in their schools and districts. They specifically mentioned that the mentors and program leaders treated them with respect. Their individual professional decision making, their time, and their input were respected. This was a departure from their normal experience in the daily stressful environment of teaching.

...what I appreciated the most was the degree of...respect that the [mentor] program shows toward teachers...being allowed to select our own area of growth...being allowed to choose between a range of options for professional learning and basically to just chart our own course. I really thought that...was just a respectful manner in which to go about professional development, definitely different than what I had ever experienced...I feel teary-eyed about it because there's no other time in the school environment where you feel that degree of respect.

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Ms. Elm, a 3-5 veteran teacher, expressed how the mentor showed respect for veteran teachers' time, their input and valued them overall: "I feel like that they just really respect you as a professional...respecting your time, respecting your input." Veteran teachers spoke about being thanked for attending to the professional development. Teachers mentioned that the professional developers provided a welcoming environment, linen table settings, food and beverages; these were small gestures but added to the atmosphere of feeling respected and appreciated.

The majority of the veteran teachers perceived the mentor's presence in the classroom as respectful, non-judgmental, and safe experience. Ms. Beechwood a K-2, elementary school teacher explains that "you really feel that you, as a person are valued for who you are, because they're not coming into criticize you...they're coming in to support you and they let you know that from the very beginning."

Transformation

Transformation was a reoccurring theme when research question number one was asked. Overall, veteran teachers did not report making small changes in their teacher practice. Instead, veteran teachers spoke about thorough and dramatic changes in their teaching practices and careers after participating in the mentoring process, often using the word *transformation*. Ms. Cassia, a K-5 elementary school teacher, expressed her feelings of transformation regarding her experience in the program. "It changed my teaching career, really, absolutely transformed it." These dramatic changes in their teaching practices defined the theme of their experience in the mentor program.

Veteran teachers commented on how transformative and empowering their experiences in the mentor program were. They felt an increase in confidence and had eye-opening professional development experiences. Teachers discussed gaining a deeper awareness of their pedagogy. Mr.

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Tecoma, currently a second-grade veteran teacher, described himself as a very strong math teacher. He commented that after 20 years of teaching as the *sage on the stage*, he shifted his practice and gained a greater understanding of teaching the concept of number sense. “I finally learned what number sense was 20 years into my teaching.” He mentioned that his student teacher also commented on what he was doing to show his students number sense and how engaged the students were. His practice shifted from explaining and modeling strategies to using deeper levels of questioning to engage students. This was a major shift in Mr. Tecoma’s pedagogy and helped him guide students to a deeper understanding of mathematical number sense, thereby increasing positive student outcomes.

Frequently, teachers discussed the relationship between feelings of empowerment and increased control over their instruction, and decreased feelings of stress and burnout. Ms. Chestnut, a kindergarten veteran teacher shared, “I think maybe it’s the empowering part that you can control and change your teaching that maybe helped with the burnout.” She spoke of feeling empowered to move away from the teachers’ guides because she had a deeper understanding of the CCSS. She could teach what her students needed based on their current results.

Ms. Douglas, a fifth and sixth grade teacher, stated that her experience in the mentor program was transformative. It gave her a realization about how poor the professional development was in her own district and how great the need for more effective professional development is for veteran teachers. She stated, “it definitely was, it was transformative. So, coming and learning, through this mentorship...prior to that, I didn’t even know, how poorly I had been exposed to PD.” Later she talked about how there was a void of professional development on the new math CCSS. She felt she would not have gained this deeper understanding of her practice without the mentor program.

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Rejuvenation

Veteran teachers spoke of the program rejuvenating their passion for teaching. They said of the program humanized, renewed, and reignited their love of teaching. Ms. Sugarberry shared, “I feel like one of the pieces of [the mentor program] that makes me feel so excited...is just knowing that I'm going to be treated like a real human being.” She also spoke of the business world and how it is more commonplace to treat professional businessmen and women with respect and decency at a conference or training. In contrast, educational trainings are often micromanaged, with timed breaks, and held in run down facilities with very few amenities.

When given a choice of the area and direction of their own professional growth, teachers reported feeling rejuvenated. Ms. Elm explains how excited she was about choosing her own journey: “we got to choose...in what area of education, we need to grow in...so already...knowing, like I kind of could control this of how I wanted to grow...felt rejuvenating.” Again, teachers commented on how amazing it was to be viewed as an individual and given a choice on the direction of their own professional growth.

Ms. Cherry, formally a K-2 elementary school teacher and currently a reading specialist, expressed views that were echoed by many other teachers interviewed for this project. She stated that the professional development in formal mentor programs supported veteran teachers and reduced their stress by renewing and refreshing their practice. She spoke of her mentor providing support and guidance in behaviors and professional development on student-centered practices.

I think that [the mentor program] really helped because [it] renewed me and refreshed me and the professional development helped me see things in different ways of how I can manage my stress with the children and...work with them...[with] different

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strategies...managing them in different ways or managing the classroom in different ways.

In addition, the love of teaching and a passion for subject matter was reignited for many veteran teachers, and that passion then carried over to other subject areas. Teachers spoke of choosing a goal of focusing on math, reading, writing, or science. Ms. Dove, a first-grade teacher shared, “I would definitely say it definitely reignited my love of teaching math...and then it has carried over into...reading and writing.” Therefore, spending time focusing on one subject area, often carried over to other subject areas. There were multiple positive adjectives used to describe veteran teachers’ perceptions of the comprehensive formal mentor experience with the common themes of professional respect, transformation and rejuvenation.

Summary of Section 1: Veteran Teachers’ Perceptions of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

In summary, section one covered the findings of research question number one regarding veteran teachers’ overall perceptions of comprehensive formal mentoring. All participants expressed that their participation in the program was positive. Nearly all of the teachers reported that the mentor program was overwhelmingly positive with perceptions of increased professional respect in addition to feelings of transformation and rejuvenation resulting from their participation in the comprehensive formal mentor program. Although veteran teachers reported overwhelmingly positive experiences, there were also a small number of suggestions for improvement which are covered in more detail in the findings of the most effective aspects of formal mentoring in section two.

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Section 2: Most Effective Aspects of Formal Mentoring

Research Question 2: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?

The findings indicate that participants perceived the comprehensive formal mentor program to be highly effective in meeting the needs of veteran teachers. All teachers expressed that they benefited from the mentor and coaching cycle. The majority of the teachers expressed that they found all aspects of the mentor program to be valuable. The findings also indicate that collaboration, observation and professional development were also perceived as effective in conjunction with the mentor and coaching cycle but could be optional when budgets are a concern. Table 6 represents the themes, percent of teachers and representative quote. The columns do not add up to 100% because there are overlaps in categories to represent the layers of participants' views.

Table 6

Participant Response to RQ2: Most Effective Aspects of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Themes	N	%	Representative Quotes
All components of comprehensive formal mentoring	15	75%	<i>I, honestly, I wouldn't change it. I just feel like just the, all the pieces from like quality training with...and having a mentor to kind of bounce ideas and push in to support and the inquiry getting the research. I mean, it's just, it's just magical. Ms. Douglas</i>
Mentor & coaching cycle	20	100%	<i>Absolutely. 100% need the mentor. So, if it's a district mentor who can connect with certain number of teachers across the district, let's say that needs to be mandatory. So, we absolutely want to make sure there's a mentorship there. So, mentorship would be number one. Ms. Needle</i>
The mentor, coaching cycle and observing exemplary instruction	10	50%	<i>So, I think that, that observational piece of going into other people's classrooms is so important having that briefing period...Ms. Beechwood</i>
The mentor, coaching cycle and participating in collaboration	7	35%	<i>...the collaboration was at such a deep level...it was not just, what are you teaching on Monday? It was like lots of</i>

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			<i>research...researching what's right for kids, reading the latest, latest books and what's right for our students...Ms. Elm</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question.

All Components of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Veteran teachers expressed frustration when asked to choose the most effective aspects of the comprehensive formal mentor program. Many teachers said that they couldn't imagine changing anything about the mentor program. They were taken back and gave responses like, "that is a tough question!" Ms. Douglas and Mr. Tecoma both stated that the question was challenging because the comprehensive mentor program, in its entirety, is magical. Mr. Tecoma said, "can I just say I would replicate that model? I would...I like everything about it!" Ms. Douglas stated, "honestly, I wouldn't change it. I just feel like just the, all the pieces from... quality training with...and having a mentor to kind of bounce ideas and push in to support and... the inquiry, getting the research...it's just, it's just magical."

Some veteran teachers explained further that the mentor and coaching cycle go hand in hand with the observations and professional development. Ms. Douglas expressed her view on theory and practice, saying that the professional development is the theory of the teacher practice and the mentor and coaching cycle are the practical ways to try out the strategies in the classroom and they should not be offered as separate structures.

I think that both...you need the theory and the practice...the mentor provides the practice, the nudge and the feedback, and then...the professional development provides the how to do it and what it looks like. And that's what I loved about the [the mentor program] because it wasn't just someone telling you. It was actually seeing it and then actually being able to talk to real teachers...pretty much the whole program.

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Along with being magical in its entirety, many veteran teachers thought that removing any component of the mentor program would compromise its efficacy. Many districts started off providing a mentoring program that followed the comprehensive formal mentor framework and teachers felt it was highly effective. However, when funds tightened up, the model was modified to include more participating teachers and did not meet the needs of veteran teachers as well. Ms. Aspen stated, “my district tried to emulate a coaching type situation at our district... and I loved it. I thought that was fabulous. But then money got tight in all of those situations. And then it was like, okay...I feel like that just doesn't fit my needs.”

Many teachers expressed how important it was for districts and schools to offer the comprehensive mentor program and keep every aspect of the program. Their conclusion is that offering anything less than the full comprehensive mentor support compromises the efficacy and positive experience of the program.

The Mentor and Coaching Cycle

When posing probing questions to identify the most effective aspects of the program, all participants insisted on the presence of a mentor and the coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing). Although, veteran teachers perceived that other components, such as collaboration and professional development might be optional, *not one* participant expressed that the mentor program would be effective without the mentor and coaching cycle.

Mr. Cedar, a kindergarten teacher, shared feelings that were echoed by many other veteran teachers when he said, “I would for sure keep the mentor...we really need to have [the mentor].” Ms. Sugarberry adamantly stated, “Well, I definitely would leave in the mentorship... [that is] what absolutely cannot be cut out is the coaching cycle.” Veteran teachers felt that

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having a mentor support them through the coaching cycle was essential and effective. They expressed the positive impact of mentors and recognized the rarity of this level of support. Teachers perceived the mentor and coaching cycle as meeting the needs of highly experienced veteran teachers.

Ms. Chestnut expressed that the most effective aspect of the mentor program is the coaching cycle. She talked about the importance of guiding teachers to stay focused, observing exemplary instruction, planning together to help improve practice and providing feedback.

...you would have to keep the mentor...because the mentor is someone guiding you kind of to stay focused...you need someone observing your lessons and giving you feedback and working together. That's...valuable cause you do have to work on improving your teaching style...

The planning within the coaching cycle was viewed as extremely valuable. Ms. Sugarberry shared how helpful that time was and how it deepened her practice. She shared, “Planning with the mentor is what helped to deepen my understanding of this specific reform.”

Given the salience and frequency of comments regarding the mentor and coaching cycle, it is important to examine subthemes within this theme. Using the theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring, subthemes of mentor respect, mentor training, and mentor disposition emerged from the primary theme of mentor and coaching cycle.

Subtheme 1: Mentor Respect

A common theme in the data was the high level of respect veteran teachers have for their mentors. Ms. Aspen, a first through fifth grade elementary school teacher, was not alone in raving about how wonderful and supportive her mentor was. She stated:

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I look up to my mentor. I think she's phenomenal in all aspects. Like I call her, or I ask her questions about anything, not necessarily even my content area, cause I just think she's remarkable...But for me going into it after teaching for 10 years, I know behavior management...but like routines and expectations and organization of content, I'm like all of those areas are things that I needed to and I wanted to improve on and using the mentorship, it was just a perfect blessing at the perfect time to help me go deeper into my content area.

Grade level collaboration can be very supportive but may fall short in comparison to individual coaching with a fully released mentor. In another interview, Ms. Maple, a kindergarten and first grade teacher, explains how the support of the mentor goes beyond what is often offered in collaborative grade level teams. Because colleagues are busy, they don't have the time to provide individual coaching the way a fully released mentor does.

I would definitely keep the coach mentor. I would never, ever cut the [mentor]...in our district, they're called teaching and learning partners. I would never ever...They're like always there, they're there to support. They're there to be a sounding board. And sometimes your grade level colleagues... can't coach you or they can't talk to you right now. They have their own things going on.

Veteran Teachers often referred to mentors as therapist, cheerleaders, and researchers, who are readily available at short notice. Veteran teachers expressed their appreciation for the mentors who went above and beyond supporting a variety of different areas and concerns within teaching. Ms. Needle, a fifth and sixth grade teacher shared, "Your mentor was by your side, she was willing to be the therapist. She was willing to be the cheerleader. She was willing to be the

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researcher...she played so many different roles...there's just so much that was supporting me and keeping me excited.”

When veteran teachers struggled with health issues or went out on leave, the mentor was there to support them. Mr. Willow, a kindergarten through fourth grade veteran teacher discussed his painful experience with going out on leave and also mentioned how much his mentor stepped in to cover for him during that time. He stated that she was very supportive of the needs of his class and administered assessments while he was out on leave. Ms. Cherry talked about the delicate way her mentor handled her health struggles during her mentorship. She appreciated the dignity, respect and kindness of her mentor.

...my mentor was really good at talking to me. I was going through a lot of health struggles at the time...So that was another added stress. And [my mentor] really knew how to just, I think, manage or handle me as a person and knew when to back off when I was sick or not able to work, and...to get on me when I needed to be pushed...So that was good in that respect of kind of managing me as a, as a person...So it alleviated the stress.

Many teachers described mentors as the most connected teachers in the school, who knew students from previous years and across grade levels and who were connected to families. This was a strong source of support for teachers who may be meeting their students for the first time each year and may not have previous experience with the students or families. In this vein, Ms. Sage, a second and third grade veteran teacher shared “she knows every child's weaknesses and strengths. So, it's to give me suggestions [such as] last year, [this student] was like this, but we did this, and this worked or type of thing...She knows [student] names and parents, and she's amazing. Like...she's connected to all the families.”

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Subtheme 2: Mentor Training

Although there were no direct questions regarding mentor training, veteran teachers expressed strong views on mentor training, mentor expertise and mentor disposition and their critical role in an effective mentor program. Teachers often raved about the level of mentor expertise, describing their mentor as phenomenal, remarkable, and amazing. They perceived the mentors as highly respected and supportive, even beyond academics. Many veteran teachers were adamant that a high level of mentor training was fundamental to the success of a mentor program and how the lack of mentor training could lead to less than desirable outcomes. Ms. Dove discussed the importance of mentor training when she said:

The thing that was great was [my mentor] she got all that training...she was incredible before, but then she got all that training...on how to mentor and how to be a coach and she's just carried it over to...all the different subject areas, not just math. So that was super beneficial to all of us...I would definitely make sure that whoever the mentors are get really good training. I know that's been a problem in the district where...the newer [mentors]...had to figure it out on their own and it was not successful.

Within the mentor expertise, veteran teachers described the necessity of the mentor taking a non-judgmental approach. This approach encourages risk-taking, trying out new instruction, self-reflection, and being open and vulnerable to feedback. Veteran teachers felt that growing their practice required a safe environment to take risks and be vulnerable with a mentor who is non-evaluative and will not report back to administration. Ms. Dove discussed this need for a judgement-free space when she said,

...We need...support and...help without judgment [mentors] who are nurturing...it's not about them. It's about the kids and it's about the teacher and it's not what you want to do,

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but it's what they need...One of the benefits that [the mentor program] does. Not only do they train them, but they take somebody from your school, so you're comfortable with that person. And I think that makes a big difference when you're having...a mentor...who the person is...because her personality and the way she approaches things, she just makes it easy.

Veteran teachers also spoke of the need for a positive disposition or personality in a mentor, stating that their positive personality and passion for teaching helped teachers to develop relationships with mentors. Ms. Rose, a fifth-grade veteran teacher, talked about the personality, passion and expertise of her mentor in glowing terms.

...she's a novel of information...it's expertise. It's passion. It's she has so many ideas that are amazing...I think it's her personality. I think it's just like...because of her passion for education, you can see it. And I want that. I like that passion and that ignite that, that...that flame, it's just, it's wonderful...it's like I'm attracted to that.

Veteran teachers expressed the importance of mentor expertise. More importantly, they also expressed that a lack thereof may cause veteran teachers to lose respect for the mentor and consequently compromise the efficacy of the professional development. Ms. Maple provided an example of not being present or open to professional development due to a perceived lack of mentor expertise. When she did not perceive the mentor as an expert, it diminished the efficacy of her experience of the training because she was less likely to be receptive. Ms. Maple states,

...first and foremost, I've really benefited from those, those...mentored...relationships when I was present, and I was open to it. And then there were moments ...when I haven't been either...I didn't have a lot of respect...for the person who was in charge...it shaped the entire experience, whether it was a series of three meetings or an entire trimester. I

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think if I didn't respect [the mentor] ...Like if I respected...the background and the expertise of the person that was mentoring me that also might determine if I'm open...

While it was clear that Ms. Maple did not want to speak ill of her mentor, she articulated that her mentor expertise can negatively or positively shape the entire experience of the comprehensive formal mentor program.

In addition to mentor expertise, the importance of a fully released mentor was mentioned several times by veteran teachers. They perceived that the efficacy of the mentor was reliant on the flexibility of time and the lack of their own classroom responsibilities. Veteran teachers expressed strong views of the mentor as an absolutely necessary support for veteran teachers. They discussed the importance of full-time mentors who have the time to research and become an expert in teaching practices. Ms. Lavender stated, "I would keep having a mentor... that has to be someone that's not teaching. It has to be someone out of the classroom." Ms. Maple echoed other veteran teachers' views when she said, "I think it's so important that...person's...only job, is to be the mentor coach partner. Because then that person has the time to become the expert at all these things and present to you how it might work in your room." Ms. Lavender, formerly a third-grade teacher and currently in a district position, talked about the need for a fully released mentor. She appreciated that the mentor could move forward with teaching ideas, strategies, and plans that teachers would like to do but simply don't have time for.

...I feel like the mentor is the one that does everything. Because if you don't have the mentor, you're going to talk to your people and be like, "Yeah, let's do that!" But no one's ever going to plan it or do it because everyone's busy and stressed out, but the mentor, that's their job. So, I would keep the mentor.

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Mentor expertise and mentor training were perceived as foundational components of the mentor program.

Observations of Exemplary Instruction and Professional Development

Veteran teachers in this sample pointed to the efficacy of observation of exemplary instruction that includes professional development in conjunction with the mentor and coaching cycle. Observations and professional development occurred when teachers were provided with five paid substitute days each year that could be used to leave their classrooms and observe exemplary instruction. Observation days often combined professional development on a specific practice and observation of instruction in that practice. Ms. Beechwood felt that the observation combined with the debriefing time, which is part of the coaching cycle, were effective in demonstrating teaching practices to veteran teachers. Veteran teachers explained that they were released from their classrooms for the day. They went to a school site to receive professional development on the practice they were about to observe in the classroom. After the observations, the presenting teachers would often debrief with the observing teachers to answer any questions that they might have. Ms. Beechwood expressed that this debriefing time was particularly valuable. “I think that [the] observational piece of going into other people's classrooms is so important and having that briefing period...I love it! because I'm like, ‘Ooh, I didn't think about it like that.’”

Veteran teachers also discussed the effectiveness of mentors who have connections across grade levels, between multiple schools, and within districts. These connections allowed mentors to quickly refer to their list of teachers to schedule observations. The mentor or administrator often covered classrooms for teachers at a moment's notice. Ms. Maple explained

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that her mentor knew the importance of observing other teachers and kept a list of teachers in mind to recommend for observations.

I will say that my mentor had...teachers she knew to send me to like readily available.

She had a list in her mind of teachers that she could depend on or that she could send...teachers to for guidance, for examples...she just knew a few key people that were reliable...because she and the other sites, mentors...were working together, she could easily reach out and say, “Can you get me a first-grade teacher at your site?” There was a quick connection where to go to.

The support provided by the mentor covering the class, in conjunction with the quick connection to observe another classroom, was highly effective in meeting the needs of veteran teachers who often have very busy schedules. They spoke about applying the practices they observed with their own students right away.

Collaboration

Veteran teachers perceive in-depth collaboration with research-based discussions as meaningful to their experience in the mentor program. Veteran teachers felt that the collaboration within the mentor program was an even more meaningful experience than their grade level, school site collaboration. Ms. Elm stated, “the collaboration [in the mentor program] was at such a deep level...It was like lots of research also like researching what's right for kids, reading the latest, latest books and what's right for our students now.” Teachers expressed that participating in this depth of collaboration was worth their time and energy.

Prior to the mentor program, Ms. Chestnut experienced a division in her school and grade levels after being shamed by administration during a staff meeting. Through the program, Ms. Chestnut’s mentor created opportunities for collaboration throughout the grade levels, starting

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the healing process after years of grade-level isolation. They felt that this level of schoolwide collaboration across grades was advantageous in facilitating collaboration of effective teacher practices and also in healing old wounds of division. She shared, “we had a planning day, and...we could learn from each other...I think that brought us together. You want your school to work together and then not have that tension...you don't want even grade levels in isolation.”

For most participants, collaboration took place on a monthly basis with teachers across several grade levels supporting each other. While other participants collaborated on a weekly basis. Many mentors brought in books for a literature study that would benefit multiple grade levels. Ms. Needle explained with enthusiasm how the collaboration meeting was supportive of her practice.

...once a month...with the whole team... [the mentor] could go get literature for us to do book...analysis or...article analysis and we were getting such great ideas and all of us were...bouncing off of each other, helping each other realize what would work for that...third grade class that...kinder class...my sixth graders and...Oh, those were awesome!

At times, collaborative groups arranged across district collaboration to connect with teachers from different districts who had also participated in comprehensive formal mentoring. Ms. Elm's sentiments about collaborating across grade level were often shared by veteran teachers. She stated, “the collaboration...meeting with teachers across districts, that was so helpful too. ‘Cause very often we just get stuck at our school site.” Teachers perceived that observing other classrooms and collaborating across districts with other educators mitigated perceptions of teacher isolation and empowered and validated teachers.

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Improvement Suggestions

Four of the twenty teachers interviewed offered their thoughts on improvements to strengthen the mentor program. Three of these teachers expressed extremely positive experiences with the program and one veteran teacher expressed mixed feelings concerning his experience in the comprehensive mentor program.

Mr. Willow expressed that the program was beneficial to him and his students, but that he also had a couple of negative experiences within the mentor program. He felt that his colleagues and mentor in the comprehensive formal mentor program were overzealous about the pedagogy and mentors were not as sensitive as he thought they should be about delivering information in small doses. Overall, he believes that all strategies and instructional practices should be approached with humility; no one practice is a silver bullet. Mr. Willow explained his thoughts on mentoring veteran teachers. He stated,

If you tell them that this is the only way to teach them...the idea that you could bully people into your point of view, or that you could just kind of aggressively push that on people, especially if you don't have any actual authority over them is a huge, huge mistake. So please encourage people not to do that.

In addition, he felt that there was a subculture of teachers at his school who were fanatical about the practice and anything less than 100% fidelity to the practice was reported to the administration.

[There was] a kind of subculture of that sort of a group that really, really, really got into it a hundred percent...if they saw somebody doing multiplication tables on the board, they would go and tell the principal, "Hey, this person's doing multiplication"...Some people

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took it upon themselves to [report to administration], and it wasn't good. It wasn't good for staff relations.

Although his mentor was extremely knowledgeable, he advised that mentors should avoid what he called “info dumps.” He explained that his mentor would often give him an overload of information on the practice that was too much to digest in one sitting. He made a point to warn against this practice for future mentor programs. He said, “the other thing I would say is when...the mentor meets with people, one-on-one, don't do info dumps...making sure that they are giving people information in happy meals-sized portions...you have to really build it up one piece at a time like you would with kids.”

Mr. Tecoma, another veteran teacher, had a couple of suggestions for improving the program. He proposed that the name “mentor” could be changed to something that sounded less hierarchical that reflects more of a partnership approach. One participating district changed the term mentor to Teacher, Learner Partnership (TLP). Mr. Tecoma also suggested that the mentor could be chosen from outside the school site to increase expertise, as his mentor was learning alongside him.

...’cause we have a really experienced staff ...it was hard to see a former peer in a [the mentor position] ...because we were both going through this same training at the same time, it was like, well, you don't know any more than I do about this...I might consider not excluding somebody from outside coming in.

Ms. Aspen thought that observing exemplary instruction was beneficial, although the professional development that followed could be even more differentiated. Veteran teachers admitted they experience feelings of frustration and boredom when the professional development was not as differentiated as it could be.

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I know this sounds like super selfish, but like I don't want to sit in a PD [professional development] where I already know the information. Like to me, that's the quickest way to, I will tune you out...I don't want to sit there and listen to something for two hours if I already know it.

Summary of Section 2: Most Effective Aspects of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Overall, veteran teachers perceived that the comprehensive formal mentor program is best offered in its entirety. However, when asked to choose, veteran teachers unanimously reported the mentor and the coaching cycle as the most effective aspects of the program. Observation and professional development were also perceived as effective when offered in conjunction with the mentor and coaching cycle. There were a small number of suggestions for improvement, such as selecting a mentor outside the school campus to increase mentor expertise, changing the title of mentor to a less hierarchical title, warnings of overzealous mentors, and warnings of fidelity to one program as a *silver bullet*. Veteran teachers' experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor in the five most salient causes of stress and burnout are discussed in the next section.

Section 3: Mitigating Stress and Burnout

Research Question 3: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?

The findings that resulted from this research question are organized using the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) with respect to each sub-question of the most salient reasons for stress and burnout. First the presence of stress and burnout were identified. Table 7 shows that all veteran teachers (100%) in this sample reported feelings of stress and nearly all teachers (85%)

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expressed feelings of burnout. There are overlaps in categories in this table as many teachers reported experiencing both stress and burnout and others reported only experiencing stress.

Table 7

Participant Response to RQ3: Veteran Teachers who Experienced Stress and Burnout

Experienced Stress and Burnout			
Theme	N	%	Representative Quotes
Stress	20	100%	<i>I was burnt out because I was not seeing any change or anything positive. Ms. Elm.</i>
Burnout	17	85%	<i>We all have that point. You know...we would all like to think that no matter what the situation is, if we're experienced enough and we're strong enough that, that we have what it takes to persevere. But the reality is that we all have...a certain pain point that will, will sideline you from the job at least temporarily...if it goes on too far. Mr. Willow</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question.

Next, this section is organized with respect to each sub-question and to the subthemes that emerged. The findings of the causes of stress are presented first, followed by the veteran teachers' perceptions of support after participating in the comprehensive mentor program. For example, the findings regarding student stress are identified and discussed, followed by a discussion on the mitigating support for student stress. This format continues through all five salient reasons for stress and burnout. Table 8 mirrors the organization and discussion of section three. This table represents the five most salient causes of stress and burnout, the mitigating support, the percent of teachers who reported experiencing each category of stress and the representative quote.

Table 8

Participant Response to RQ3: Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Stress and Support

Conceptual Framework Themes	N	%	Representative Quote
Students			
Student stress	18	90%	<i>...just the massive number of students...really high-needs students... Ms. Sugarberry</i>

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Student support	20	100%	<i>...there was somebody to talk to somebody to bounce ideas off of when I got frustrated and the kids... weren't understanding something, I, it was somebody, another person than just like...a teacher in another classroom and she was able to come in and see their work and help me and help them in the same respect. Ms. Dove</i>
Autonomy			
Autonomy loss	15	75%	<i>You feel, you don't have control of the system and they're just telling you what to do. Yeah. You don't have autonomy... Ms. Chestnut</i>
Autonomy gain	20	100%	<i>if I didn't go through (mentor program), I would have probably looked for somebody else to tell me what to do. Ms. Acacia I think it gave me more autonomy to be a better practitioner. Ms. Magnolia</i>
Education Reform			
Education reform stress	19	95%	<i>...after 20 years in education, you seen so many things come and go, and everything gets presented that way at first. Right. So, when it was Open Court. Open Court was the answer for language arts and then it wasn't. And then...small groups were the answer and until they weren't. So then whole group instruction was much better. Till it wasn't. Mr. Willow.</i>
Education reform support	18	90%	<i>...planning with the mentor is what helped to deepen my understanding of this specific reform. Ms. Sugarberry</i>
Teacher Isolation			
Isolation stress	7	35%	<i>I really think that the stress and burnout has a lot to do with feeling...isolation, like not being able to collaborate with other [teachers]...because for me the stress and burnout was...I just felt like I didn't have...anyone I can bounce ideas off of. I had my other grade level teachers, but you know what? Sometimes you're not thinking the same way they're thinking. Ms. Lavender</i>
Isolation support	16	80%	<i>So, I believe that the program does for teachers or insulate them from feeling that sense of isolation because of the weekly check-ins from the mentor, because of the [mentor] meetings...and because of the professional development and the opportunities that are present for teachers to form meaningful connections with teachers. Ms. Sugarberry.</i>
Administration			
Administration stress	15	75%	<i>"Me boss, you not" was her saying...She walked around with a bull horn and yelled at kids and teachers. She even went into teachers' rooms with the Bullhorn to yell at the teacher in front of the kids...she raised, she had her chair up higher and then all the other chairs lower in our office. Ms. Cassia</i>
Administration support	11	55%	<i>...definitely helpful. At times she would talk to the principal on behalf of the staff on what she saw...she helped plan PDs. She was right there scheduling and planning things with the principal, helping her like mentoring the principal as well...So definitely. Ms. Dove</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to each sub-question of the five most salient causes of stress and burnout.

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Veteran teachers shared their perception of the five most salient causes of teacher stress and burnout. Participants were asked sub-questions about each of the five most salient causes of burnout: student stress, loss of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and administrative stress. Perceptions of stress in student behavior and academics (90%) and education reform (95%) were perceived as most stressful by veteran teachers in this sample. Loss of teacher autonomy and lack of administrative support were perceived as equally stressful by 75% of the participants. The lowest perceived source of stress was teacher isolation (35%). On the other hand, after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring, all the veteran teachers interviewed for this study (100%) reported increased support that mitigate feelings of student stress and lack of autonomy in the classroom. In addition, nearly all (90%) of veteran teachers reported increased support for adapting to various education reforms after participation in the comprehensive formal mentor program. Veteran teachers also reported a greater degree of collaboration and support that reduced perceived feelings of teacher isolation. Last, 55% of veteran teachers in this sample perceived that the mentor program supported teachers who had feelings of stress due to administration.

Student Stress

Student stress can lead teachers to experience emotional exhaustion and may cause burnout. Veteran teachers in this sample expressed that student stress was a primary factor in their own feelings of stress and burnout. The subthemes that emerged from student stress were challenging student behaviors, academically-at-risk students, and poverty.

Subtheme 1: Student Behavior

Mr. Willow, a K-4 teacher, discussed a painful situation involving a very challenging student in his classroom that resulted in him taking a leave of absence. He solemnly talked about

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coming to the realization of defeat by challenging student behaviors. His response speaks for itself.

We all have that point. You know, people like to say, I mean we would all like to think that no matter what the situation is, if we're experienced enough, and we're strong enough that, that we have what it takes to persevere. But the reality is that we all have...a certain pain point that will, will sideline you from the job at least temporarily...if it goes on too far...

Ms. Needle expressed shame in admitting that she felt defeated by certain student behaviors that continually interrupt classroom instruction. She felt the only hope would come from removing the child from her classroom.

I actually thought during the year, is there any way we can move this kid just for my sanity. And I don't say that often, but things that were draining just the constant negativity or the constant classroom interruptions that you just can't stop.

Ms. Maple, a K-1 teacher, started the interview rather reserved until asked if she experienced stress with students. Her stress level rose in the interview as she spoke of her students. She admitted that she felt, “so much, so much stress, I think, because I feel like the behavior is unpredictable and...I cannot necessarily plan for it or account for it.” Veteran teachers within this sample had at least a decade of experience in the classroom, yet still perceive student behavior as a primary stressor and continue to need support in this area.

Subtheme 2: Academically-at-Risk.

Veteran teachers expressed frustration around falling short of meeting the overwhelming academic needs of many students. Ms. Elm, a 3-5th grade teacher, discussed her frustration with not being effective with high-needs students at her former urban, Title 1 school. Her experiences

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with these feelings led to burnout and, eventually, teacher migration to another school. She stated, “so I was dealing with the most at-risk kids every day... ELL students...So I was feeling definite burnout cause I was like, I'm not seeing any change or anything positive.”

Ms. Cherry reported that she migrated out of a school with high concentrations of at-risk students. She felt overwhelmed and ineffective. She observed students entering second grade far below grade level and expressed that she was at a loss on how to close the achievement gap. She stated, “I worked seven days a week trying to help them...I didn't know what to do with these kids because...by second grade the holes were so big. I just, I, I just felt like I was failing them. I didn't know what to do with them at that point.”

Ms. Sugarberry, a teacher who taught in urban, Title 1 schools for 24 years, reflected on the stress and burnout that can come from working with high-needs students. She reported that she had a class of 30 students and discussed the daunting job of managing “just the massive number of students and...really high-needs students.” In addition to academically-at-risk students, veteran teachers expressed the challenges of working with populations of students who experienced high poverty.

Subtheme 3: Poverty

Several teachers expressed the heavy burden they carry when working with children in poverty. Teachers in urban, Title 1 settings talked about lying awake thinking about how they can better support these students. Ms. Rose, a 4th grade teacher, shared her heartbreaking experiences of worrying whether her students were getting enough food. Ms. Beechwood talked about how her low-income families were not able to be as involved in their child's education. As a result, children from these families often have few experiences outside of the home and school, due to limited means and their parents' demanding work schedules. She shared, “you have

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families that just are not involved...because they have to work or...they don't even have the means, some of these kids have not been to your basic aquarium or in certain places because their parents can't afford to take them.” Student behaviors, academically-at-risk students, and working with students in poverty pose emotional challenges for teachers. These challenging conditions are perceived as highly stressful.

Student Support

They saw me see them...Ms. Douglas

All participants expressed receiving student support during the comprehensive formal mentoring process (see Table 8). Getting to know the students, supporting challenging student behaviors, and supporting students academically were the subthemes that emerged from veteran teachers' experiences while participating in comprehensive mentoring. Participants expressed that these subfactors mitigated student-related stress. Moreover, veteran teachers spoke of additional positive outcomes for students in terms of motivation, engagement, and student autonomy. These positive outcomes were grouped together as a fourth subtheme.

Subtheme 1: Getting to Know Students

Getting to know the students through an asset lens rather than a deficit lens was a central theme in the professional development offered through the mentor program. Participants spoke about changing the way they related to students, seeing students as more than numbers, and getting to know students' individual strengths and weakness on a level that veteran teachers had not experienced prior to the comprehensive formal mentoring. They expressed having this experience of building on students' strengths rather than the red pen of negativity, showing students what they did wrong academically in the subject areas of math, reading, and writing. Ms. Douglas, who focused on writing, talked about seeing her students for the first time and how

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they responded. She saw their lives and struggles on the pages of their writing and looked at them for the first time as individuals, and they noticed the difference.

I definitely think that there was a shift in, in the connection with my students...I would say there's definitely a shift in that ...I got to know them better as well as I think they, they were able to, like, they saw me see them. Like I see you and I know you as a writer...

Ms. Acacia, who teaches kindergarten through sixth grade, described the support she received to become the teacher she always wanted to be: a teacher who is invested in getting to know and supporting her students because they deserve the best.

I always knew that as a teacher, that I wanted to have a great relationship with my students. I wanted to make sure that they knew that I was more than just their teacher...even with their families, like I wanted to make sure that I was present to them and not just a teacher for six and a half hours a day, and then nothing after that...

She went on to say that the mentor program helped her to reach these individual goals she held for herself as an educator.

I wanted to continue that after my mentorship too...after my mentorship, or even during, I just felt like I knew my students on a different academic level. Like I was so invested in making sure that I saw growth and I noticed growth and that I...really met their needs and saw what their strengths were. ... every single year I've had ...25 to 30 students and the time that I invested in each individual student during that mentorship was so different...that it...made our relationships, that much stronger...and I think that the parents saw that too. Like I was really invested in the kids.

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Ms. Acacia expressed that her participation in the mentor program was the driving force behind her journey. She believed that her students deserved the best educator and that the path to becoming the best educator would be to develop strong student-teacher relationships. She stated, “I knew that in the back of my mind I was doing this for them...I was doing this mentorship because they deserved the best educator that they could be in front of [them].”

Getting to know students on an individual and academic level was a reoccurring theme for veteran teachers as they discussed their comprehensive formal mentoring experiences. They reported decreased student-related stress and increased student support.

Subtheme 2: Academic Support

Participants expressed that their mentors supported students academically throughout the coaching cycle. During the planning and debrief meetings, mentors often collected and discussed data requested by the veteran teacher. For example, veteran teachers might let their mentors know that they are working on higher level questioning to meet students’ individual needs. Mentors might collect data on the types of questions teachers asked, along with student responses. Together, they might spend time analyzing the level of questioning in the most recent lessons and planning the level of questioning for the next lesson. Ms. Acacia talked about her planning time with her mentor.

[My mentor] and I would, would sit there and kind of just analyze my questions and thought about and think about, okay, well, what could you have asked if you didn't get the answer that you wanted? What question could you have asked instead?...what are your next steps for that kiddo? So, you were always looking to push that student...no matter what level they were.

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Ms. Sugarberry talked about the mentor support she received within the coaching cycle that helped her analyze student work, determine students' needs, and ascertain the next academic steps. She talked about how beneficial it was to have a partner in this work, where teachers usually have the best intentions but don't always have the time to analyze student work to inform the next teaching steps. She stated, "by analyzing student work with her [my mentor], that helped me know more... about what my kids know and how I can better teach them...before having a mentor... you have it in your mind to look at the work. Like you bring it home, but you don't have all of the time."

Again, mentors guided teachers to approach student work thorough an asset lens. Within the coaching cycle, teachers often analyzed student work for strengths and next steps. Ms. Maple mentioned that this work also helped improve student behavior.

...the mentorship that I received helped me...to see all the students' strengths and stop seeing all of their, whatever they do, all their work in a deficit-based way...the nature of this approach to teaching math...it's like very strength based to see what the students' strengths are. ...my [mentor] showed me that whatever the kid is doing in their math skills, that's a great starting point for this next step. So that helped me not to look at everything in like a deficit way...because a lot of the behavior... stems from something, maybe a frustration with the content.

Veteran teachers spoke of the positive outcomes of mentoring on student achievement outcomes. Ms. Cassia, who has always taught in urban, Title 1 school settings, talked about the increase in students' growth. "If people are looking at your scores, you look like you're not doing a good job. And you're like, man, you can't look at our scores. You have to look at how much they've raised, you know?"

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Ms. Elm, focused on writing in her journey and how beneficial the shift in practice was, particularly for second language learners. She perceived her students as achieving tremendous growth in the area of writing, a particular challenge for second language learners.

...it was incredible to see the growth that they made, like huge, huge growth. And it was in writing, which...that's such a hard subject...especially ELL students...I was just trying to meet them where they were at and then let's like celebrate that, like make these small steps to grow and then they just started to make huge, huge growth.

She also added that she perceived an overall increase in students' test scores and that raised her confidence in her teacher practice. She stated, "if we're going to look at test scores alone, my students are doing very well each year...with what I'm doing in the classroom. So, I think I have more confidence about doing what's right for kids."

Ms. Chestnut, who has worked in a Title 1, urban setting for 26 years, focused on reading in her mentoring journey. She echoed the sentiment of other veteran teachers, saying that she saw strong growth in her students' work and expressing that she will not return to her old way of teaching where she primarily used the teacher's guides.

It is looking at that growth and you're looking at the data so you can actually see, "Hey, this is making a difference in the reading and the writing." And then when you see, "Oh my gosh, look at how my kids are reading!" After the first year of reader's workshop...I can't do it another way now. I wouldn't change.

Veteran teachers also spoke of their students gaining a stronger and deeper understanding of the content. In math, number sense was often mentioned with a positive shift of an overall stronger understanding of how math works. Mr. Willow stated, "I would say that there is a...

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general trend in increased student understanding of how math works [schoolwide]...And I would say that I have seen that with my own students.”

Through the mentorship and using more effective practices, veteran teachers perceived that were supported in getting to know their students on an individual level, thereby increasing academic growth in their students.

Subtheme 3: Behavior Support

Mentors provided student behavior support in various ways through the coaching cycle, such as modeling or providing resources. Mentors were described as well informed of individual students and well connected with students and families across the grade levels. Ms. Lavender explained how helpful her mentor was in providing insight and resources for managing challenging student behaviors.

[My mentor] was really good about, like after he would be in my classroom, if something were to come up the next day, I would have something in my mailbox...Oh, I found this article, or did you consider trying this? And...not just...my technique in teaching, but with certain students...maybe this child needs this? So that helped a lot. I feel like [my mentor] kind of knew the families too...So I think that helped...[I] gained confidence in knowing what students needed and how to provide that for them.

In addition to support in getting to know students, supporting students’ academic growth and supporting student behaviors, veteran teachers expressed many positive outcomes for students that overlap or intersect with the themes on student support.

Subtheme 4: Additional Positive Student Outcomes

Veteran teachers discussed numerous positive outcomes as a result of their mentoring experience and shifting their teaching practice. Increased student motivation was a reoccurring

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theme with veteran teachers. Ms. Cassia perceived that her students organically spent more time reading and writing because they were enjoying it. She shared, “The main thing I noticed was the love of reading and the love of writing.” Ms. Chestnut echoed that sentiment saying, “I could see the full-on benefit, the amount of time that they would be, the motivation to read.” Ms. Cassia also had a similar experience. She states that student scores did go up, but the love of reading was what really stood out to her. Ms. Cassia stated,

our scores did go up, but they did not skyrocket...I think it was mainly because you cannot measure the love of reading. You cannot measure engagement, you can't, you can't measure those things. And I used to say that all the time, like...you can't just look at our test scores because they're English language learners and...they, they come from different backgrounds...

Veteran teachers shifted their practice from trying to control aspects of students' learning to acting as more of a facilitator, offering students choices in their own learning journey. Ms. Dove stated, “the kids are in control and we're helping to foster them and their growth and their learning.” Ms. Chestnut also reflected on increasing student choice in her classroom and her perception that it helped behavior.

The key difference I think, [is] really letting them go forward and make their choices. I'm not telling them what books to read, I'm letting them choose. And so I feel like giving students choice in the workshop, a choice of what they're going to write about how they're going to make their books, how they're going to read, that helps behavior.

Veteran teachers perceived that offering students this level of choice also increased student autonomy and individual growth. Ms. Nandina, a third-grade veteran teacher, shared that she experienced a higher level of student autonomy in her classroom and increased student

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empowerment. Students took more responsibility to make decisions about reading and decisions as authors. They decided what to read, what to write, and how they wanted to develop their writing. She stated,

We want them to be growing learners, right? We want them to self-regulate...their autonomy, right? Their ability to take in and create and be self-motivated, their ability to, to realize that this is my learning. I'm in charge of it. I get to empower it. I get to make the choices...I get to go down the road I want to go down and...build that growth mindset and have them reflect on their learning and not just telling them.

Teachers perceived many layers of support within the mentor program. They expressed support with getting to know students, support with achievement growth, support with student behavior, and many additional positive student outcomes.

Autonomy Loss

In the second area of stress and burnout for veteran teachers, loss of teacher autonomy was expressed by 75% of the participants. The themes that emerged from the loss of teacher autonomy were lack of professional respect, lack of choice, and a learned helplessness.

Perceived lack of respect in the profession was a reoccurring theme. Veteran teachers expressed feelings of defeat and grieving, being disrespected, taken advantage of, and not being true to their own principles. Ms. Chestnut, a K-2 teacher of 26 years, expressed her feelings of defeat as she was told to stop teaching reading in small groups and to instead have greater fidelity to a new reading program.

I felt like I had lost this control...[I was told] I can't do guided reading till they [students] know all their letters and they can blend. I disagree. But at that point I just kind of, I went along with it and then I felt like...this isn't right...I didn't like it. The structure, it was

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boring, and the reading comprehension was confusing, but I was told I had to do it and it got stressful.

Years later, the administration held her accountable for the low performance of the students who moved into the upper grades. Ms. Chestnut talked about the painful experience of being shamed in a staff meeting by the administrator. The administrator pointed out the schoolwide trend of decreased achievement of students who came up through K-3. Ms. Chestnut stated that she knew she was responsible as the kindergarten teacher, but she did not have the opportunity to teach small group reading and teach what she knew was right for students. She stated, “Like everyone's responsible for these kids. I'm like, of course, but you know what? You didn't give me a choice. And we did things that we were forced to do and yeah, it was stressful.”

Ms. Nandina spoke of principals mandating fidelity to ineffective programs that took away teacher autonomy and decreased creativity. She shared, “you have to have fidelity to the program...It really broke that ability to connect all the subjects...so definitely that was something that I felt like it stripped a lot of our creativity away. It stripped that ability to take ownership.”

Ms. Chestnut described how districts and school sites do a disservice to teachers and students by creating a dependency on the teacher's edition of textbooks and discouraging teachers to make professional decisions about their students' needs.

...learned helplessness...like if someone is being told, you got to do this and here's the guide and do this and do this and do this and the teachers are like, okay...I'm going to go to the guide...I feel like you just, you don't learn that you could control your curriculum. If they're controlling the curriculum and they don't give you a choice, then you're...not as involved...I'll just do what they tell me.

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The lack of professional respect, lack of choice, and learned helplessness were subthemes that emerged from the overall loss of autonomy expressed by most of the veteran teachers who were interviewed. Although 75% of teachers expressed a lack of teacher autonomy, all veteran teachers interviewed expressed an increase in autonomy after participating in the comprehensive formal mentoring.

Autonomy Gain

All veteran teachers who were interviewed reported that they experienced an increase in teacher autonomy following their involvement in the mentor program. When teachers were asked if they felt their sense of autonomy had increased after participating in the mentor program, their responses generated two common themes: autonomy in professional growth and overall ownership and confidence.

Autonomy in Professional Growth

Following their participation in the comprehensive formal mentoring, all interviewees reported perceived increased autonomy in the professional growth of their practice. They spoke of having greater autonomy in professional growth of their practice, particularly in the area of choice. Veteran teachers expressed overwhelmingly positive perceptions, thoughts, and experiences once their perceived autonomy increased.

Many teachers spoke about personal decision making regarding the subject and standard of their choice for their learning journey. Allowing veteran teachers to choose their area of growth in professional development was empowering. As part of the goal setting, teachers choose a subject and standard that they'd like to focus on in the mentoring experience. Ms. Needle and Ms. Elm shared how much it meant to them to be able to choose the area of growth, rather than being told what they are going to learn. Ms. Needle stated, "you get to personalize...

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just about every step of the way.” Ms. Elm felt rejuvenated by having autonomy of her own professional growth. She stated, “I think it's the freedom that we had choice. That's a big one...we got to choose where we want or in what area of education, we need to grow in...knowing, like I kind of could control this of how I wanted to grow, that felt rejuvenating.”

Ms. Acacia spoke about experiencing greater autonomy in the classroom and said she experienced a large-scale change in how she sought advice from others on decisions about teaching practices in her classroom. She shared, “So, I think autonomy wise, like I felt very free to do whatever my students needed from me...if I didn't go through [the mentor program], I would have probably looked for somebody else to tell me what to do.”

Veteran teachers repeatedly expressed a shift toward exercising their own judgment, beginning with choosing an area of professional growth and then exercising greater decision making in their classroom practices. Veteran teachers made connections between the power to make sound decisions and their ability to effectively meet the needs of their students. Ms. Cassia states,

So, everything about [the mentoring program] and even common core [CCSS], I feel like gave me autonomy because for the first time I could choose how I was going to do it...I had choice, not only did the kids have choice, but I had choice and that was huge for me.

Choice of professional growth and choice of pedagogy in the classroom were perceived as increasing feelings of teacher autonomy. Veteran teachers also expressed feeling increased ownership and confidence in their pedagogy and the efficacy of their practice.

Ownership and Confidence

In an atmosphere of professional respect during their participation in the mentor program, veteran teachers also reported an increase in a sense of ownership and confidence. They reported

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that they owned their practice and were confident that they would not go back to what they perceived as ineffective in comparison. Ms. Chestnut shared,

I think...[the mentor program] treated us like professionals...[It was empowering] I'm like, no, I'm not going back. If they tell me I have to do something or do a scripted program that I don't agree with, I'm not! ... I just don't feel right about following that. I feel more confident as a teacher that I can control what I'm teaching, 'cause I know best practice. So, I felt like it definitely helped with the burnout and the frustration...

Teachers reported greater confidence and ability to defend their practice. Ms. Elm stated, "I think I have more confidence about doing what's right for kids." Ms. Sugarberry also stated, "I feel as if the program sharpened the saw, like it supported my proficiency. Yes, absolutely. Definitely. I became a stronger teacher." Mr. Tecoma talked about being able to defend his practice in stating, "and it's like, you can absolutely defend why you're doing this."

Autonomy, ownership, and increased confidence were reported outcomes for veteran teachers who experienced comprehensive formal mentoring. They perceived an increase in their teacher autonomy and their ability confidently defend the efficacy of their pedagogy.

Ed Reform Stress

Nearly all of the veteran teachers (95%) in this sample perceived education reform as stressful. Overall, the perceptions that teachers are not included in education reform decision making chips away at autonomy and causes additional stress. The subthemes related to education reform stress are impact of the pendulum swing, inadequate professional development for education reform, and ineffective reform.

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Impact of the Pendulum Swing

Veteran teachers spoke at length about the education reforms that have come and gone, and their varying levels of efficacy. The perception of education reform as a seemingly endless swinging pendulum can be heard in the tone and exhaustion in the voices of veteran teachers. Mr. Willow expressed that his experience with the pendulum of education reform left him feeling jaded.

...after 20 years in education, you see so many things come and go, and everything gets presented that way at first. Right. So, when it was Open Court. Open Court was the answer for language arts and then it wasn't. And then...small groups were the answer and until they weren't. So then whole group instruction was much better. 'Till it wasn't.

Ms. Elm pointed out that the constant change left her with feelings of insecurity; that she was never good at any one practice.

...one year the focus was we're going to look at essential standards. Then the next year it's like, Oh, now we're going to change our focus. Now we're going to be having a new slogan or something...there were lots of changes and I could never get really good at something because our focus kept changing. So, yes, I did feel like there was burnout.

Even when teachers do perceive education reform as effective, an addition layer of support in the form of adequate professional development is still needed. Although most teachers agree with the depth and rigor of the CCSS education reform, the way the reform was adopted by many districts and rolled out with inadequate professional development was less than ideal. Ms. Dove spoke about her experience when the CCSS were adopted.

Common Core was stressful... It just caused...of stress...because...principals didn't really know what they were supposed to be doing...The district kept thinking they were

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giving us trainings and they were less than trainings. They were horrible, but it was a lot of PDs that were not meaningful and not helpful...Our district has a bad tendency of thinking they're giving us PDs and a lot of times they're sales pitches and we don't learn anything, and we have to learn everything on our own and figure things out on our own.

The perceived constant pendulum swing of education reform was a common thread of concern for the veteran teachers in this sample. Participants expressed feelings frustration which led to feelings of apathy regarding the lack of control of cycles of implementing, discontinuing and reimplemented education reforms in teacher practices. For example, many teachers experienced the policies of individual, differentiated instruction, followed by a sage on the stage whole class instruction, only to return to individual, differentiated instruction, once again.

Ineffective Education Reform

Ms. Chestnut discussed an experience with education reform that she intuitively knew was not beneficial for the children but was pushed on her from the top down.

...one of the things that really affected me was when we did Open Court [reading program] ... and it was like pushed on you. Like at first it was like the whole language and I loved like teaching reading, and it was balanced literacy...then we had the shift...there was all this pressure to be on the same lesson every day and...they would come around our school...like, you had to be on the same lesson.

Veteran teachers reported that the expectation of being on the same page as the teacher next door was illogical, considering the fact that realistic classrooms reflect a range of student capabilities. Pushing programs from the top down was perceived as an ineffective way to implement education reform.

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Ed Reform Support

Nearly all veteran teachers interviewed (90%) perceived the comprehensive formal mentor program as a support for various education reforms. Teachers who participated in the comprehensive mentor program when CCSS was implemented, discussed the value of the support they received through the mentor program when the new standards and practices were being adopted. Additionally, teachers discussed mentor actions within the coaching cycle that supported the adoption of the CCSS including planning, modeling, coteaching and reflective feedback.

Ms. Lavender perceived that her mentor's support guided her into more meaningful planning of the types of deeper level questions that aligned with CCSS. She shared, "definitely through like the pedagogy...we were doing a lot of work on questioning with students...that relates to the standards... So, I feel like learning that specific pedagogy did help with the common core, because we could see how it related to the standards."

Ms. Magnolia, formerly a fifth-grade teacher who was working in an urban, Title 1 school, and who is currently working as a coach in an urban district, spoke of the support she received from the mentor program that aligned her practice in mathematics using the Standards for Mathematical Practice, SMP. This support to align her practice with the SMPs within the CCSS lessened the learning gaps that had resulted from the perceived less-than-adequate district trainings.

...I didn't even know about the SMPs...I remember [my mentor] would say...we're going to need to pick an SMP. I'm like what? ... [my mentor] went through it together and it started to make more sense... our district... We really haven't done any follow through after that initial Common Core training when it first came out.

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Ms. Chestnut felt that the mentor program guided teachers to align their teacher practices with the CCSS. Ms. Chestnut, who explored writing workshop, stated that the mentor program “would train us and show us how writing workshop, reading workshop, any training you went to, how it aligned with Common Core Standards. So, I think it definitely had helped with the stress [from the CCSS reform].” In addition to supporting perceived effective education reforms, veteran teachers reported that the mentor program also supported them in navigating through education reforms that they perceived as ineffective and yet still mandatory.

Support with Ineffective Reforms

The mentor program supported teachers as they weeded through education reforms that teachers are asked to adopt but perceive to be ineffective. Mentors helped to prioritize effective and required areas and weed out ineffective areas. Ms. Nandina shared that her mentor would ask, “What is the most effective part of this program? What can we keep of this program?” Ms. Maple described that her mentor not only supported the current approach she was coaching teachers to implement, but when the district adopted a new curriculum, she also took the time to thoroughly learn the new material. After learning the new curriculum, she then could synthesize the two approaches and guide teachers through what was effective and required. In this way, the mentor saved teachers a great deal of their limited time. Ms. Maple shared,

I think the first thing that comes to mind, she herself [my mentor]...became an expert.

She already was an expert with...the CGI [Cognitively Guided Instruction] approach to math. And then when this new math curriculum...was adopted, she quickly became really familiar with practically all of the...activities across the grade. So that helps because as it was being rolled out and teachers were, sort of like choosing a camp, she was able to, like, offer up different kinds of menus of how to blend those...So in other words, we, I

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trusted her competency. I trusted her knowledge because she took that time to learn all of it, both sides, both camps, both approaches, and then just offer, offer different ways to still stay comfortable with your teaching method and your style. But then she would still say like, don't forget, like she'd sort of blend both of them so that we weren't having to choose or being upset. She just created all the differentiated options for teachers.

Mentors who took the time to research and become knowledgeable about all education reforms, then synthesize the material for teachers, were valued. This decreased stress, saved precious time, and may have decreased conflict within staff and between staff and administration.

Ms. Dove expressed that the modeling, observing, and debriefing were also a tremendous support to show her the teaching practice, allow her to try things out, and then receive feedback.

Ms. Dove stated,

...her [the mentor] teaching and me watching...her ...modeling it with my class, we would plan it. She would talk about what we were going to do and then she would do the whole lesson and I would sit and observe. I could take notes, I could interact as I felt more comfortable and as it went along, but she was the one who was doing the teaching and the modeling so that I could actually see it with real children. So that was extremely helpful. And at the beginning...I was a little needy and I kept saying, okay, I'm trying something new, come in and help me. And she was very willing and always there to help. And then [she] kind of pushed me to, you can do this...And that was really helpful too, because it's new and it's scary and you don't want to do something wrong...So that was super helpful. The modeling was amazing.

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Veteran teachers expressed that they felt supported through various education reforms after receiving comprehensive formal mentoring. The fully released mentor engaged in helpful practices, such as conducting research, teaching, modeling, coteaching, planning, observing, and providing feedback. This was perceived as a cycle of supporting veteran teachers as they navigate the various reforms they are required to implement.

Isolation Stress

The frequency of perceived isolation stress was described as less prevalent than the other salient causes for stress and burnout, with 35% of veteran teachers reportedly experiencing teacher isolation. Veteran teachers experienced isolation stress due to being new to a school, having a different pedagogical philosophy than their colleagues, experiencing the day-to-day routine of being with children, intra-school conflict, and being at schools with different track systems.

Often, teachers may experience teacher isolation when they are new to a school or grade level. Ms. Dove was in this exact scenario and said the isolation she felt made it a very difficult year for her. She related the feelings to those she had as a novice teacher. She states, “definitely, definitely...it was rough. All three of the other ladies had been together for a long time...so it was really stressful. Cause I was basically alone and had to...make new friends and things like that. And not everybody was welcoming. Yeah, that was rough.”

Ms. Lavender said she had feelings of isolation, even within in her collaborative grade level planning, due to not sharing the same pedagogical philosophy as her colleagues.

I really think that the stress and burnout has a lot to do with feeling...teacher isolation, like not being able to collaborate with others...[for] me the stress and burnout was...I just felt like...I didn't have anyone I can bounce ideas off of. I had my other grade level

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teachers, but you know what? Sometimes you're not thinking the same way they're thinking.

Ms. Chestnut experienced teacher isolation when an administrator created competition between teachers and grade levels.

...we had that principal who came in and said, “look at our scores, look how awful they are and it's everyone's responsibility because these kids were here in kindergarten and they were here in first grade.” At that moment, it had this tension between upper and lower, grade. It really built a tension at our school that lasted a good few years...

Ms. Lavender expressed how the day-to-day isolation of being with children was supported by having a mentor in the classroom with her. She stated, “I feel like it's hard to be the only adult in a classroom of littles. Like I need another adult in there with me.”

Teachers spoke of increased teacher isolation due to scheduling systems implemented as an attempted solution for high enrollment and insufficient physical classrooms; teachers were scheduling in a rotation that moved them on and off campus throughout the school year. Ms. Acacia shared, “I felt like I was isolated...because we were on the track system, so...somebody was going off as I was going on and...there was not very much collaboration happening because of that system.”

These were the common themes in teachers’ perceptions of teacher isolation. The frequency of perceived isolation stress was less prevalent when compared to the other salient causes for stress and burnout. However, participants did report that they experienced stress due to feelings of isolation related to being new to a school, having a different pedagogical philosophy, the day-to-day routine of being with children, inner school conflict, and track

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systems. In addition, participants also reported experiencing isolation support from the comprehensive formal mentor program.

Isolation Support

Although only seven teachers (35%) expressed that teacher isolation was a concern, when veteran teachers began talking about their experiences in the comprehensive formal mentoring program, more feelings of isolation support were uncovered. Most veteran teachers (80%) perceived isolation support throughout the comprehensive mentor program. They pointed to collaboration with the mentor within the coaching cycle as a factor that reduced feelings of isolation. Teachers also expressed reduced feelings of isolation as a result of their participation in various levels of collaboration across grade levels and across districts.

Ms. Beechwood stated, “I never felt alone, which was something that I truly to this day appreciate beyond words because it was, it was hard at times...but I did not feel that I would drown. I felt that I was being supported and that someone had my back.” Ms. Cassia also explained how she did not feel alone when she collaborated with her mentor and colleagues in reading workshop practices. “I had [my mentor] to help me learn those things and I wasn't on my own. My cohort, it was really nice because I had, I think, two or three others that were doing reading workshop as well. So, we can learn from each other.”

Veteran teachers expressed that many aspects of the mentor program provided support that insulated teachers from feelings of isolation. Collaborating with their mentor, collaborating with colleagues, and collaborating with teachers at other school sites all decreased feelings of isolation. Ms. Sugarberry shared,

...you don't always necessarily have teachers on your team who you respect and get along with. Right? For a variety of reasons. So, I believe that what the program does for

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teachers is insulate them from feeling that sense of isolation because of the weekly check ins from the mentor, because of the [collaboration] meetings, like once every whatever number of weeks and because of the professional development and the opportunities that are present for teachers to form meaningful connections with [other] teachers.

When veteran teachers began talking about their experiences in the comprehensive formal mentoring program, feelings of isolation support surfaced. Most veteran teachers perceived that collaborating with the mentor, within the coaching cycle, and participating in various levels of collaboration across grade levels and across districts were valuable forms of support for their feelings of teacher isolation.

Administration Stress

Me boss, you not...Ms. Cassia

Lack of support from administration was perceived as stressful by 75% of the teachers in this sample. When they discussed their administrative-related stress, veteran teachers reported stress they attributed to perceived misuse of authority, inexperienced administration, micromanaging behaviors, and lack of support for instructional practices.

Ms. Cassia shared shocking experiences that she felt were a clear example of misuse of authority involving her administrator in an urban, Title 1 school.

She [the principal] walked around with a bullhorn and yelled at kids and teachers. She even went into teachers' rooms with the bullhorn to yell at the teacher in front of the kids...She would leave these notes in your box that would either say, "See me at your convenience or see me right now" ...you got that note and you're just like panicky...I got that [note] "See me when I'm ready"...I tried for three weeks and she kept going, "not ready. I'm not ready to talk to you. I'm not ready." Finally...three weeks later, she was

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finally ready to talk to me about how I...disrespected her in front of other people and that she is the authority. Oh, "Me boss, you not" was her saying. she raised, she had her chair up higher and then [had] all the other chairs lowered in her office. So, when she had meetings with parents or teachers or anything, she was up higher...

In addition to perceived misuse of authority, veteran teachers spoke of stress as a result of perceived controlling or micromanagement administrators. Ms. Douglas talked about the stress, burnout, and attrition she felt stemmed from a perceived micromanaging administrator. Out of a staff of 27 teachers, she said 22 of them asked for a transfer that year. She was hesitant to discuss details, saying that the staff and community were wonderful. She perceived her administrator's behavior as unethical and controlling, and it motivated her to leave her urban, Title 1 school.

...I had such a crazy administrator...[I] probably wouldn't have left...but she was so unethical, and she did go after so many other people that I just couldn't see myself [staying]...truly, the community, the, the teachers were all wonderful. The year that I left, we had 22, I think there was...27 teachers and 22 asked for a transfer, if that just tells you anything... She was pretty crazy though...

Unfortunately, the majority of teachers expressed that throughout the duration of their careers, they have experienced very few administrators that they respect as educational leaders. Ms. Cherry, a veteran teacher of 24 years who worked at both urban and suburban schools stated, "I've had...one administrator in 23 years who I really respect." Ms. Dove, a veteran teacher of 24 years who taught in both urban and suburban schools, also had a great deal to say about her experience with unsupportive administrators.

...in my teaching career... I'd say I've had one [administrator] who was amazing and helpful and supportive. I've had many who stabbed me in the back. I've had many who

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don't tell us the truth, who...favor the parents...who are not supportive when parents come to them with concerns, who don't know how to communicate properly...I don't think I'm alone on the, any of these things...principals, aren't always the best communicators and don't always know what's going on. And even though they should be there for the teachers, as well as the students, a lot of times that doesn't happen. So, the lack of support has been a big problem with them.

Ms. Dove discussed the stress she and her colleagues experienced due to ongoing new administration at her school site. She perceived her school as a training ground because they had many first-year administrators with either no experience, or their only experience in an administrative role was at a middle or secondary school.

Most of the...principals, we have been their first. A lot of them were APs [assistant principals], which is extremely difficult and different than being the one in charge...they have no principal experience, or they've come from a middle school and we're an elementary school, which is very different.

As a component of the comprehensive mentor program, administrators are expected to support the program without micromanaging the teachers. A more supportive and hands-off administrator gives the teachers the opportunity to take risks and grow in a safe environment. Ms. Douglas shared her perceptions of how difficult it was for her administrator to have a hands-off approach.

...she [the principal] is definitely a micromanager and she likes the control and the power. So, I don't think she appreciated the lack of it, she wasn't... hands-off. They're not supposed to be part of any of it. And I don't think she appreciated that. I wouldn't say she,

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she made it horrible for me, but...I don't think she appreciated the fact that principals were not a part of the equation.

Veteran teachers perceived the lack of support from administration as stressful, attributing the stress to perceived misuse of authority, inexperienced administration, micromanaging behaviors, and lack of support with instructional practices.

Administration Support

Percentages of teacher identifying support for administrative stress contrasted with those for isolation stress and support, such that fewer teachers reported isolation stress (35%), but more teachers (80%) reported receiving support for feelings of isolation. More teachers reported administration stress (75%) and fewer teachers (55%) perceived the mentor program as support for administration stress. The veteran teachers who did experience support pointed to administrative support for teacher practices and mentors advocating for teachers with administration.

Support in Pedagogy

Administrators who received training in how to support teachers with developing and refining their practice were appreciated by veteran teachers and perceived as providing a high level of administrative support. Moving into this deeper relationship was also perceived as building stronger foundations for teacher autonomy. Ms. Sugarberry described her relationship with her administrator as strong and said that the administrator was someone she respected, but she also perceived that the relationship was strengthened by the support from the mentor program. She states,

I have a lot of respect for her and she's very smart, but when you really understand what the teacher is doing, then that changes the way you can talk with a teacher about her

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work. So, yes, I would say as a result of the professional development that my administrator...received, that enabled us to connect in a deeper way with regard to teaching and learning.

When Ms. Needle's mentorship brought more engagement and love of reading to her students, her administrator was in support of her practice. She encouraged and provided space for Ms. Needle to take risks.

So, there was an excitement and there was validation from the admin saying, yes, this is good. Keep going, keep trying things. You're not exactly on target, but...trying things in the classroom.... doing new procedures and strategies and trying to really explore what's possible, there was absolutely support for that...

Mr. Cedar, a transitional kindergarten teacher in an urban, Title 1 school, discussed feeling supported by his administrator while he was in the mentor program. He reported that he gained confidence that he did not have with previous administrators. He likens these new feeling of confidence to "gold" and said he no longer experienced anxiety when an administrator came into his classroom to observe his instruction. He stated, "I felt a lot of support from him...my confidence level was high. I wasn't intimidated when an administrator walked in anymore. I mean, that, that to me was gold right there."

Many teachers perceived an improved relationship with their administrator after participating in the comprehensive mentor program. When they were supported by their administrator, they experienced less intimidation and focused more on effective pedagogical practices.

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Mentor Advocating

When there was a lack of administrative support, several veteran teachers perceived that the mentor made efforts to advocate for teachers. Ms. Dove shared her experience with a mentor who advocated for the staff of teachers, and even offered support for the administrator. She stated, “at times she would talk to the principal on behalf of the staff on what she saw...she helped plan PDs. She was right there scheduling and planning things with the principal, helping her like mentoring the principal as well...because...[the] principal needed help too.”

Teachers shared experiences where the mentors also mentored teachers to take the next step in their professional career. One mentor even encouraged a veteran teacher to pursue the GATE certification, thus preventing the teacher from being displaced. Ms. Rose shared that the main reason she has her GATE certification is due to the support and encouragement she received from her mentor.

She's like...I want you to ...get yourself into the GATE program...because I see that this is going to be something very useful. I know you don't see it now, but...they're going to...lay off teachers...if you have a GATE credential, you're going to be fine. And I'm like, okay. And guess what? I finished this past year.

The majority of teachers in this study, experienced stress from each of the most salient areas of stress and burnout: student stress, education reform, loss of teacher autonomy, and administration stress. Fewer veteran teachers reporting perceived teacher isolation. After participating in comprehensive formal mentoring, all veteran teachers reported support for student stress and perceived an increase in autonomy. They experienced support for various education reforms after participating in the mentor program and experienced a high degree of collaboration that they perceived as reducing feelings of teacher isolation. Last, fewer veteran

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teachers perceive the mentor program as a mitigating factor for administrative stress, but those who did, felt the mentor played a strong role in supporting veteran teachers and even advocating for them.

Summary of Section 3: Mitigating Stress and Burnout

In summary, this section covered the findings for research question number three on teachers' perceptions of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor the five most salient causes of stress and burnout. In this study, all veteran teachers (100%) experienced stress and the majority of veteran teachers (85%) experienced burnout. Veteran teachers also perceived the comprehensive formal mentor program as an effective support for mitigating perceived student stress, autonomy loss, and education reform stress. Getting to know the students on an individual and academic level was perceived as one of the most transformative shifts in veteran teachers' pedagogy. Getting to know students was often reported as an epiphany that rejuvenated their teacher practice.

Teacher isolation was the least reported form of perceived stress (35%) and yet, 80% of veteran teachers reported isolation support as a result of participating in the variety of collaboration opportunities offered in the comprehensive formal mentor program (i.e., the coaching cycle, inquiry collaborative groups after school, and professional development). It is also important to note that 75% of veteran teachers reported experiencing stress and burnout due to lack of administrative support. However, not all participants expressed adequate support to mitigate administrative stress (55%). Administrative support was the lowest perceived support when compared to the other four areas. It is clear that comprehensive formal mentoring did not adequately mitigate perceived administrative stress. With the lack of administrative support, teacher migration may be too difficult to mitigate.

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Section 4: Mitigating Teacher Attrition

Research Question 4: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?

When veteran teachers were asked if they have considered leaving their school, their district, taking an early retirement, or leaving the teaching profession all together, many teachers' responses were, "Yes! All of the above!" Nearly all veteran teachers expressed a strong desire to leave their school, leave their district, take an early retirement, or leave the profession all together, prior to participating in comprehensive formal mentoring (see Table 9). However, all veteran teachers in this sample stated that they do not have plans to carry out those inclinations of taking an early retirement or leaving mid-career.

Table 9

Participant Response to RQ4: Participants Considered Leaving the School, District, or the Profession

Considering Attrition Prior to Comprehensive Formal Mentoring	N	%	Representative Quotes
Expressed a desire to leave their school, district, retire early or leave the profession altogether	20	100%	<i>100%. I was ready to go...So, I wanted to leave the district. I wanted to leave my school and I wanted to take an early retirement. And I wasn't sure if leaving the school and district meant like doing a different job altogether, but I was open to that, I was open to just do something else. Ms. Sugarberry, 24 years in urban, Title I settings.</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question.

After receiving comprehensive formal mentoring, there were no teachers in this sample who retired early or left mid-career. However, 25% of the veteran teachers were promoted into leadership positions after receiving comprehensive formal mentoring. These five teachers accepted either a reading specialist or district coaching position. One veteran teacher left her

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school after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring, with a specific aim of working with an administrator who shared a similar pedagogical philosophy.

In regard to research question number four, veteran teachers' thoughts on mid-career attrition and early retirement are discussed first, followed by perceptions of the support they received through the comprehensive formal mentoring program that may have mitigated mid-career attrition and early retirement. The findings on teacher migration are discussed in research question number five as there are overlaps between veteran teachers' perceptions of teacher migration and perceptions of teaching in urban, Title 1 school settings. Therefore, the discussion on teacher migration was coupled with veteran teachers' perceptions on teaching in urban settings. Veteran teacher retention and migration after experiencing comprehensive formal mentor, percent of teachers' response, and representative quote can be found in Table 10.

Table 10

Participant Response to RQ4: Teacher Retention and Migration After Experiencing Formal Mentoring

After Receiving Formal Mentoring	N	%	Representative Quotes
Early Retirement			
Teachers who reported they plan to stay to full retirement	20	100%	<i>...so, participating in [the mentor program] definitely shifted my ideas about how much longer I can keep working...I definitely did feel like I can keep going. I can keep going awhile longer. Ms. Sugarberry, 24 years at Title 1 Schools.</i>
Mid-Career			
Teachers who did not leave mid-career	20	100%	<i>I cannot imagine this journey without [the mentor program]... I don't know where I would be right now if I didn't have that. And...I wonder if I would have thought, Hey, it is time to jump ship. Ms. Needle, 28 years at suburban, Title 1 School.</i>
Teacher Migration			
Left for a leadership position in district as reading specialist or coach This movement is referred to as <i>upward mobility</i> (Grissom et al. 2016).	5	25%	<i>I feel like I grew and I'm able to be in this position now because I can speak from the experience I went through. I feel like I can coach better. Ms. Magnolia</i>

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Left to work for an administrator with the same philosophy of pedagogy	1	5%	<i>I need to go somewhere where I'm going to be encouraged to continue to grow... I started researching myself like where, what school can I go to where an administrator has the same vision and methodology... that I have... Ms. Elm</i>
Teacher Retention			
Teacher retention (to date) after experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring	14	70%	<i>I wasn't intimidated when an administrator walked in anymore....I mean, that, that to me was gold right there. I'm not leaving the school...I'll outlive that principal. Mr. Cedar, 26 years at urban, Title I schools.</i>
	N=20		

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question.

Mid-Career and Early Retirement

The reported desire to leave mid-career or retire early is a reoccurring theme throughout interviews with this sample of the veteran teachers. Nearly all (95%) of teachers expressed a desire to leave mid-career or retire early due to stress and burnout. Ms. Dove expressed that ineffective programs and the lack of autonomy cause teachers to seriously consider early retirement. When Ms. Dove was asked if she had considered leaving her school, district, taking an early retirement, or leaving the teaching profession all together, she adamantly responded,

Yes. A lot! All the time! Even before COVID happened. It's just become very stressful and there's more and more put upon the teacher...every year it seems like there's just more busy work and more things that we have to do...we're not there for the kids as much as we want it to be...we can't just teach and do what we know is best and what we need to get done. Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah. All the time.

Ms. Needle explained that she entered education with no knowledge of pensions and retirement programs, only to realize that even though stress and burnout made her want to leave, she could not retire at 53. She shared, “cause when I started at age 23...nobody told me, ‘Hey,

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you shouldn't start teaching at 23... 'Cause... you put your 30 years in, you're at 53. That's not retirement age in any place.'”

All veteran teachers in this sample expressed a desire to leave mid-career or retire early due to teacher stress and burnout, prior to participating in comprehensive formal mentoring. However, many teachers mentioned that the support they felt after receiving comprehensive formal mentoring increased their stamina to remain in the profession longer. None of the teachers in this sample left mid-career and all reported that they plan to remain in teaching until full retirement.

Attrition support

Several veteran teachers perceived the mentor support as helping them to stay in the profession a bit longer. When asked if she considered taking an early retirement, Ms. Sugarberry said that she was strongly considering it. However, she did express that the mentor program had helped her to stay a bit longer.

100%. I was ready to go... So I wanted to leave the district. I wanted to leave my school and I wanted to take an early retirement... I wasn't sure if leaving the school and district meant like doing a different job altogether, but I was open to that. I just wanted to do something else... so participating in [the mentor program] definitely shifted my ideas about how much longer I can keep working... I definitely did feel like I can keep going. I can keep going awhile longer.

Ms. Needle said, “I cannot imagine this journey without [the mentor program]... I don't know where I would be right now if I didn't have that... I wonder if I would have thought, Hey, it is time to jump ship.” Ms. Cassia shared that the program made it easier to remain in the teaching profession.

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I don't think so...financially, I probably would have had to do it anyway, but I definitely wouldn't have enjoyed it. I was getting so burned out on that old school teaching...So, no, it [the mentor program] made it easier to stay.

Although most teachers perceived the comprehensive mentor program as support that helped them remain in the teaching profession, most veteran teachers also spoke of salaries and pensions as a strong reason for staying. Ms. Sugarberry stated, “I couldn't go anywhere else and make the same amount of dollars.” Ms. Chestnut said, “I would never leave [district] just because I put so many years in and I would probably [create problems] with my retirement.”

Summary of Section 4: Teacher Attrition and Retention

To summarize the findings for this section on mitigating attrition, participants often expressed a desire to leave their school, leave their district, retire early or leave the profession altogether. Many teachers perceived the mentor program as mitigating those feelings of stress and burnout leading to considerations of attrition. However, compensation (e.g., salary and pension) were also expressed as strong reasons why they would not give in to thoughts of leaving.

Section 5: Experiences in Urban, Title 1 School Settings

Research Question 5: In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools?

Nearly all of the participants in this study taught in Title 1 schools prior to, or during, their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring. Veteran teachers drew on their experiences, either at their former or current school setting, to offer firsthand perspectives of teaching in urban environments. Urban, Title 1 school environments are characterized by high

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concentrations of poverty, second language learners, and high-needs students, compared to non-Title 1 school environments with lower concentrations of poverty and high-needs students. Table 11 represents participant demographics, retention, and migration in Title 1 school settings.

Nearly all (90%) of participants shared that they taught at a Title 1 school throughout their teaching career. Two veteran teachers only taught at non-Title 1 schools. Six teachers (30%) experienced teacher migration out of urban, Title 1 school settings prior to taking part in the comprehensive mentor program. Twelve teachers (60%) were teaching in urban, Title 1 settings during their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring. Fourteen teachers (70%) remained at their school after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring. Six teachers did migrate out of their Title 1 school setting after participating in the mentor program. However, five of those teachers (25%) left urban, Title 1 school settings for a leadership position with the district, such as reading specialist or district coach. One veteran teacher reported an overwhelmingly positive experience in the comprehensive formal mentor program; however, after her administrator left her school, she transferred to another Title 1 school to work with an administrator whose philosophy of pedagogy was closer to her own. The last six teachers (30%) migrated out of their Title 1 school setting prior to participating in the comprehensive mentor program. For the teachers who migrated out of their Title 1 schools setting, the mentor program was not offered at their former school or district so it is difficult to know if the program would have prevented them from migrating away from what they perceived as challenging working conditions.

Table 11

RQ5: Demographics, Retention, and Migration in Title 1 School Settings

Categories	N	%
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Characteristics of Teachers in Relation to Working at Title 1 Schools		
Taught at Title 1 schools throughout their careers	18	90%
Only taught at non-Title 1 schools	2	10%
Location During Mentorship		
Taught at Title 1 schools during their mentorship	12	60%
Taught at non-Title 1 schools during their mentorship	8	40%
Teacher Retention		
Remained at their school (to date) after experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring	14	70%
Teacher Migration		
Upward mobility, teachers left urban, Title 1 schools for district leadership positions as a reading specialist or coach	5	25%
Migrated to another Title 1 school after experiencing formal mentoring to work for an administrator aligned with her pedagogy	1	5%
Teacher Migration Prior to Comprehensive Formal Mentoring		
Prior to comprehensive formal mentoring, teachers migrated away from Title 1 school to non-Title 1 school settings	6	30%
	N=20	

Note: N refers to the number of participants who responded to this research question however, there is also overlap with participants' responses across categories.

Both migrating teachers and teachers who remained at their Title 1 school shared their experiences with the many challenges of teaching at Title 1 schools in urban settings. The themes that emerged from veteran teachers' experience in urban, Title 1 settings were: exhausted and overwhelmed, feeling unappreciated, and challenging working conditions with low performing students and lack of parent involvement. Last, veteran teachers also expressed their perceptions of supports that may mitigate teacher migration in this challenging working environment.

Theme 1: Exhausted & Overwhelmed

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Veteran teachers spoke of feeling overwhelmed and exhausted by teaching in urban settings that led to high stress and burnout. Teachers spoke of the prolonged hardship. Ms. Aspen, who currently teaches at a large urban, Title 1 school shared, “It’s a Title 1 school, low socioeconomic and that’s hard being at the same school in that environment for nine years. It’s hard and it’s exhausting.” Ms. Douglas, a former urban, Title 1 teacher stated, “I would say I was definitely burned out and I think it was just a combination of everything. I mean, you know, being at a Title 1, it’s a tough, tough gig.”

Many teachers confessed that they were overwhelmed in the stressful environment of urban, Title 1 settings. Mr. Willow, a veteran teacher who formerly taught at a large, urban, Title 1 school stated, “I was like, I don’t know if I can keep doing this. What I did know was that I needed to get out of [this school] ... it wasn’t for me. I wasn’t the first person I know to come to that conclusion.”

Ms. Cherry left an urban, Title 1 school when she was denied an open position at her current school. She talked about her strengths as an educator and the process of deciding to become a reading specialist. When she was denied an open position that she was qualified to teach, it left her feeling unsupported by administration. She was so hurt that she ended up leaving the school to go work with a more supportive administrator. Later, she left her urban, Title 1 school for a specialist position with the district.

I asked to be switched to kindergarten because I was so miserable in second grade...I was crying and...I was so frustrated...there was an opening and it was legitimate...I know I’m a good kindergarten teacher...I know I get results and she wouldn’t move me...when she told me I couldn’t have K [kindergarten] and I had to stay there, I couldn’t go to school, crying 180 days more...I knew it wasn’t right for the kids...I loved [my

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school] and at the time thought I would never leave. That was my family. That's where I felt at home. I collaborated with people...I worked so hard with them in so many different roles.

In addition to feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, many teachers spoke of feeling less appreciated in urban, Title 1 settings than in suburban or non-Title 1 schools.

Theme 2: Feeling Unappreciated

Teachers pointed out the differences in hard-to-teach urban settings, including lack of recognition and appreciation from the parents and the community. Ms. Lavender, who formerly taught at an urban, Title 1 school stated, "I feel like...teachers...don't get a lot of recognition and they deserve a lot. Especially teachers at downtown like [Title 1] schools where there's no PTA, no parents support really...not in like, Oh, here's your full coffee cart breakfast...and it can be very tiring because teachers do a lot extra."

Ms. Beechwood, who taught at an urban, Title 1 school for 14 years, discussed the stress and lack of appreciation that drove her to leave her school and district for her current suburban, non-Title 1 school. She loved teaching and yet she got to the point where she didn't want to step foot on the school campus.

So, it got to a point where it was, I was feeling used in a sense, or I was feeling like I was devalued. I wasn't appreciated for who I was and what I was doing for these kids. It just was like, "No, you need to do this now. No, you have to do this." So, it got to a point where I was, I was burnt out...the administration up above just had this mentality of "No, let's work...you're bees worker bees," and that's pretty much it...lacking that human touch of appreciating and complimenting what keeps your, your teachers happy. So, it filters through and it gets to the point where it just, it wears you down...so I made the

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decision at that point. I have to get out because I'm in education because I love it. I love teaching the kids and I want to bring the best. And this is, I'm not feeling it. So that would be I, the time that I felt the most...reluctant to even step foot into the school...

In addition to feeling overwhelmed and unappreciated, veteran teachers spoke of the challenges of working in schools with a high rate of poverty, academically at-risk students, and low parent support.

Theme 3: Challenging Working Conditions

The challenging working conditions of Title 1 settings with concentrated populations of high-needs students were discussed frequently by veteran teachers. The subthemes of high-needs students and lack of parental support were often mentioned.

High-Needs Students

Ms. Rose spoke of sleepless nights worrying about her students in poverty, knowing that her students come to school hungry and often leave without enough to eat. She emotionally shared, "I go to bed worrying about all these kids." She shared, "I have so many kids...who are hungry, who are embarrassed to ask, I just say, take the food, take some burritos. Here's some apples and oranges." In addition to serving students in poverty, the pressure to raise student achievement further increases veteran teachers' perceptions of stress.

Teachers lamented about being tasked with the job of raising student achievement of low performing students. They often experienced feelings of defeat that stem from not seeing academic gains in the lives of their children. Ms. Rose shared about modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of her students who were performing far below grade level.

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... a lot of the fourth-grade curriculum, my kids can't do it. They can't even read the fourth-grade curriculum. So, I have to implement and add other ideas so that they're still learning and not feeling like they're not successful.

Veteran teachers reported that poverty-related issues, combined with pressure to meet the high-needs of second language learners, was more than they could sustain. Ms. Rose, a 4-8 grade teachers expressed, "I feel that sticking 34 English language learners in my room, I can't, I don't feel like I am making a difference because there's so many kids...I have a student who doesn't know his letters and his sounds." The many challenging layers of teaching in Title 1 settings not only include high populations of second language learners, but also the additional layer of not receiving parent support.

Lack of Parent Support

Veteran teachers were saddened by experiences with children whose families have limited participation in their child's academic life. They realize that the parents often do not have a choice to be more involved with their children, due to the number of hours they are required to work. Ms. Beechwood shared her experience in her former position with teaching children in urban, Title 1 setting. Veteran teachers reported that they perceived a lack of parenting taking place in their students' homes. At times, they found themselves playing the role of educating parents on parenting and life skills as a consequence. Ms. Rose talked about having difficult conversations with her student's mother.

...unfortunately, I'm...telling a mom how to be a mom...I tell her how concerned I am about...a lack of desire. And she's in fourth grade, she's reading at a second-grade level and I'm like, there's going to be a gap that's going to get a little bigger, a little bigger, a little bigger and there's going to be a point where your daughter's gonna be so frustrated

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because she's so behind and she won't understand...I don't want her to drop out. I don't want to her to get so stressed that that's her escape mechanism... “I'm just going to drop out.” and then...the moms says, “Oh...I did the same thing at 15.”

Ms. Acacia shared that she felt she had no solutions to bridge the gaps for underperforming students who lack of parent support at her former urban, Title 1 school. She chose to leave that school due to her perceptions of overwhelming working conditions.

...education and family support...I guess for me it didn't seem like a priority to a lot of those students. And so many of them were...struggling and they weren't up to their grade level benchmark. So that stress that I internalized was how can I help them get to where they should be if they aren't getting support from home, there is no home to school connection. Like how, how am I supposed to do that? I just felt a little defeated...

Compared to suburban settings, teaching in urban, Title 1 school settings was perceived as much more stressful by this sample of veteran teachers. Teachers expressed exhaustion and feelings of being overwhelmed and unappreciated. They shared their experiences of the working conditions in urban settings that have high concentrations of low performing students who live in circumstances of poverty and lack parent support and participation. Veteran teachers also expressed their perceptions about what might help teachers remain in these challenging settings.

Theme 4: Perceptions of Mitigating Teacher Migration from Urban, Title 1 Schools

Veteran teachers expressed their thoughts on reducing stress, burnout, and attrition associated with teaching in urban, Title 1 settings. They pointed to the importance of not only participating in comprehensive formal mentoring but also having administration support, and a strong team of collaboration. Teachers perceived the absence of administrative support or abuse of power, combined with the challenges in urban, Title 1 settings, as predictive of teacher

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migration. Ms. Sugarberry, who taught at an urban, Title 1 school, expressed her belief that teacher migration or attrition is inevitable without the support of an administrator or support team. She shared, “I think it makes a big difference who your administrator and your team [are]...if one of those two or God forbid both are bad, then definitely stress and burnout become palpable...I don't even see how people stay in the profession at all. If those two factors are bad.”

Many teachers spoke about administrators who were perceived as highly supportive particularly in urban, Title 1 settings. Veteran teachers spoke of administrators who were involved in supporting the mentor program, but also remained hands-off in terms of allowing the teachers to explore and take risks with practices. Veteran teachers also spoke of administrators who attended trainings in pedagogical theory, and trainings on how to support a mentor program. Administrators were perceived as supportive when they knew their curriculum, supported readers and writers’ workshop, supported Cognitively Guided Instruction in mathematics, supported new thinking, provided opportunities for collaboration, buffered teachers from district stress, did not have favorites, supported teachers with parents, and generally ran the school in a professional manner.

Veteran teachers in urban, Title 1 school settings expressed a need for aligned pedagogy among teachers and administrators. Veteran teachers may feel so passionately about needing this level of support from administration that they migrate to another school in search of this support. Ms. Elm and Ms. Cherry who taught in Title 1 school settings, both left schools to work under a specific administrator who they knew would be more aligned with their philosophy on instructional practices. Ms. Elm stated, “I need to go somewhere where I'm going to be encouraged to continue to grow. So...I started researching...what school can I go to where an administrator has the same vision and methodology...that I have.”

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Veteran teachers who participated in comprehensive formal mentoring while teaching at a Title 1 school, and who remained at a Title 1 school, reported that they would have left their Title 1 school had it not been for the mentor program. Ms. Rose felt that teachers at her Title 1 school would have left, “frustrated because they didn't have the support of a [comprehensive formal mentor program],” adding, “I think you'll have a higher percentage of teachers staying because of it [the mentor program] versus a school that has no support.” Veteran teachers reported that a supportive administration, a strong collaborative team, a full-time, fully released mentor, and coaching cycle may mitigate teacher migration in urban, Title 1 school settings.

Teaching in urban, Title 1 settings is perceived as extremely challenging by veteran teachers. However, they expressed that a combination of supports for veteran teachers may mitigate the high rate of stress, burnout and teacher migration. Teachers spoke of the importance of combining comprehensive formal mentoring with a strong administration. Ms. Sugarberry who worked at Title 1 schools for 24 years, expressed that the combination of supports helped her to stay at her Title 1 school. She had the support of the comprehensive mentor program, but also spoke of the importance of a supportive administration and collaborative team. Ms. Sugarberry states,

I was like, yeah, maybe I should go work on the East side [non-Title 1 school settings] ...but the thing too, which made a big difference for me...is that I was heavily supported by my [mentor]...administrator and I had an awesome dynamic [collaborative] team. Right. So, because those...things were really in place...I didn't feel compelled to leave...but within a year my principal got moved and then we got somebody new and I was like, yeah, I gotta go like this isn't good. And I think it makes a big difference who your administrator and your team [are].

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Clearly, administration is perceived as highly influential in mitigating attrition and retaining veteran teachers. The findings indicate that veteran teachers located in challenging urban, Title 1 settings need a system that consists of not only a comprehensive formal mentor program, but also a strong administration in order to retain veteran teachers. Without strong administrative support, comprehensive formal mentoring may not be enough to retain these valuable and experienced veteran teachers.

Summary of Results

The findings of the five research questions of this study were explored in this chapter. The essence of the findings indicates that veteran teachers perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as an overwhelmingly positive experience. Teachers perceived increased professional respect, transformation, and rejuvenation. Veteran teachers perceive that all components of the comprehensive formal mentoring framework are valued support for the needs of veteran teachers. Nonetheless, when asked to choose, veteran teachers reported that the mentor and the coaching cycle were most effective in meeting the needs of veteran teachers. Observation, professional development, and collaboration are perceived as optional, but must be paired with the mentor and coaching cycle. It also emerged that veteran teachers perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor to various levels for stress and burnout in the areas of student stress, loss of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support. In addition, the results reveal veteran teachers perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as a positive support for teacher retention in the areas of mid-career attrition, early retirement, and teacher migration.

What is also significant is that 30% of the veteran teachers in this sample left their Title 1 school prior to participating in the mentor program. It is difficult to know if the mentor program

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would have mitigated this attrition. Some teachers expressed that they might have stayed if they had the comprehensive level of support from the program. Other teachers reported that the lack of administrative support was a top reason for leaving and they didn't feel that the mentor program could mitigate an unsupportive administrator. Participants in this sample migrated out of Title 1 settings due to challenging working conditions and unsupportive administration. Teacher migration ultimately has a negative impact on students. If we are to reduce teacher migration, providing a supportive administrator may be one method to lessen the number of teachers who leave hard-to-teach schools. Finally, findings reveal that veteran teachers perceive teaching in urban, Title 1 school settings as the source of higher degrees of stress, burnout, and attrition than suburban, non-Title 1 settings. They also perceive that a highly supportive administrator, combined with a strong collaborative team and a full-time, fully released mentor may mitigate stress, burnout and teacher migration in urban, hard-to-staff school settings.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

This qualitative, phenomenological study examined veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of participating in a comprehensive formal mentoring program. Twenty K-8 veteran public-school teachers from several Southern California urban and suburban, Title I and non-Title I schools provided their perceptions of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for stress, burnout, and attrition. Additionally, they provided their thoughts on the aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that most effectively support the needs of veteran teachers. Finally, participants in this study provided insights into their experiences of teaching in urban, Title I settings, compared to teaching in suburban, non-Title I school settings.

Key Findings

The significant impact of comprehensive formal mentoring support for veteran teachers was revealed by participants' use of rich, descriptive language when discussing their experiences. Veteran teachers perceived their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring as an overwhelmingly positive, transformative, and rejuvenating experience. Comprehensive formal mentoring is also perceived as mitigating the effects of stress and burnout in the areas of student stress, lack of autonomy, education reform stress, teacher isolation, and lack of administrative support. In addition, veteran teachers perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor of teachers' inclination to leave their schools for early retirement, mid-career, and teacher migration. Finally, there are mixed perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher migration in urban, Title I school settings that are led by unsupportive administration. Under these conditions, a greater

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combination of supports may be required to mitigate teacher attrition. These key findings are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Frameworks and Organization

The theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring and the conceptual framework in this study, together, act as a lens to explore and frame teachers' perceptions of the mitigating factors for stress, burnout, and attrition and the positive outcomes of comprehensive formal mentoring for both teachers and students.

This chapter will address the essence of veteran teachers' perceptions to make connections between those perceptions and the limited amount of literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers. In addition, this chapter will also address new findings in meeting the needs of veteran teachers, the implications, and limitations of this research study, followed by recommendations for further research. Key findings from the study are addressed and discussed with respect to the five research questions and are often viewed through the lens of both the conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Section 1: Veteran Teachers' Perceptions on Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Research Question 1: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?

In this study, it was discovered that 95% of veteran teachers perceive participating in comprehensive formal mentoring as an overwhelmingly positive experience. The essence of the findings is that veteran teachers in this sample perceive that comprehensive formal mentoring has a positive effect on professional respect, transformation, and rejuvenation. Veteran teachers had clearly given a great deal of thought to their individual experiences in the comprehensive formal mentor program. They spoke at length and expressed positive appreciation for the high

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level of support received from the mentoring program. When answering research question number one, veteran teachers used descriptive language, such as *amazing*, *transformative*, and *rejuvenating*. The effusive language indicates that participation in comprehensive formal mentoring was a deep and meaningful experience.

There is little literature on the participation of veteran teachers in comprehensive formal mentoring programs. Although there is a gap in the literature, the few articles that have been published in this area do make the claim that veteran teachers may experience positive outcomes, such as professional growth, professional respect, encouragement, and renewed commitment when participating in mentoring (Danielson, 2002; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). The focus of these articles is primarily on veteran teachers who provide mentoring, rather than veteran teachers who receive mentoring, and there is no mention of comprehensive formal mentoring. Although Danielson and Hargreaves have made important contributions to the literature, their articles on mentoring seems to have only scratched the surface of the potential positive outcomes of veteran teachers receiving mentoring.

The perceived positive outcomes for veteran teachers in this study are rejuvenation and reclaiming passion for the profession of teaching and the field of education. Within the literature, some work has been explored on the journey of teachers who reclaim their identity and passion, and thereby recognize their best inner selves as educators (Palmer, 2017). However, Palmer's work does not specifically reference comprehensive formal mentoring as a pathway to rejuvenation for veteran teachers. Interestingly, this current study on veteran teachers suggests that teachers who have ten to thirty years of experience in the classroom not only benefit from receiving comprehensive formal mentoring; they also perceive mentoring as a critical experience to rejuvenate and reignite their passion for teaching.

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Despite the lack of literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers, there are parallels between positive outcomes for new teachers, as described in the large body of studies on new teacher mentoring, and positive outcomes of veteran teachers observed in this study (Ingersoll et al., 2012a; Stanulis et al., 2012; Sutchter et al., 2019). New teachers report personal satisfaction, sense of reward, growth, and encouragement as positive outcomes of experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring (Ehrich et al., 2004). Positive outcomes for veteran teachers in this current study are further significant as feelings of professional respect, transformation, and rejuvenation increase teacher well-being and we know that teacher well-being is positively associated with student well-being.

This study provides evidence that veteran teachers, who are far from novice, also report positive teacher outcomes when they receive a high level of comprehensive mentor support. These findings also suggest that, at present, there is a systemic lack of support for veteran teachers. Participants' strong positive responses indicate that comprehensive formal mentoring is highly successful in meeting the support needs of veteran teachers. As such, this study is a critical contribution to the nascent body of literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers.

Section 2: Most Effective Aspects of Formal Mentoring

Research Question 2: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?

Research question number two is organized according to the theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring with a focus on the most effective aspects of mentoring perceived by veteran teachers. The majority of veteran teachers perceived all aspects of the

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program to be effective. Therefore, this section begins with the discussion on keeping all aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring. In an ideal mentor program, budget would not be an issue in supporting veteran teachers. However, participants voiced their understanding of the differences between an ideal mentor program and the realities of budget constraints. In this discussion, the themes of foundational, essential, and optional in relation to the components in the theoretical framework of comprehensive formal mentoring emerged, as shown in Figure 3.

Administrative support, mentor training, and a fully released mentor were perceived as baseline, foundational supports required for the success of a mentor program. The mentor and the coaching cycle were both perceived as essential to the mentor program; veteran teachers expressed that these elements were absolutely essential and were nonnegotiable. Observations of exemplary instruction and professional development would be included in an ideal program but could be considered optional, given the realities of district budgets. The discussion of this section continues with the foundational, essential, and the optional components of comprehensive formal mentoring. All components of the comprehensive formal mentor framework – the foundational, essential and optional components – are highlighted and discussed respectively.

Keep All Components of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of the veteran teachers (75%) did not want to remove or change any components of the comprehensive program. They reported that all aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring support the needs of veteran teachers. Despite the absence of literature on comprehensive mentoring for veteran teachers, the literature on new teacher mentoring does indicate that the more comprehensive the mentor package, the more successful the program will be for reducing stress, burnout, and attrition (Ingersoll, 2012; Stanulis et al, 2012). Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that veteran teachers perceive

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the more comprehensive the mentor package, the more support they received to reduce stress, burnout, and attrition. These findings bring new insight into meeting the needs of highly experienced, veteran teachers. The findings indicate that veteran teachers need and appreciate higher levels of teacher support.

Figure 3

Veteran Teachers' Perceptions of Most Effective Aspects of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

Note. Theoretical Framework of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring was adapted from Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching, Intensive New Teacher Mentoring (Stanulis et al., 2012), and the Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (Martin, 2008). The categories of Foundational, Essential and Optional are the result of the findings in this study.

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Foundational: Administration Support

The need for administrative support and mentor training were reiterated throughout this study and were perceived to lay the groundwork for an effective mentor program. Without administrative support, teachers expressed that they would not have the necessary freedom to explore and refine their practice. Without mentor training, the mentor would not have the expertise to guide the teachers in their professional development journey.

Administration has an enormous influence on the teacher stress, burnout, and attrition (Grissom et al., 2021; Ladd, 2009). Therefore, a supportive administrator is foundational for the success of a comprehensive mentor program (Ehrich et al., 2004; Martin, 2008). In this study, veteran teachers perceived a greater level of support to grow and develop their practice when their administration was supportive of the mentor program. When administrators were not in support of the mentor program or the theory of pedagogy, teachers perceived increased levels of stress, burnout, or attrition. Stress caused by an unsupportive administration is perceived as the number one reason for teacher migration to another school (Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011; Ingersoll, 2001). An unsupportive administration, even greater than veteran teachers experiencing student stress, may be predictive of teacher migration.

What became clear in this study is that an unsupportive administrator may lead to teacher migration, even among teachers who expressed positive outcomes, such as increased autonomy, ownership of practice, decreased student stress, and decreased teacher isolation after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring. The negative effects of unsupportive administrators were especially acute when administrators were perceived as micromanaging or seen as abusing their authority. In addition, teachers reported that unsupportive administrative leadership in urban, Title 1 school settings leads teachers to pursue efforts to leave in search of

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better working conditions. In this study, administration seems to be pivotal in reducing or increasing stress and burnout, thus leading to teacher migration.

Foundational: Fully Released Mentor and Mentor Training

Along with administrative support, fully released mentors (i.e., mentors who are released from their classroom obligations) and mentor training were perceived by veteran teachers as the foundational groundwork of an effective mentor program. Teachers expressed the need for mentors who have a high level of expertise and positive dispositions. Veteran teachers reported loss of respect for mentors with lower levels of expertise when compared to the veteran teachers receiving mentoring. Veteran teachers did not want to spend their limited time working with less experienced and less qualified mentors. These responses are supported by prior studies wherein mentor training was found to prepare mentors with the skills necessary to guide adult learning (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Roehrig et al., 2008). Mentor training should be offered prior to and throughout the mentor program to maintain the level of mentor expertise and the quality of the efficacy of the mentor program (Evertson & Smithey, 2000; Nevins et al., 2009). Mentor training is perceived as fundamental and foundational to the program. Under the umbrella of mentor expertise, there is additional evidence that these trained mentors are most effective when paired with new teachers on the same campus (Ehrich et al., 2004).

In the present study, the majority of mentors and the veteran teachers were paired on the same campus. In line with the aforementioned literature in this area, many veteran teachers in this study felt that selecting a mentor from the same campus, who may have prior knowledge of families, students, and the culture of the school may be advantageous. However, one teacher, Mr. Tecoma, perceived this to be a limitation. He expressed that he might want a mentor selected from outside the school site to increase mentor expertise. It may be that bringing in mentors who

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have already been trained and offer a different pool of knowledge may provide enhanced mentor expertise. Possibly, Mr. Tecoma's perspective may be relevant when a school site is just introducing a formal mentor program and may not have an experienced mentor available. In that case, it may be more advantageous to select a mentor from outside the school campus. Selecting a mentor from the same campus or outside the campus should be considered carefully according to the needs and resources of the school site and district.

Teachers mentioned that, in addition to high-quality training, fully released mentors were foundational to a mentor program. This aligns with the literature on mentoring programs for new teachers. New teachers who were provided a fully released mentor experienced better outcomes and increased student achievement (Fletcher & Strong, 2009). Veteran teachers recognize that if mentors are not released and must continue to teach in their own classrooms, mentors are limited in their ability to support teachers. Mentor expertise and a fully released mentor were foundational to the efficacy of the mentor program.

Essential: Mentor and Coaching Cycle

When veteran teachers were asked to select one component of comprehensive formal mentoring that was most effective, all veteran teachers (100%) reported that the mentor and coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing). Teachers expressed that they could not have transformed their practice without the individual support from their mentor within the structure of the coaching cycle. The value of the differentiated professional development was linked to the coaching cycle that was used throughout the mentor program. The coaching cycle was perceived as individual, differentiated professional development. The lack of differentiated professional development normally offered by schools and districts was perceived as ineffective by veteran teachers. The literature mirrors the

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inefficacy of a *one size fits all* approach and that coaching or mentoring may lead to greater efficacy and mastery of practice (Costa, 2002; Knight, 2010). Veteran teachers stressed the importance of differentiated professional development in meeting the needs of veteran teachers.

If funds allow, teachers expressed that combinations of additional components have the potential to enhance the efficacy of the mentor program. Many teachers felt that a combination of the mentor and coaching cycle, in addition to the observations of exemplary classroom and professional development, were effective. Many teachers felt that a combination of the mentor and coaching cycle, in addition to collaboration were effective. However, there wasn't a single teacher who expressed a belief that their positive experience could be replicated with the absence of a mentor. This seems to indicate that mentor and coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing) are perceived as essential to the efficacy of supporting valued veteran teachers.

Goal Setting

Veteran teachers identified choice and differentiation within goal setting as a highly effective and respectful way to begin their journey. Veteran teachers perceive choice as crucially interconnected with autonomy in their professional development. Differentiation and choice were not specified in the theoretical framework, yet veteran teachers mentioned that they appreciate these elements and need to exercise a voice in their individual professional development needs. Voice and choice are also echoed in the mentoring literature. Mentees experienced choice by setting short and long term goals in a partnership approach (Ehrich & Hansford, 2008; Knight, 2008). The partnership approach and choice of goal setting set the tone of professional respect for veteran teachers and increase teacher autonomy and ownership.

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Planning

Veteran teachers, in their busy schedule, saw planning with their mentor as time well spent. During this planning time, teachers in this study reported a deep exploration of research-based practices. Veteran teachers described their mentor as prepared and knowledgeable about standards and effective practices. As noted in the inclusion criteria in Table 3, all participants experienced ongoing weekly planning times with their mentor. Although planning occurred at formal set times, veteran teachers also mentioned many unscheduled valuable moments of planning with the mentor on the way to the copier or in the lunchroom. This planning time with the mentor was an essential component to guide teachers and help them refine their instructional practices.

Modeling and Coteaching

Veteran teachers reported that mentor modeling occurred many times a week or as often as needed. Teachers expressed appreciation for the mentors who modeled instructional practices in their classroom with their demographic of students. Modeling and coteaching were often mentioned as a way for veteran teachers to see the instructional practice in action. In modeling, the mentor would teach the mentee's class and model the instructional strategy with the students. For example, mentors might model quality questioning, posing questions to the students while teachers observe and takes notes on the efficacy of the questions. Later they might debrief what was effective and what could be modified. Mentor modeling provided a realistic view of theory into practice and an effective way to overcome perceived obstacles, such as teachers' critical views that this practice may not work with their school and classroom demographics. Reflection on what worked and what could be improved as tangible next steps for teachers to explore on their own or with the guidance of the mentor, may be discussed in the debrief.

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Debriefing

Veteran teachers perceive the debriefing time within the coaching cycle as an opportunity to uncover gems of wisdom. The significance of time spent with the mentor on reflective discourse appears in the new teacher mentoring literature. New teacher mentor studies show a relationship between consistent individual time with the mentor and stronger outcomes for new teachers (Harrison et al., 2005; Roehrig et al., 2008). The literature on reflective discourse between mentor and mentee suggests positive learning outcomes for new teachers (Harrison et al., 2005; Mathur et al., 2013). The results of this study on veteran teachers indicate veteran teachers may also experience positive learning outcomes after engaging in reflective discourse with a mentor.

Reflective discourse as an effective tool for growth was echoed by the veteran teachers in this study. They spoke about the importance of the opportunity to reflect on various types of data with their mentors. Mentors often collected data on veteran teachers' instruction and provided opportunities for veteran teachers to reflect on this data. Many mentors videotaped the veteran teachers' instruction for self-reflection. Teachers spoke of multiple opportunities to reflect on their own teaching or the exemplary instruction of another teacher. Reflective discourse and debriefing time with the mentor were perceived as powerful components that increased the efficacy of the coaching cycle.

Optional: Observation and Professional Development

Observation and professional development were reported as effective aspects of the comprehensive formal mentor program when coupled with the mentor and coaching cycle. This was confirmed by the few existing studies of comprehensive formal mentor programs. The additional bundles of professional development and collaboration, alongside a mentor and

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coaching cycle, result in better outcomes for both teachers and students (Martin, 2008; Stanulis et al., 2012).

Observation is a time when the mentors and veteran teachers observe exemplary instruction on the same campus, different campus, or at a different district. The professional development of pedagogy often takes place prior to observing the instruction. For instance, teachers might meet at a school site, in the library, prior to the classroom observation to receive professional development on the instruction practice scheduled for observation. Although the majority (75%) of participants in this study reported that the observation of instruction and professional development were effective, they stressed that observations alone would not be successful. Participants expressed the additional need for a mentor to guide veteran teachers to apply and master the newly observed practice through the coaching cycle.

Veteran teachers expressed that observation of instructional practices with professional development offered both theory and practice which were meaningful and vital to veteran teacher support. Professional development in research-based practices, in addition to observations of exemplary teachers, provide the theory to underly the observed practice, and in turn inspire change or refinement of instructional practice. Theory of practice alone is not sufficient to create change. Veteran teachers need guided opportunities to practice newly observed instruction in class, with a mentor. Teachers stated that the mentor support with the coaching cycle provided the practical application of implementing new teaching practices. The majority of the teachers felt that both theory and practice were necessary to support their pedagogy.

Support from administrators, fully released mentors, and mentor training were perceived as foundational aspects of the comprehensive formal mentor program. These were foundational

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in that they laid the foundational groundwork for the mentor program. The mentor and coaching cycle were perceived as the essential, most effective aspects of the mentor program. Finally, collaboration, observations, and professional development were perceived as effective, but potentially optional in the case of budget constraints.

Gender Dynamics on Perceptions of Mentor Training

There were slight differences by gender in the veteran teachers' perceptions of most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring. The sample of three males to seventeen female veteran teachers is representative of the general population in elementary school teachers and yet more male teachers offered critical suggestions for improving the program. Two of the three male teachers were more open about their disappointment in specific areas of the program, such as a lack of mentor expertise, and perceptions of overzealous and narrow-minded mentors. There were also a couple of suggestions from female veteran teachers who reported a lack of respect for previous mentors with less expertise. However, the overall essence of teachers' perceptions revealed a slightly more critical view from male teachers.

These most effective aspects of foundational, essential, and optional components of the mentor program highlighted in this section are also perceived as relating to the mitigating factors of stress and burnout.

Section 3: Mitigating Stress and Burnout

Research Question 3: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?

The discussion for research question number three is organized through the lens of the conceptual framework, concerning veteran teachers' perceptions of the most salient reasons for stress and burnout and the perceived mitigating support of comprehensive formal mentoring.

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Mitigating Stress and Burnout

Veteran teachers in this study perceive comprehensive formal mentor program to be a mitigating factor for stress and burnout. Teacher stress is often described as a feelings of anger, anxiety, or depression that result from negative aspects of work (Kyriacou, 2001). The findings of this study support prior assertions that teaching is a stressful occupation; 100% of the teachers in this sample said they experience job-related stress (Herman et al., 2018; S. Johnson et al., 2005). In the Herman et al. (2018) study, at least 30% of teachers report moderate to high levels of burnout in their positions. In contrast, 85% of the veteran teachers in this study reported experiencing burnout, signifying that the rate of teacher burnout in this sample was exceptionally high. Additionally, a high rate of absenteeism was found; 10% of teachers in this study reporting they took a leave of absence due to burnout. This is concerning, as absenteeism is correlated with decreased student achievement and well-being (Miller et al., 2008).

Although there is a dearth of literature on comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers, findings in this study indicate that comprehensive formal mentoring also increases teacher well-being. This echoes studies on new teacher mentoring that report strong correlations between formal mentoring and teacher well-being (Kutsyuruba et al., 2019). In this study, after participating in the comprehensive mentor program, teachers perceived stress and burnout to be ameliorated for the five most salient causes of teacher stress and burnout. Student stress decreased, education reform stress decreased, teacher isolation decreased, and teacher autonomy increased. Getting to know students and their interests on a deeper academic level was an unexpected positive outcome of comprehensive formal mentoring. In turn, this experience of getting to better know their students had strong positive outcomes for teacher well-being and student well-being. Gaining autonomy and ownership of practice after participating in

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comprehensive formal mentoring was another strong positive outcome. This study provides vital evidence that comprehensive formal mentoring is also effective for veteran teachers and that many of the strategies used to mitigate stress and burnout for new teachers are also effective for veteran teachers.

Student Support

Veteran teachers expressed a strong need for student support. Even after decades of experience in the classroom, veteran teachers perceive student behavior and academics as a primary source of stress. Teachers experience some of the highest risks of stress and burnout of any profession, and these stressors may in turn lead to negative student outcomes, such as lower student achievement and decreased student well-being (Lankford, 2002). In this study of veteran teachers, all teachers perceived the mentor program as a positive support for stress related to both student behaviors and academics. After receiving comprehensive formal mentoring, teachers in this study reported positive student outcomes in the areas of student well-being, motivation, engagement, and perceived academic gains (Fletcher et al., 2005).

All veteran teachers in this sample perceived the mentor program as a positive support for both student behaviors and academics. After receiving comprehensive formal mentoring, teachers in this study reported positive student outcomes of student well-being, motivation, engagement, and perceived academic gains. The literature does indicate that the more supportive the professional environment, the greater the positive outcomes of student well-being and increased student achievement (Papay & Kraft, 2015).

Shifting their practice from sage on the stage to more of a facilitator orchestrating independent practice afforded veteran teachers the opportunity to not only spend more time with individual students, but also to track their individual progress and get to know them in the

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process. What is clear is veteran teachers in this sample expressed strong emotions of an awakening or an epiphany when discussing how they got to know their students on a deeper level individually and academically. They expressed that they had always wanted to know their students' individual interests, strengths and needs. However, teachers were often overwhelmed with whole class instruction and prescribed teachers' edition, that they simply didn't have the time required to get to know their students. In working with their mentor, the coaching cycle provided veteran teachers with time to plan, analyze, and observe student work in addition to the mentor encouraging individual and small group instruction. All of these actions allowed veteran teachers to gain a deeper knowledge of their students' individual academic level and interests.

In addition, shifting their practice from a deficit lens to an asset lens motivated and inspired their students. One teacher poetically stated, "they saw me see them," and she discussed the positive outcomes of engagement and motivation as a result of shifting her practice to getting to know her students on a deeper level. Veteran teachers reported that getting to know their students was a strong support that reduced stress with student academics and behaviors. Getting to know their students on an individual level was reported as a transformative effect of the mentoring experience. Veteran teachers are often presumed experts in classroom management and student behaviors. However, even after a decade or more of experience, veteran teachers reported that the comprehensive formal mentoring provided needed support in the areas of student behavior and academics. In addition to student support, veteran teachers expressed support for increase autonomy in the classroom after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring.

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Autonomy Gain

The pendulum swing of education reform is a major culprit of increased stress, burnout, and attrition. Participants spoke about the back and forth and repackaging of old ideas into new names and new programs. They expressed dismay regarding the lack of professional respect exhibited by administrations that fail to include teachers as decision makers in the education reform process. It was not surprising that veteran teachers expressed feelings of frustration and anger related to their perceived lack of respect, and the lack of choice in decision making concerning their practice and professional development. The perceptions of veteran teachers regarding the loss of autonomy mirror the growing trend of increased, centralized government control over education (Jeong & Luschei, 2018). Veteran teachers claimed that the current education system often leaves teachers feeling out of control, increases learned helplessness, and increases reliance on teachers' editions, resulting in decreased professionalism and decision making in the classroom.

However, perceived increased autonomy was a strong outcome of comprehensive formal mentoring for veteran teachers in this study. They felt empowered by the degree of choice and voice they were given regarding their individual professional development in an environment where they often have very little choice. Veteran teachers reported that the program supported them in standards-based instructional practices, increasing their feelings of ownership and empowerment. Several veteran teachers shared that they could now confidently defend their instructional practices and never return to former instructional practices that relied on teachers' editions. Some veteran teachers reported that they no longer felt intimidated by administration the way they did prior to the mentor program. Teachers also expressed that this shift in their pedagogy may not have been possible without the comprehensive formal mentor program.

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The veteran teachers' perceptions of increased autonomy and empowerment in this study mirror the literature on teacher autonomy; when autonomy is decreased, levels of stress increase and when autonomy increases, empowerment and professionalism increase (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Increased teacher autonomy means that teachers can make professional decisions in the classroom based on the efficacy of their practice, rather than being concerned that they are on a certain page in a teachers' edition. Increased autonomy empowers teachers to make professional decisions based on the efficacy of their practice. In addition to autonomy gain, veteran teachers provided professional perspectives regarding the education reform they have experienced in the span of their teaching careers and the support they received after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring.

Education Reform Support

Not all education reform was perceived as unwelcome to the veteran teachers in this study. Most participants reported that they are in agreement with effective education reforms, such as the CCSS. However, they also expressed that adoption and mastery of education reforms at the classroom level necessitated comprehensive levels of support. The teachers in this study philosophically and pedagogically agreed with the depth and rigor of the CCSS. They did not resent this sweeping education reform, but they did resent the lack of comprehensive teacher support for the adoption of the CCSS. The lack of support for the CCSS is noted in existent literature and often indicates that less than half of classroom teachers received adequate support for the CCSS (Stair et al., 2017). When implementing education reforms, some districts provided more support than others. The veteran teachers who received inadequate training from their district, but were being mentored at the time, expressed a strong appreciation for the support they received through their comprehensive mentor program.

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The comprehensive formal mentor program provided deeper insight and exploration of the standards and their alignment to teachers' instructional practices. Veteran teachers who received support through the comprehensive mentor program felt empowered to implement the standards on a deeper level with their classroom practice. Overall, veteran teachers in this study communicated that they are in favor of effective education reform. However, when education reforms are necessary, they expressed a specific need for more comprehensive forms of support to gain a deep understanding for implementing and mastering the education reform in the classroom.

Mitigating Isolation

After decades of studies on teacher isolation as a cause of teachers stress and burnout (Heider, 2005; Nehmeh & Kelly, 2018; Rothberg, 1986), it was surprising that the majority of veteran teachers in this study did not perceive isolation to be a strong driver of stress. Only 35% of this sample felt that they experienced teacher isolation. A small number of teachers spoke about feelings of isolation when they moved schools and were still forming relationships for collaboration. Other teachers spoke of divisions within their school site. Concerns about teacher isolation have been documented as an antecedent of stress and burnout (Kidger et al., 2016). In addition, mentor programs have also been correlated with reducing teacher isolation (Heider, 2005). However, most teachers in this study stated that they have a strong collaborative team at their school site that help prevent feelings of teacher isolation.

It is possible that teacher isolation is decreasing as districts and schools have built capacity for grade level collaboration that successfully decreases the risk of teacher isolation. Many teachers spoke of strong collaborative teams within their grade level in addition to collaboration within the mentor program. The overall trend observed in this study points to

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increased collaboration within both urban and suburban teaching environments as a mitigating factor that reduces the problem of teacher isolation. The perceptions shared by this sample of veteran teachers indicate that collaborative efforts implemented by school leaders may mitigate the decades-old problem of teacher isolation (Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006).

Experienced veteran teachers may not always be conscious of their collaborative needs. Although only 35% of the teachers in this sample expressed isolation stress, many veteran teachers expressed strong appreciation for components of the comprehensive mentor program that provided additional collaborative support. Even though isolation might not be perceived as a major stressor, having a mentor in the room to provide modeling, coteaching, and rigorous planning led to increased feelings of collaboration and reduced feelings of isolation. Veteran teachers also found after-school inquiry groups to be a valuable source of support when the content addressed their needs and was aligned with their pedagogical theory of practice. In these groups, veteran teachers met monthly for a book study, discussion, and collaborative planning. Although teacher isolation was not perceived to be a serious concern, the comprehensive mentor program was reported as contributing additional, valued collaborative time with the mentor in the coaching cycle, the professional development, and the afterschool inquiry groups.

Section 4: Mitigating Teacher Attrition

Research Question 4: What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?

This research question asks whether teachers who experienced stress and burnout felt supported to remain in their school after receiving formal mentoring. In this study, the majority (70%) of veteran teachers remained in their position after receiving formal mentoring as noted in

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Table 10. Five teachers (25%) left their schools for a promotion to a leadership position, such as literacy specialist or district coach. Grissom et al. (2016) refers to this category of teacher movement as *upward mobility* rather than teacher attrition or teacher migration. One teacher left her school after receiving formal mentoring, specifically to work for a more supportive administrator. She was not looking for better working conditions, rather, she had transformed her practice and was in search of an administrator who would support that transformation.

However, prior to participating in comprehensive formal mentoring, six teachers in this study (30%) migrated out of urban, Title 1 school settings due to perceived difficult working conditions. Whether these teachers would have stayed at their former Title 1 schools if they had been supported through comprehensive formal mentoring is not known. This question was beyond the scope of this study. However, some participants did express their perception that they may have stayed at their Title 1 school, if they had the support of a comprehensive formal mentor program.

Of the veteran teachers sampled in this study, there was very little movement after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring. Participants expressed that the mentor program transformed their experience in the teaching profession and allowed them to remain in their position with increased happiness. They reported that the mentoring experience reignited and rejuvenated their passion for teaching. Ms. Elm stated, “if I wasn’t part of [the mentor program] ... I think I might've become one of those...teachers that complained... I don't know if I would've gone out of the profession, but I might've become more of a curmudgeon.”

The findings regarding the retention of veteran teachers after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring are based on veteran teachers’ current positions in schools and districts. However, the dates of their participation in comprehensive formal mentoring ranged

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from the current year up to fifteen years prior to the interview as noted in Table 3. As can be seen in the demographic information in Table 1, many teachers have remained in their positions well after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring and expressed no intentions on leaving. Several teachers were currently participating in comprehensive formal mentoring at the time of the interview. Therefore, it is also difficult to know if those participants may migrate to another school in the future.

While attrition of veteran teachers is related to a combination of factors, an unsupportive administrator appears to have a strong negative effect. Some veteran teachers also shared the belief that the mentor program might have helped them stay if they also had a supportive administrator. The perceptions of veteran teachers indicate that there is very little that can mitigate attrition away from unsupportive administrators in urban settings, particularly in the case of administrators who misuse their authority in the position.

Veteran teachers also felt that the comprehensive mentor program may not have been the sole factor that prevented attrition; salary and pension compensation must also be considered. Although salary and pension may be a mitigating factor for mid-career and early retirement, it is important to note that salary and pensions may not mitigate teacher migration. Salary and pensions are not impacted if teachers migrate out of hard-to-teach, urban settings but stay within their same district. Therefore, attrition in the form of teacher migration remains a serious concern.

The majority of the teachers in this sample experienced high levels of stress and burnout. However, all teachers reported that the mentor program led to a reduction in perceived stress in the areas of student stress, loss of autonomy, and education reform stress. Teachers reported increased collaboration which further reduced any feelings of teacher isolation. They also

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expressed feelings of increased support when administration was perceived as unsupportive. This study indicates that comprehensive formal mentor program was perceived by veteran teachers as a mitigating factor for stress and burnout that helped reduce attrition.

Mid-Career and Early Retirement.

Mid-career attrition and early retirement attrition can burden schools and create a void of experienced veteran teachers who would otherwise contribute to students and the school community (Alvy, 2005). A large percentage of teachers retire early and leave the profession due to stress and burnout (Ingersoll, 2002). However, veteran teachers perceived comprehensive formal mentoring as a substantial form of support to increase teacher well-being while remaining in the profession. Many teachers stated that they no longer have thoughts of leaving mid-career or retiring early after participating in the mentor program. Participating teachers expressed that they may not have left mid-career or retired early, but that they may have become a “curmudgeon” in the high stress environment without the positive experience of comprehensive formal mentoring. Similar to new teacher mentor programs but a new finding for the literature on veteran teachers, comprehensive formal mentoring is perceived by veteran teachers as a rejuvenating experience that translates into remaining in the profession with a stronger sense of teacher well-being.

Section 5: Experiences in Urban, Title 1 School Settings

Research Question 5: In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 schools versus non-Title 1 schools?

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Perspectives of Urban, Title 1 School Settings

While there were no interview questions that specifically asked about teacher migration, an exodus from urban, Title 1 settings was evident among the participants' responses in this sample. Veteran teachers frequently spoke about the challenges of teaching in urban, Title 1 school settings and about making the decision to leave in search of reduced stress and better working conditions. We know that teacher migration is higher in urban settings with high concentrations of low-performing, low-income students (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2005). In this sample, 30% of the teacher migration from Title 1 to non-Title 1 schools occurred prior to their mentoring experience. The migration movement that occurred after comprehensive formal mentoring (30%) involved promotions to leadership positions. Migration out of urban, Title 1 schools is an ongoing concern. However, participants in this sample provided insight into a combination of supports that may decrease the exodus out of challenging, Title 1 school settings.

Veteran teachers who migrated out of Title 1 school settings reported that they may not have left their former Title 1 school if the combination of comprehensive formal mentoring and a supportive administrator had been available to them. Teachers who did stay in urban, Title 1 settings reported that they also may also have left if they had not received the support of the comprehensive formal mentor program. If this is in fact true, this is a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge on mitigation of attrition in hard-to-staff, Title 1 school settings.

Stress and burnout are strong drivers of teacher attrition. In this way, the findings of this study are in agreement with the results of existent literature; teacher migration is statistically much higher in urban settings, leaving the highest needs students with the highest degree of teacher turnover and fewer highly qualified veteran teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Smith & Ingersoll

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2004). Experienced veteran teachers often leave schools in urban settings due to challenging working conditions. Urban schools often pose the greatest challenge in teaching, due to overburdened classrooms with high concentrations of students living in poverty, second language learners, and low student performance rates (Allensworth et al., 2009; Barnes & Crowe, 2007). Unfortunately, it is the students who are negatively impacted by a revolving door of less experienced teachers.

The essence of the perceptions of veteran teachers is that comprehensive formal mentoring provides crucial support for teachers in this environment with positive outcomes for both teachers and students. However, the participants in this sample also report that comprehensive formal mentoring may not meet the challenge of mitigating attrition if there is a lack of administration support. This mirrors existing literature finding that lack of administrative support is associated with high teacher turnover rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Ladd, 2009).

In this study of veteran teachers, participants expressed their perceptions of two essential support systems needed to retain teachers and increase teacher well-being in urban, Title 1 schools. Teachers perceived that a strong administration, along with comprehensive formal mentoring may develop a strong collaborative team, and provide essential support to increase teacher retention, teacher well-being, and positive student outcomes. Teacher migration is an ongoing concern with detrimental impact on high-needs students. With the goal of retaining valuable, experienced veteran teachers in urban, Title 1 school settings, future studies should explore essential and needed systems as sources of support (e.g., strong administration, strong collaborative teams, and comprehensive formal mentoring).

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In addition to participants' insight into their experiences of teaching in urban, Title 1 settings, veteran teachers in this study also provided a self-reflection of veteran teachers and their needs.

Perspectives on the Needs of Veteran Teachers

Participants in this study expressed their thoughts and perceptions of the specific needs of veteran teachers. One participant offered an analogy: veteran teachers are like a rooted tree. When planting in new soil, veteran teachers need to be handled with care, given resources to grow, and allowed time to flourish. Without proper care, a rooted tree can go into shock and remain dormant for years. Being handled with care might be exemplified through showing professional respect and increasing individual choice. When given resources, such as a mentor with a coaching cycle, observations, and professional development, growth is supported. Allowing time to flourish allows veteran teachers time for buy-in and the opportunity to try out new practices and see if they are a good fit.

Although the veteran teachers in this sample have at least a decade of experience in the classroom, they expressed pride in their desire to continuously learn. They described themselves as lifelong learners who strive to keep an open mind and who seek professional development on their own within the very limited time that they have. Teaching requires a daunting amount of time and energy; for this reason, veteran teachers expressed a need for greater opportunities and resources to support them in continually learning and refining their practice.

The term *humanizing* was used when speaking about the support veteran teachers received from the comprehensive formal mentor program. Many teachers expressed strong emotions when they discussed feeling undervalued and unappreciated in their teaching positions. The perceptions of veteran teachers in this sample potentially point to an environment of

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dehumanization, particularly in urban, Title 1 settings with unsupportive administrations who misuse their authority.

Veteran teachers expressed a need for professional development that incorporates increased professional respect, choice, and differentiation. The veteran teachers in this sample have personally experienced the pendulum swing of education reform and, as a result, they do not easily buy into new practices. Notably, veteran teachers shared critical views of those who stand in front of them and claim to know a better practice. They expressed that professional trainers and developers will more effectively lead veteran teachers when they have a high level of expertise and patience. They expressed the desire to see research on efficacy of the education reforms and new practices. In addition, they conveyed that they need time and support to implement new practices.

The need for transformative and rejuvenating experiences was expressed by veteran teachers. Veteran teachers shared a need to gain a deeper understanding and application of their practice. They expressed appreciation for mentors and trainers who encourage veteran teachers to be open and vulnerable, an often-challenging experience. Veteran teachers spoke honestly about how difficult it is for them to be open minded when they feel like they have all of the answers after decades in the classroom. Veteran teachers would like to have input on the professional development they receive, such as a freedom of choice in the type and area of professional development, along with more individualized training. *One size fits all* professional development creates feelings of disrespect when teachers' limited time is wasted. They expressed a desire to set professional goals for themselves and a need for non-judgmental support to encourage risk taking as they strive to improve the efficacy of their teaching practice. Veteran teachers in this study voiced numerous areas of need that they perceived were unmet in

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their current school settings but were supported in their experience of comprehensive formal mentoring.

Implications for Administrators, Schools, Districts

The findings on the perceptions of veteran teachers have implications for administrators, schools, and districts. Three main implications emerged from the perceptions of veteran teachers: (a) veteran teachers benefit from comprehensive formal mentor programs, (b) veteran teachers agree that teaching in urban settings is far more challenging than suburban, non-Title 1 schools, and (c) administrative support is vital to retaining teachers in urban, Title 1 settings.

Based on the participants in this sample, comprehensive formal mentoring is a much-needed support to mitigate stress, burnout, and attrition experienced by veteran teachers. After participation in the mentoring program, the teachers perceived decreased student stress, decreased teacher isolation, decreased stress from education reform, and increased teacher autonomy. It is clear that veteran teachers are in need of greater support and perceive comprehensive formal mentoring as a support that meets their needs.

Offering more comprehensive supports for teachers in challenging Title 1 school settings would benefit administrators, schools, and districts. All teachers expressed positive perceptions on comprehensive formal mentoring as support for urban, Title 1 school settings. However, many teachers did not feel that comprehensive formal mentoring alone would mitigate teacher migration in urban Title 1 school settings. Strong administrative support in addition to comprehensive formal mentoring is needed to stem the tide of teacher attrition. The combination of a full-time mentor program, backed by a supportive administrator and collaborative team, could be the necessary mitigating factor to address the ongoing problem of teacher migration.

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Implications for Policy

This study has implications for future policy in fair and ethical practices of administrators, in adopting research-based practices, and in offering more comprehensive formal mentoring support for implementation of education reform. In this study, participants spoke about being bullied, humiliated, and mistreated by administration, resulting in attrition or migration to other schools. However, when teachers migrate to another school, that does not solve the problem of unethical practices by administrators.

The role of the administrators in the success of comprehensive formal mentor program is clear from the results of this study. Additional qualitative and quantitative studies are recommended to investigate situations of misuse of administrative authority and presence of unfair and unethical administrative practices. These studies may inform policy advances to ensure administrators are not overstepping their authority with intimidation practices but rather they are guided by fair and ethical, more supportive leadership practices.

Veteran teachers have experienced excessive education reform. Administrators, districts, and policy makers may benefit from being reminded that, when education reform is implemented, veteran teachers will have greater buy-in if they experience greater perceived choice and are provided research-based practice, differentiated professional development, and comprehensive support resources. Education reforms, such as the CCSS (an overhaul of the standards, practices, and accountability assessments throughout the nation), require large-scale support for successful mastery. It is recommended that veteran teachers be offered comprehensive formal mentoring as a resource to support successful implementation of large-scale education reform.

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In addition, this study may have implications for organizations dedicated to giving voice to veteran teachers, such as Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) at the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. Organization like ILC, who are deeply interested in the organic views and experiences of veteran teachers in the classroom, may benefit from the findings in this study. Findings that indicate comprehensive formal mentoring supports the needs of veteran teachers may inform policy decisions and allocation of funds. In addition, comprehensive formal mentoring in conjunction with a supportive administration may be a mitigating factor for attrition in urban, Title 1 school settings. These findings that arose from the voices of veteran teachers may be of interest to ground level organizations, such as the ILC.

Implications for Mentoring Programs

A comprehensive formal mentor framework could serve as a viable option for schools and districts when designing support programs for veteran teachers. A mentor program may support veteran teachers who experience feelings of stress, burnout, and teacher migration. Veteran teachers who are in challenging, urban settings may benefit from a comprehensive formal mentor framework, in conjunction with strong administrative support, to mitigate feelings of stress, burnout, and teacher migration.

Key facets that should be considered when designing mentorship programs for veteran teachers are setting up the foundational and essential requirements of the program. The optional components of the program may be implemented when funds are available.

Foundational Components

Fundamental to the success of a mentor program is a supportive administration, or administrators who have been trained in supportive leadership. It is also recommended that clear goals are established to provide supportive, yet hands-off, leadership to allow veteran teachers

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room to explore their new practice. Administrators are encouraged to observe classrooms and attend professional development. They are encouraged to become familiar with the desired pedagogy to guide supportive, in-depth conversations, and obtain understanding of the learning taking place within their teaching staff. Veteran teachers who experience comprehensive formal mentoring commonly spend two or more years in the mentoring program to transform their teacher practice. Success of the mentorship program is aided by consistent, supportive leadership without change or movement in the administration. An unsupportive administration or leadership change may disrupt this foundational component of supportive leadership in comprehensive formal mentoring. Implementing these recommendations will allow administrators to support teachers throughout the duration of their mentor program and establish the foundational conditions of a successful outcome.

Providing a fully released mentor and mentor training are additional key facets of setting up the foundational components. Fundamental to the success of the program are mentors who have been released from the classroom and whose sole responsibilities are related to supporting the needs of veteran teachers. Prior to, and throughout the mentor program, it is recommended that mentors receive continued training in the coaching cycle (Costa, 2002), adult learning theory, and a partnership approach to mentoring (Knight, 2009; Richter et al., 2013; Zuckerman, 2001). Selecting mentors with experience and expertise in the desired pedagogy is recommended. For example, if schools or districts are striving for a school wide change in the mathematical practice of cognitively guided instruction (CGI), selecting mentors who are not only familiar with CGI, but also have mastered CGI in their own classrooms and are comfortable modeling and coteaching the mathematical practice with other faculty, is recommended.

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The mentor duties may also include leading schoolwide professional development in the desired teaching practices. It may be beneficial to select mentors from the school site when seeking someone who is familiar with staff, students, families and the school culture. However, it may also be beneficial to select a mentor outside the school site when mentor expertise is not yet available.

The title *mentor* is often used. However, a couple of districts selected a less hierarchical title, such as *Teaching, Learning, Partnership (TLP)*. Choosing a title that both staff and administration perceive as appropriate is recommended. The most important facets of the foundational components of a comprehensive formal mentor program are selecting supportive administrators and providing a fully released mentor who receives ongoing mentor training throughout the mentorship.

Essential Components

Providing a mentor and a coaching cycle (i.e., goal setting, planning, modeling, coteaching, and debriefing) are absolutely essential components of a successful mentor program. Choice and differentiation are at the forefront of each segment within the coaching cycle. It is recommended to allow veteran teachers choice and voice in goal setting and the specific area of growth, when possible. Allowing veteran teachers choice and differentiation of professional development of teacher practices creates greater buy in. Establishing weekly planning times and encouraging that a minimum number of hours each week be spent in the coaching cycle will increase positive outcomes for teachers (Stanulis & Floden, 2009).

Optional Components

Providing substitute days for observation and professional development could be costly and may not be affordable for all schools or districts implementing a comprehensive formal

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mentor program. For this reason, these components are optional allowing a district to expand or contract components of support according to financial situations. If funds allow, it is recommended that five to ten paid days be offered to release teachers from their classroom to observe exemplary instruction in the desired pedagogy. Schools and districts may choose to utilize outside organizations that offer professional development or provide their own professional development within the school site or district. Observations rather than online videos are powerful learning experiences for veteran teachers. The idea is to allow teachers to observe the practice in action in a real classroom setting with students. A professional development prior to the observation prepares teachers for what they will see. A reflective debriefing afterward clarifies and solidifies the learning that took place. Although these components may be costly, many teachers in this sample pointed to the benefit and powerful learning they experienced through observations and professional development.

In addition to professional development, collaboration is recommended as an optional component. The thinking behind *optional collaboration* as an added component is that although collaboration is essential for increasing teacher efficacy, many schools have already done a great deal of work in building capacity for collaboration within and across grade levels. Therefore, if this component was added later, veteran teachers would still have opportunities for collaboration at their school site. Interestingly, in this study, veteran teachers perceived less need for collaboration, but they expressed great appreciation for the collaboration they received. This may mean that many layers and levels of collaboration are helpful in supporting veteran teachers.

If the funds are available, it is recommended to provide an inquiry group for the cohort of teachers experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring. This group would preferably meet for two to three hours after school, at least once a month. This time is perceived as beneficial for

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discussion on the current stages of growth teachers are experiencing. In addition, many teachers felt that it was valuable to have a book study on their shared subject of interest during inquiry collaboration. For example, if teachers chose CGI in mathematics as a focus, a professional book by Megan Franke might be suitable for a book study for this group of veteran teachers. The mentor might facilitate the group, guide them through the content and encourage teacher commitments of trying out new practices in their own classroom.

If teachers chose to explore new practices inspired by observation and professional development or from the book study within the inquiry group, the mentors may follow up through the coaching cycle. The mentors may plan the lesson with veteran teachers, model, coteach, or observe veteran teachers trying out new practices and then provide feedback during the debrief and reflection time.

These recommended key aspects of a mentor program are based on the literature and the findings in this study. A comprehensive formal mentor framework could serve as a practical application for schools and districts to support veteran teachers who experience feelings of stress, burnout, and attrition. A comprehensive formal mentor framework, in conjunction with strong administrative support, could serve as a practical application to mitigate burnout and retain veteran teachers in challenging, urban settings.

Implications for Sustainability of Comprehensive Formal Mentoring

In addition, according to the findings in this study, comprehensive formal mentoring may have sustainability as a form of support for veteran teachers. Veteran teachers with 12 to 32 years of experience, and a critical eye toward professional development, reported that the formal mentoring experience was one of the most meaningful and transforming professional development experiences in their career. Many participants in this study experienced

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comprehensive formal mentoring a decade or more prior to participating in this study, and yet they expressed that comprehensive formal mentoring continues to benefit their teaching. That is, even if veteran teachers are only involved in the comprehensive formal mentoring program for a comparably small percentage of their teaching career, the benefits of that experience continue to reverberate for many years to come. For this reason, comprehensive formal mentoring may offer a level of support that provides sustainability for veteran teachers.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future research on comprehensive formal mentoring is recommended in four main areas: administrative support, reasons for teacher migration, dehumanizing environments, and empirical data on student achievement. First, future research on the relationship between comprehensive formal mentoring and administrative support is recommended. Much of this study explored teachers' perceptions of experiencing comprehensive formal mentoring in which administrative support is a component in the framework. However, when administrative support is lacking, particularly in urban, Title 1 settings, comprehensive formal mentoring may not mitigate teacher migration. Future research should explore comprehensive formal mentoring, in partnership with strong administrative leadership, as a mitigating factor for attrition and teacher migration. One possibility would be comparative quantitative studies on comprehensive formal mentoring with strong administration in urban, Title 1 settings as compared to urban, Title 1 settings that do not receive comprehensive formal mentoring. A comparison study would provide stronger data to support future implementations of comprehensive formal mentor programs.

Second, future studies on deeper exploration of motivations for leaving schools in urban settings is recommended. The aim of this study was only to uncover veteran teachers' perceptions regarding comprehensive formal mentoring. Exploring why teachers migrate away

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from urban, Title 1 settings was outside the scope of this study. Therefore, additional and in-depth qualitative studies should be conducted to explore reasons why veteran teachers migrate from urban, Title 1 schools to non-Title 1 schools. This would inform stronger support systems to increase teacher retention in urban settings.

Third, future research could focus on the effects of teaching in an environment that veteran teachers perceive as dehumanizing. Veteran teachers expressed strong feelings about working in an environment that felt was disrespectful and even dehumanizing to teachers. Future research is recommended to explore the conditions that are perceived as dehumanizing and supports to cultivate a more humanizing working environment.

Last, future research is recommended to explore student achievement gains after veteran teachers participate in comprehensive formal mentoring. In this current study, veteran teachers self-reported achievement gains in reading, writing, and mathematics. Future quantitative studies that use a pre and posttest methodology are recommended to explore increased student motivation, student engagement, understanding in number sense, increased achievement in literacy, and mathematics after receiving comprehensive formal mentoring and strong administrative support in urban, Title 1 schools. Studies providing empirical data for increased achievement after participating in comprehensive formal mentoring could support future policies for administrators and districts.

Limitations

The design of this study contains several potential limitations. First, a purposive, criterion based, snowball sample with the sample size of 20 participants sourced from school districts in Southern California is not generalizable to larger populations. Another limitation of the phenomenological design is the self-reporting of information by the participants, who relied on

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memory for accuracy. Participants drew from experiences ranging from the current year to over a decade ago. An additional limitation is sampling bias; teachers with less than positive experiences may have chosen not to participate. The researcher sought to include teachers who already left the profession by mid-career attrition or early retirement. However, through the limitations of snowball sampling, none were identified.

The researcher also acted as the primary data-collecting instrument; this necessitates the identification of her personal values, assumptions, and biases at the outset of the study to keep an open mind as the research was conducted (Creswell, 2014). In addition, there were no incentives to participate in this study. Perhaps if incentives were offered, more teachers with less than positive experiences may have offered to participate. Last, this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic; therefore, no interviews could be conducted in person. All interviews were conducted online via *Zoom.us*. Although, this did not impact or limit the number of teachers who participated in this study, limitations, such as a perceived lack of privacy may have occurred.

Conclusion

Twenty veteran teachers provided rich insight of their experience of participating in comprehensive formal mentoring which is rarely offered to veteran teachers. Many veteran teachers shared that the experience of participating in formal mentoring exceeded their expectations and was perceived as amazing, transformative, and rejuvenating. Participating teachers perceived positive outcomes for teachers and students as a result of the mentoring experience. Positive student outcomes of engagement, motivation, stronger understanding, and achievement gains were reported. The overwhelmingly positive experiences of veteran teachers indicate that comprehensive formal mentoring is a strong support for teachers who experience

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the five most salient reasons for teacher stress and burnout. Veteran teachers reported that stress was mitigated with increased student support, greater autonomy, deeper understanding of education reforms, increased meaningful collaboration, and mixed perceptions of reduced stress were perceived for lack of administrative support.

Connections between comprehensive formal mentoring and teacher retention are more difficult to separate. Teachers expressed feelings of support to remain at their school, district, and in the profession of teaching as a result of participating in the comprehensive formal mentor program. However, they also point to compensation (e.g., salary and pension) as a strong source of motivation to remain in the profession. Although salary and pension compensation may keep teachers in the profession, monetary compensation does not mitigate stress, burnout or teacher migration. If stress and burnout are still present, teachers and students continue to suffer negative outcomes. In addition, teachers may continue to seek opportunities to migrate out of urban, Title 1 settings for schools with better working conditions, which also negatively impacts high-needs students. Consequently, this points to a need for supports that go beyond monetary compensation and provide additional comprehensive teacher support for mitigating burnout and attrition.

Participants also shared their perspectives of additional supports needed for veteran teachers who work in urban settings. Of the participating veteran teachers, 90% worked in urban, Title 1 schools. Drawing on that experience, veteran teachers perceived that working in urban, Title 1 settings was much more challenging when compared to suburban, non-Title 1 settings. They expressed a need for increased support, choice, differentiation in professional development, and greater autonomy in the classroom. Veteran teachers reported that they believe stronger supports are needed within the staff, such as the placement of fully released mentors as full-time staff to support teachers serving urban, Title 1 schools. In addition to being provided a fully

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released mentor, collaboration, observations, and professional development in standards-based instructional practices are perceived as the most effective teacher support to mitigate stress, burnout, and retain teachers. Last, it is crucial that teachers in challenging, Title 1 school settings have a highly trained, supportive administration. According to this sample, comprehensive formal mentoring alone may not mitigate the stress of an unsupportive administration, particularly in cases of administrators' misuse of authority. However, a supportive administrator in partnership with a comprehensive formal mentor program may mitigate the serious problem of teacher migration that negatively impacts high-needs students.

In summary, veteran teachers perceive comprehensive formal mentoring to be an essential support to mitigate stress and rejuvenate the career of teachers. They also perceive comprehensive formal mentoring in conjunction with supportive administration as a possible solution to teacher migration in urban settings. Veteran teachers recognize that they are in a profession that requires a commitment to lifelong learning. They ask for professional autonomy and professional respect as they adapt and grow within an ever-changing profession. Like the rooted tree placed in new soil, when given comprehensive resources, time, and handled with care, they too will grow and flourish.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participation Survey

1. Name
2. Have you participated in being mentored? If so, what were the dates?
3. How frequently did you meet with your mentor?
4. On average, how much time did you spend one to one with your mentor each week?
5. How frequently and for how much time did you plan lessons with your mentor?
6. How frequently and for how much time were you observed in the classroom?
7. How frequently and for how much time did you debrief classroom observations?
8. How frequently and for how much time did your mentor co-teach or model lessons?
9. How frequently and for how much time were you released from your classroom to observe exemplary or new teaching methods?
10. How frequently and for how much time did you meet with a group of teachers after or before school, to collaborate or discuss as a professional learning community?
11. How frequently and for how much time were you released from your classroom to observe exemplary or new teaching methods?
12. Would you be willing to participate in an in-depth interview on your experience in this mentor program?

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Appendix B: Demographic Form

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age
4. Ethnicity
5. How long have you been teaching?
6. How long have you been teaching at this school_____ and district?
7. What grade levels have you taught?
8. What is your highest degree?
9. What other degrees or certifications do you hold?

Appendix C: Matrix of Research and Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Question
1. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring?	1. As a highly experienced veteran teacher with ten or more years in the classroom when you received comprehensive formal mentoring, what are your perceptions, thoughts and experiences of receiving comprehensive formal mentoring?
2. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of the most effective aspects of comprehensive formal mentoring that meet the needs of veteran teachers?	2. If you were to design a mentoring program to support highly experienced veteran teachers like yourself, what would you include or leave out?
3. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for teacher stress and burnout?	3. Prior to participating in the mentor program, have you experienced stress and burnout? If so... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have you felt stress due to student relationships? Was there a shift in your relationship with students as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support your relationships with students? Have you felt isolated as a teacher in the classroom prior to the mentor program? Was there a shift in your perception of teacher isolation as result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program decrease teacher isolation? Have you felt stress from administration? Was there a shift in your relationship with your administrator as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways

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	<p>did the mentor program support your relationships with your administrator?</p> <p>d. Have you felt stress from education reform? Was there a shift in your level of stress regarding education reform as result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support you with education reform?</p> <p>e. Have you felt a loss of teacher autonomy? Was there a shift in your perception of teacher autonomy as a result of participating in the mentor program? If so, in what ways did the mentor program support teacher autonomy for you?</p>
4. What are veteran teachers' perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of comprehensive formal mentoring as a mitigating factor for attrition, including teacher migration and early retirement?	4. Have you ever considered leaving your school for a different school or district, taking an early retirement or leaving the teaching profession altogether? If so, have your perception, thoughts and experiences changed during or after participating in the mentor program?
Additional probes used during the interview process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me more about that? • Can you clarify that? • Can you expand on that? • What part of that experience was significant? • What did the mentor or program specifically do to help you?
5. In what ways do the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers differ as a function of teaching in urban, Title 1 versus non-Title 1 schools.	No additional interview questions for research question #5. The researcher used the demographic survey in combination with the interview responses to analyze this research questions.

Appendix D: IRB Consent Form

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *COMPREHENSIVE FORMAL MENTORING INTERVIEW* (IRB # 3553)

You are invited to participate in research on the mentoring of veteran teachers. Volunteering will not benefit you directly, but you will be helping the investigators to research the perceptions, thoughts and experiences of veteran teachers who have participated in a comprehensive formal mentor program. If you decide to volunteer, you will participate in one brief survey and possibly another brief survey along with an in-depth interview. Your participation will take approximately 45 to 60 minutes of your time. Volunteering for this study involves no more risk than what a typical person experiences on a regular day. Your involvement is entirely up to you. You may withdraw at any time for any reason. Please continue reading for more information about the study.

STUDY LEADERSHIP: This research project is led by Heidi Akin, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Educational Studies of the Claremont Graduate University, who is being supervised by Dr. Thomas Luschei, Dissertation Advisor, School of Educational Studies.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of veteran teachers who have received comprehensive formal mentoring.

ELIGIBILITY: In addition to 10 years of teaching experience teaching, K-12, teachers must have also experienced at least one year of formal mentoring to participate in this study.

PARTICIPATION: During the study, you will be asked to answer questions about your experience in comprehensive formal mentoring. This will take about 45 to 60 minutes in total. The first brief survey will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions such as "How often did your mentor observe your instruction? And "How often did you debrief with your mentor?" If you meet the criteria, you will be asked to complete another brief survey. The second survey will take about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions such as, "How many years have you been teaching?" Last, you will participate in an in-depth interview. This will take about 30 to 45 minutes. You will ask questions such as, "What are your perceptions, thoughts and experiences on participating in a formal mentor program?"

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: There are minimal risks by taking part in this study. To minimize the possibility of an inconvenience of time, we will meet at the time and location of your choice. Also, to minimize the risk of a breach of confidentiality, we will make every effort to protect your confidentiality. We will not reveal your identity. Only the researcher and the dissertation chair will review the data. We will use pseudo names and protect all data we collect. We will also delete all emails, recordings and data collected after their research purpose is served.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION: We do not expect the study to benefit you personally. This study will benefit the researcher(s) by providing insight into the experiences of veteran teachers who participated in a comprehensive formal mentor program.

COMPENSATION: You will not be directly compensated for participating in this study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop or withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any particular question for any reason at

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CGU Adult Consent Form Template

any time without it being held against you. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no effect on your current or future connection with anyone at CGU.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your individual privacy will be protected in all papers, books, talks, posts, or stories resulting from this study. We may use the data we collect for future research or share it with other researchers, but we will not reveal your identity with it. In order to protect the confidentiality of your responses, we will not use your name or other identifying information. An audio recorder will be used while the researcher also takes notes during the interview. Audio recordings will be transcribed and used for research purposes. Only the researcher and Dr. Luschei, the dissertation chair will have access to the data. We will erase such recordings and delete all notes when their research purposes are served after transcribing, coding and summarizing them in order to protect participant privacy.

SPONSORSHIP: This study is not sponsored.

FURTHER INFORMATION: If you have any questions or would like additional information about this study, please contact Heidi Akin at 714 329-4305 or Heidi.Akin@cgu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Thomas Luschei at Thomas.Luschei@cgu.edu. The CGU Institutional Review Board has approved this project certified this project as exempt. If you have any ethical concerns about this project or about your rights as a human subject in research, you may contact the CGU IRB at (909) 607-9406 or at irb@cgu.edu. A copy of this form will be given to you if you wish to keep it.

CONSENT: Your signature below means that you understand the information on this form, that someone has answered any and all questions you may have about this study, and you voluntarily agree to participate in it.

Signature of Participant _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Participant _____

[If Applicable:] The undersigned researcher has reviewed the information in this consent form with the participant and answered any of his or her questions about the study.

Signature of Researcher _____ Heidi Akin _____ Date _____
Printed Name of Researcher _____ *Heidi Akin* _____