The Satisfaction of New Teachers with Induction and Mentoring in a Local School System

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study sought to gauge the satisfaction of the induction and mentoring process received by new teachers in an upper East Tennessee school district. The sample consisted of eight teachers from three elementary schools and two secondary schools. The teachers selected had six or fewer years of teaching experience. The research was guided by four research questions and data were collected using Google Meet interviews with participants. The data collected were used to determine how prepared new teachers felt in the classroom, what kind of support they felt they received, how they perceived communication from administration, and what needs they felt were unfilled. The data revealed teachers in this district did not feel prepared when they first entered the classroom, with three common themes emerging. These were insufficient pre-service preparedness, a lack of formal induction process by the district, and a lack of rules and procedures training at the school level. Data further determined that no support was given regarding stressful situations in the classroom. Also, new teachers felt that their support came primarily from their peers. Regarding satisfaction level with administration, one common theme observed from the data was that communication and support by the administration were directly related to the participating teachers' satisfaction level. A major conclusion of the research yielded two themes regarding the unfulfilled needs of new teachers: mentor input and support, as well as observational feedback from administration and lead teachers. With proactive attention to these needs, a strategy can be put in place to create a formal induction and mentoring process for new teachers.

Keywords: new teachers, induction, mentoring

DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated…

To my husband, Shane: God brought you to me many years ago and I am so thankful for you. You have always encouraged me to chase my dreams. You have supported me through this process with love, positive words, laughter, and a shoulder to cry on. You have believed in me when I did not believe in myself. I am so grateful for the sacrifices you made for me during this time. Thank you for being a wonderful husband and best friend. I love you more than you will ever know.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

New teachers enter their first classroom filled with excitement. The knowledge they gained in their pre-service education plus the desire to make a difference in the lives of students fuels their enthusiasm. Unfortunately, the shift from being a pre-service teacher assisting in a classroom to a professional teacher in charge of a classroom is overwhelming for many new teachers. While other professions have the luxury of adapting and learning the intricacies of the job, teaching does not provide that luxury. The first year of teaching can be very demanding. It is during this time that a new teacher must learn to deal with things such as instruction, assessment, and classroom management. "Being a novice teacher is a challenging and difficult position to be in. My first-year teaching was an emotional roller coaster filled with nerves, exhilaration, and uncertainty" (Clark, 2012, p. 197).

In many cases, new teachers are expected to teach with the confidence and knowledge of a twenty-year veteran teacher (Manning, 2012). Many new teachers work alone in their classrooms, therefore feeling isolated while trying to meet these expectations. New teachers are normally allowed a learning curve, but the support they need isn't always there. Without a strong support system, many new teachers struggle with the implementation of the knowledge and skills they learned in their preparation. Research suggests that the expectations of what new teachers perceive teaching to be and the actual reality of teaching are very different (Botwinik & Press, 2013). Many teachers find themselves in a "sink or swim" situation. The isolation, along with the weight of expectations has led to an increase of teachers leaving the classroom within the first five years (Manning, 2012.)

When new teacher begins their career with negative experiences, their future growth as an educator can be limited (Brown, et al., 2020). In addition to negative experiences, many new teachers begin their careers without a formal training program. Some school districts abandon new teacher training altogether due to time constraints, lack of money, or both. As a result, new teachers can get frustrated and ultimately become ineffective. "Failing to support early career teachers is detrimental to the profession not just because some of those with the strongest potential among them may leave, but also because those who stay behind can be hindered in their goal of becoming the teachers students deserve" (Brown, et al., 2020, p. 2).

Induction is defined as the support and guidance provided to new teachers in the early stages of their careers. New teacher induction and mentor programs have become a fundamental component of new teacher satisfaction and success. A high-quality induction program can impact an entire teaching career. Not only does it reduce the number of teachers who leave the profession, but it puts the teacher on a path to positive professional growth. Utilizing high-quality programs to integrate, coach, and support new teachers has shown to increase satisfaction, thereby increasing teacher success (Martin, et al., 2015). Some high-quality induction programs have evolved from simply helping a new teacher survive the first year to becoming part of a professional learning culture (Feiman-Nemser, 2012). A high-quality program should not only promote professional development but also improve the quality of teaching and learning for all involved. Three fundamental factors of the long-term success of new teachers include mentoring, collaboration, and ongoing professional learning. Ingersoll (2012) found that the strength and number of supports the new teacher participated in aided in that teacher's retention.

Mentoring is a large part of new teacher induction programs. Research states that much of the success of retention of new teachers is directly related to the effectiveness of mentor relationships (Martin, et al., 2015). Mentoring in education is defined as, "personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools" (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 9). Nationally, two-thirds of teachers report having participated in a teacher induction program and 71 percent of those teachers report having a mentor (Martin, et al., 2015). Those numbers are impressive but can also be deceiving. Teachers have reported that the relationship between themselves and their mentor played a significant role in their success but also their failure.

When a struggling new teacher was asked about her relationship with her mentor, she responded, "I figured it out that I don't have a relationship with this woman and I don't trust her to come into my room and observe me and really get what is going on because she hasn't been around" (Martin, et al., 2015, p. 6). On the other hand, teachers who have a successful relationship with their mentors report feeling comfortable collaborating with them. A successful new teacher said about her mentor, "He gives me a ton of positive feedback to the point that I am more and more honest about what I am doing and seeking feedback. So, I've developed the confidence to try new things" (Martin, et al., 2015, p. 6). By tailoring a mentorship program to each new teacher's individual needs, a mentor can impact a teacher's career.

Collaboration is also an essential element of a high-quality induction program. It makes a notable difference by giving the teacher support, insight, and a feeling of belonging. If new teachers are not supported by their colleagues, they can become frustrated and overwhelmed. Many new teachers report that understanding the curriculum and appropriate instructional strategies ranks high on the list of their priorities (Martin, et al., 2015). Participating in

curriculum and instruction discussions (formal or informal) with colleagues provides strong support for new teachers. By collaborating on topics such as lesson planning, assessment, student work, and pedagogy, new teachers can gain insights from more experienced colleagues (McIlheran, 2018).

High-quality and ongoing professional learning is also essential to a high-quality new teacher induction program. A high-quality professional learning program allows teachers to continuously reflect on teaching practices that directly affect student learning (Timperley, 2011). Professional learning takes on many forms. It can include formal meetings that address an important topic for new teachers. It can also include fewer formal methods of learning, such as allowing a new teacher to visit a veteran teacher's classroom to observe. Many new teachers report this process to be extremely helpful. The opportunity to observe how a veteran teacher handles instruction, assessment, and classroom management provides a model for the new teacher to utilize (Martin, et al., 2015). The ultimate goal of ongoing professional learning is to provide a learning environment that will cultivate new teachers' growth.

Many school districts offer induction and mentoring programs but overall, seem to lack the quality needed for teacher success. A 2019 review by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. reveals that many novice teachers report they need more support than they are currently receiving. The analysis shows that many teachers feel less than very well prepared in areas such as teaching their assigned content, various instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, and student assessment (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). New teachers are struggling with preparedness, are overwhelmed, and are not receiving enough support.

High-quality induction can enhance a teaching practice at the time when teachers most need it. Actively addressing areas of concern provided by novice teachers and providing the

support they need will help build a strong foundation. This ultimately results in a stronger education experience for students (Clark, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

As new teachers begin their careers, they are often overwhelmed with the reality of the classroom and administrative responsibilities. Providing new teachers with a formal induction and mentoring program has proven to result in higher teacher confidence and satisfaction (Martin, et al., 2015). Currently, the rural district in this study does not have a formal induction or mentoring program. This warrants investigation of new teacher satisfaction and retention in the district, as well as recommendations based on new teacher feedback, that will provide the support needed for success.

Purpose of the Study

Retaining new teachers and helping them become highly effective is a benefit to students, schools, and school districts. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2021), the district in this research had an enrollment of 9,464 students for the 2019-2020 school year. They employed 634.60 teachers during this same school year. Individual interviews will be conducted with approximately 8 new teachers in the district who have six years or less experience. The interviews will first focus on the type of induction and mentoring process the teacher received, if any. Then, the interviews will ask about areas such as preparedness, support, communication from administration, and overall satisfaction of the program.

Significance of the Study

This study is designed to gauge the satisfaction levels of new teachers in a rural school district in Northeast Tennessee and use that information to form recommendations to that district. This study is to first provide information to the district as to the satisfaction of new teachers

regarding the support they have received. This program hopes to improve teacher success in this rural district by providing tools to support new teachers, highlight their strengths, make them highly effective, and retain them in the district.

Initial Research Questions

What is the satisfaction level of new teachers in the district as far as the induction and mentoring process?

How prepared do the new teachers feel for the classroom?

What kind of supports did the new teachers receive?

How satisfied are the new teachers with the communication from the administration?

What are areas of need for new teachers?

Limitations

Limitations of the research include voluntary research participants. Some concerns are participants not completing surveys, not participating in interviews, or not being forthcoming with their job concerns. Some participants may resist being recorded during an interview. The ultimate concern in this study is participants withdrawing from the study before the research is complete.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and any limitations the study may have. Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature, focusing on research of teacher satisfaction and successful induction programs. Chapter 3 details the research procedures of the study, as well as initial research questions. It also discusses the collection and analysis of data.

Chapter 4 includes the results of the study, as well as the response of the researcher. Chapter 5 includes the discussion of results, as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This research aims to investigate new teachers' perceptions of the mentoring process they received. Then, the focus will shift to recommendations for the school district. Therefore, Chapter Two of this study provides a thorough investigation of the literature relevant to the study's overall purpose.

Teacher Mentoring

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the verb mentor means "to help and give advice to a younger or less experienced person, especially in a job or at school" (Cambridge, n.d.). Mentoring is largely acknowledged as a method of providing or imparting skills to professionals (Schulleri, 2020). Mentoring occurs when a person with more experience develops a relationship with a less experienced person and provides information, advice," and emotional support over an extended period.

Mentoring programs in education are similar to mentoring programs in business. They are designed to help new hires with job expectations, increase productivity, and increase job satisfaction. Unlike business mentoring, however, education does not seek to focus on the financial results. Rather, it seeks to produce highly effective educators who positively impact student achievement (Bowman, 2014).

History of Mentoring

Mentoring in the education field happens at different levels depending on the focus of the mentoring relationship (Schulleri, 2020). Mentoring can occur in a large group setting or in a smaller group setting that provides open conversation among new teachers. Most often, however, mentoring is one-on-one and focuses on the individual need of the teacher (Cuddapah, 2016). Many other scholars in the field of education have put forth their perspectives of the definition. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) stated, "Mentoring is the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools" (p.203). Cook (2012) describes new teacher mentoring as a process where the mentor supports the new teacher and challenges them to increase their effectiveness.

Successful teacher mentoring has shown to be grounded in relationship building. Koki (as cited by Alabi, 2017, p. 66) believed mentoring to be the following:

> "a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing, and supporting a beginning or new teacher. It is generally accepted that a mentor teacher leads, guides, and advises another teacher more junior in experience in a work situation characterized by mutual trust and belief" (p. 66).

Characteristics of an Effective Mentor

To achieve the goal of this study, it is imperative to define what makes an effective mentor. Zachary (2012) investigated this notion and declared it to be one where the "mentor and mentee work together to achieve specific, mutually defined goals that focus on developing the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking; it is in every way a learning partnership" (p. 3). Yirci (2017) expands on that notion and adds that a mentor's psychological guidance can

strengthen a teacher's self-esteem and competence, while vocational development support can improve a teacher's profession. Characteristics of a good mentor include generosity of time, a willingness to learn, an ability to praise and encourage, and openness about recognizing the limitations of their mentees (Barrera et al., 2010).

An effective mentor will have strong interpersonal skills and be able to form strong, positive relationships. Torrez and Krebs (2012) found that new teachers perceive an effective mentor as someone who creates a positive relationship with them, provides opportunities and support, and is honest, trusting, and responsible. Novice teachers also expect their mentors to listen to them, offer help, and share their personal experiences with them (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012). Being able to relate to common experiences between mentor and mentee helps forge a relationship and build trust. Effective mentors offer encouragement and continuous support, engage in open communication, and provide feedback (Izadinia, 2016).

The Importance of Teacher Mentoring

New teachers entering the field of education are often faced with many challenges. They are expected to acclimate themselves to the position, sometimes with minimal support, while also providing exemplary instruction to students. New teachers are seldom aware of the school culture, norms, and expectations. They are also unaware of their roles and how to fulfill them when they begin their first teaching assignment. The first year of teaching has often been referred to as the "year of tears" (Frykholm, 2005). As the current teacher workforce is younger, less experienced, and more diverse in preparation and experiences than the workforce of 20 years ago, research reveals inexperienced teachers are less effective (Henry et al., 2014).

Novice teachers are allowed a learning curve, of course, but the support they need isn't always there. Many new teachers face their first year with the reality of isolation having no assigned mentor, little or no professional training to develop teaching skills, and limited contact with colleagues (Bickmore, 2013). "As they become submerged in the job and isolated in their classrooms, they tend to forget some of the rewarding reasons for entering the teaching profession" (Schwan et al. 2020, p.191).

Support

School districts need to provide support for new teachers to provide job satisfaction and retain teachers. Research has shown that novice teachers who are deeply engaged with supportive and accomplished mentors are more likely to experience career satisfaction and success (Harris, 2015). Mentors "need to be reflective practitioners, know how to facilitate adult learning, as well as observe and provide feedback" (Radford, 2017, p. 3). Mentors become critical in guiding new teachers to enhance their planning, instruction, and content knowledge. Mentoring should allow new teachers to develop expertise and diminish isolation by offering stability and support (Alabi, 2017). It ultimately promotes the individual growth and development of that teacher for the ultimate benefit of student achievement. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) reviewed research studies indicating that when new teachers participated in mentoring programs, their students showed greater academic gains.

According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, "To achieve a fundamental transformation of education and help students meet the higher performance set by the common core standards, the very culture of how teachers are supported must change" (Alliance for

Excellent Education, 2014, p. 1). Research finds that teachers are the number one in-school influence on student achievement, and high teacher turnover rates hurt student achievement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Mentoring programs for new teachers have risen in popularity for school districts nationwide. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggested a gradual increase in the percentage of beginning teachers who reported participation in induction and mentoring programs over the past 20 years. One study revealed a relationship between induction and mentoring programs and teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession, especially in the beginning years (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013).

Once teachers feel they have these supports, they will have more opportunities to develop other skills crucial to their job. Teachers can now focus on issues such as classroom management, promoting positive study habits, teaching students with diverse backgrounds and abilities, supporting the emotional needs of students, and communicating with parents. When schools implement mentoring programs effectively, sharing knowledge between teachers becomes a universal benefit for students, teachers, and the school climate (Bowman, 2014).

Retention

Research has shown that organized, meaningful mentoring programs can also be beneficial in retaining teachers. According to research statistics, approximately 8% of teachers leave the profession every year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), and over one-third of teachers quit within the first five years (Schwan et al. 2020). Consequently, 92% of new teachers who worked with a mentor throughout their initial year of service returned for a second

year, and 86% of this group remained in education by the fifth year. For teachers without

mentors, 84% returned for their second year, while 71% persisted in the profession to the fifth

year (Gray et al., 2015). New teachers who participate in high-quality, comprehensive mentoring

programs have consistently shown a desire to stay in their careers (Callahan, 2016). As a result,

this reduces the financial cost and the expenditure of human resources associated with teacher

turnover (Lipton and Wellman, 2018). While it is impossible to retain every teacher who enters

the field, it is prudent for school districts to study and work to prevent teacher attrition as much

as possible (Callahan, 2016). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) stated, "Almost all of the studies that

we reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction had

higher satisfaction, commitment, or retention" (p.225). Sherratt (2017) reviewed data from Every

Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) by examining the main topics related to teacher retention. The

data determined teachers needed to feel supported to remain in the classroom. A comprehensive

mentoring program fulfills that need.

Models of Mentoring

Ingersoll (2012) discussed the importance of new teacher induction programs to enhance

teacher skills and improve new teachers' performance. The ultimate goal is to equip new teachers

with tools to improve student growth and learning. There are many different mentoring models,

but for this study's purpose, a limited number of models will be discussed.

School-Based Mentoring (Informal)

One of the most common induction programs for new teacher learning and support is a

process where a mentor (usually a veteran teacher) within the school is assigned to a new teacher

(Desimone et al., 2014). With this mentoring, new teachers have direct access to mentor teachers who can share their knowledge, making it more efficient to acquire necessary information. Support and mentoring by veteran teachers have shown to have a positive effect on beginning teachers' quality of instruction and the ability to improve their students' academic achievement (Ingersoll et al., 2014). One powerful factor for new teacher success was having a mentor who taught the same subject and had common time for planning and collaboration. (Bowman, 2014).

While there are many benefits to this type of mentoring, it is not without its drawbacks. Often, informal mentoring is based on a need at the moment instead of practical and successful classroom strategies.

School-Based Mentoring (Formal)

Formal mentoring is more systematic than informal mentoring. Informal mentoring tends to be more "at the moment" as support, whereas formal mentoring is a scheduled interaction. One benefit of formal mentoring is the ability of mentors to observe and collaborate with their new teachers, and this allows for more personalized feedback. When recruited and trained based on effectiveness, formal mentors are more apt to have the time to provide feedback and spend time with the mentee (Hochberg et al., 2015).

One of the biggest obstacles to this mentoring is providing the information teachers need to ensure their mentee's success (Albert, 2020). Efforts to improve formal mentoring include identifying aspects of mentoring that matter most. Engaging teachers in more specific needs, such as planning lessons and analyzing student work, tends to set new teachers up for success more than simply sharing materials (Hochberg et al., 2015).

Team teaching has also been used in school-based mentoring. Team teaching is a form of collaboration that enhances teachers' knowledge of instructional strategies, promoting competence and confidence in their profession. This type of mentoring pairs the mentor and mentee to co-teach in a classroom and collaborate outside of the classroom (Bowman, 2014). The new teacher can witness high-quality instruction by the mentor teacher. The new teacher can also be observed by their mentor and given timely feedback. The pressure felt by a new teacher can be greatly alleviated by working and team teaching with a mentor (Stanulis & Floden, 2009).

Instructional Coaching

Mentoring can also come in the form of instructional coaching, a systematic effort to help the teacher reach a level of competence and confidence that a school-based program may not have time to provide. Instructional coaching helps new teachers make meaning through a pedagogy based on real-world application in the context of their classroom (Zugelder, 2019). Many coaches are qualified teachers trained by a district to function as a team and provide classroom assistance with teachers and the students. Coaches have well-defined, goal-oriented responsibilities to improve teacher instructional skills (Wong, R. & Wong, H.K., 2013). They also have time to support new teachers emotionally.

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Successful Mentoring

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Schwan et al. (2020) conducted qualitative research regarding self-perceptions among mentors and new teachers participating in a statewide comprehensive mentoring program. Both mentors and new teachers who participated in this program during the 2018-2019 school year

were surveyed. Six dominant themes emerged from new teacher responses: improved instruction, collaboration, positive interaction, improvement, direction, and sense of community.

Regarding improved instruction, one participant indicated that having the mentor to help guide reflection by watching videos of herself teaching was crucial because it allowed the participant to see both good and bad, ultimately making the instruction more effective. The new teachers in this study described the collaboration as brainstorming ideas, bouncing ideas around, and talking problems out with another teacher. One of the new teachers made the observation, "With this program, I was able to obtain many new relationships with not only my mentor but also other teachers I observed within our district" (Schwan et al., 2020, p. 196).

Positive interaction emerged as an important component of the program. One respondent stated,

Through the mentoring program, I have gained a confidant. I feel as though I can communicate with my mentor about anything, personal and professional, that comes along with the job. Being a new teacher can be stressful, and it was reassuring to know that I regularly had someone to talk to about any issues I was struggling with (Schwan, et al., 2020, p. 196).

New teachers also noted that improved instruction was vital to success because they felt the mentor invested in their success as educators. That, in turn, helped reduce feelings of isolation while increasing confidence, self-esteem, and professional growth. One mentee stated, "Having her there to help guide me in reflecting on my teaching by watching my videos was

crucial because she was able to point out some things that I never would have" (Schwan et al., 2020, p.195).

The direction was an essential theme for new teachers in this study, as well. One participant stated the following:

> The program helped make the first year of teaching easier by knowing I was not doing it all alone and made the second year enjoyable because I could see myself growing as a teacher and improving in my teaching techniques. It gave me the confidence I needed to know that I was going in the right direction and that if I struggled with something I could ask questions to help ease my stress and anxiety (p. 197).

Finally, a theme emerged from new teachers regarding a sense of community. Mentor relationships can be formed during a time when the new teacher feels isolated and alone. One new teacher summarized sense of community by saying:

> My participation in the Mentor Program gave me someone to help navigate the challenges faced when dealing with community members and families. I was able to have a better sense of the duties required of me not just for my students, but for the entire community (p. 198).

Additionally, participation in this statewide mentoring program also positively affected the retention of new teachers. Almost all (93%) of the new teacher participants of this study remained in the same job in the second year.

Mentor responses in the study yielded five dominant themes: reflection, positive interaction, collaboration, improved instruction, and improvement of their teaching. Reflection among mentors caused one mentor to respond, "Mentoring makes you take a second look at yourself, strategies and overall best practices that you have become out of touch with as you have been doing things 'your way' for so long" (Schwan et al., 2020, p. 198).

Positive interaction produced a robust and dominant theme, as well. One mentor respondent said:

> I looked to keep material fresh and exciting and to find new material, instead of reusing some from many years ago, so that my new teacher could also see how to bring in outside supplemental materials to meet individual needs. I also feel my students got a refreshed and rejuvenated teacher out of me by my interactions with my new teacher (Schwan et al., 2020, p.199).

The collaboration proved beneficial for mentors as well as mentees in this study. As one participant stated:

> Anytime you step out of your regular routine it forces you to look at things in a different manner. I was inspired by my mentee to try some new approaches in my classroom. Together we explored what worked, what didn't, and used what we discovered to enhance our teaching. Our students benefited from our collaboration (Schwann et al., 2020, p. 199).

Improved instruction allowed mentors to reflect on their role as an educator resulted in conducting new research, implementing teaching strategies that were more engaging for

students, creating more authentic assessments, and carefully constructing learning outcomes for their students. One mentor observed that going to other teachers' classrooms helped her mentee and helped her see different facets of teaching.

Finally, mentors saw an improvement in their teaching practices. This improvement emerged as a dominant theme among many mentors who participated in the program. One mentor participant stated:

> Because of my revitalization as a reflective practitioner, my students were positively impacted. As my new teacher and I were constantly evaluating lessons, parent interaction, classroom environment and more, I took these new ideas and revelations into my classroom. I believe that my students next year are actually the ones that will have benefited the most, because so much of what we talked about this year sparked new and exciting ideas for the upcoming school year (Schwann et al., 2020, p. 200).

Another study conducted by Barrera, Braley, and Slate (2010) investigated feedback from mentor teachers regarding formal mentoring programs. The purpose of the study was to examine the views of first-year teacher mentors regarding the quality of the teacher mentoring programs in their school districts. The research took place in the region of South Texas. The researchers wanted to answer four questions: 1. What teacher involvement/support factors are perceived as necessary for mentors to be successful in preparing first-year teachers? 2. What staff development training factors are perceived as necessary for the instruction of mentors? 3. What administrative support factors are perceived as necessary for mentors to prepare first-year

teachers successfully? 4. What resource materials factors are perceived as necessary for the success of mentors in preparing first-year teachers?

The researchers found that "regarding teacher involvement/support, almost all of the mentor teachers believed a teacher mentoring program with well-defined goals was absolutely essential for retaining beginning teachers" (Barrera, 2010, p.71). Concerning staff development, slightly more than half of the mentor teachers believed that training new teachers for special populations was the best use of time. Beginning teachers may be well prepared to teach regular education students, but they need different educational skills in teaching students with special learning needs (Barrera, 2010). Regarding administrator support, slightly more than 50 percent reported that the duties and responsibilities should be clarified to both the mentor and the new teacher. An outline of specific responsibilities is beneficial to both new teachers, as well as their mentors. Finally, regarding resource materials, almost 75 percent of the mentor teachers believe that mentees should have already met the requirements for a teaching certificate. Teachers employed with temporary credentials, as tends to occur when teaching shortages are present, may not be as likely to remain in the teaching profession as those teachers who have a teaching certificate. Mentor teachers see this as an issue when training a new teacher, and the buy-in may not be there from the new teacher.

In summary, the study considered the importance of teachers in the lives of students. Teachers need to learn skills to become highly qualified educators and effective teachers. Mentoring programs are an effective way of improving the skills of beginning teachers and increasing their retention rate. "We believe that all teacher mentoring programs should be

continuously evaluated to ascertain their effectiveness so that teacher retention can be enhanced, ultimately resulting in improved teacher quality" (Barrera et al., 2010, p.72).

A Strong, Comprehensive Program

A comprehensive program is one in which new teachers have opportunities to work with other colleagues in learning communities, observe experienced teachers' classrooms, be observed by mentors, analyze their practice, and network with other novice teachers (Martin, Buelow, and Hoffman, 2016). This program has proven to be much more successful than programs that offer information and strategies at the beginning of the year, with little opportunity for application, practice, and follow-up. Participating in a statewide mentoring program had a positive effect on the retention of new teachers.

The Texas Teacher Mentor Advisory Committee discussed seven critical components of a successful mentoring program: mentor selection, mentor assignment, mentor training, mentor roles and responsibilities, program design and delivery, funding, and accountability (TTMAC, 2015). Effective, comprehensive mentoring programs tend to carefully select and train mentors and provide structured time for interactions between the mentor and mentee. The focus is on improving the new teacher's content knowledge, instructional skills, and classroom management (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che 2013). These programs also improve student learning, reduce the attrition rate of first-year teachers, and provide a positive return on investment. Most of the studies reviewed by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) showed that beginning teachers who participated in a mentoring program performed better at various aspects of teaching, such as improved instructional practices, demonstrating successful classroom management, developing

effective lesson plans, and maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Schools that implement an effective, comprehensive beginning teacher induction program are more likely to have lower teacher turnover rates, experience higher job satisfaction among their faculty and staff, and produce higher-quality teachers (Reeder, 2103). Morettini's research of mentoring in urban schools (2016) concluded that one of the reasons new teachers chose to stay in their current school was the mentoring process they received despite the many challenges they faced.

Support should include induction and mentoring programs, a relationship with the administration, and professional development (Williams, 2012). Unfortunately, many induction and mentoring programs are driven by administrative or regulatory requirements instead of focusing on the actual need, teacher learning (Jensen, 2013). Martin, Buelow, and Hoffman (2016) noted that less than 1% of teachers receive what is considered a comprehensive induction.

Strong Administrative Leadership

Administrators play a critical role in the implementation of school-based mentoring programs. They assign mentors to mentees is working as collaborating teams to achieve a common goal (Chen, 2014). To ensure the successful implementation of a school-based mentoring program, the administrator should take special care when selecting mentors, training mentors, setting up the master schedule to allow mentors to perform all their duties, and fostering high morale among mentors and mentees (Albert, 2020). School administrators also need to design supportive environments for novice teachers (Gholam, 2018).

The mentor teachers surveyed in the Barrera et al. study (2010) proved quite optimistic about their school administrators' support for the teacher mentoring program. Mentor teachers stated they were given time to observe and to provide feedback to new teachers. They were also able to be near their mentees, and many were teaching the same content. These factors added to the success of the mentoring program.

Strong Mentor Selection and Training

Many times, teachers are chosen to become mentor teachers because they are veterans in the field. Many states require new mentors to have a minimum number of years of teaching and demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom, usually measured by past evaluation data (Southern Regional Education Board, 2018). Selecting mentors using criteria such as years of experience and past evaluation scores can be problematic because teaching and mentoring have different knowledge and skillsets. Although there is some overlap, there are significant differences. Effective mentors are not necessarily those who provide exceptional instruction to students. They are good at giving personal, emotional, and instructional support to new teachers.

Once mentors with these qualities are found, the focus needs to be on preparing them to grow new teachers successfully. The Southern Regional Education Board (2018) recommends focusing on three areas: interpersonal relationships, coaching skills, and growth for both mentor and mentee.

Research conducted by Barrera et al. (2010) previously noted that school districts need to improve the preparation of mentor teachers. Certain guidelines and training should be specified for a teacher mentoring program to be successful. One guideline is well-defined goals for mentors. These goals should focus on developing the mentee's skills, abilities, knowledge, and thinking (Zachary, 2012). Another guideline should include the clarification of duties and

responsibilities assigned to mentors. Additionally, time must be examined and structured to allow the mentor to perform the duties and responsibilities. Observations by the mentor teacher of the mentee's instruction, as well as providing time for mentees to observe their mentor during instruction is vital to the success of a strong mentoring experience.

Successful Mentor/Mentee Pairing

The pairing of mentors and new teachers also impacts the program's success. Mentor and new teacher pairings have been significant in past studies. While experienced mentors are usually involved with new teachers, new teachers are often poorly matched with their mentors. As a result, new teachers rarely have meaningful conversations with their mentors about instruction and classroom management (Shepherd & Devers, 2017).

Mentees participating in a mentoring program have reported a positive experience overall, however, would have preferred to have a choice of mentor. Justification for mentor preferences included, first and foremost, mentors not having a common grade level, planning time, content area, or proximity. Mentees also described how the mentor's lack of time or motivation weakened the mentoring relationship. Still another obstacle mentees reported was the issue of mentors and mentees not having common personality characteristics. The characteristics of mentors went together with the theme of mentor accountability (Frels et al., 2013).

Likewise, mentors also described barriers in the relationship and felt matching should be better balanced. Mentors also listed not having a common grade level, planning time, content area, or proximity as a hindrance. Mentors recommended mentees should be mentored for more

than one year but no longer. In addition, mentors believed they should only be given one mentee at a time rather than multiple placements (Frels et al., 2013).

Emotional Support

Odell and Ferraro (as cited by Moreton, 2016) found that 4 years after engaging in formal mentoring, beginning teachers stated that the most valuable and influential aspect of their mentoring was their mentors' emotional support. Moreover, the instructional and pedagogical aspects of mentoring and coaching, however helpful, did not continue to resonate over time with beginning teachers to the extent that the emotional aspect of mentoring did.

Relationship

The successful mentoring program includes one-on-one mentor-to-mentee relationships. A middle school study completed by Sowell (2017) suggested that a trusting relationship must be established between the mentor and mentee. This relationship reflects factors of trust, warmth, acceptance, and transparency (Gholam, 2018). Research by Reitman & Karge (2019) found new teachers reported the most helpful thing was someone to support them. Every answer in the qualitative inquiry mentioned a relationship with a mentor or colleague. "Mentor and mentee relationships have proven to be a lifeline for many early career educators" (Lozinak, 2016, p. 12).

Time

One theme that emerges in many mentoring studies is the aspect of time. Mentors and mentees both describe the need for more time to spend together. For mentees, time included mentors being dedicated to time for any help the mentee needs, time for observations and

collaboration, and increased release time allotted for the extra workload (including paperwork). Mentors echoed the sentiment and added to these needs by suggesting time together before the school year begins. In addition, principals acknowledge that more time is needed for both mentor and mentee and for the principal to commit to meeting with new teachers to offer support (Frels et al., 2013). Time provided by the district for mentors and new teachers to work together is vital.

Limitations to Success

Leaders want to see their new teachers succeed but have limited time to spend with them. Veteran teachers also want to see new teachers grow but have so many other concerns filling their time. Too many times, it results in new teachers leaving the field of education altogether. New teachers who have left the profession cite lack of adequate resources and inadequate mentoring support as reasons for their exit (Tait, 2008). Lack of support accounts for nearly 17% of why teachers leave education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Conclusion

Being a new teacher is a difficult task. New teachers must begin their new careers by acclimating to the culture of their new school, establishing their routines, managing stress, and juggling demands placed upon them. Teacher induction and mentoring programs are put in place to support the new teacher while preparing them to be effective. Retention also plays a prominent role in the need for mentoring. New teachers who participate in quality, comprehensive mentoring programs have consistently desired to stay in their careers (Callahan, 2016). Research has also shown that novice teachers who are deeply engaged with supportive and accomplished mentors are more likely to experience career satisfaction and success (Harris, 2015).

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

Mentoring is a large part of new teacher induction programs. Research states that much of the success of retention of new teachers is directly related to the effectiveness of mentor relationships (Martin et al., 2015). Mentoring in education is defined as "personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools" (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, p. 9). Nationally, two-thirds of teachers report having participated in a teacher induction program, and 71 percent of those teachers report having a mentor (Martin et al., 2015). Those numbers are impressive but can also be deceiving. Teachers have reported that the relationship between themselves and their mentors played a significant role in their success.

Research Question

What is the satisfaction level of new teachers with the induction and mentoring process they received?

Research Design

This study sought to gauge the satisfaction of new teachers in an upper East Tennessee rural school district with the district's induction and mentoring process. A qualitative research design was chosen for this research, with the researcher being the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants using Google Meet sessions, and participants were able to provide their stories of induction and mentoring in the school district.

Once the interviews were completed, a six-step process recommended by Creswell & Creswell (2018) was used.

(1) organizing the interviews and preparing them for data analysis

(2) transcribing the interviews

(3) coding and categorizing the data

(4) generating and describing categories and themes

(5) representing the description and themes

(6) interpreting the findings.

Site Selection and Demographics

The site for this study is a rural school district in Northeast Tennessee. At the time of this study, the district contained eleven elementary schools, seven middle schools, and four high schools. In the 2020-2021 school year, the district reported 9,247 students and 616 teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). The median household income for families in this district was reported as $50,551. The population reported was 96% White, 1% Black, and 1% Hispanic or Latino.

Participants in the Study

Before the study was initiated, permission was requested and approved by the Milligan University Institutional Review Board. The administration of the school system also granted permission.

The interview participants were teachers new to the school system within six years. Each participant was selected via email invitation, phone call, or personal visit. Some participants who initially accepted the invitation were unable to complete the study due to COVID-19. A total of eight participants were interviewed. Participants represented pre-kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school level teachers. A total of five schools were represented. These schools included three elementary and two secondary schools. Of the three elementary schools represented, one has a population of 382 students, one has a population of 235 students,

and one has a population of 625 students. Of the secondary schools represented, one has a population of 807 students and the other has a population of 754 students. All schools represented are Title I schools. Some teachers interviewed were new to both the profession and the school system while others were new only to the school system.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher was an educator in the district used in this study and conducted all participant interviews. The researcher conducted one-on-one virtual semi-structured interviews. The questions were open-ended to allow participants the opportunity to share their own experiences. Interview questions are listed in Appendix B for review.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

Data collection for this study was gathered by interviewing participants. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), qualitative research purposefully selects participants who will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question. Participants were chosen by email, phone, or face-to-face invitation based on the number of years teaching in the district. Each participant was interviewed using the same list of open-ended questions. After each interview, each participant was asked to offer any additional information they would like to aid in the research process. Additionally, the researcher listened to all transcriptions. Once transcriptions were created, the researcher collected data and coded for themes in the data. For validity and reliability, triangulation of data methods and member checking after the individual one-on-one interviews were conducted. Member checking allowed for participants to correct or clarify themes emerging during their interviews.

Before the Study

Before launching the study, the study was vetted and approved by several administrative authorities. After completing a thorough Institutional Review Board (IRB) process, Milligan University's IRB approved the study. In addition, permission was obtained for each school site's school board and head of school.

Selection of Participants

Interview participants were selected via a process of convenience sampling through personal visits, phone conversations, or invitations by email. Teachers who were new to the district within five years were contacted. The researcher began with new teachers in the same school, then branched out through phone conversations or email invitations to all new teachers in the district. After describing the nature of the study, the details of the consent form, and that each participant was voluntary, participants were asked to email a response to the researcher via email. The researcher then gained signed consent forms from all participants. Each participant was informed of their ability to remove themselves from participation at any point in time. They were also informed of the recording of their interview for transcription. All selected participants were provided with an explanation of the consent process and were given an informed consent form Appendix C. The form detailed the process and the rights of the participant regarding their role in the study. All participants agreed to participate in the study. Interviews were scheduled as participants were available.

Implementation of the Study

The study began with a meeting with the Director of Schools to provide information regarding the research, allow the Director to provide feedback, and gain approval for the study. Once the study was approved, potential participants were then selected via a convenience

sampling process. Emails, phone calls, or personal visits were used to invite participants to the study.

All interviews were recorded and saved to a flash drive handled only by the researcher. After each interview was complete, the researcher reviewed the recording and took detailed notes. Transcription software Sonix (http://www.sonix.ai) was also used to assist in transcribing data. Once interviews were completed, the researcher used a coding process to identify themes emerging from the interviews. Member checking for each participant was used to ensure validity and reliability. Each participant was informed during the initial interview that a follow-up meeting would be scheduled to allow the participant to confirm the intended statement and meaning for the study.

Data Management

Data were collected via individual private Google Meet interview sessions, and each session was recorded and saved to a flash drive. The electronic data is password protected and only accessible by the researcher. The researcher also took detailed notes on printed transcriptions, as well as other handwritten notes. All data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home for five years from the successful defense of the research. At the end of five years, the researcher will delete all electronic data and shred all notes.

Data Analysis

An overview of the data analysis process by Creswell & Creswell (2018) lists six steps of the qualitative data analysis process. This process includes the following steps:

(1) Organize and prepare data for analysis.

(2) Read or look at all the data.

(3) Code the data.

(4) Generate a description of themes.

(5) Represent the description and themes.

(6) Interpret the meaning of the themes and descriptions.

Data from interviews were transcribed by handwritten notes and assisted by Sonix artificial intelligence software. The notes were then annotated and highlighted by the researcher. These notes were analyzed for emerging themes, which were then given descriptions. A description of a theme is defined as "a detailed rendering of information about people, places, or events in a setting" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 269). Initially, the transcriptions from the interviews were read, annotated, highlighted, and categorized to determine emerging themes. Further analysis aided the researcher in determining broader themes and coded categories that cut across data collected from all participants, which helped determine meaning, understandings, and insights. Narrative constructions supported the broader themes and formed the basis of determining the prominent thinking of participants. These findings are detailed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Trustworthiness

The study required the researcher to rely on participants, to tell the truth concerning their experiences as a new teacher receiving mentoring. The one-on-one interview process allowed participants to feel comfortable talking about their experiences. Each interview permitted the researcher to prompt participants to delve deeper into their thoughts about the mentoring process. To ensure the qualitative validity of the interview data, the researcher used the process of member checking. To ensure the qualitative reliability of the data, transcripts were reviewed to make sure no mistakes were made during transcription. Codes were also reviewed to ensure uniform accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights of the participants. Therefore, safeguards were put in place to ensure those rights. First, the researcher articulated the objectives of the study both verbally and in writing to each participant. Next, the researcher obtained written permission from participants to allow interviews (Appendix C). After interviews were completed, each participant was allowed to review their responses to verify accuracy. Finally, the researcher protected all rights of the participants when reporting the findings of the data.

Potential Contributions of the Research

Many school districts offer induction and mentoring programs but seem to lack the quality needed for teacher success. A 2019 review by the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., reveals that many novice teachers report they need more support than they are currently receiving. The analysis shows that many teachers feel less than very well prepared in teaching their assigned content, various instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, and student assessment (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). New teachers are struggling with preparedness, are overwhelmed, and are not receiving enough support.

High-quality induction can enhance a teaching practice at the time when teachers most need it. Actively addressing areas of concern provided by novice teachers and providing the support they need will help build a strong foundation. This type of induction ultimately results in a more robust educational experience for students (Clark, 2012).

The study's potential benefit will reveal the overall satisfaction levels of novice teachers in this school district. By conducting this research, potential benefits will be the knowledge of satisfaction levels of their novice teachers and ways to improve the training process in the future.

Enhanced professional development and mentor support will lead to teachers' retention, thus providing cost savings for the school district.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

The purpose of this case study was to understand the satisfaction of new teachers regarding the support they received from the school system upon entry and during their initial employment. The study targeted a rural school district in Northeast Tennessee. The data compilation process took place through structured interviews with eight participants; participants represented pre-kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, and high school level teachers. A total of five schools were represented, and these schools included three elementary and two secondary schools within the school district.

The eight interviews were conducted with new teachers in different stages of their careers. The interviews provided the data, which was interpreted to format a clearer understanding of the county's effectiveness as far as orientation, development, and overall retention of teachers new to the system. For this study, the participants were selected based on their employment with the school system. The objective was to understand their experience with the system regarding their overall satisfaction with their new mentoring. Each teacher was referred to as Teacher 1 through 8, depending on their order during the interview process. Each participant was sent a copy of the quotations from the transcripts that were presented in the case study for review.

Interview Analysis

The interviews were recorded and transcribed to provide the data for the study. The transcription was produced through a software program that transcribed audio files collected during the live interviews. Through the transcription and study, the response to these questions allowed the researcher to better understand the participants' perceptions of their mentoring

experience within the school district. The transcription analysis allowed the researcher to capture repetitions and patterns within the responses, creating a complete understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants. After the interviews were conducted and the transcription was completed, open coding was initiated to assist in separating segments within the participants' responses. Once these pieces were determined and the information was synthesized, patterns were identified. A comparison of the responses assisted in the understanding of the onboarding experiences of the participants.

The process of axial coding occurred between the raw categorization and the selective understanding of these participants in conjunction with the study's purpose. The axial segment of the data analysis focused on isolating the causal connection between the patterns and categories formed through explicit connections between the responses during the interview. These patterns were identified through redundancies discovered within the transcription of the responses. Both the frequency and depth of response were gauged in connection with the study's purpose to assist in reflecting the teacher's satisfaction with the mentoring process.

The eight teachers within the district who were interviewed were selected based on their explicit knowledge of the system's initiation and onboarding processes. This personal understanding of the district's attempts to assimilate and train new teachers allowed for a clear glimpse into the reality of these processes. The teachers were given designations based on their placement in their interview process. Through the interview process, these teachers were the basis for the study's understanding of the level of satisfaction of new teachers with the mentoring processes provided by the school system.

Staff Profiles

The eight interviewees were members of the teaching staff within the school district. Their involvement with the district provided insight into the mentoring process. It also provided insight as to the satisfaction of new teachers upon entry and during their initial employment. This introduction allows for an insight into the differences in the teaching staff who shared these understandings. Table 1 provides an outline of the teachers that were interviewed. It lists the grades they serve, years of experience, and degrees attained. This information provides a complement to the first interview questions and gives pertinent background information.

Table 1

Staff Profiles

Teacher	Grade Level	Years of Experience	Degree
T1	Sped - Pre-K	1	Bachelor's K-6
T2	5th Grade	1	Bachelor's K-6
T3	1st Grade	4	Master's K-6
T4	Kindergarten	1	Bachelor's Pre-K-3
T5	1st Grade	1	Bachelor's K-6
T6	High School ELA	5	Bachelor's 7-12
T7	High School Math	5	Master's 7-12
T8	High School Math	6	Master's 7-12
8 Participants	5 Primary 3 Secondary	4.1	5 Bachelor's Degrees 3 Master's Degrees

Interview Results

The interview process began with a description of the study's purpose. The teachers were given an overview of the goal concerning their experience within the district's orientation process. The interview was divided into three sections: teacher introduction, orientation methodology, and process evaluation.

Section 01: Participant Profile and Experience

The first questions provided an introductory response by inquiring about the teacher's overall experience and to what level of schooling they had achieved. The first question was used as a baseline to gauge the participants' level of competency based on experience and set the interview tone. Based on these responses, teachers fell into the following categories: teachers with six years of experience or less and a bachelor's level or greater of post-secondary education.

Teachers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 all had achieved a bachelor's degree, while teachers 3, 7, and 8 all had achieved a master's degree in education. Of the pool of participants, teachers 1, 6, and 8 were the only teachers with five years of experience, with the entire group averaging 4.1 years of experience between the eight interviewees. Table 1 further displays this information.

This commonality among the teachers allows for a consistency of personnel from both experience and education levels. The second interview question addressed the motivation for these participants to enter the teaching profession. By asking the group members "why" they decided to become a teacher, intrinsic and extrinsic factors were examined. By understanding these, the researcher can better understand the factors contributing to how the participants valued their work and their priorities. Based on the pre-set and emergent codes, the following categories have been created to present the understandings of the eight teachers about the profile of those interviewed: teacher experience, teacher motivation, and teacher preparedness.

Teachers 1, 2, 4, 6, and 8 all mentioned that a primary contributor to their "why" for teaching came from the idea that this work had a purpose or that they intended to make a difference in the lives of their students. Teacher 1 admitted:

> … I became an educator because I wanted to make that difference. I want to be the teacher that child remembers that was the stepping stone that helped me get to where I wanted to be.

Teacher 2 echoed a similar sentiment but focused on the impact that an educator can have on students at a young age; Teacher 2 stated:

> They [other teachers] get into teaching for the modeling and learning aspect of it. And I've always loved working with kids, so it [teaching] was a perfect match.

Teacher 4's responses to the first question seemed a combination of the previous two:

> So, I became a teacher because I really just wanted to make a difference with kids. I'm more comfortable around kids than I am with adults and I just love being with them, and they love to learn from me.

Teacher 6 admitted a similar motivation for getting into the profession, but also suggested that the work has a future yield on society in the following statement:

> If you're going to make any change in society, you're going to have to reach a younger group of people… I needed to go into a different field where I could make changes earlier. Yeah, be more proactive.

Teachers 3, 5, and 7 provided a second and prominent pattern. Their responses by admitting that their "why" for entering the profession came from an attempt to shift the paradigm of their professional career by shifting their occupation and viewing the teaching profession as an alternative career to what they had been pursuing previously. This variable gave added rationale for the variance in the age range of the participants, which ranged from ages 23 through age 35. This contributing factor allowed once again for a wide array of perspectives. Although the participants all share similarities in their chosen profession, newness to the district, and experience with the onboarding processes, they each hold unique characteristics as individuals,

making the similarities in their responses more powerful. To the decision for a new career in education, Teacher 3 stated:

> I did that [occupational therapy] for about a year and started to think that it just wasn't what I needed to do. I took an intro to education class… And as soon as I was in it, I just knew, like, that's what I wanted to do.

Teacher 5 echoed a similar transition into the vocation:
> I never thought of it [education] as a career path until I was presented with the opportunity.

Teacher 7 provided a similar rationale when selecting education as a profession from other options:

> My advisor said, well, you can either do research or you can teach. And I said I don't want to do research.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 2

Teacher's "Why" for Teaching

Make a Difference for Students	Alternative Path/Career Choice
5 responded	3 responded

The third question gauged the actual pre-service preparedness that each of the participants felt they had received through college preparation courses, teacher observations, and field experience. The question assisted in better understanding the participants' preparedness for the classroom. It also helped to understand the level of initial orientation and support that the teacher may need from the district to assimilate effectively, or as is the case of three teachers, a completely new profession.

Teacher 1 and teacher 8 responded that they had no actual preparedness for real-world classroom management. These teachers all agreed that this was due to either a lack of actual classroom experience or a disconnect between what was taught in their pre-service program and what happens in the classroom. Teacher 1 states:

> And so, all the college gave me a lot of useful information, a lot of good resources, and a lot of good things to think about. I don't feel like I was very prepared to teach sixth grade.

Teacher 8 responded similarly:

> So, I just showed up and had no idea where I was going. Luckily there was someone in the parking lot when I got there, and I said… where do I need to go?

Teachers 2, 4, 5, and 6 stated that while they had some experience through theory and book resources, these programs were generic and offered little to assist or prepare for issues that they had experienced in the classroom. Teacher 2 admitted that while they were prepared in theory,

> I felt very prepared to create lesson plans… [the teacher had acquired] a couple of teaching strategies. To items such as classroom management, professionalism. Those sorts of things, assessments [the teacher felt] ok.

Teacher 4 echoed:

> I would say the biggest thing that they prepared me for was how to teach literacy, how to teach like phonics, phonological awareness, more so than classroom management.

Teacher 5 agreed that there was little preparation when it came to managing the unknowns in an actual classroom:

> I didn't feel like I learned much hands-on in the classroom stuff. So, I was like, I can make a lesson. But implementing it in the real world I was unprepared for, and there was a learning curve.

Teacher 6 agreed:

> You have kids who are not following what the textbook, you know, says they'll act, and you don't know why, but you've got to figure out how to handle it. So, you don't have

these 25 other kids who aren't getting our stuff… [preparation programs] don't always know if it was as practical… but it didn't really teach me as much how to what to do when you have three classes that are totally different.

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 3

Pre-Service Preparation

No preparation	Lack of Classroom Experience	Theoretical Preparation
2 responded	7 responded	4 responded

After categorizing the responses to the first three interview questions, the collective responses were taken into consideration. From the synthesis of these interactions, major and minor themes were identified to assist in the understanding of the participant's experiences.

Section 02: Experiences of the School District's Induction Process

The second grouping of interview questions dealt with the direct experiences of teachers during the induction process within the district. The fourth and fifth interview questions asked the participants to summarize their induction experience with the district and speak to the level of preparedness they felt within classroom instruction, curriculum design, and other operational duties. These questions allowed the teachers to reflect on what processes the district put into place to assist newcomers, both to the district and their specific school. Based on their responses, categories were identified to illustrate the perspective of the eight teachers and their experience with the induction process within the district: a lack of a formal or viable process for supporting teachers across the district and success through the relationship with peers or mentor teachers.

Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 6 all mentioned there was no formal induction or onboarding process within their specific school or expectations from the district that were communicated with new teachers. Teacher 1 expressed:

I don't think that the central office this year was able to do anything like that…

Teacher 2 also suggested that the district,

> … so, I was kind of just thrown in there when I got hired. I met with the principal, and we did a tour of the school. Other than the technology part, I just kind of felt like I was building the plane as I was flying it. But other than that, I really didn't [have an induction process]

Teacher 6 stated that there was an orientation at the district level, but no formal school level induction:

> The meetings [professional learning and in-service] were scattered throughout the year because I knew I wouldn't have a mentor teacher. I was kind of like, well, prepare me for this. Give me something, but nothing came up. I would ask my principal and say well, this just happened so, you know, tell me what to do.

Teachers 4 and 8 expressed that they felt ill-prepared for the classroom regarding the needs of the students, curriculum design and pacing, and processes for behavior management.

Teacher 4 expressed:

So basically, I had to go to other people to find all of those things out… So, I had to seek people out. Thank goodness for the people who did help me because now I feel a lot more prepared. But I know there are still some things I don't know.

Teacher 8 stated similarly:

> There were a couple of meetings we had to go to. I don't remember a lot of them, but I remember having to go to the central office once a month. I think there were six or eight meetings that they went to, and it was a lot of policy for the counts, it wasn't really teacher-oriented, it was very human resources oriented.

Teachers 3 and 5 admitted to beneficial relationships with team members and veteran teachers to understand processes as the need arose. These relationships assisted in navigating

uncertain situations, but a formal mentor or program of support was never assigned or discussed.

Teacher 5 stated:

> We had teacher leaders come in and we would have meetings and it was like, you can ask anything you want. It's non-judgmental. And so, we did that two times during the year, the first time was crazy, so I did enjoy that. That was like our mentoring program.

Teacher 3 stated:

> I kind of discovered my own teacher mentor. I was teaching with her, and she was part of my hiring process as well. She was in the interview with me when I got hired. So, she definitely took me under her wing and was like, anything you need. So, I really went to her a lot. We would sit down and do lesson plans together from the start. So even though she may not have officially been given that title, I felt like she was that [mentor] to me.

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 4

Perception of District's Induction Process

No Formal Process	Not Aligned with Teacher Needs	No Assigned Mentor/Peer
3 responded	2 responded	5 responded

The sixth and seventh questions addressed the supplementary needs of new teachers throughout the school year; the processes by which teachers, through their initial experiences, addressed a problem and sought support directly from the school or even at the district level. Teachers were asked to outline experiences or resources provided by the district to assist with classroom needs. They were then asked to what impact these resources resolved issues. Based on the pattern of responses from the eight interviews, the following categories emerged to present the understandings of the teaching staff concerning experiences of being a new teacher and the supports provided by the district: No formal tools or plans created to assist with stressful

situations and the policies created were not effective in dealing with specific conflict regarding

the classroom or the curriculum.

Teachers 1, 2, 4 6, and 8 all stated that no formal training was provided to teachers or

plans created to assist with stressful classroom situations. When asked if the school assisted with

tools and support to deal with stressful situations in the class, Teacher 2 stated:

> Not really, I just relied on my co-teachers to help me relieve stress. But as far as support
> from the district, I don't really feel like I got that.

Teacher 4 stated that there wasn't a lot of support from the district or school administration by
stating,

> There wasn't much communication at all, really about anything. I had to kind of just ask
> my peers and deal with situations as they came.

Teachers 1, 3, 5, 7, and 8 mentioned that the only beneficial assistance came through the

input and strategies offered by colleagues. Teacher 1 stated that:

> I always felt bad going to my partner teacher when she's not my mentor, but she's the
> person who is doing the same things as me. So, I went for her a lot, and she was the one
> who really helped me.

Teacher 3 suggested that other teachers were the greatest support to them in the following

response:

> So, we [peer teacher] had afternoons where we talked about what we could do better to
> kind of involve kids and what they were learning and kind of just getting ideas and
> brainstorming.

Teachers 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 stated that school policies were not teacher-centered, and from

the teachers' perspective were in place to benefit the administration's workload. Teacher 6

stated:

> I guess I felt like I always had it [support] but I didn't use it, and I had a miserable year
> because of it. I was hesitant to use it because I was a new teacher and was trying to prove
> myself. And even though, you get the feeling like you don't have the resources they really

tell you… like hey, go deal with that with your administrator and hope that they like you or don't get annoyed if you have bad classes.

Teacher 7 was asked about the support they felt for understanding processes at the school and responded:

Zero. I learned that you handle it in the classroom or it's not going to be dealt with.

Teacher 8 also stated:

We weren't really given any tools. It was just, you know, do the best. You know if a fight breaks out in your room - just call the office.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 5

Needs and Support for New Teachers

No Formal Training	Limited District/Admin Support	Strong Peer Support	District Support Non-specific
5 responded	3 responded	7 responded	5 responded

The eighth and ninth questions probed the presence of school administrators and the assistance they provided within the specific schools as it pertained to new teachers' satisfaction with their orientation year. Teachers were asked about the relationship between the teacher and the administration staff, as well as their perspectives about the level of communication and transparency the administration offered. Based on the pattern of responses from the eight interviews, the following categories have been formed. These categories present the understanding of the teaching staff concerning experiences of being a new teacher and the

support provided by the district: a reliance on support from direct school administration, and the importance of administrative processes for teacher success.

Teachers 1, 3, 4, and 8 all mentioned that they felt supported by the administration throughout the year. Teacher 1 stated:

My principal allowed me to observe her. And so being able to observe her and see how that works. She was fabulous.

Teacher 3 stated:

I knew that I was going to get good feedback from her, she wasn't somebody that was just going to come in and check off the boxes and then give me my thing and say, here you go, you're done.

Teacher 4 stated:

I would say that if I needed him for anything, I could go to him and ask him, and he would try to figure out the answer for me.

Teacher 8 stated:

The principal was phenomenal. Very old school. One hundred percent backing teachers and didn't really care what the central office told them to do. If he didn't think that it was best for his teachers, then he wasn't going to do it.

Teachers 2, 5, and 7 felt that the support was minimal from the administration. Teacher 2 stated:

My principal is very friendly and very nice, but he wasn't there a lot and I feel like he was just happy and lucky, he just went with whatever the plan was.

Teacher 5 stated:

I'd go a whole day or two without seeing my administrator. And so, if you don't make any effort to get to the office, sometimes you won't see them for a whole day or two. She only came in one other time [not an evaluation] when the power was out.

Teachers 1, 3, 4, and 8 felt that the level of communication between the administration and the teaching staff was adequate. In contrast, teachers 2, 5, and 7 felt that the level of

communication and transparency between the administration and the high school teaching staff was limited. There needed to be more communication and input from the teachers.

Table 6 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 6

Supports from School Administration

Positive/Adequate Relationship	Negative Relationship	Positive Transparency/Communication
4 responded	3 responded	4 responded

Questions ten, eleven, and twelve all focused on the interrelationship between teachers as a support network for new teachers. Teachers were asked about the support provided by fellow faculty and teachers. They were also asked the level of confidence that each new teacher felt in communicating and contributing to the on-staff community. Finally, they were asked if any of the participants in the study had been assigned an official teacher mentor. Based on the pre-set and emergent codes, the following categories have been formed to present the understanding of the teaching staff concerning experiences of being a new teacher and the support provided by the district: teacher relationships provided most of a non-formal orientation process for new teachers, all social-emotional supports for teachers were provided solely by fellow teachers and a few administrative members, and no teacher mentors were assigned within the district.

Teachers 2, 3, and 5 all mentioned that they received support from fellow teachers through their instructional team, content team, or relationships developed throughout the school year. Teacher 2 stated:

I had an aide in my first class that would do stuff for me. And I relied on them [fellow teachers] a lot, especially, you know.

Teacher 3 stated:

We were so close-knit; like our staff and faculty are very close. And so, I think if any of us ever felt like something was going on, we would have somebody to go and talk to.

Teacher 5 exclaimed:

If I had questions about the curriculum, if I needed help with it, I would talk to her. She was the one I would go to for support.

Teachers 2, 7, and 8 all mentioned that communicating with the subject-level team

members provided the most favorable feedback. Teacher 2 stated:

I just relied on my co-teachers.

Teacher 7 stated:

The staff has really helped me out with that. At least my fellow teachers have from an administrative standpoint.

Teacher 8 also mentioned:

I was extremely nervous, but the mentor teacher assured me. "Just get in there, do what you think you need to do, and if it doesn't work, tomorrow's a new day. We'll fix it." So, I was like "ok."

Teachers 1, 4, and 6 all provided evidence that there was no district policy or school

examples of a formal teacher mentor. Teacher 1 stated:

I do feel like that would be the one thing I felt like the district could have given me was an actual mentor.

Teacher 4 echoed in a similar response:

They [the staff] helped me honestly figure out everything I needed to know about the school for the most part. I would say they helped my confidence because as a new teacher with no onboarding or anything.

Teacher 6 mentioned:

The district was preparing for consolidation, so we had 20 new hires coming in. Five of us were at the same school. Let's all get to know each other and get through this together.

Table 7 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 7

Peer Support and Local Mentors

No Teacher Mentors Assigned	Strong Support from Teaching Peers	Support from local Admin
7 responded	6 responded	2 responded

Section 03: Perceptions of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Induction Process

The third grouping of interview questions offered an opportunity for teachers to assess themselves as far as confidence and needs for the upcoming year. Question 13 asked teachers to offer areas where they felt confident relative to their teaching experiences during the first year with the district. Based on their responses, categories were identified to present the understandings of strengths and weaknesses of the induction process as a mechanism for growing new teachers. The following categories were formed from the synthesis of the responses: content, curriculum, and student relationships.

Teachers 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 all mentioned curriculum and knowledge of their respective content areas as a strength. Teacher 3 stated:

I am more confident in the curriculum. I am not going to have to figure out what it is I'm going to do. I'm going to pull this out again, and so I feel very confident with the curriculum.

Teacher 4 mentioned:

I feel a lot more confident in the curriculum now because that was something that was brand new to me and not explained at all. So, I kind of just had to learn it as I went.

Teacher 5 mentioned:

I still feel confident in my ability to formulate a lesson to take the curriculum that's given to me and to deliver that and to pull out the parts that my kids need to understand.

Teacher 6 said:

I am confident in my content, but the struggle is to get the content to where it's beneficial [for students]

Teachers 2, 7, and 8 all shared that they excelled in building rapport with students.

Teacher 2 shared:

I was confident in my relationship with the kids.

Teacher 7 stated:

I am extremely confident in my classroom management skills, but I've brought students out in the hallway to talk to them. I've sent them to another room to cool off, you know?

Teacher 8 stated:

I just try to be open and honest with my kids and have my expectations upfront. And I called them out on their crap when they are being crazy teenagers, so I don't really have any classroom management problems.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 8

Teacher Strengths

Student Rapport/Management	Content/Curriculum
3 responded	5 responded

The last question addressed the area of need at which teachers felt like they needed or could have used more support throughout the school year. This question was used to probe a systematic area of weaknesses within the induction process. Based on the pre-set and emergent responses from the participants in the study, the following categories were identified: Classroom management, mentor input and support, and observational feedback from administration and lead teachers.

Teacher 1 and teacher 8 both mentioned that classroom management was an area where they needed more support. Teacher 1 shared:

> I appreciate training for teachers about behavioral stuff because I would definitely like more training in that area.

> Teacher 8 shared:
> I mean, a little bit of support in classroom management. I just have cases of being called names or things like that, just how to prepare and deal with those situations. I was never told how to do anything like that.

Teachers 2 and 5 both agreed that a more formal program for mentor assignment, input, and support would have greatly improved their experience with the induction process. Teacher 2 shared:

> School policies or school routines like inventory at the end of the year. Who do I reach out to for this kind of help? I mean, just like a handbook that tells you everything, like in this situation… That's just kind of used to a teacher that's worked in the school for a long time, but as a new teacher just coming in, you don't really get that because every school is so different.

Teacher 5 shared:

> I almost preferred a scripted program in a way.

Teachers 3, 4, and 7 all mentioned that more frequent feedback from mentors, lead teachers, and administrative staff assists in some of the pitfalls experienced in their first year. Teacher 3 shared:

I mean, I think one thing that I always want to stress over, and it's not really me being a teacher in the classroom, it's more the extra things. It's the things that go along with continuing to be licensed and having to do the extra professional development. Sometimes those things can fall through the cracks because you're so consumed with the day-to-day.

Teacher 4 stated:

Last year I had three different people observe me and give me evaluations. So, I never really knew what to change or how to better myself because they all said different things.

Teacher 7 stated:

I love teaching. But I hate being a teacher. I hate all the extra stuff, right? So, you know, I wouldn't say I'm getting all the support I need when it comes to the area of teaching.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the number of times these sub-themes were coded:

Table 9

Teacher Need

Classroom Strategies	Assigned Mentor Schedule	Observational Feedback
2 responded	2 responded	3 responded

Conclusion

This chapter detailed the study's findings and themes that were presented through the discourse of the interview process. In Chapter 5, the researcher explains the conclusions taken from the interview data presented in Chapter 4. Answers to the research questions are present and reviewed. Lastly, the study outlined in Chapter 5 will compare the findings outlined and offer recommendations for future research to extend this work.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of Findings and Conclusion of the Study

The purpose of the research for this qualitative study was to discover, in more depth, the induction process for the rural school district. The following questions were used to assist in broadening these understandings of the satisfaction level district teachers had with the onboarding process as new teachers. The comprehensive questions for this study were:

1. What is the satisfaction level of new teachers with the mentoring process?

2. How prepared do new teachers feel for the classroom?

3. What kind of support did new teachers receive?

4. How satisfied are new teachers with communication from the administration?

5. What are the areas of need for new teachers?

To provide insight into these questions, research was conducted, and the participant's responses were analyzed. The eight teachers who had direct experience with the induction process within the school district were interviewed; these teachers had experience with the induction process throughout multiple schools and at both the primary and secondary levels.

Summary of Findings

The teachers were interviewed in random order and scheduled through the convenience and flexibility of the researcher and the participants. The interview questions provided a structured conversation to better understand the satisfaction level of teachers with the district's onboarding process. The interview questions sought answers to the guiding research questions, and the process of open coding was utilized to detect patterns in the responses and determine categories. These categories were created and synthesized to form themes that are presented as a response to the research questions.

Discussion of Findings

Themes Regarding How Prepared New Teachers Feel

Research question 2: "How prepared do the new teachers feel for the classroom" focused on the perspectives of the eight teachers. Interview questions gauged certification, experience, pre-service preparation, and the onboarding process that they received from the district. Several themes emerged regarding factors concerning preparation for teachers.

Three common themes emerged referencing barriers to teachers' preparedness for the classroom. These themes included no effective preservice preparedness, a lack of a formal induction process by the district for new teachers, and a lack of training regarding school processes and procedures specific to the local school.

Six out of the eight teachers interviewed agreed that the preservice programs that they attended did little to prepare them for the actual classroom environment. The perception of limited preparedness was shared on a spectrum: Teachers feeling completely unequipped to teachers stating that the lack of experience and theory left them feeling ill-prepared for the practical issues that arise in the actual school setting.

Teacher 5 summarized the group's main points by emphasizing that "implementing it [practice] in the real world I was unprepared for, and there was a learning curve." The responses were categorized to form this theme suggesting that the lack of initial preparedness by pre-service programs contributed to a lack of preparation by teachers in the first year with the district.

The second common theme relating to research question one was the complete absence of an induction process from the district. Three out of the eight teachers that were interviewed agreed that there was no formal or district-organized training or support for teachers new to the

district. While there was mention of assistance from individuals, being predominantly peer teachers, a structured process for preparing, supporting, and mentoring new teachers was never mentioned.

Teacher 2 summarized the group's main points by stating "Other than the technology part, I just kind of felt like I was building the plane as I was flying it. But other than that, I really didn't [have an induction process]." The responses were categorized to form this theme suggesting that the lack of a formal induction process was a major contributor to perception and feeling of a lack of preparation for their posting within the district.

The third common theme regarding the preparedness of new teachers regards a lack of training or introduction to the processes and procedures that deal with the operation of their specific schools. Two of the eight teachers interviewed mentioned that besides a lack of a formal induction process when it came to operational understandings of their immediate school, new teachers had limited to no training regarding school procedures.

Teacher 4's response best contributed to this understanding by the group in the following response: "I had to go to other people to find all those things out… So, I had to seek people out." The responses were categorized to form this theme suggesting that by not providing teachers with the basic operational understandings, these teachers felt unprepared for their new position within the school district.

Themes Regarding the Support New Teachers Received

Research question 3: "what kind of support did the new teachers receive?" focused on the perspectives of the eight teachers. Interview questions captured the perceived support of the eight teachers regarding the help they received from the district, school, and fellow staff during their first year. Several themes emerged regarding factors concerning preparation for teachers.

Two common themes emerged referencing the support that the district's first-year teachers experienced. These themes consisted of no formal tools or plans being administered to assist with stressful situations and that the support received throughout the year came from peer teachers.

Five out of the eight teachers interviewed mentioned the absence of formal training provided to teachers in handling classroom/school situations. The responses were elicited by an interview question probing potential support from the school assisting with new teacher orientation to the school system.

Teacher 4's response, "there wasn't much communication at all, really about anything. I had to kind of just ask my peers and deal with situations as they came." best summarized the group's perspective. The responses were categorized to form this theme, suggesting the lack of ongoing support for difficult situations throughout the year.

The second common theme regarding teacher support during the initial year was that new teachers received most of the support from peer teachers. Five of the eight teachers interviewed mentioned that the only beneficial assistance came through the input and strategies offered by colleagues.

Teacher 1's response best summarized the study's perspective in the statement, "I always felt bad going to my partner teacher when she's not my mentor, but she's the person who is doing the same things as me. So, I went to her a lot, and she was the one who really helped me." The responses were categorized to form this theme suggesting that the only practical or operational support came through non-designated mentors or fellow faculty members.

Themes Regarding Satisfaction Level with Administration

Research question 5: "How satisfied are the new teachers with communication from the administration?" sought to understand the perspectives of the eight teachers regarding their satisfaction level with the communication of administration. Several themes emerged regarding factors concerning preparation for teachers.

One common theme emerged referencing the level and prioritization of communication from the administration. While four of the eight teachers felt that the administration provided adequate communication and three of the eight teachers felt that the communication was limited; the majority mentioned practical communication and support was a key factor in their evaluation of their local administration.

Seven of the eight teachers who were interviewed explained that their experiences, a local presence, support in the classroom, and meaningful experiences determined whether the administrator was effective or ineffective.

Teacher 3's responses provided a complete synopsis of this determination by the group interviewed: "I knew that I was going to get good feedback from her, she wasn't somebody that was just going to come in and check off the boxes." The responses were provoked by an interview question probing potential support from the school assisting with new teacher orientation to the school system.

Themes Regarding the Needs of New Teachers

Research question 4: "What are the areas of needs for new teachers?" attempted to understand the needs of new teachers with the district as far as support or processes that would help them be more successful. Several themes emerged regarding factors concerning preparation for teachers.

Two common themes emerged referencing the needs of new teachers. These themes were mentor input and support, as well as observational feedback from administration and lead teachers.

Seven out of the eight teachers all mentioned a positive impact from working with fellow faculty members as informal mentors, content support, or assisting with alleviating personal or classroom stress. These responses provided an understanding of how the teachers provide practical assistance with troubleshooting operational procedures, curriculum problems, and classroom management solutions.

Teacher 8 stated that "I was extremely nervous, but the mentor teacher assured me, 'Just get in there, do what you think you need to do and if it doesn't work, tomorrow's a new day. We'll fix it.' So, I was like, "Okay." These comments summarize the group's collective perspective by suggesting that one of the keystones to orientation and support comes through the mentorship and support system of fellow teachers.

The second common theme of the need for new teachers suggested that teachers need observational feedback that assists with troubleshooting obstacles relating to curriculum and classroom management. Three of the eight teachers all mentioned that more frequent feedback from mentors, lead teachers, and administrative staff assist in some of the pitfalls experienced in their first year.

Teacher 4 stated, "Last year, I had three different people observe me and give me evaluations. So, I never really knew what to change or how to better myself because they all said different things." These comments share a common understanding that consistent and meaningful feedback can help them better their practices and find solutions to local issues. The

responses were categorized to form this theme suggesting that the only meaningful feedback can be a great aid to new teachers.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations unfolded as the study progressed. The interview pool was impacted in part by Covid-19, and a larger pool of participants was limited to the eight participants represented in the study. The study was conducted via semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that allowed participants the ability to reflect and best describe their experiences; because of this, the data collected were strictly based on the participants' statements. The school district was also located in a rural community, which restricted the range of conclusions based on the experiences of the region.

Conclusions

This study's major conclusion as to the satisfaction level of teachers with the district's induction process was represented in the study. Teachers responded to the interview questions and shared their experiences with the new teacher orientation and mentoring processes with the district. Regarding the level of preparedness felt, the limited organization for a formal program by the district, and the discussion of needs by the participants, it was discovered through the interviews that there is a lack of satisfaction with the mentoring process within the participants interviewed.

A major takeaway from the study regarding the district's induction process is that while the participants experienced no intentional program focused on the development, their experiences and responses outline a need for formal mentorship, professional learning opportunities, and school-level teams to form a local orientation plan.

The study revealed that there are qualities of these experiences that could be implemented through a formal program that includes new teacher mentors that assist in the introduction to

school policies and procedures, aid in the implementation of course design, and the execution of curriculum. Also, from the interviews participants agreed that there was a need for stress relief or a supportive environment that would assist with the stress of not only the classroom but in making the school a community, not only for a purpose but for support. The study also shared a natural pattern of teachers wanting feedback and observational data that would assist in bettering their teaching practices. This type of actionable information is something that these new teachers craved. From the consistency of the administration to communication regarding the daily operations and plans for breaking cyclical barriers, the teachers interviewed did want structure. They commented that there is value in collaboration for many of the issues that arise within a school.

The research focused on the understanding of the teaching staff regarding their satisfaction level with the induction process of the rural East Tennessee school district. The emergence of the major themes addressing the research questions provides a complete picture of how the onboarding process impacted new teachers in the school system.

Recommendations for Practice

The researcher determined that there are common characteristics in the perceptions of new teacher induction within the school district. The following recommendations for practice are based on the experiences described within this study:

1. The teaching staff described a lack of a formal program for onboarding or orienting new teachers to the district. The solution would be to form a team consisting of school-level administration and teachers within the district that assisted in creating a natural program for induction; the district could utilize professional learning requirements to create opportunities for these new teachers.

2. Based on the reflections of the teachers interviewed, the most valuable aspect of their new teacher experience came through the assistance of fellow teachers. This consideration suggests that part of the mentoring process should be an assigned mentor with check-ins and mentorship times. Based on the responses, the mentor should be close in proximity, work with a similar content area, and provide opportunities for the new teacher to ask questions and troubleshoot difficult situations.

3. Per feedback based on teacher need, the mentor and administration should work together with formal and informal observations to provide actionable feedback with curriculum implementation and classroom management strategies.

4. Based on the experiences of the new teachers, the administration should work to provide teachers with training opportunities related to operational procedures, such as technology, school practices, and scheduling design before the year starts, if possible, to make teachers better prepared for the year.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research provides a small sampling of experiences that the teachers had with the induction process of the rural district, and how satisfied these teachers were with the process. Therefore, recommendations for further research include, but are not limited to:

1. A further qualitative study should consider an expansion of the scope of the study to include aspects such as a comparative study with other similar school districts within the region. This would help discern the patterns and effective practices.

2. A quantitative approach should be considered in the future for comparing these experiences with factors such as student growth, teacher growth, teacher retention, and teacher satisfaction surveys.

3. The study would have benefited from the addition of interviews conducted with
    administrators discussing the rationale for no formal induction and mentoring
    process for a more complete understanding of the district's perspective.

Additional research on the topic of understanding the induction processes of the district and
teacher satisfaction would increase the scope of knowledge within this area of research.

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Appendix A

MILLIGAN
UNIVERSITY

Date: January 25, 2022

Principal Investigator: **Jayna Phelps**, Graduate Student, Milligan University
From: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Milligan University
Project: *The Satisfaction of New Teachers with Induction and Mentoring and the Design of a New Teacher Induction and Mentor Program in a Local School System*
RB Tracking Number: **2022-01**
RB Approval Number: **Exp2201251012**
Subject: **Final Approval**

On behalf of the Milligan University Institutional Review Board (IRB), we are writing to inform you that the above-mentioned study has been approved as expedited. This approval also indicates that you have fulfilled the IRB requirements for Milligan University.

All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission, meaning that you will follow the research plan you have outlined here, use approved materials, and follow university policies.

Take special note of the following important aspects of your approval:

- Any changes made to your study require approval from the IR3 Committee before they can be implemented as part of your study. Contact the IRB Committee at **IRB@milligan.edu** with your questions and/or proposed modifications;
- If there are any unanticipated problems or complaints from participants during your data collection, you must notify the Milligan University IRB Office within 24 hours of the data collection problem or complaint;
- Milligan University requires specific formatting when collecting demographic data on gender; please contact me if you need assistance with this formatting.

The Milligan University IRB Committee is pleased to congratulate you on the approval of your research proposal. Best wishes as you conduct your research! If you have any questions about your IRB Approval, please contact the IRB Office and copy your faculty advisor if appropriate on the communication.

On behalf of the IRB Committee,

Trini Rangel, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Milligan University

Appendix B

Interview Questions Guide

1. How new are you? What grade? Subject? Undergrad? Grad? Gateway?

2. Tell me your "why" for teaching. Why did you decide to become a teacher?

3. Tell me areas where you feel that your pre-service (college) experience prepared you.

4. Tell me about the induction (onboarding) experience you had.

5. How do you feel about your preparedness in the classroom for things like administrative duties (such as taking attendance, lunch count, copy machine), classroom management, instruction?

6. Tell me about the tools and support you were given to deal with stressful situations in the classroom?

7. Do you feel you were given the tools and resources to help with stress, conflicts, and time management?

8. Tell me about the support you have received from your administrator.

9. How satisfied are you with the communication provided by your administrator?

10. Tell me what other supports you have received from school faculty and staff.

11. How do you feel communicating with co-workers?

12. Did you have an official mentor?

13. What areas do you feel confident in?

14. Tell me about your areas of need.

Appendix C

TITLE OF STUDY

The Satisfaction of New Teachers with Induction and Mentoring in a Local School System

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Jayna Phelps
Milligan University, Department of Education
jephelps@k12k.com

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to gauge the satisfaction levels of new teachers in the Northeast Tennessee school district. This confidential information will be used to create a formal induction program that will include mentorship, collaboration, and ongoing professional learning.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Research procedures will include a semi-structured interview regarding the satisfaction level of your induction into your school district. The interview will take between 30-45 minutes. Interviews will be conducted via Google Meet. These interviews will be recorded by the researcher.

RISKS

Risks may involve a hostile work environment. This risk will be mitigated by always keeping all identities confidential.

You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

BENEFITS

The benefits to you as a subject are anticipated to be the ability to utilize the induction program for yourself.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your identity during the research process will be confidential. For this research study, your comments will not be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher.
- Keeping recording of interviews saved in a password-protected online file.

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact the Institutional Review Board at http://IRB@milligan.edu

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and understood the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____