Assignment #2: Synthesis and the Research Gap

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There are many challenges that an educator faces each and every day. Some of these challenges are things that can cause an educator to want to leave the classroom setting and look for employment elsewhere or to retire completely. It is important that states such as South Carolina look at the challenges that teachers are facing and understand what is causing teachers to want to leave the classroom setting. Understanding what is causing teachers to leave the education field can allow states to try to address the exodus that is taking place within the education field in states such as South Carolina.

In the articles that have been identified to be included as part of the dissertation, the statement of common findings is that there is an issue within the field of education of teachers losing motivation to teach or leaving the field at alarming rates. On average, about 20% of all educators leave the field of education each year (Hammonds, 2017). One of the issues resulting from teachers leaving the profession is the amount of money that it takes to hire a new teacher, train them, and prepare them for the classroom setting (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017). The majority of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017). Some of the issues that have been identified in the past that can have an effect on teacher retention are morale of the teacher and the school as a whole, the amount of training and mentorship that a teacher gets, and the amount of communication that takes place between teachers and other stakeholders involved such as parents and the school administration.

In analyzing all the research articles, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. Some of the conclusions that can be made are that morale, training and mentoring programs, and communication are important to teacher retention and keeping teachers within the classroom setting. If these issues are ignored then it is possible that the amount of teachers leaving the profession could get even increase and it could become even more difficult to staff schools across the country. If school systems and states concentrate on these three areas, then it is possible that fewer teachers will look to leave the classroom setting.

In the education field, morale is extremely important to the success of a teacher. Morale within any organization, especially an educational institution, is important; low morale can cause a teacher to consider leaving the profession. Additionally, educators who have low morale are more likely to have lower achievement rates for students on assessments (Abazaoglu & Aztekin, 2016). Educators who are motivated to work, have higher morale, and are not concentrating on leaving the field of education tend to have higher assessment scores for students in the classroom (Abazaoglu & Aztekin, 2016). Employees such as educators who are stressed or have low morale are more likely to consider leaving an organization and looking for another job (Çelik, 2018). Educators who have bad classroom control have been found to be more stressed and have lower morale (Bowen, Marx, Williams, & Napoleon Jr., 2017). The teachers who have bad classroom control are more likely to look at leaving the classroom setting over someone who has better classroom control (Bowen, Marx, Williams, & Napoleon Jr., 2017).

Training and mentoring are also critical for teacher retention. Employees who are trained are more likely to have higher morale and are less likely to look at leaving a position (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018). Employees who are trained on how to handle many different issues that could pop up in the work environment are less likely to quit their jobs because they will not get stressed out as easily (Beynon, Jones, Pickernell, & Packham, 2015). Schools that have good training and support systems in place by the administration have higher teacher retention rates (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018). Educators who felt like they were not doing their job alone were more likely to stay within the education profession, and educators who felt like they had someone that they could go to in the event that they felt like they were having a difficult time at school were less likely to leave the education field (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018). Educators who have been given more training either while attending school or by the school that they are employed at are more likely to stay within the education system a longer amount of time (Bibi, Ahmad, & Majid, 2018). Schools that place a strong emphasis on mentor programs for new teachers tend to have higher employee retention rates (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi, & Cocoran, 2017).

Another important aspect of teacher retention is having good communication in place between all of the stakeholders involved. Schools that foster positive employee and supervisor relationships tend to have higher employee retention rates (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi, & Cocoran, 2017). Turnover of teachers is higher in schools that have bad teacher and administration relationships (Covella, McCarthy, Kaifi, & Cocoran, 2017). Teachers that feel like they are part of a team and have positive relationships with their peers and administration are less likely to want to leave the teaching field (Hammonds, 2017). Institutions of education need to foster positive relationships among the administration and teachers in order to reduce employee turnover. Teachers who feel like they are not included in the decision making process are more likely to feel less valued and more likely to consider looking to move to another school or job completely (Faremi, 2017). One of the strategies that has been used to improve teacher retention has been having meaningful communication between teachers and the administration of the school (Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell, 2017). Many teachers leave the profession because there is a lack of communication between the various stakeholders involved, and the teachers feel like they are by themselves in the classroom setting (Dupriez, Delvaux, & Lothaire, 2016).

It is important to understand how all of these studies help inform the research gap of the doctoral student’s dissertation that will be conducted. All of the studies show that there is indeed the need to determine what is causing teachers to leave the profession in the state of South Carolina. Hammonds (2017) pointed out that there was a need for more research in other states to determine what is causing educators to leave the field. This view by the author was supported by Papay, Bacher-Hicks, Page, & Marinell (2017) in which there is a need to figure out what is causing so many teachers to leave the profession in this day and age. The other research that has discussed in this paper shows that it is important to determine if morale, training and mentor programs, and communication are issues that need to be analyzed in order to reduce the amount of teachers leaving the profession. It is important to determine if stress, morale and training are issues that are causing educators to look at leaving the classroom setting within the state of South Carolina. Carrying out a dissertation study on what is causing educators to look at leaving the classroom setting in the state of South Carolina can help add some much needed data to this field of study.

Educators have shown some of the reasons why they are leaving the classroom setting in other states. However, there has been little research on the causes of teachers leaving the profession in the state of South Carolina. It is therefore important to carry out research on teacher retention in South Carolina. As a result, this dissertation would focus upon the reasons and issues that are causing educators to leave the education field or to be thinking about leaving the field of education within the state of South Carolina. Several different areas have been identified that require better understanding and consideration in regards to identifying and addressing some of the causes that could lead someone to want to leave the teaching profession.

There are many challenges that an educator faces on a daily basis. Some of these issues can end up causing the educator to look at leaving the field. It is important that research is conducted in the state of South Carolina in order to determine what is causing teachers to leave the classroom setting. Determining why teachers are leaving the field of education can allow the state to potentially address the exodus that is taking place within the field. If the research is not conducted, educators will likely continue to leave the field because steps are not being taken to address the issues and concerns that are causing educators to leave the profession as a whole.

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