NOVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM AND DISTRICT-ASSIGNED MENTORING EFFICACY

By

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Toni Lynne Richards July 7, 2022

Dedicated to Eileen and Lester Gasper, and Anthony and Betty Gasper

Thank you to my grandparents, Eileen and Lester, for listening to me and believing in me (I love and miss you). To my parents, Tony and Betty, for pushing me to do more and be more while encouraging me to pursue my possible.

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ABSTRACT

New teachers, or those within their first 5 years of teaching, have an attrition rate of 40% compared to the experienced teacher attrition rate of 8% (NCES, 2012; Taie & Goldring, 2020). Induction programs with organizational supports for novice teachers are in many districts, it is important to conduct program evaluations to review the perceived helpfulness of the programs (Davis & Higdon, 2008). The purposes of this mixed methods sequential explanatory study are to determine (a) the fidelity to which the district induction program was implemented, (b) which components of the district induction program novice teachers describe as most useful to their professional growth, and (c) the ways in which the district mentoring process was useful to novice teachers' professional growth. Participants were 33 novice teachers in one Middle Tennessee school district during the 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021 school years. Most participants identified as White, non-Hispanic (n = 30), 21–25 years old (n = 18), and attended a traditional 4-year teacher preparation program (n = 20). Thirty-three novice teachers completed Likert-type surveys, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Five participants completed semistructured interviews, which were analyzed manually using thematic coding. Findings indicated that attendance at the novice teacher induction program was inconsistent, due to unclear administration expectations, timing and location of meetings, and late hiring dates. Participants spoke about the induction program and district-assigned mentors related to classroom management, lesson planning, expectations of administration, and the role of mentor. Implications for research include investigating differing perceptions and needs of traditional certification and alternative certification teachers, the correlation between program attendance and teacher attrition, and effective novice teacher supports in rural or fringe districts. Implications for practice include training mentors on constructive feedback and the use of the

evaluation system, updating program content annually based on participant feedback, providing late hires and conflicting work schedules alternate ways to receive program content, and having consistent expectations from the district and school-based administration regarding program attendance.

Keywords: novice teachers, teacher induction, mentoring, professional growth, program evaluation

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Chapter I

Introduction

According to the Learning Policy Institute (2018), 7.3% of teachers plan to leave the profession in 2016 across the United States. In Tennessee, 20% of teachers changed their school between the 2017–2018 school year and the 2018–2019 school year with 10% of teachers leaving the profession or the state (Collins & Schaaf, 2020). Teachers in the subject areas of mathematics, science, special education, and English language learners were more likely to leave the teaching profession than teachers of other subjects (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teachers were also more likely to be movers (i.e., change school but remain in the profession), or leavers (i.e., leave the teaching profession) if they were working at schools receiving federal funds under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Espel et al., 2019). Also, limited organizational and administrative supports in underfunded and under-resourced areas, such as urban and rural schools, had the highest number of teachers leaving the profession, especially among early-career teachers (i.e., those with less than 5 years of experience; Barnes et al., 2007; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Pratte & Booker, 2014).

Based on studies of teacher attrition, district administrators develop programs to support teachers in high-risk categories. One group of focus is early-career teachers, with less than 5 years of classroom experience, and novice teachers, with one or less of classroom experience (Espel et al., 2019). These teachers make up the largest group of teachers leaving the professions (Espel et al., 2019; Kapadia et al., 2007; Pratte & Booker, 2014). Early-career teachers are placed in schools with high vacancy rates, low socioeconomic status, specialized fields such as

science, mathematics, and special education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), and lack administrative support (Pratte & Booker, 2014).

Induction programs are developed by school districts to assist novice teachers transition from university studies to the role of full-time teacher (Barnes et al., 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Induction programs are not standardized across the state or nation but have similar features (Schuck et al., 2017). The most common features are orientation, professional development, and mentors (Schuck et al., 2017). The orientation component consists of a 1-day or 2-day session with district introductions of central office personnel and an overview of district policies or procedures (Barnes et al., 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Districts may also use this day to complete documents or training for human resources or technology (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012). Some districts have new teachers participate in induction programs to familiarize them with district policies and procedures (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Mitchell et al., 2017).

The professional learning component of induction programs focuses on transitional support for novice teachers and includes classroom management, building classroom relationships, lesson plan development, and lesson delivery (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Professional development can be defined as additional learning or courses teachers attend either in school, the district, or an outside source (Main & Pendergast, 2016). The purpose of professional development is to support teachers to become higher performing on evaluations, more productive in the classroom, and improve student achievement (Adnot et al., 2017; Kraft et al., 2016). The topics covered during induction are designed to help novice teachers acclimate to their school and district culture or context (Adams-Budde et al., 2020; Adnot et al., 2017).

Induction programs often include a mentoring component. Mentors can be appointed at the district level from a mentoring pool of candidates or assigned by administrators at the school

level and may be in the same content area or teach the same grade level (Schwartz & Dori, 2016). The mentors help novice teachers with daily teaching administrative duties, content area concerns, and student concerns (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2017; Schwartz & Dori, 2016). The mentor can also help novice teachers cope with challenges in the classroom as well as school community and culture (Dias-Lacey & Guirguis, 2017; Schuck et al., 2017).

Problem of Practice

Nationally, over 13% of teachers have less than 4 years of teaching experience (Taie & Goldring, 2020). Early-career teachers, or those within their first 5 years of teaching, have a higher attrition rate than experienced teachers at 40% compared to experienced teacher attrition rate of 8% (NCES, 2012; Taie & Goldring, 2020). Early-career teacher attrition contributes to the national teacher shortage, as 43% of teachers are eligible to retire over the next 10 years (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Taie & Goldring, 2020). According to recent studies, early-career teachers are retained in their current school 82% of the time, with approximately 8% transferring within or between school districts and 10% leaving the teaching profession (Espel et al 2019; Pratte & Booker, 2014). Teacher attrition is detrimental to districts in hiring costs as well as the time and financial costs of mentoring and professional development (Barnes et al., 2007; Collins & Schaffer, 2020). Students who are economically marginalized, have a disability, or are non-White are more likely to experience teacher attrition (Barnes et al., 2007; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In Tennessee, novice teacher attrition rates resemble those of other states across the nation with 72% being retained in their current school and an additional 8% being transferred to other schools within the district (Collins & Schaffer, 2020). The district under study, however, has a higher novice teacher attrition rate than the state

average, which can disrupt student learning and school culture, as well as cost the district human and financial capital.

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study are to determine (a) the fidelity to which the district induction program was implemented, (b) how novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth, (c) how novice teachers perceive the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth**.**

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. To what degree was the district induction program implemented with fidelity?
2. How do novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth?
3. How do novice teachers perceive the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth?

Overview of Methodology

This mixed methods study addresses organizational supports provided to novice teachers. The design is two-phase explanatory sequential mixed methods that incorporates collection and analysis of quantitative followed by collection and analysis of qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This triangulation method allows a better understanding of the complementary data and provide a greater depth of understanding of the quantitative data (Creswell, 2013).

The quantitative data were collected via surveys of novice teachers in the district to determine the fidelity of implementation and the types and frequency of organizational supports given to novice teachers to support their professional growth. The follow-up qualitative data

were collected via interviews to add in-depth explanation of ways the components of the induction program and mentoring process was useful to professional growth of novice teachers. This second phase helps to explain the quantitative data and allows for the expansion of the statistical analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Significance of the Study

While many school districts have induction programs with organizational supports, it is important to conduct program evaluations to review the perceived helpfulness of the programs (Davis & Higdon, 2008). High-quality induction and mentoring programs help novice teachers with the transition from the collegiate classroom to the educational environment (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Evaluating these programs ensures the quality of the programs, distinguishing desired outcomes, and determining if the induction program is helping to retain novice teachers (Patton, 2017).

Effective induction programs help with teacher turnover and save additional funds spent during the initial teaching years (Barnes et al., 2007). School districts spend money on recruiting and developing this new talent (Barnes et al., 2007). Many times, districts also spend money on special incentives such as signing bonuses as well as specialized training for novice teachers (Barnes et al., 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). For example, funding is spent on administrative processing in transferring teachers to other schools to find a better fit. Schools with a high rate of students on free and reduced meals, with a high rate of students of color, or low performance on state rating metrics spend their scarce resources on novice teachers that could be used in the classroom (Barnes et al., 2007). While there is a cost of human capital in this transition of teachers, it is also costly to students.

Teacher attrition can impact students' academic success in the classroom and the school's overall performance on state rating matrices. For example, students taught by novice teachers have lower performance on state assessments when compared to students of experienced teachers (Barnes et al., 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). The cost is greater for students at schools with a high concentration of students of color or labeled as Title I by the Department of Education since these schools tend to employ teachers with fewer years of service, thus less classroom experience (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Reichardt et al., 2020). Additionally, novice teachers need greater assistance in learning to teach in their school context but lack administrative support or academic resources (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kraft et al., 2016). Teachers become more productive with more teaching experience and skill development in the classroom, which makes them better at supporting student academics and positively affecting student achievement (Adnot et al., 2017; Harris & Sass, 2010). When schools have high turnover rates, those students do not benefit from their teachers' professional learning as new skills and techniques show positive results the year after the professional learning is received when teachers have had an opportunity to implement and practice the new skills in the classroom (Harris & Sass, 2010; Ronfeldt, 2012).

Definition of Key Terms

1. **Attrition:** Attrition refers to teachers who leave the profession or take a nonteaching position within the school system (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Espel et al., 2019). For this study, attrition is when teachers leave the teaching profession or public school system anytime during a career, including retiring (Espel et al., 2019).
2. **Alternative Certification:** An alternative teaching certification is granted at the district or state level for individuals with a bachelor's degree who did not attend a traditional

university program (Adnot et al., 2017; Clotfetter et al., 2010). Alternative certification is often granted in content areas that have teacher shortages, such as mathematics, science, and special education (Adnot et al., 2017).

3. **Early-career teacher:** An early-career teacher is a person with less than 5 years of teaching experience (Buchanan et al. 2013; Pratt & Booker, 2014). The term "early-career teacher" and "new teacher" are often used interchangeably in the literature and refer to people just beginning their teaching careers.
4. **Induction:** An induction program is developed within a district or school to orient and assist new teachers and to help them grow as practitioners (Kapadia et al., 2007).
5. **Mentoring:** The ongoing interaction of an experienced mentor teacher and novice teacher used to help the novice teacher understand school and district policies, develop skills in practice, and assimilate to school and district culture (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Kapadia et al., 2007).
6. **New Teacher:** A new teacher is a teacher with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience. A new teacher may also be listed as an "early-career teacher" in the literature (see Schunk et al., 2012).
7. **Novice teacher**: A novice teacher is generally defined as a person in the teaching profession with 0–1 year of experience (see Schunk et al., 2012). The terms "new teacher" or "early-career teacher" are also found in the literature, although the term "new teacher" typically refers to those with 5 or fewer years of experience.
8. **Novice teacher**: A novice teacher is generally defined as a person in the teaching profession with 0–1 year of experience (see Schunk et al., 2012). The terms "new

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Chapter II

Synthesis of the Research Literature

This chapter presents an overview of the social constructivism theoretical framework and how teacher induction programs can be explained using this theory. The review of literature discusses the national and state attrition rates with a focus on novice attrition rates, followed by factors related to novice teacher attrition, types of induction models and supports provided to novice teachers, program evaluations, and gaps in the research.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is social constructivism developed by Bruner (1965). Bruner studied the role of the teacher as well as language and instruction in developing how students problem solve and how problem solving varies from person to person (Jennings et al., 2013). The idea is that developing knowledge requires social interaction to make sure that the instruction is integrated into prior learning. Also, social constructivism suggests that students build on their knowledge through real-world application (Jennings et al., 2013). It is through social processes that students construct their new ideas and concepts related to abstract knowledge (Brown et al., 1989; Jennings et al., 2013).

An extension of social constructivism is situated learning in which students are put in situations and simulations to assist in making meaningful connections with their learning (Brown et al., 1989). Situated learning occurs when knowledge is developed as part of the situation in which it is learned and is continually changing when the context of usage changes. Context usage, or the activity or location of learning, ties their book knowledge to actual application and removes the abstract in the thought process and problem solving (Brown et al., 1989). Situated learning allows individuals to take their abstract knowledge and through activities and situations

are allowed to integrate their different ideas and language into those situations to develop a product (Brown et al., 1989; Cobb & Bower, 1999). Users then change their view of the world by putting their conceptual knowledge from textbooks into their own culture and identifying ways in which it can be used in problem solving (Brown et al., 1989).

Teaching is a situated learning experience (Buchanon et al., 2013). Students gain the knowledge through the textbooks and materials taught in their college preparatory classes, for example, and then they must use these materials developed in theory and apply the conceptual knowledge and skills as practitioners (Buchanon et al., 2013; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). This becomes problem solving in the school environment, and novice teachers need to learn how to incorporate the language and culture of their schools and classrooms (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). While situated learning has similarities to an apprenticeship, it is not the same. Apprenticeships require students to learn skills, tools, and culture to perform a job under the direct leader or a master in the trade, while novice teachers have conceptual knowledge and skills that need to be applied in a new situation (Brown et al., 1989; Buchanon et al., 2013).

Review of Literature

Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition, or teachers leaving the profession, contributes to the national teacher shortage (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), school systems must hire replacements for the high number of beginning teachers that leave the profession every year. In their analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) 2011-2012 and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) 2012-2013, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond analyzed the trends in teacher turnover, which refers to teachers changing schools as well as those leaving the profession. The researchers noted that the

trend of leavers—those teachers leaving the profession—increased significantly at 3% or approximately 90,000 teachers. One factor was the region of the country, with teachers in southern states leaving at a higher rate than in northern regions of the United States. Another factor was subject taught, with mathematics and science teachers being more likely to leave the profession over the other subject areas. Additionally, teachers in special education and English as a second language had a higher probability of leaving the profession and those with alternative certification license (i.e., those who received certification through a non-traditional teacher program) were more likely to be leavers than stayers. This probability of leaving increased when teachers were working with underrepresented student populations, especially if teachers had an alternative certification.

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) noted additional factors for teachers leaving the profession included workplace conditions, demands on teacher's time, lack of support from administration, lack of resources in the schools, and other opportunities in non-teaching fields of study. In a similar study, Espel et al. (2019) found that factors such as subject taught, years of experience, school characteristics, and administrative support aligned with those of Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond. Espel et al. analyzed quantitative information gathered from administrative data provided by the state education agencies and supplemented these data with statistical information from the National Center for Education Statistics. Epsel et al. also included factors often uncontrollable by individual schools, such as low pay or working a part-time position and noted that teachers at nonrural schools were more likely to be leavers than those teachers at rural schools and elementary school teachers were more likely to be leavers than middle school or high school teachers. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond noted a lower

percentage of elementary school teachers leaving the profession but did not examine middle school or high school as a whole, just by subject area.

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) and Espel et al. (2019) analyzed the trends in teacher attrition with the characteristics of students the leavers were serving. Both studies noted teachers who work with underrepresented populations had a higher percentage of teachers leaving the profession. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond noted that these students were also more likely to be served by teachers with alternative certifications or fewer years of experience.

In Tennessee, Pratt and Booker (2014) examined the state's attrition, rates focusing on years of experience and effectiveness as determined by the state teacher evaluation system, Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM; see Appendix A). The quantitative data examined by Pratt and Booker were collected in 2012 reflecting on the 2011–2012 school, which coincide with the data used by Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017). Pratt and Booker found that 8% of Tennessee teachers were leavers at the time of their study. They reported that teachers who had 0–2 years of experience were significantly more likely to be leavers, which is consistent with other studies discussed in this literature review. Pratt and Booker also found that teachers who were more likely to be leavers were those who earned a level of overall effectiveness score of 1, 2, or 3 on the five-point scale and those who lacked: feedback to improve teaching, evaluation consistency, and support by administration. These trends in school factors concur with the studies of Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond and Espel et al. (2019), especially the findings related to administrative support for teachers' professional learning and the protection of a teacher's instructional time in the classroom.

Collins and Schaaf (2020) updated the Pratt and Booker (2014) study by re-examining teacher attrition in Tennessee using state quantitative data from the 2017–2018 school year and found the attrition rate had increased to 10%. Collins and Schaaf analyzed the data from the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) to determine patterns in teacher attrition for the state. A key finding stated by Collins and Schaaf concurred with Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) and Espel et al. (2019): teachers serving urban schools and schools with a high population of underrepresented schools were more likely to be leavers that teachers at suburban or rural schools. Collins and Schaaf also found that urban schools were more likely to hire more teachers with fewer years' experience who needed greater support from administration and were more likely to be leavers, similar to previously mentioned studies. Contrary to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond, however, Collins and Schaaf found that Tennessee teachers in secondary mathematics and science were retained at the same rate as other subject area teachers were not more likely to be leavers. Contrary to Pratt and Booker (2014), Collins and Schaaf found that teachers' evaluation ratings did not affect their rate of leaving the profession; districts were retaining Level 3 teachers at one percentage point lower than Level 5 teachers. Similar to past studies, they found that novice teachers or those with limited experience needed greater support from administration, but questioned whether the teachers were not as prepared for their school context or had inadequate preparation for teaching.

Within the national and Tennessee-specific research, there are several common factors for teacher attrition. These include teacher characteristics and school or district characteristics. The common teacher characteristics in predicting attrition are the type of certification, fewer years of experience, and subject or grade level taught. School characteristics included workplace

conditions, lack of administrative support, lack of resources, student populations, and district and school location. The following section will examine research on these common factors.

Factors Related to Novice Teacher Attrition

This section contains research literature pertaining to factors that affect novice teachers, or those with 0–2 years of experience. Teachers with fewer years of experience are more likely to be leavers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Collins & Schaaf, 2020) and novice teachers are leaving the profession in greater numbers that teachers with more experience (Pratt & Booker, 2014). Novice teachers' need for extra administrative support, and learning the context of their schools, encompass many of the predictor traits of leavers as described in the research.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Quantitative studies by Pratt and Booker (2014), Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) and Collins and Shaaf, each showed that novice teachers were more likely to leave the classroom. Collins and Shaaf (2020) questioned in their study findings if teachers were being prepared enough in their teacher preparation training for the classroom or school context. In April of 2017, the Tennessee Department of Education released a study addressing the partnership between school districts and teacher preparation programs. In their study, the Tennessee Department of Education was examining ways to work with school districts to understand how teacher preparation programs can identify areas of teacher shortages, develop teaching skills for those school districts, and integrate novice teachers into the classroom.

Traditional Programs. Traditional programs are discussed in educator preparation programs as a 4-year program of study in a university setting that incorporates course work as well as student teaching or residency program (Nelson et al., 2019; Tennessee Department of

Education, 2017). With situated learning theory, knowledge and skills learned in the university course work is used in student teaching or residency to help teacher candidates with problem solving in real-world situations.

Nelson et al. (2019) examined a 12-week, field-based teacher preparation in their mixed methods study of literacy educators in which teacher candidates spent 8 hours in the classroom at a local school. The teacher candidates worked with professors and local school faculty to complete coursework, observations, and integration into classroom roles. Nelson et al. analyzed summative assignments, teacher candidate reflections, and responses to open-ended questions. The researchers focused on candidates' development of professional knowledge that would be challenging to develop while being a novice teacher and found that candidates were able to gain a deeper understanding of literacy education, as well as basic classroom routines and procedures, or technical knowledge, needed for general classroom instruction. By working with a classroom teacher in the field-based setting, candidates were able to develop an understanding of decision making as well as differentiation of lesson planning. Nelson et al. found that placing candidates in a field-based program prior to a student teaching component influenced competency and decision making in the classroom. The researchers also found that candidates had a greater overall knowledge of literacy and content as well as pedagogy and working with students.

Mena et al. (2017) also studied preservice teachers and their professional knowledge of teaching such as content and pedagogy. Their study participants ($N = 16$) were preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and university teachers; the qualitative data were collected from recordings of mentoring conversations. The preservice teachers were completing a semester-long student teaching program, unlike the candidates who were in a field-based program, which was 1 year, studied by Nelson et al. (2019). Mena et al. found that mentoring conversations could help

candidates since they focused on events in educational contexts. Mentor teachers were able to give classroom context advice for classroom management and instructional knowledge to candidates based on their individual situations. Mentors were also able to give advice on inferred knowledge those items that are never explicitly taught such as the role of parents or affective knowledge, such as dealing with collegial peers. Mena et al. found that mentor support was vital to help preservice teachers develop expertise in teaching classroom management and administrative knowledge or the professional content delivery knowledge. Mena et al. concluded that preservice and novice teachers would develop greater self-knowledge with practice and experience. They also concluded that continued teaching practice and experience in a situation would further develop classroom context knowledge, or technical knowledge, which was comparable to the findings of Nelson et al. when teaching candidates were placed in field-based courses and developed situational learning.

Simons et al. (2019) conducted a mixed methods study on two different types of student teaching experiences to understand preservice teachers' perception of the collaboration needed with mentor teachers. The researchers examined data collected from preservice teachers ($N = 14$) after parallel teaching and sequential teaching. Parallel teaching is when the mentor teacher and student teacher teach the same content and activities to subgroups in a class. Sequential teaching is when the mentor teacher and student teacher are responsible for different phases within a lesson. Simons et al. found that, overall, preservice teachers had a positive attitude about the team teaching since they were able to collaborate on the lesson plans. This was similar to the findings of Nelson et al. (2019), with mentor teachers being able to help preservice teachers with educational context and instructional knowledge. As with the other two studies where mentoring and teaching knowledge growth helped preservice teachers, peer support and professional growth

were advantages to preservice teachers who were co-teaching in this study. The co-teaching model of student teaching also adds to a preservice teachers' professional knowledge through situational learning experiences, but, similar to the other studies, preservice teachers need additional preparation and practice to build their expertise.

Alternative Certification Programs. Alternative certification is an overreaching term used to describe any teaching certification outside of the traditional university setting. Teachers in an alternative certification program have an introductory education course or two, then complete additional coursework while working in the classroom (Redding & Smith, 2016). Redding and Smith (2016) found that the number of teachers starting as an alternatively certified teacher rose 11 percentage points between 1999 and 2012. Often these alternatively certified teachers work in high vacancy positions or in schools with a high population of underserved student groups (Redding & Smith, 2016). Recently, rural schools are also using more alternative certify teachers to fill vacancies in career and technology fields as well as mathematics and science (Browning & Ball, 2018). According to the research on teacher attrition, novice teachers with an alternative certification were more likely to leave their positions and teaching than teachers who studied in a traditional program (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Collins & Schaaf, 2020).

Redding and Smith (2016) analyzed quantitative data from the nationally administered Staff and Student Survey (SASS) and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey (TFS) to understand teacher characteristics, school context, working conditions, and organizational supports for alternative certification teachers. They found that, during 1999–2000, the percentage of traditionally certified teachers leaving the profession was comparable those with alternative certification. But by 2011–2012 school year, more alternative certified teachers (27%) left the

profession than traditional certified teachers (17%). Redding and Smith noted that alternative certified teachers were largely male, non-White, aged 30 or older, did not have an education degree, and taught in high demand fields such as mathematics or science. As for preservice training, or practice in the classroom prior to teaching, alternative certified teachers lacked prior experience. They also felt less prepared than their peers who went through a traditional program.

Redding and Smith (2016) also confirmed other research findings on school condition where alternative certified teachers were hired. They often, for example, worked in schools with high student behavior problems, lacked administrative support, limited resources for materials and supplied, and served large populations of underrepresented students. Attrition research has found that these were also characteristics of school and administrative conditions that lead to high teacher attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Collins & Schaaf, 2020). According to Redding and Smith, this continues the cycle of these schools that already have teacher attrition and are hiring alternatively certified teachers to fill vacancies. Redding and Smith believe that alternative certified teachers can benefit from school-based supports, but further research needs to be conducted on specific supports for the different cultural backgrounds and the lack of preparation of alternative certified teachers.

Mentzer et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative, comparison study for quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) teaching preparation, comparing alternative certification pathways. One program was 12 semester hours with two courses taught as prerequisites the summer before teaching and the additional classes were completed during the fall semester of teaching. The other program was a 1-year residency program that allowed students to graduate with a master's degree, but all coursework was completed while teaching middle school or high school STEM classes. Mentzer et al. examined self-efficacy, teaching

preferences, and functioning in a high-need school. While both groups ($N = 15$) scored themselves similarly for self-efficacy to begin with, the master's pathway grew more confident with the yearlong support. The continued coursework and support throughout the year had a greater influence on teacher confidence. In the area of teaching preference, the group ($n = 7$) with more field training and less preparation learned more practical solutions for teaching and dealing with problems in the classroom. Both groups were ill-prepared to deal with classroom management, but the master's pathway was better prepared for high-needs classrooms. Mentzer et al. concluded that fast-track certifications do not give teachers enough context or knowledge needed to teach in high demand schools. They also concluded situated learning helped teachers to find more practical ways to solve problems rather than using education theory. Fast-tracked teachers also took longer to build continued confidence in their teaching ability (Mentzer et al., 2018), which could lead to teachers leaving the profession.

In 2018, Redding updated his 2016 study with Henry to understand the characteristics of an alternatively certified teacher. The researchers found that alternative certified teachers were changing the demographics of novice teachers by adding more diversity, whereas traditional programs were largely identifying as female or White. Redding and Henry also found that alternative certified teachers were more likely to graduate from selective universities and teach mathematics and science, giving greater content knowledge and raising scores on content knowledge certification testing. Redding and Henry suggested that policymakers note these changes in demographics would allow schools to choose a more diversified teaching pool. The researchers also state universities need to review their policies for traditional certification programs to understand why they are not conducive to underrepresented populations. Redding and Henry question what can be done to support these alternative certification teachers to prevent

them from leaving the teaching profession since the number of teachers coming to the profession through alternative certification is growing.

Organizational Factors

Organizational factors affecting teacher attrition can be divided into two categories: school context and administrative factors. School context includes school location, student population, content and grade levels taught, and school culture (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Espel et al. 2019). Administrative factors include support from administration and other teachers, evaluations, school resources, and accountability measures.

School Context. According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) teachers in schools labeled Title I by the federal government had a higher attrition rate than other schools. These schools have a high proportion of their students receiving free and reduced lunch and, often, have fewer supports for teachers and fewer resources. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond also found that school location (i.e., rural, urban, and located in the South) had an increased effect on teacher attrition.

Hammerness and Matso (2012) investigated novice teachers and school context specific to urban schools by conducting a case study in Chicago as part of the Urban Teacher Education Program. This program was designed to help teachers learn the contexts of their schools and communities in which they worked. Hammerness and Matso suggested that teachers were leaving the profession before they were able to develop needed teaching skills and develop good working relationships with urban students, which were necessary to help students achieve in class as well as on state and national assessments. Hammerness and Matso felt the students and communities varied in urban areas and supports for novice teachers needed to be tailored not to a general urban population, but to the specific school where the teacher worked. Novice teachers in

this program were assigned to their coaches during the 2 years of preservice coursework and student teaching. Coaches designed their strategies based on the individual needs of the novice teacher. Educational policy and urban education course were taught at the university while coaches worked with the district policies overlapped with geographic context and local sociocultural context. The coaching continued throughout the first three years of teaching.

Hammerness and Matso (2012) found that this approach helped novice teachers "unpack their relationships with their students" (p. 572). This type of coaching also helped with classroom behavior issues, familial norms, integrating home and family background, and understanding the neighborhood in which teachers worked. The coaching also helped novice teachers find their own authority and voice in the classroom. From their findings, Hammerson and Matso concluded that all novice teachers need to learn the context of their schools to better the relationships with students and their families, which could help with school climate and working conditions.

Bauml et al. (2008) conducted interviews with 20 preservice teachers to understand their experiences and perceptions of teaching in urban schools. Participants were completing their coursework to graduate and had completed at least one semester of field study (i.e., student teaching). The participants were asked questions about their classroom experiences with individuals with different backgrounds than themselves, culturally, racially, or economically. Each participant was given a hypothetical scenario to respond to in terms of teaching at an urban school. The researchers found that, of the participants who expressed concerns about teaching in an urban school, the concerns fell into three areas: racial or cultural barriers, behavior issues with students, and difficulties with teaching a first year in that setting. Overall the participants who expressed concern about teaching in the urban school setting also felt unprepared to work with students and families in that community setting. One participant in Bauml et al.'s study

expressed a need for additional support and training to work within the urban school. This situational learning was supported in the program studied by Hammerson and Matso (2012) but is not supported in all urban districts as seen in attrition research (see Espel et al., 2019).

Administrative Factors. The supports needed to teach in diverse setting such as urban and rural schools is usually tied to administrative support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Collins & Schaaf, 2020). Administrative support in attrition research has been categorized as either technical, professional, or affective by Schwartz and Dori (2020). Technical supports are those dealing with time usage, such as planning and limited interruptions to the classroom, and administrative tasks like attendance, data reporting, school or district required forms. Professional supports are for student assessment, evaluations, content, classroom management, and curriculum. Affective supports can be positive, such as motivation, peer friendships, and coteaching, or negative, such as disappointment or criticism. It is the negative aspects addresses by affective supports that can contribute to dissatisfaction with the teaching profession.

Thomas et al. (2019) conducted a mixed methods study on professional supports for novice teachers. The two participants as well as their school mentors ($N = 10$) were given the survey and interviewed to better understand collegial support networks for beginning teachers in the professional domain. The researchers found that the principals are facilitators of a supportive school culture and can promote or hinder teacher peer support. Support in the professional domain (i.e., content, curriculum, and classroom discipline) while having greater access to experienced teachers helped one participant to decide to stay in teaching. Thomas et al. reported the other beginning teacher had already decided to leave the teaching profession before the end of her second year of teaching.

Thomas et al. (2019) mention principals as being the facilitators of a supporting community for professional domain growth and development in beginning teachers. Researchers in an earlier study, Schuck et al. (2017), also concluded that school leadership set the climate for teacher support. Schuck et al. surveyed novice teachers (*N*=237) on what actions could be taken to retain teachers. The first part of the survey was demographics, and the second part was two open-ended questions. The first open-ended question concerned novice teachers' views on what kept teachers in the profession. The second open-ended question asked novice teachers to describe the challenges they faced. Since the questions were open-ended a qualitative analysis was conducted to understand novice teachers' perceptions. A lack of school leadership in professional supports lead to novice teachers not feeling comfortable with turning to experience colleagues for assistance. Some novice teachers reported feeling bullied by senior teachers to the point the novices did not want to ask questions or ask for supports. Novice teachers noted that this school climate was affecting their decision to return the following school year. Schuck et al. noted the survey data pointed to other administrative actions that negatively impacted novice teacher job satisfaction, which included workload demands and lack of time for professional learning and preparations. The demands were found to interfere with work-life balance for many novice teachers. Novice teachers with a supportive principal who set the positive climate of collegial support and mentoring had a higher job satisfaction experience.

According to Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017), dissatisfaction with state assessments of students and with administration were two of the reasons for teacher attrition. For student assessments for state measures, the researchers found that 17% of respondents were unhappy with the lack of supports and resources to help students, while 25% were dissatisfied with accountability measures. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond found dissatisfaction with

administration in the areas of intrusions on class time, discipline issues, lack of autonomy in the classroom, and lack of influence over school policies and practices. Part of many state and district teacher evaluations are tied to state assessment measures and, as Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond stated, respondents were unhappy with accountability measures, which can include teacher evaluations.

Teacher Evaluations. Annual evaluations are used by school and district administration to gauge teacher effectiveness and improve the quality of teaching (Collins & Shaaf, 2020).) Novice teachers were often rated lower on evaluations for effectiveness (Pratt & Booker, 2012) and novice teachers needed experience in the classroom to become more effective teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016; Simons et al., 2019).

Israel et al. (2014) conducted a mixed methods study on 16 novice teachers and the role of their five mentors in giving feedback for the evaluation process. The goal of the program being studied by Israel et al. was to improve teacher effectiveness while supporting the growth and development of new teachers. The mentors observed novice teachers and evaluated them with a set evaluation rubric. After the evaluation, mentor teachers would focus on directly supporting areas needing refinement and development. During the process, novice teachers were observed four separate times, formally and informally, and additional interactions and observations were made if the novice teacher was struggling to make progress with the evaluation system. Israel et al. collected data from the evaluations, mentor time allocation charts, and interviews with the novice teachers at the end of the school year and found that concrete and detailed observation feedback specifically tied to the evaluation rubric improved the performance of novice teachers. Novice teachers needed extra support in understanding the expectations of the evaluation model with extra clarification of requirements within the components (Israel et al.,

2014). Beyond the content and lesson presentation, Israel et al. found that evaluation-based observations also helped with classroom management concerns often with classroom procedures such as during station teaching or transitioning students between activities or classrooms.

Although Israel et al. (2014) suggest that evaluations must be used for consistent feedback to be effective, dissatisfaction with the evaluation process was mentioned in teacher surveys (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, teachers with low evaluation scores, or ratings of "ineffective," are not being retained in schools and novice teachers need additional time in the classroom to gain proficiency (Hammerson & Matso, 2012; Pratt & Booker, 2014). Grissom et al. (2021) analyzed data from classroom observation evaluations which are used for 50%-70% of evaluation scores in Tennessee from the 2011-2012 school year through the 2018-2019 school year. The researchers found that teachers with fewer years of experience had lower scores on classroom observations evaluations, but teachers who identified as male or as an underrepresented populations scored lower than those identifying as female or White. Grissom et al. found that this gap can be explained by the context of the school where the teachers were working at the time of the observations. They stated that these teachers were often given students who were lower achieving on state measures, had past disciplinary problems, or were on free or reduced lunch. This correlates to other studies in which researchers found novice teachers of underrepresented populations worked at more urban schools with those student populations (Espel et al. 2019; Pratt & Booker, 2014). Grisson et al. suggest schools use the evaluations as a portion of the evidence when deciding teacher placement as well as teacher retention.

Novice Teacher Supports

Situated learning theory explains that context usage and real-world problem solving tie coursework and textbook knowledge to the application of knowledge and skills (Buchanon et al., 2013). Research on teacher preparation programs shows that novice teachers need additional experiences in the classroom to develop their effectiveness (Mena et al., 2017; Nelsen et al., 2019), even when entering the profession through alternative certification programs (Mentzer et al., 2019; Redding; 2018). The research on teacher attrition demonstrated the need for supports of novice teachers, who are more likely to leave the profession than experienced peers (Carver-Hammond & Darling-Thomas, 2017; Collins & Shaaf, 2020).

Induction Programs

Dais-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) studied how a novice teacher's first year can determine if the teacher will stay in teaching. They concluded that stress, lack of administrative support, and perception of ability to work with behavior issues affected novice teachers' perceptions of teaching and the teaching profession. Areas of stress found by Dais-Lacy and Guirguis in their qualitative study included work overload, lack of support from teachers and administrators, discipline challenges, and curriculum challenges. The study also explored the coping mechanisms novice teachers use to get needed support during the first year. These included seeking outside sources of support, re-evaluating teaching, and finding the help of a mentor. When novice teachers re-evaluated their teaching, they were reflecting on the lesson plan, delivery of the lesson, and what they as teachers could have done differently to improve their teaching. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis concluded the stresses of novice teachers need to be addressed at the school level with extra supports to be available to novice teachers. The extra support from

collegial peers would be helpful to novice teachers when dealing with re-evaluating teaching as well as guidance for curriculum and lesson planning.

Burke et al. (2015) studied the different types of supports given to novice teachers during their first years. They examined administrative support, collegial support, mentors, and professional training. They found at the end of the first year, teachers were more likely to leave the profession if they had little sharing of resources, curriculum or content support, limited work connection with experienced teachers, and a lack of professional conversations or learning opportunities. Burke et al. align with Dias-Lacy and Guirguis on the stress the school situation can cause novice teachers. Burke et al. explained that novice teachers preferred the support of experienced teachers for curriculum and planning while being able to have professional conversations about concerns within the classroom. The researchers also concluded novice teachers leaving the profession had limited interactions with mentors and felt isolated. There was also a need for professional learning specifically for the challenges experienced by novice teachers, such as classroom management, teacher voice, and long-term professional learning.

Adams-Budde et al.'s (2020) findings align with Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) in their case study ($N = 3$) of novice teachers. Adams-Budde et al. studied what they referred to as "pose, wobble, and flow," the process novice go through as their beliefs on teaching and learning are challenged and they work through to a greater and deeper understanding of teaching and learning. Beginning with pose, the belief about teaching and learning, the researchers found those beliefs were developed during preservice and teacher preparation classes. These ideas become challenged in the classroom as teachers learn to teach and the researchers call this the wobble. Adams-Budde et al. concluded the wobble let novice teachers to question their poses and reflect on the classroom challenges to their beliefs in teaching and learning. This is part of situated

learning theory when learned skills and knowledge from textbooks is applied to real world situations and the prior learning needs to be adapted to the new context (Brown, et al., 1989) The wobble led to what the researchers called the flow, the growth and development of a new understanding of teaching and learning. Adams-Budde et al. concluded it is important to help novice teachers through this process of growing and developing with their experiences.

The Tennessee Department of Education (2017) reported novice teachers felt more prepared and viewed their training more favorably when they participated in an induction program at the district level. To assist with the transition from the teacher preparation program to full-time teacher, districts develop induction programs to help novice teachers gain experience (Barnes et al., 2007; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Ingersoll and Smith (2004) reported novice teachers in an induction program and had support were less likely to leave the profession. They also reported that novice teachers develop more as teachers when they had a variety of support activities and induction programs had multiple components. While not standardized, induction programs have common features such as professional training, assigned mentors, and orientations (Schuck, 2017). Burke et al. (2015) concluded the purpose of an induction program should not be retention but supporting novice teachers develop their teaching practices and bettering their early teaching experiences.

Mentoring Supports

The availability of a mentor is a common theme in the research on induction programs (Adams-Budde et al., 2020; Burke et al., 2015; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Schwartz and Dori (2016) studied the connection between mentors and novice teachers. They focused on mentors as facilitators of the induction process and their role in helping novice teachers achieve high quality instruction. Schwartz and Dori studied 12 participants teaching in a STEM high school program.

By using semistructured interviews, observations, and reflective writings, the researchers wanted to understand the mentoring process, challenges faced during mentoring, and ways mentoring contributed to the teaching ability of novice teachers. Schwartz and Dori divided supports into three domains, technical, professional, and affective. The technical domain includes time management, and administrative tasks such as attendance, entering grades, and filling out school forms. The professional domain focuses on content and pedagogy as well as assessment of student learning. The affective domain is about the positive friendships and motivations as well as the negative aspects, such as criticism and disappointment. Schwartz and Dori concluded successful mentoring was key to the development of novice teachers. According to Schwartz and Dori successful mentoring can be judged by the level of respect and ability of the mentor to be a role model. Novice teachers develop their confidence in planning and delivery of lessons, understanding of school and district policies, and deepening their knowledge of pedagogy.

Marshall et al. (2013) also studied the supports given to novice teachers but focused on special education teachers. They found that survey respondents (N = 1,662) contributed work conditions such as too much paperwork, lack of planning, responsibility for too many students with varying issues, and lack of support as reasons for deciding if novice teachers were going to stay in the teaching profession. When novice teachers were partnered with an experienced teacher the need for support was highest at the beginning of the school year. Novice teachers reported to the researcher the mentor teachers who were determined to help them be successful were available near daily. Novice teachers reported a great sense of confidence in their abilities to do their job by learning how to better work with students and manage paraprofessionals. Novice teachers also reported greater confidence in writing individualized education plans and performing other administrative tasks within the technical domain. Marshall et al. reported that

paperwork was the top listed reason for special education teachers leaving the profession. But they concluded the help of mentors with education plans and formal assistance with meetings, novice teachers were able to receive individualized support. This mentoring helped novice teachers learn to navigate the requirements of the technical domain of teaching and develop a greater understanding of state and district requirements.

Mitchell et al. (2017) also examined the role of mentors in the induction process. Their case study focused on the concerns of novice teachers who were challenged by the demands of the curriculum and evaluation process and the need for help on everyday classroom tasks. Mitchell et al. used the California induction program, which focused on instruction and assessment, professional domain, over the other domains of technical or affective. This induction model developed professional learning communities for novice teachers and assigned them mentors. The professional learning communities met in 4-week cycles and consisted of assessments, reflections, and portfolio entries. The mentors in this program were assigned to multiple novice teachers for the school year. This program had few face-to-face meetings between the mentor and novice teacher, which led to conflicts in what supports were being given and what was needed. Mitchell et al. found that novice teachers found the online format and time spent with mentors as inadequate. Novice teachers expressed concern over instructions and needing clarification on assessment assignments. Mitchell et al. concluded that, for induction programs and mentors to be successful, mentors need to know when, why, and how to work with novice teachers. Mentors also need to understand strategies for interacting with novice teachers and giving specific feedback. This conclusion concurs with other studies of mentors within an induction program needing to be deliberate with working with novice teachers.

Evaluating Induction and Professional Learning Programs

Research and program evaluations have different purposes since research develops new knowledge and evaluations develop improvements and judgments about an existing program (Patton, 2017). Research does inform evaluation, however, by adding knowledge to the problem and helping frame the evaluation purpose and questioning (Patton, 2017). The evaluation process is the basis of understanding what is and what is not working in organizational programs (Patton, 2017). Levin-Rozalis (2003) explains that research grows the body of scientific knowledge while evaluations give feedback to stakeholders. Levin-Rozalis presents other differences between research and evaluations: application, theory, methodology, generalization, relevance, and causality. For application, Levin-Rozalis states the difference is in evaluations applying the findings narrowly to a particular project. This difference in application sets up the other differences making evaluations field-dependent and research theory-dependent. Evaluations, according to Levin-Rozalis, need to be "systematic and repeatable" (p. 6). Program evaluations should review who the program serves, what training is received, and whether it works in practice (Patton, 2017).

Program evaluations can be quantitative or qualitative depending on the questions being asked (Patton, 2017). A mixed methods evaluation adds depth and personal context to the statistical data (Patton, 2017). Many program evaluations use surveys or open-ended questions and interviews to get a better understanding of participants' reactions and learning (Guskey, 2002; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). A mixed methods approach to program evaluation allows for the triangulation of data and strengthens evaluation claims (Patton, 2017). Patton also states the open-ended research questions can help compare what is wanted in a program with what is

intended to be the outcome. The open-ended questions also give in-depth explanation of individual experiences within the program being evaluated (Patton, 2017).

For professional development, program evaluations provide meaningful information to district leaders to develop and improve the professional development and the effects on student outcomes (Guskey, 2002). There are five levels of evaluating professional development according to Guskey (2002): participants' reaction (Level 1), participants' learning (Level 2), organization support and change (Level 3), participants' use of new knowledge and skills (Level 4), and student learning outcomes (Level 5). Level 1, participants' reaction, is about the perception of time well spent and meaningfulness to the individual. Level 2, participants' learning, measures new knowledge and skills attained. Level 3, organization support and change, refers to organizational policies and procedures that function as barriers or supports to program implementation. Level 4, participants' use of new knowledge and skills, focuses on the application of content learned during the program. An evaluation cannot be completed at the end of a professional learning session, since it requires participants to practice the new knowledge and skills. Level 5, student learning outcomes, focuses on students' learning and understanding if the stated goals of the professional learning session were achieved or whether there were unintended outcomes. Guskey argues for multiple measures of student learning, that unintended outcomes—positive or negative—are highly important and should be noted, and "above all, be sure to gather evidence on measures that are meaningful to stakeholders in the evaluation process" (p. 9).

Summary

This chapter presents an overview of situational learning theoretical framework and how teacher induction programs can be explained using this theory. Situational learning posits that

knowledge and skills learned in a classroom setting require social context to make connection for real-world problem solving (Brown et al., 1989). Novice needs need additional classroom experience to build on the knowledge gained during their preparation program.

Research shows that novice teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession compared to their experienced peers. The factors that contribute to that are a lack of experience, school context with the student characteristics and school climate, and administrative concerns with lack of support and evaluation measure (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Espel et al., 2019). To help novice teachers gain classroom experience and learn a deeper understanding of teaching and learning, supports are recommended to be put in place. These supports are called induction programs and consist of several parts including orientation, professional learning, and mentoring.

This study intends to build on that of Mitchell et al. (2017) who studied the mentoring component and the professional development component of an online induction program by studying face-to-face components of an induction program. Additionally, this study intends to build on Chaney et al. (2020), who conducted a statewide novice teacher survey to determine the perceived helpfulness of the induction program. They suggested a need to understand the nature of induction programs, the supports offered, and the frequency of those supports and that an in-depth qualitative portion of data, such as an interview, should be used to add to the use of surveys in a study examining perceived helpfulness.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the supports given to new teachers during their first year of teaching, including how well the program was implemented, and understand how novice teachers perceive the induction program and the supports given in the mentoring program in relation to their professional growth. The novice teacher induction program consists of three

parts: orientation, professional learning, and mentoring. This program evaluation will add to the understanding of needs of novice teacher supports during their first year of teaching. The steps taken to complete a program evaluation need to be deliberate to understand if the program—such as an induction program—is achieving the intended outcome (Levin-Rozalis, 2003). The evaluation should be able to be replicated as needed in the future (Levin-Rozalis, 2003). Evaluations of induction program should not focus on surveys and a mixed method study is adds depth to survey results (Guskey, 2002). Additionally, how frequently novice teachers meet with mentors should be examined.

Chapter III

Method

The purposes of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study are to determine (a) the fidelity to which the district induction program was implemented, (b) how novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth, (c) how novice teachers perceive the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth**.** In this chapter, I describe the research design, context, method, participants, instruments, and data collection and analysis. This chapter also contains an explanation of the trustworthiness and credibility of the research and the researcher's reflexivity. The research questions that guided this study were:

The research questions guiding this study are:

1. To what degree was the district induction program implemented with fidelity?
2. How do novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth?
3. How do novice teachers perceive the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth?

Context of the Study

The location of the study is a school district in Middle Tennessee. This district is labeled as fringe rural by the U.S. Department of Education (2019), which means that it is a rural area less than five miles from an urban area. The district is largely rural and has one city with a population of over 17,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). The district has 25 schools and serves over 12,000 students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2020). Four of the schools are virtual or alternative placement; the other 21 schools are physical buildings. During the 2018–2019 school year, the district had 743 teachers with an additional 834 staff members (U.S. Department

of Education, 2021). There are 498 teachers within 12 elementary schools and 238 teachers within eight middle or high schools.

In March of 2020, this county closed school buildings in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and began virtual schooling via the Microsoft TEAMs videoconferencing and online classroom application. When school began in August of 2020, opening day was briefly delayed for three days followed by a week of alternating student arrivals. After fully opening, classes resumed in person with the use of masks. Small student groups were quarantined or put in homebound isolation as recommended by the health department due to contact tracing or positive test results for the virus. During these times, the teacher taught both in-class and homebound students simultaneously with the aid of the Microsoft TEAMs application. In January of 2021, this county began teaching alternating student groups in person and at home in an asynchronous fashion for a 9-week period. After spring break, all students returned to school, but absences continued due to health department recommendations and the COVID-19 virus.

The novice teacher induction program in this district is being revised to align with research-based practices more closely. Teachers new to the district during the 2018–2019 school year, including novice teachers, were inducted under the old program. This program consisted of a 2-day professional learning session (see Appendix B) in which new teachers participated in several 45-minute meetings with members of central office staff to learn district policies, obtain computer logins, and meet other new teachers. Novice teachers were assigned two mentors, one assigned by their principal and one provided by the district. School-based mentors were required to have a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience and complete a checklist of items with their mentee at some unspecified time during the school year. The district-assigned mentor was an

individual from the district office that oversees professional development. The district began changing the induction program in 2019–2020 by adding voluntary, monthly district learning meetings, called Moving Beyond Survival, for novice teachers. Schools were also asked to add learning meetings at the building level.

During the 2020–2021 school year, Moving Beyond Survival learning meetings (see Appendix C) became required for all novice teachers with less than 1 year of teaching experience and voluntary for teachers with 1–2 years of classroom experience. Monthly new teacher meetings became mandatory at the school level as well as a district-assigned mentor for all new teachers. The six-part Moving Beyond Survival series was designed to assist beginning teachers in developing effective classroom management and instructional practices as well as learning about the state's evaluation rubric and district policies. These learning meetings occurred once a month for 1 hour after school during September, October, November, January, February, and March. These meetings were led by a professional learning leader from the district who also conducts teacher evaluations. Moving Beyond Survival topics include asking effective questions, differentiated instruction, assessing learning, and providing academic feedback as well as other topics for classroom and lesson planning. During the 2020–2021 school year, Moving Beyond Survival had 17 continually enrolled participants and during the 2020–2021 school year there were 16 continually enrolled participants.

Role of the Researcher

This study was developed by the student researcher as a requirement for graduation at Austin Peay State University in the Doctor of Education program under the direction of the dissertation chair and committee. The student researcher developed the research design and

research instruments with committee guidance. The student researcher was also responsible for all data analysis and interpretation.

The student researcher was a teacher in the district being studied but was not involved in the new teacher induction program in this district. My work as a classroom teacher and a teacher leader has brought me in contact with some of the middle school novice and mentor teachers as well as their administrators. I teach at one of the district schools in this study, but I did not have extensive interaction with any participants prior to the study. The student researcher was not involved in any supervision of participants nor had any administrative duties or supervisory role at the district during the study. Although they worked in the same relatively small district, the participants were not extensively known to the student researcher prior to the study.

Research Design

A mixed methods design was used to create this program evaluation to examine participants' reactions and learning (Guskey, 2002; Patton, 2017). Mixed methods research is when qualitative and quantitative research methods are used to collect and analyze data in a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). A mixed methods approach allows for multiple ways of viewing the research questions and approaching the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative data generates insights into individual experience while quantitative data give the statistics to tell the areas to expand on (Patton, 2017).

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have limitations when conducting a program evaluation (Patton, 2017). Quantitative methods on a small sample size make it hard to generalize to a larger population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Qualitative methods also have limited use in generalizing to a larger population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Using only

quantitative data in a program evaluation removes the individual voice and story of the issue (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Patton, 2017). The research questions were linked to mixed methods to add depth and individualized context to the research (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Patton, 2017).

After determining the research design, the next step was to determine the order of data collection (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, the quantitative data from the surveys would direct the development of the interview questions. This strategy was used to give voice to the data collected quantitatively (Patton, 2017). Chaney et al. (2020) developed the basis of the survey, which addresses participants' reactions to professional learning using Guskey's (2002) levels of professional learning evaluation. Since the research methodology includes a survey and semistructured interview access to the program, this triangulation strengthens program evaluations by adding personalized stories to quantitative data (Patton, 2017). Complete alignment of the research design can be seen in the research matrix (see Appendix D).

Participants

Participant Selection

Survey participants were selected through convenience sampling (Patton, 1990). Survey participants were teachers involved in the district's new teacher induction program during the 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021 school years, which consisted of any newly hired teacher with 0–1 year of classroom experience. The eligible participants were full- and part-time novice teachers in all school levels, pre-kindergarten to l2th grade, as well as librarians. School counselors were excluded, as they did not have to attend an induction program in this district.

Most participants in this study (n = 30) identified White, non-Hispanic and identify (n = 18) as 21–25 years old (see Table 3.1). Prior to being hired by the district, participants (n = 22)

had some prior experience with 12 having completed a student teaching or residency experience. During their first year of teaching, most participants (n = 15) taught in elementary school subjects other than Special Education or English as a Second Language.

Table 3.1

Background Information of Survey Participants, by Cohort

	2018 Cohort (n = 3)	2019 Cohort (n = 14)	2020 Cohort (n = 16)	Total (N = 33)
Age				
21–25	2	8	8	18
26–30	0	2	3	5
31–35	1	3	3	7
36–40	0	0	1	1
41–45	0	0	0	0
46 and over	0	1	1	2
Role during first year				
ESL (K12)	0	0	1	1
librarian	0	0	0	0
mathematics (middle or high)	0	0	1	1
science (middle or high)	0	4	0	4
special education (K12)	0	1	0	1
other elementary school	2	4	9	15
other middle school	0	3	2	5
other high school	1	2	3	6
Prior teaching experience*				
No prior experience	0	6	3	9
Student teaching/residency	1	4	7	12
Substitute teacher	2	2	3	7
Private school (without certification)	0	1	1	2
Private school (with certification)	0	0	1	1
Certification				
Traditional	3	6	11	20
Alternative	0	8	5	13

Note. ESL = English as a Second Language. *n = 32

Interview volunteer participants were selected through stratified sampling was used for the purpose of capturing themes in the experiences within the induction program (Patton, 1990).

The goal was to recruit three participants from each school year ($N = 9$) with one from each cohort scoring (i.e., *extremely helpful*, *somewhat helpful*, and *rarely or not helpful*) regarding their satisfaction with the district's induction program and nine survey participants did agree to interviews. However, three ended communications with the student researcher prior to the interviews being scheduled. Of the remaining six, one participant was from the 2018–2019 cohort, three participants were from 2019–2020, and two participants were from 2020–2021. Three participants identified their teaching role as other elementary, two were science (middle or high), and one was other high school (see Table 3.2). Half of the participants had traditional certification and half had alternative certification. Two participants had no prior teaching experience, two had participated in student teaching or residency, one participant had been a substitute teacher, and one participant taught at the college level without certification.

Table 3.2

Background Information: Interview Participants

Participant	Age	Grade	Subject	Certification	Prior Experience	Overall Survey *M*
2018A	21-–25	3	other elementary	traditional	substitute teacher	2
2019B	26–30	9–12	science (middle or high)	alternative	private school	1
2019C	21–25	9	science (middle or high)	alternative	no prior experience	2
2019G	31–35	4	other elementary	alternative	no prior experience	3
2020A	31–35	5, 6	other elementary	traditional	student teaching or residency	1
2020H	36–40	11	other high school	alternative	no prior experience	2

Note. Participant number is their cohort year and the order in which their survey was received.

Recruitment

The participants were recruited through the school district's Federal Programs office which oversees the induction program for novice teachers. The Director of Federal Programs emailed a recruitment letter (see Appendix E) to 70 potential participants, using district email addresses on file, and a link to the survey to support participant confidentiality with 33 of the surveys being returned. The beginning of the survey contains the informed consent statement as well as reassurances that participation in this study would not affect performance reviews or evaluations, in alignment with IRB guidelines. APSU IRB approval is in Appendix F. Participants needed to agree to two statements on the downloadable consent statement (see Appendix G) before preceding to the survey: "Did you read the consent statement?" and "Do you agree to participate?" Participants were able to participate in an optional drawing for one of three Starbucks e-gift cards. Teachers interested in participating in the interview portion of the study added their email addresses at the end of the survey (see appendix H). Once the informed consent (see Appendix I) was received, the interview was scheduled at a time convenient to the participant. Participants were able to participate in an optional drawing for one of three Target e-gift cards.

Instrumentation

Based on the review of the literature and similar studies, the use of surveys and interviews were identified as appropriate methods to collect data related to the research questions. The survey was developed by the student researcher based on the review of the literature, survey questions from similar studies, and requests by the district being studied. The interview was developed as an extension of survey questions.

Survey

The survey is a 7-question multipart Likert-type scale developed by the student researcher. The purpose of the survey is to describe participants' experiences within the novice teacher induction program (see Appendix J). The survey answers Research Question 1: To what degree was the district induction program implemented with fidelity? Research Questions 2 and 3, which components of the district induction program did novice teachers describe as most useful to their professional growth and which components of the district mentoring process did novice teachers describe as most useful to their professional growth are preliminary answered in the survey. Additional questions at the end of the survey were for demographic and background purposes. Prior to the study, the survey was piloted with four inservice teachers, two of whom have doctorates, and the district's Director of Federal Programs, to check for question clarity and estimated completion time.

The constructs in this study were organizational supports and perceived usefulness of program components. An example of a question related to fidelity of implementation is: "Did you attend New Teacher Program (2 days in July)?" An example of an item related to perceived usefulness of "Moving Beyond Survival" is: "Of the content covered in the Moving Beyond Survival series, rate how helpful each portion was in your professional growth" An example of a question related to how novice teachers describe their mentoring experiences during the induction program is "If you met with your district-assigned (not school-assigned) mentor, how frequently did you discuss or get help with the following topics?"

Semistructured Interview

Based on the analysis of the survey, the semistructured interview was developed by the student researcher for in-depth elaboration on Research Questions 2, and 3 how do novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program and the district mentoring program in

relation to their professional growth are preliminary answered in the survey. The semistructured interviews consists of 17 open-ended items (see Appendix K). Prior to the study, the interview protocol was piloted with four inservice teachers, two of whom have doctorates, to check for item clarity and estimated completion time.

The items elaborated on individual experiences and provided a personalized context to the survey questions. Items 1 through 5 are related to participants' experience during the 2-day new teacher program in July. Items 6 through 11 are concerning the program components of the "Moving Beyond Survival" professional learning series. Items 12 through 16 are connected to the participants' experiences and relationships with the district-assigned mentor. Item 17 is a reflection overall first year of the Novice Teacher Induction program. Interviews lasted up to 50 minutes and were conducted at a time convenient for the participant and using the Zoom video conferencing program to eliminate any need for travel.

An example of an item related to Research Question 2 is "Can you describe your overall perception of the 2-day program?" An example of an item related to perceived usefulness of program components is "Which topics covered and discussed at the meeting were most useful to you and your work in the classroom?" An example of an item related to Research Question 3 and novice teachers' perceptions of their mentoring experiences during the induction program is "In what ways was your district-assigned mentor the most impactful to your professional growth?"

Procedure

Data Collection

Survey

The survey was digitally distributed on Microsoft Forms through the Office of Federal Programs at the district's central office, as Microsoft Forms was the preferred digital survey

generator for the district. The survey was emailed to participants from the Federal Programs office and open for 2 weeks. A reminder email was distributed by Federal Programs after 5 days and 10 days. The survey was expected to take participants less than 20 minutes to complete and was automatically returned to Federal Programs when submitted. The responses were compiled in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet by the central office and any identifying emails or other markers were removed and teachers were assigned a code using their Cohort year and a letter (e.g. 2019A, 2020B) before being emailed to the student researcher.

Semistructured Interview

The student researcher scheduled semistructured interviews via email and conducted interviews using the Zoom videoconference platform. Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient to participants. Participants were assured confidentiality and names were changed to pseudonyms in the transcription. Interviews were video-recorded and automatically transcribed through the Zoom videoconference platform. A secondary recording was made with the Rev Application in case of any technical difficulties. Interviews are expected to last up to 50 minutes. To de-identify the interview data, the student researcher labeled the interviews, so they match their survey information (e.g. 2019A, 2020B).

Data Analysis

Survey

Survey results collected in Microsoft Excel were converted from text response to a number with 4 = *Extremely helpful*, 3 = *somewhat helpful*, 2 = *not very helpful*, and 1 = *not helpful at all*. The conversion was used for the text answers for frequency, 4 = *frequently*, 3 = *occasionally*, 2 = *rarely*, and 1 = *never*. Microsoft Excel was used for descriptive analysis of quantitative data to determine mean, median, and mode. The descriptive analysis is used to

determine the usefulness of each component of the novice teacher program. After survey data were analyzed, these results were used to support criterion selection of interview participants.

Semistructured Interview

Transcripts from the interviews were thematically coded as described by Braun & Clarke (2006). Thematic coding allows for the identification of patterns in the data for analysis and reporting. Thematic coding was used to understand the experiences of the participants through the repetition of ideas (Braun & Clark, 2006). The student researcher used the six steps for coding as outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006). The transcripts were printed out for the coding process and read with preliminary notetaking. The student researcher highlighted sections, words, or phrases to develop preliminary codes. These codes were examined first for similarities and connections. Then the student researcher examined the codes for differences to develop patterns and categories. A visual thematic map was developed to make connections in the coding and develop support coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The student researcher used thematic mapping to develop the overall themes of the interviews.

Trustworthiness

Establishing quality indicators within qualitative research ensures the research can be trusted by the reader (Brantlinger et al., 2005). To ensure qualitative research has trustworthiness, certain quality measures must be met which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and reflexivity (Korstjen & Moser, 2018). Credibility is when confidence is placed in the information drawn from the data and can be established with prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member checks (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Credibility can also be established with member checks and prolonged observations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Transferability to other contexts, settings, and participants by the reader occurs

with in-depth, thick descriptions within the writing to explain the data and context of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Establishing dependability and confirmability includes when participants evaluate the findings and researchers can confirm the findings of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Dependability and confirmability can be done with an audit trail in which all data, data analysis, transcripts, and records are kept from project design, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of findings (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher must examine their assumptions, preconceptions, and biases to establish reflexivity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

In this study, indicators of trustworthiness for credibility, transferability, dependability, and reflexivity include methodological and data triangulation, member checks, collaborative work, audit trail, peer debriefs, and a reflexivity statement. Methodological triangulation is established when the data are collected in various and unique ways (Brantlinger et al., 2005), such as when the data were collected from surveys as well as interviews. The data from the survey were elaborated on in the semistructured interviews allowing for data triangulation. The member check was involved when final study findings were given to the district involved in the study to review. Dependability and confirmability were established as this study is being conducted for a doctoral program's dissertation requirement, the student researcher's dissertation chair and dissertation committee participated in peer debriefs as well as reviews of the audit trail. The following section, researcher positionality, contains the student-researcher's reflexivity statement that explains the student-researcher's background, bias, beliefs, and assumptions.

Researcher Positionality

My instructional background is in middle and secondary education focusing on social studies and English language arts. I am also a licensed administrator with an Education Specialist

Degree in Educational Leadership. I am a post-baccalaureate certified teacher, which means I received my teaching certification after I graduated from college with my Bachelor of Science degree. This was a separate certification program from the university teaching program with its own coursework and supervisors. When I began teaching, I was not part of a novice teacher induction program, but I had colleagues at my school who answered my questions about procedures without being formal mentors. I also had a university supervisor during my teacher certification program who observed my classroom twice a semester.

I have been a classroom teacher for 22 years and have worked in four school districts. When I became a teacher in Tennessee as part of another school district, I was put through the same novice teacher induction program with true novices. This program consisted of monthly meetings and working with teacher leaders on the workbook *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Marzano et al., 2001*)*. In my current district, my principal assigned a mentor for my first year so I could ask questions related to school and district procedures. This program did not have structured meetings or formalized structures for support.

For the last 5 years, I have served in my school district as a Middle School Teacher Leader for Social Studies, which involves leading professional learning opportunities. As a teacher leader, I work with teachers from a variety of schools and grade levels in developing skills in best practices and mentoring teachers, as needed. In my teacher leader role, I have discussed the support needed for novice teachers with administrators in the district central office as well as individual school administrators as part of the professional learning sessions I facilitate. There is a need to better understand the transition period for novice teachers from being university students to reflective practitioners. This transition period would likely benefit

from on-the-job support (e.g., peer mentoring) to hone techniques in classroom management skills, lesson delivery, and relationship building within the school culture. The concern for the attrition rate of these novice teachers motivated me to research mentoring supports and induction programs.

With the onset of a new induction program, I am interested in evaluating the various supports of the program to understand what is helpful to novice teachers. The new mentoring and induction program includes meetings and guidance for classroom topics as well as conversations with mentors. As a teacher leader and a classroom teacher, I am vested in supporting novice teachers to continue with their teaching careers. This study can help examine the supports given to novice teachers by the district and individual schools. By using this study, it is my hope that districts will design novice teacher support programs that are more beneficial to participants.

I need to disclose assumptions I have related to the study. The first assumption is that by attending the district's new teacher induction program, participants actively engaged with and completed all components of the program. The second assumption is all participants who were involved in the induction program in the same school year have experiences that can be compared. During the 2018–2019 school year, all meetings and mentoring were completed in a face-to-face format. The following year (i.e., 2019–2020) school was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic and meetings and mentoring moved to a virtual format in the spring semester. During the fall semester of 2020–2021, meetings and mentoring became hybrid with some that took place face-to-face and others in a virtual format. The third assumption is that participants responded to the research instruments honestly. Their responses were confidential and not tied to work-related performance or evaluations. I am not connected to evaluating or performance reviews so there was no introduction of bias due to participants attempting to please

me with their answers. Also, since the participants were able to answer the survey at their chosen time, participants were able to focus and thoroughly review each question before answering. With the interview being scheduled at a time chosen by participants the same assumption can be made for the interview questions.

Chapter IV

Findings

This mixed methods study utilized an explanatory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Findings for Research Questions 1–3 were derived from analysis of both a survey and semistructured interviews. The survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the interviews were analyzed using thematic coding (Braun & Clark, 2006). Qualitative findings are supported using direct quotes. To maintain confidentiality, the six interview participants were given the code matching their survey based on their year of employment and the order in which their survey was received: 2018a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019g, and 2020h. The findings are organized by research question and the chapter ends with a summary of the findings.

Fidelity of Implementation

Research Question 1 examined fidelity of implementation for the novice teacher induction program, which was assessed via attendance at various components of the program. Data from surveys and interviews were analyzed to answer this question. Quantitative data are presented first, followed by the qualitative data to help explain the findings.

Not all novice teachers attended all components of the novice teacher induction program (see Table 4.1). Of the total survey responses ($N = 33$), 25 attended the 2-day new teacher induction program, 17 attended the Moving Beyond Survival learning opportunities, and 29 participated in mentoring. Most survey respondents participated in the mentoring program, including all of the 2020 Cohort.

Although there were no interview questions specifically focused on attendance in the novice teacher induction program, several participants mentioned reasons for not fully participating (see Table 4.2). Barriers to attendance to attendance included administration,

awareness of the program, and time or location of components.

Table 4.1

Attendance at Novice Teacher Induction Program Components, by Cohort

Component	2018 Cohort (n = 3)		2019 Cohort (n = 14)		2020 Cohort (n = 16)		All Cohorts (N = 33)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Novice Teacher Induction Program	3	100	11	79	11	69	25	76
Moving Beyond Survival	1	33	7	50	9	64	17	52
Meeting with District Mentor	2	66	11	79	16	100	29	88

Table 4.2

Barriers to Attending the Novice Teacher Induction Program

Theme	Definition	Samples quotes
Expectations of Attendance	The leadership in the district or school	"my principal" "the principal" "talking with Mrs. S" "hired after" "hired mid-year"
Awareness	Awareness of program existence, requirement, or content	"I didn't know that was available" "I knew they were there" "have to drive to the other side of the county"
Start Time or Location	When and where the program was held	"live hour and a half away" "started at 3:30" "on TEAMs since we had the capability"

Central office personnel and school administration need to agree upon and communicate the expectations of novice teacher attendance at all induction program components, regardless of start date. The first theme of barriers to attendance, the expectation of attendance, was divided into district administration and school administration. For district administration, comments were related to being hired after school started, such as "I started halfway through the year" (Participant 2019c) and "I wasn't hired yet" (Participant 2020h). For school level administration, comments were related to receiving varied, and sometimes conflicting, information about attendance requirements. as stated by Participant 2020a shared that the "county has a lot of expectations as, as do all schools" and that they prioritized their "[school] expectations on top of

the other expectations." Participant 2020a offered a possible solution, stating that "if they're [central office] going to provide PDs [professional development opportunities] for the new teachers…admin[istrators] at the school should be involved or proactive in making sure that the things [that the] the school expects are part of those."

Central office personnel and school administration need to ensure that novice teachers are aware of the new teacher induction program requirements. The second theme of barriers to attendance, awareness, included awareness of program existence, requirements, or content. Some participants registered not knowing a component was a requirement and did not participate because they were unaware of the requirement. Participant 2019g, for example, stated that they "signed up for them [Moving Beyond Survival] on my own…to make sure I hit my 30 hours [of required professional development]" whereas Participant 2018a explained that they did not "think—honestly didn't even know that—that [Moving Beyond Survival] was an option." Awareness of the mentoring program was also an issue. When discussing the mentoring program and being assigned a district mentor, Participant 2019g stated

> I don't remember them specifically giving me a teacher and saying 'Hey, this is your mentor. Go to them.' I was lucky enough to have somebody in my grade level that taught both of the subjects that I was teaching. So, I felt like I could go to them to ask questions, but I don't remember ever being specifically assigned a mentor.

Conversely, Participant 2019b was aware of the Moving Beyond Survival component but they chose not to attend due to the location of the meeting.

The start time and location of meetings need to take into consideration the various times that schools end their instructional day and the distance teachers have to drive. The third theme of barriers to attendance, start time or location, focused primarily on the Moving Beyond

Survival program component. Participant 2019b explained, "I knew they [Moving Beyond Survival] were there, but living an hour away and having small children, just the times that they were made it really difficult." Participant 2019c also had a timing conflict and explained that the program started at 3:30 but their "school did not release until 3:25…and it was probably a 15- to 20-minute drive, given traffic." Participant 2019c suggested "moving that time so it's more accessible to… everyone coming from every part of the district and whether the school gets out at 2:20 or 3:25, making that available for every teacher." Participant 2020h noted that some meetings were held in a particular location and "since I'm coming all the way from [my school], that was a challenge" and suggested that "it would've been helpful if we had like those further-away ones [meetings] on TEAMs [via video conferencing] since we had the capability" to meet remotely.

Survey questions, analyzed for fidelity of implementation, indicated that the program components were not attended by all surveyed novice teachers. The analysis of the interviews revealed three themes related to barriers to attendance: expectations of attendance, awareness of the program or its components, and timing and location of meetings.

Perceived Usefulness for Professional Growth

Research Question 2 examined novice teachers' perceptions of the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth. This section focuses on the 2-day new teacher induction program and Moving Beyond Survival components. The mentoring component of the novice teacher induction program is conveyed in the next section. Data from surveys and interviews were analyzed to answer this question. Quantitative data are presented first, followed by the qualitative data to help explain the findings.

The 2-day new teacher induction program was held in July, prior to the start of the school

year, and 25 of the 33 survey participants attended (see Table 4.3). Of the sessions attended during those 2 days—the "1st Day of School" based on the work of Wong and Wong (2018)—was the most helpful to all cohort's professional growth ($M = 2.67$), but *somewhat helpful* was the most frequently chosen response about this session. The WIDA (i.e., World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) standards session was perceived as least helpful ($M = 1.58$) with *not very helpful* as the most common rating; this session was consistently rated the lowest in all three cohorts. WIDA standards are used to integrate language and context in classrooms to support students who are learning English as a second language. There was not a consensus among the cohorts as to which session they perceived as most helpful to their professional growth with the 2018 Cohort choosing *very helpful* for the technology session ($M = 3.33$). There was little variation in the ratings of the other sessions.

Table 4.3

Perceived Helpfulness of the 2-Day New Teacher Program, by Topic and Cohort

Topic	2018 Cohort ($n = 3$)		2019 Cohort ($n = 11$)		2020 Cohort ($n = 11$)		All Cohorts ($N = 25$)	
	M	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode
Technology	3.33	4	2.72	2	1.55	2	2.28	2
Special Education	1.50	1, 2	2.09	2	1.55	2	1.79	2
Board Policies	3.00	2, 4	2.27	2	2.09	2	2.25	2
WIDA Standards	1.50	1, 2	1.45	1	1.73	1	1.58	1
TEAM Evaluation	3.00	2, 4	2.60	2	2.00	2	2.35	2
Student Services Resources	2.00	2	2.27	2	2.00	2	2.13	2
"1st Day of School"	2.50	1, 4	2.73	2	2.46	2	2.67	2

Note. Data represent the responses of those who attended the 2-day new teacher induction program. WIDA = World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment. TEAM = Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, part of the state teacher evaluation system (see Appendix A).

The Moving Beyond Survival learning opportunities were held six times during the

school year and were attended by 17 of the 33 survey participants (see Table 4.4). However, only one participant from the 2018 Cohort completed the survey and rated each item as *very helpful*. Of the topics offered, reflective practices ($M = 2.67$) and classroom management ($M = 2.63$) were consistently rated high for helpfulness, with *very helpful* being the most frequent rating. The 2019 and 2020 Cohorts concurred that the least helpful sessions were accessing online textbooks ($M = 1.80$) and accessing online resources ($M = 1.80$); *not very helpful* was the most frequently chosen response.

Table 4.4

Perceived Helpfulness of Moving Beyond Survival, by Topic and Cohort

Topic	2018 Cohort ($n = 1$)		2019 Cohort ($n = 7$)		2020 Cohort ($n = 9$)		All Cohorts ($N = 17$)	
	M	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode
Teacher Center	3	3	2.42	3	2.56	3	2.53	3
Access Online Textbook	3	3	1.83	2	1.62	1	1.80	1
Access Online Resources	3	3	2.00	2	1.43	1	1.80	1
Classroom Management	3	3	2.71	3	2.50	3	2.63	3
Explicit Direct Instruction	3	3	2.43	3	2.43	2	2.47	3
Instructional Practices	3	3	2.50	2	2.43	2	2.50	3
Assessing Students	3	3	2.57	3	2.43	2	2.53	3
Academic Feedback	3	3	2.43	2	2.29	2	2.40	2
Reflective Practices	3	3	2.71	3	2.58	3	2.67	3

Note. Data represent the responses of those who attended Moving Beyond Survival.

Novice teachers were most concerned with classroom management, planning, and expectations about the TEAM teacher evaluation. These three themes materialized in the interviews along with networking and being inundated with information (see Table 4.5). Interestingly, the theme of network (e.g., meeting teachers and support personnel) was also found in the interviews about the meetings with their mentors.

Table 4.5

Themes Related to Novice Teacher Induction Program Experiences

Theme	Definition	Sample quotes
Classroom management	Teacher procedures in the classroom	"I had no education classes" "what are you doing to control your kids"
Planning	developing lessons, and resources	"I started making lesson plans" "assessments and academic feedback" "I didn't know I had access too"
Network	Group of people for support	"I met a few teachers" "technology leaders" "had email addresses to get help"
Administrator Expectations	District and school personnel who evaluate teachers and set expectations	"go over the TEAMs rubric" "I had no idea about the TEAM rubric" "know what is expected day one"
Inundated with Information	Overwhelmed with information or presenters	"it was slightly overwhelming" "something pop's in your head later" "all the information they were throwing at me"

Classroom management sessions were consistently rated *very helpful*, so much so that Participant 2019g "felt like the information that I got in those trainings [classroom management] was very, very beneficial and it was stuff that I was still able to bring into my classroom now [three years later]." Classroom management strategies were modeled by the program instructors who explained "[strategies] she was doing to us [during meetings] without us even realizing it" (Participant 2019g). However, according to Participant 2019c, focusing on classroom discipline or "what are you doing to control your kids?" was not a topic of these sessions; they wanted more information on "how to handle the students in the classroom that have behavior issues." Participant 2019c explained that, particularly with entering the teaching profession during the pandemic, "having a more specified classroom management towards adolescents would be awesome." Participant 2019b would have liked a session on classroom discipline, followed by time to ask questions, "where it's sort of like a panel…where you've got a technology coach…new teacher mentor…somebody who does the walkthroughs and the evaluations…what

does it [classroom management] look like here [in this situation]?"

Another theme from the interviews was planning, both with developing lessons and with resources. Based on the information she received in the TEAMs sessions, Participant 2019b "started making lesson plans, and thinking about what I would be doing in my classroom." Participant 2019c "had no education classes during [her] bachelor's [degree program]" so, for her, assessment and academic feedback as part of developing lessons were the most helpful sessions. She also added that she found learning about "the different kinds of assessment, and the kinds of question and how questioning should be done" to be helpful. Participant 2020h stated that, in addition to classroom management, the "one about the teacher center was helpful…to see what [resources] they have and see what they do. It [the teacher center] enabled me to use it for a couple of things I would not have thought of doing." Participant 2019g concurred that "going to the teacher…center that first time, I learned a whole lot of stuff there that I didn't know I had access to." Participant 2019c spoke about technology resources, adding: "I remember, specifically the technology leaders…did survey of all of the technology resources…it was comforting to know that there were gonna be some resources."

Having access to resources for lesson planning was connected to the network theme, or having a group of people for support. Participant 2019c continued discussing the technology leaders she met, "I have never emailed her and not gotten a response. If I didn't get a chance to ask my question, I was able to either ask my department or mentor or just email the person directly." Participant 2019c also spoke of networking, generally, in the novice teacher induction program: "I met a few teachers that I ended up working with. I also met some other brand-new teachers and so we were able to sort of walk through the process together." Other than meeting other teachers, one participant specifically mentioned the helpfulness of the program instructors:

"all of the presenters were really friendly. They were open to answering any questions" (Participant 2018a).

Not all teachers, however, stated that the novice teacher induction program created networks. Participant 2020h, for example, stated that they

> felt very much like an island a lot of the time…I'd ask for …help [from other participants], but they were struggling, too. I really think if there was a structured support system put in place to support those new teachers, I think that they would be more successful.

Participant 2020a had a similar insight and stated that they felt "like we need to build bridges [supports with materials and people], like we build bridges for our students. We need more bridges in place that don't have to get rebuilt every time."

Novice teachers need to understand the expectations of the central office as well as those of school administration. As Participant 2018a stated, "I was focusing on…getting prepared for the first day of school, but getting familiar with the policies, the expectations…what was expected of me as a teacher." Participant 2019g expressed that "the 2-day orientation really helped me feel more confident going into the classroom, so that I wasn't just kind of thrown there with no expectations of what it was gonna be like." Part of these expectations were the teacher evaluation process in the TEAM rubric. Participant 2019g explained that the Moving Beyond Survival meetings were "really helpful because she [the presenter] did break it down, not just in the language that's used on the rubric, but she really made sure that we understood what each meant." Participant 2019b explained: "You're in college to be a teacher…you always go over the TEAM rubric. I think everyone needs a refresher. It is helpful to see…an example of this."

Not all participants found the content related to the TEAM rubric to be sufficient. Participant 2019c, for example, was concerned because she was an alternative certification teacher and shared that she "had no idea about the TEAM rubric…by the time of my first evaluation came around, no one said: Hey, go and look at the TEAM rubric." Participant 2020h expressed the need for greater feedback from administration dealing with the evaluation process, sharing that "being able to communicate [directly with admin[istration] to request that feedback would've been helpful. …Just ways to open those doors [of communication]."

During the 2-day new teacher induction program, novice teachers attend seven sessions covering a variety of topics. Interview participants noted being inundated with information, including presenters from the various district departments. "I remember being a little bit overwhelmed, just with all of the information that they were throwing at me," explained Participant 2019g. She added, "as a new teacher, having student-taught [done student teaching], I just felt like there was a lot of stuff that I was trying to take in." This sentiment was shared by Participant 2018a, who stated, "I feel like all of them had great information...we were just crunched for time." Participant 2018a suggested "maybe [the program would be] better, like, one-on-one or just [having] more time" and Participant 2019g likewise suggested that "they might extend it outside of just 3 days…maybe 3 days or 4 days."

Survey questions analyzed for perceived helpfulness of the novice teacher induction program classroom management and student–teacher relationships were frequently rated *very helpful.* Interview themes were classroom management, planning, network, administration and inundated. While these themes were common, the positive or negative experiences varied between interview participants.

Mentoring and Professional Growth

Research Question 3 examined novice teachers' perceptions of the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth. Data from surveys and interviews were analyzed to answer this question. Quantitative data are presented first, followed by the qualitative data to help explain the findings.

Novice teachers met with their district-assigned mentor at varying frequencies and without a set amount of time spent on various topics (see Table 4.6). Survey participants frequently chose two survey topics as the subject of their mentor visits: classroom management (M = 3.62) and student–teacher relationships (M = 3.45). All cohorts agreed that meetings about classroom management and student–teacher relationships occurred frequently. The least frequent meeting topics were difficult/challenging parents (M = 2.48) and co-teaching and modeling strategies (M = 2.66), with these meetings happening rarely. The 2020 Cohort also met rarely about administrative duties such as attendance and grading.

Interestingly, when compared to the data on helpfulness of meeting topics, the most frequent meetings, classroom management (M = 2.69) and student–teacher relationships (M = 2.66), were also the ones rated *very helpful* (see Table 4.7). There was no consensus, however, on topics rated as *somewhat helpful* or *not helpful at all.* The 2018 Cohort frequently chose district/school policies (M = 2.00) as *somewhat helpful* but did not choose any topics as *not helpful at all*. The 2019 Cohort consistently rated all topics *very helpful*, but when observing the mean of 2.30, the topics of district/school policies, administrative duties, and work/life balance were the lowest. The 2020 Cohort frequently chose the topic difficult/challenging parents (M =1.94) as *not helpful at all*. Surprisingly, the 2020 Cohort only had 3 of 11 topics rated as *very helpful*, making the overall rating of the mentoring program for this cohort as *somewhat helpful*

(mode = 2) and lower than the other cohorts.

Table 4.6

Frequency of Meetings with District-Assigned Mentor, by Topic and Cohort

Topic	2018 Cohort (n = 2)		2019 Cohort (n = 11)		2020 Cohort (n = 16)		All Cohorts (N = 29)	
	M	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode
Classroom management	4	4	3.64	4	3.56	4	3.62	4
Student–teacher relationships	4	4	3.55	4	3.31	4	3.45	4
District/School policies	3.50	3, 4	3.00	2	2.31	3	2.66	3
Administrative duties	3.50	3, 4	2.45	3	2.00	2	2.76	2
Difficult/challenging parents	3	2, 4	2.72	4	2.25	2	2.48	2
Resources	4	4	3.09	3	2.75	3	2.97	3
Student assessment	4	4	3.27	4	3.00	4	3.17	4
TEAM evaluation	3.50	3, 4	3.36	4	3.31	4	3.34	4
Co-teaching/modeling strategies	4	4	2.64	2	2.50	2	2.66	2
Job-related stress	3.50	3, 4	3.27	4	2.88	3	3.07	4
Work/life balance	3.50	3, 4	3.00	4	2.75	3	2.90	3

Note. Data represent the responses of those who met with their district-assigned mentor. TEAM = Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model, part of the state teacher evaluation system.

Classroom management and planning, along with time management and developing lessons, were the focus of most mentor meetings, were rated as *most helpful*, and were two of three themes of the interview analysis (see Table 4.8). An additional theme, and concern, of interview participants was understanding the expectations of school administration, especially in reference to teacher evaluations. These themes are similar to those found when examining perceptions of the novice teacher induction program. The final theme of mentor support focused on the role of the mentor and relationship the participants had with their mentor.

Table 4.7

Perceived Helpfulness of District-Assigned Mentor, by Topic and Cohort

Topic	2018 Cohort (n = 2)		2019 Cohort (n = 11)		2020 Cohort (n = 16)		All Cohorts (N = 29)	
	M	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode	*M*	Mode
Classroom management	3.00	3	2.73	3	2.62	3	2.69	3
Student–teacher relationships	3.00	3	2.73	3	2.56	3	2.66	3
District/School policies	2.00	2	2.30	3	2.09	2	2.14	2
Administrative duties	2.50	2, 3	2.30	3	1.88	2	2.07	3
Difficult/challenging parents	2.50	2, 3	2.30	3	1.94	1	2.11	3
Resources	3.00	3	2.45	3	2.25	2	2.38	2
Student assessment	3.00	3	2.55	3	2.12	2	2.34	3
TEAM evaluation	3.00	3	2.64	3	2.31	3	2.48	3
Co-teaching/modeling strategies	3.00	3	2.50	3	2.06	2	2.29	3
Job-related stress	2.50	2, 3	2.50	3	2.06	2	2.25	3
Work/life balance	2.50	2, 3	2.30	3	2.00	2	2.14	2

Note. This data consisted of responses from participants who met with a district-assigned mentor. TEAM is the standard teacher evaluation system in Tennessee.

Interviewees commonly mentioned classroom management, or discipline, as a focus for their mentor meetings. For example, participants shared that "[they] discussed a lot about, like, classroom management and things of that nature (Participant 2018a)," "classroom management was a big challenge for my first semester" and their mentor helped them learn "how to manage those [big] personalities" (Participant 2020h), and "she [my mentor] helped me most with classroom discipline" (Participant 2019b). Participant 2019c also "struggled with classroom discipline" and explained that their mentor helped them "greatly in understanding what to let go, what not to let go." They described how their mentor "would have her yellow legal pad out. And she would leave me with, like, three pages of notes." Having an experienced mentor who could share effective strategies was mentioned by others, as well. Participant 2020c explained her

mentor “has been around the block a couple times [has had many years of experience]. And, so she knows what to expect in certain situations.” Another novice teacher stated that their mentor “suggested some tips that I could use for the future” and “that’s honestly what helped me the most” (Participant 2020a).

Table 4.8

Themes Related to District-Assigned Mentor Experiences

Theme	Definition	Sample quotes
Classroom management	Teacher procedures in the classroom	“Classroom management was a big challenge” “we talked about that” “what to expect in certain situations”
Planning	Time management and developing lessons	“I just feel like I am swamped in grading” “tap into resources” “always focused on content”
Administrator Expectations and Mentor Role	District and school personnel who evaluate teachers and set expectations	“the best way that the district helped me” “we were just kind of thrown into a fire” “matter of location” “new teacher guide in the school”
Mentor Support	Working with mentor to help them accomplish goal	“friendly face in the classroom” “I love her so much” “empowering me” “gave me the best notes”

A second theme is related to planning, which includes with time management and developing lessons. Mentors were able to provide specific advice that could be immediately put to use. Participant 2020h explained that her mentor helped with “delivering of lessons, making sure that I break them up so that I’m not standing there and lecturing for 90 minutes.” Participant 2019c had similar conversations with her mentor. They were advised to “give students a break in between notetaking” and, when complaining that they felt like they were “swamped in grading,” were told that “not everything has to be a grade.” Participant 2019b stated that her mentor would answer any questions she had as well as “encouraged [her]… not to reinvent the wheel, [but instead] to use, tap into resources instead of trying to create my own.” Some mentors included

reflection and feedback in these discussions. For example, Participant 2018a noted that her mentor helped with planning, particularly "the content part of it because every time she came in, we talked about what I was teaching" and even asked "how were the students taking it" and if "they [were] receptive to what I was teaching."

A third theme was administrator expectations for evaluations and mentor role. At one extreme, Participant 2019c expressed the mentor assigned to her by the district "was the best way that the district helped me to progress my first year. The district did a fantastic job assigning me to her." At the other extreme, Participant 2019g was not assigned a district mentor: "I don't remember ever being specifically assigned a mentor."

Several participants expressed wanting more guidance from their mentors, with better communication from administration. Participant 2020h commented on the regularity of mentoring and suggested that having "more structured visitation time would be great…[and that] "structured time in the classroom would be more helpful" than the current process of informal observations. Participant 2020a stated that he felt "more like we were just kind of thrown into a fire" and that his mentor "helped that a little bit." He "took those suggestions [from his mentor]…[but] it was kind of [a] negative [experience], just because of the way the administration had handled those suggestions [at original school]. I think it was just a matter of the location [school] and the timing." He explained further that he used "the same information, the techniques that my mentor for the county had given me were effective this year [at a different school in the same district]. It was just a different environment."

Participants also mentioned needing consistency between the administration and their district-assigned mentor. Participant 2020a explained: "I'd like the mentor also being a bridge between you and your administration and their expectations. I don't know why there isn't a

bridge for new teachers to admin[istration] without having to make it a [teacher union] issue." Participant 2020h wanted more support from her mentor in preparing for evaluations, stating "there's not a lot of feedback here. I was blindsided [by my final evaluation]."

The final theme, mentor support, encompasses the encouraging relationship provided by a district-assigned mentor. For example, Participant 2020a stated that he appreciated his mentor "asking how he was doing...and just being present" and she still checks on him. While Participant 2020a was concerned that the mentor teacher "had more than one new teacher on their load" and "having more than one [mentor] would be beneficial," others had a different experience.

The district-assigned mentors helped Participant 2018a with their progress by being a "friendly face in the classroom" and Participant 2019b as someone who "was just so encouraging…just kind of empowering me to be the authority in my classroom." Participant 2019c seemed to have a particularly positive relationship with her mentor. She called her mentor "an angel sent from God above" and explained that her mentor "was also kind of like my shoulder to vent on [the person I could turn to]. And so, she could always give me some kind of feedback on whatever personal things that I was venting about" demonstrating the personal relationship she had with her mentor. Participant 2019c's mentor also "encouraged building those interdepartmental friendships" and shared then that "some of my best friends right now…are teachers I made friends with [through the new teacher induction program]."

As with the other components of the novice teacher induction program, classroom management, planning, and administration were frequently mentioned themes. With the district-assigned mentor, classroom management and student–teacher relationships were a frequent focus of meetings and were rated *very helpful* on the surveys. The analysis of the interviews revealed classroom management, planning, administration, and mentor relationship as key themes with

many discussions overlapping these themes.

Summary

The survey analysis determined the components of the novice teacher induction program were not implemented with fidelity and had varying levels of attendance. Novice teachers perceived the sessions on classroom management and TEAM evaluation as very helpful and classroom management was a frequently discussed topic in the interviews. Interview analysis also determined that administration and the TEAM evaluation were concerns for novice teachers and that they would like additional assistance with the evaluation process. Other themes were planning, expectations of administration, and mentor support.

Chapter V

Discussion and Recommendations

The purposes of this study are to determine (a) the degree of fidelity in implementing the district's induction program, (b) how novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth (c) how novice teachers perceive the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings as related to the synthesis of literature, followed by conclusions, limitations and delimitations, and implications for future practice, research, and policy.

Discussion

The analysis and interpretation of the overall findings revealed four major themes. The first two themes of classroom management and planning are related to the professional and technical aspects of teaching. The third theme of expectations of administration is relevant to the first two themes in reference to the evaluation process and teacher retention. The fourth theme was the support of the mentor and work relationship network as part of novice teachers' professional growth.

Classroom Management

Teaching is a situated learning experience where novice teachers must apply the textbook knowledge to develop the knowledge and skills as a practitioner (Buchanon et al., 2013; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Consistent with previous literature, the findings of this study revealed novice teachers needed help with classroom management and rated those sessions consistently higher than other sessions. Mentor meetings frequently focused on classroom management, with a focus on student engagement and student discipline. Recent research shows that novice teachers, especially those with alternative certifications, need experience in the classroom with supports to develop their effectiveness (Mena et al., 2017; Nelsen et al., 2019). Additionally,

alternative certification teachers are poorly prepared to deal with classroom management (Mentzer et al., 2018). The interview findings revealed that the three participants with alternative certifications spoke more about requesting and receiving more help on classroom management and lesson planning from their mentors, when compared to the traditionally certified participants.

Planning

Alternative certification teachers required a longer time to build their teaching confidence (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Mentzer et al., 2018) but novice teachers felt more confident when working on planning and lesson delivery with a mentor (Schwartz & Dori, 2016). Interpretation of survey and interview data revealed that novice teachers worked frequently with their mentors on developing lesson plans in connection to classroom management. Novice teachers needed access to resources and strategies while planning their lessons, which they were able to get through the novice teacher program. The findings of this study concur with Mentzer et al. (2018) and Schwarz and Dori (2016) with participants' ratings of the sessions on instructional practices and explicit direct instruction as *very helpful* for their professional growth. Novice teachers want to understand the expectations of administration, particularly about both planning and classroom management since they are part of the teacher evaluation system.

Expectations of Administration

Workplace conditions and lack of administrative support and workplace conditions have been consistent factors in teacher attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017; Espel et al., 2019). Administrative interference with professional learning and demands on teachers' time have a negative impact on novice teachers' job satisfaction (Schuck et al., 2017). The interview data revealed that, in some cases, school administration was hindering novice teachers'

attendance at program sessions and implying the novice teacher induction program content was less important than other professional learning opportunities or school-based meetings.

Novice teachers need consistent evaluation expectations and constructive feedback to remain in the classroom as a teacher (Israel et al., 2014; Pratt & Booker, 2014). Novice teachers in this study were concerned with the evaluation process—particularly related to consistent effective feedback—and understanding the expectations of administrators. Novice teachers reported being unfamiliar with the TEAMs teacher evaluation rubric used in Tennessee schools. While Tennessee universities may include instruction related to the TEAMS evaluation model, teachers from other states or those with alternative certifications have not received training or coursework on the model. Dissatisfaction with accountability measures such as the teacher evaluation process has been noted in previous studies as a factor in teacher attrition (e.g., Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017) and teachers with fewer years of experience generally have lower scores on classroom evaluations (Grisson et al., 2021; Pratt & Booker, 2012). The novice teachers in this study noted concerns about classroom management and planning being included in the teacher evaluation process, since these were areas where they struggled. Participants indicated that they frequently met with their mentor concerning the evaluation process and that the time spent with their mentor on the TEAMs evaluation process were rated as *very helpful*.

Mentor Support and Work Relationship Network

Mentors help novice teachers understand the daily demands of the teaching profession and support novice teachers in achieving effective instruction (Mitchell et al., 2017; Schwartz & Dori, 2016). These findings of this study concur with the previous research; for example, interview data revealed the importance and fundamental role of mentors in the professional growth of novice teachers. Mentors need to be trained to understand how to interact with novice

teachers with strategies for giving feedback (Mitchell et al., 2017). Contrary to this, the findings revealed the mentors continually gave feedback on lessons and adjusted to the needs of the novice teachers even though the district does not train the mentors. One of the trends in the data was the role of the district mentors in the professional growth of novice teachers and novice teachers perceiving their mentors as *very helpful*.

During the first years of teaching, a teacher is more likely to leave the profession if they lacked sharing of resources or work connections with experienced teachers (Burke et al., 2015) and teaching peers could help novice teachers when dealing with the stresses of being a novice teacher (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Findings indicated that networking with other novice teachers as well as content experts was important in helping novice teachers during their first years. One interview participant, in particular, mentioned still being friends with the other novice teachers in her induction program cohort and another revealed that their mentor encouraged her to expand her teacher network. Additionally, survey data showed that participants frequently discussed job-related stress and work/life balance with their mentors; these topics were rated as *very helpful*.

Conclusions

The conclusions are related to participants' background, teacher induction program attendance, COVID-19, and commonalities of themes. First, it is important to note that 13 of the 33 survey participants and three of the five interview participants possessed alternative certification. Research studies reveal that alternative certification teachers are more likely to leave the teaching profession or change schools during the first years of teaching (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017; Espel et al., 2019; Pratt & Booker, 2012). These studies also discuss that alternative certification teachers need greater support to become successful

teachers. This coincides with one interview participant, with traditional certification, changing schools within the district after year 1 due to negative feedback from administration, and two others, with alternative certification, leaving the district to teach in other districts.

Based on findings from the first research question, the novice teacher induction program was attended inconsistently and therefore, not implemented with fidelity, leading one to question what the ratings of the helpfulness of the program were based on. Additionally, although these findings are dependable (i.e., supported by participant data), the small sample size and relatively high percentage of teachers with alternative certification limit the transferability of these findings. In particular, the 2018 Cohort only had three survey respondents from 14 potential participants and one interview participant; only one attended all parts of the novice teacher program. This limits our overall understanding of how that cohort perceived the teacher induction program, particularly when compared to the 2019 and 2020 Cohorts that had more participants. Additionally, if novice teachers are not in attendance they would not receive the supports and information provided (e.g., behavior management strategies, evaluation criteria) integral to their success.

The 2020 cohort consistently rated the helpfulness of program components and mentor topics lower than the previous cohorts. These individuals started teaching at the same time students were returning to in-person instruction after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible that the supports the 2020 Cohort needed were not the same as previous years, given the shift to hybrid teaching, working while some teachers and students were quarantined, and dealing with large numbers of student absences. Counterintuitively, the 2020 Cohort rated the technology session lower than the previous two cohorts. Perhaps the content of the technology session had not changed from previous years and novice teachers were expecting more

technology information specific to teaching during a pandemic, such as online assignments and hybrid teaching. Another hypothesis is that teachers starting in the fall of 2020 were more comfortable using technology than past cohorts due to their increased personal use of technology (e.g., teleconferencing) during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Lastly, the survey and interview findings, somewhat unexpectedly, revealed an overlap of themes concerning the novice teacher program content and sessions and the mentoring process and topics. Novice teachers in this study stated concerns about classroom management, planning, and expectations of administration as well as how to improve their professional growth in these areas, particularly given the inconsistent feedback provided in their teacher evaluations. Classroom management and planning are two of the major areas within the teacher evaluation process, which contribute to the administration's decision to keep a teacher in subsequent years.

Limitations and Delimitations

This section explains the limitations and delimitations of this study. The limitations are out of control by the researcher and may be potential weaknesses in the study (Simon, 2011). These limitations can be in research design, participants samples, and time of the study (Patton, 1990; Simon, 2011). Delimitations are not positive or negative but are rather justifications for choices made by the researcher (Simon, 2011).

The limitations of this study include the sample and participant selection as well as the time span of the research. The sample of survey participants was a typical case sample of participants in the induction program. This study was conducted in one setting using a specific induction program and cannot be generalized in a strict manner, but also cannot be dismissed as an extreme sample (Patton, 1990). For the semistructured interviews, the participant samples are limited to a specific number each year being studied and are a stratified purposeful sample. This

small sample size would limit generalization, but stratification would capture a common core in the interview analysis and the depth of information retrieved in the interviews would allow for generalities (Patton, 1990). Related to the brief time span of the research, and to avoid only a snapshot of data, induction program participants were surveyed and interviewed across 3 separate school years.

The delimitations in the study include the district, the time frame, and the problem chosen to study. The school district was chosen because it is where the student researcher is employed and would, therefore, provide meaningful and actionable results. The cohort years researched were chosen to support participants' ability to reflect on recent events and to coincide with the development of the new induction program. The problem undertaken was chosen due to the higher-than-average novice teacher attrition rate in this county. Additionally, the county recently implemented a revised induction program, and the findings may be helpful to the district in considering any potential changes.

Implications for Practice

This study revealed an inconsistent fidelity of implementation for the novice teacher induction program. While some teachers attended all sessions, other teachers were informed by school administration that school-level meetings or professional development took precedence over attendance at the induction program sessions. Therefore, it is imperative that district administration communicate attendance expectations and program benefits to school-based administration as well as the novice teachers. To further address the barriers to attendance, the district could establish multiple sessions with access via TEAMs video conferencing or use various start times and locations. This would also help teachers balance work and life demands on their time, which was a factor mentioned in the interviews. A barrier to attendance specific to

the 2-day novice teacher program was due to the hiring date by the district. The district should evaluate the need for an alternative date in January to have a second session for those new teachers or session recordings to be viewed later. If novice teachers are not in attendance for the program components, they are not getting the information and support offered.

During the sessions, this study revealed the focus of novice teachers was on classroom management, planning, and administrator expectation for evaluation. While classes on classroom management and lesson planning were covered in university education coursework, not all the novice teachers had received that instruction since they were alternative certification applicants. To better inform the Moving Beyond Survival program content, participants could complete a survey during the 2-day novice teacher program about their biggest worries or curiosities related to the upcoming school year. Even those who attended novice teacher program sessions, novice teachers required additional assistance from program sessions as well as their mentors in these areas. University–district partnerships should meet to discuss preservice instruction versus induction supports so there are no unnecessary overlaps. As the research discussed, novice teachers need extra support in applying textbook knowledge to daily application.

Mentors need to be trained in best practices for working with novice teachers and providing effective feedback, particularly for those with alternative certifications since they had not received university coursework on classroom management and planning. Additional sessions could focus more on these topics and less on topics such as the WIDA standards that were rated less helpful. Program content and session content need to be updated annually, based on changes (e.g., COVID-19) and participant feedback. For a teacher with an alternative certification, their need for additional support may lead to a need for specialized sessions especially as the number

of teachers with alternative certifications begins to rise among new hires. Resources available in the district were different than the resources available on the university campuses.

Many novice teachers may not be familiar with the resources available to them whether at the district's curriculum library, teacher center, or content websites. District leaders and mentors should make novice teachers aware of what was available to them. For example, a district webpage with links to resources could be created for all novice teachers to use. This district does not have a content repository for lesson plans or content-based activities. Having this type of repository would help novice teachers with developing and implementing lesson plans as they learn district and school expectations. These resources could also help novice teachers as they are learning to balance work and life demands. If these are vetted plans or activities, it would help novice teachers develop lesson plans that align with the TEAM teacher evaluation model.

During this study, participants expressed concern about the TEAM teacher evaluation model and school administration's expectations of teachers. Additional university instruction on the TEAM evaluation model would help novice teachers become familiar with the process. During student-teaching, education students should have some of their teaching evaluated on the TEAM model and reviewed with in-depth feedback. Supplementary sessions that focus on administrative expectations as evaluated on the TEAM model should be developed for teachers with alternative certification or moved from another state. Additionally, sessions on the TEAM evaluation model could be completed on the school level with school administrative input on expectations. The mentors, as part of the support and feedback system, should informally evaluate novice teachers using the TEAM model to establish a framework for mentoring conversations and classroom feedback. Mentors should be trained by the district in evaluating teachers on the TEAM evaluation model. University observers for student teaching should also

be training in the evaluation model to allow for continuity of the evaluation processes. Mentors should also meet with school administrators to work as a liaison between administrators and novice teachers.

Implications for Research

The findings revealed that novice teachers come to the profession with varying degrees of education instruction and alternative certification teachers have little background in education. Future research should further evaluate the data collected in this study to determine if the participants with alternative certification rated their experience with a statistically significant difference from those with traditional certification. Additional data analysis could focus on participants' prior experience in the education field and their age when they entered teaching to see if these factors discussed in research are indicators of teacher attrition in this district, potentially leading to targeted sessions for these populations. Research should be conducted to determine if there is a correlation between teachers who left the district and rate of attendance at the novice teacher induction program. Additional questions could be added to the survey to include question about peer supports within grade levels or subject areas and connections between novice teachers and experienced teachers.

Numerous studies have focused on novice teacher attrition and teachers in urban school districts but research on similar issues in rural areas was limited. Additional research needs to be conducted on teacher attrition in rural areas as well as the growing number of alternative certification teachers in those communities. Research on the supports given to novice teachers in rural or fringe rural districts should be explored. In particular, it would be helpful to determine who rural or fringe districts can use their resources most effectively to support their novice teachers.

To conduct a more thorough program evaluation, the survey used in this study could be presented to all novice teacher program participants in lieu of the district's standard professional development survey. This would ensure that all participants were surveyed rather than hoping participants respond to an email after the program has finished. Program evaluation surveys should be sent out earlier in the school year and not during the week last week of school when teachers are overwhelmed with school requirements. As part of program evaluation, data should be collected more frequently and reviewed for trends.

One limitation was the number of participants surveyed. It is important to receive survey responses from a variety of novice teachers with a more even distribution of certification types. There should also be an exit interview for those who leave the district after the first year or change schools within the district after Year 1. These exit interviews should be used to determine trends and help inform support strategies, particularly since the district does not always maintain contact information with former employees.

Another limitation of this study was the time period of this study. This study included novice teachers hired over a three-year time period, but the data were collected at one time. Since this study was a program evaluation, a researcher could replicate the study in subsequent years within the same district. Researchers could analyze the data collected to determine trends over a greater span of time, as discussed in the limitations section.

Implications for Policy

The department of education in the state of Tennessee, as well as other states, requests novice teacher supports be put in place within the school districts. The Tennessee Department of Education does not give a set standard for what the novice teacher induction process entails. Tennessee distributes an annual teacher satisfaction survey and new teachers have a specific

section with questions pertaining to their first year of teaching; this section appears every 4 years. The state should consider asking these questions annually to capture novice teachers' perceptions immediately following their first year so that action can be taken based on the trends seen. This study revealed that there is a need for a more effective induction process for situated learning to occur with novice teachers. Greater guidance from the Tennessee Department of Education would lay the groundwork for supports across the state.

This study also revealed that novice teachers were not as familiar as expected with the TEAM model of evaluation and they perceive that their evaluators have not consistently given effective feedback. The state department of education should modify evaluator training to help bridge the gap between the evaluation and productive feedback. The state or district should consider extending uniform training to mentors as well as university instructors and classroom observers. The department of education should take situated learning into account during a novice teacher's first years of teaching with a modified evaluation process that promotes technique development.

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Appendix A

Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model

Teacher Evaluation (https://team-tn.org/teacher-evaluation/)	
Background	Teachers are the most important factor influencing student success. The goal of the TEAM evaluation process is to provide educators with a model that helps them continuously improve their practice. A complete picture of what goes on in the classroom is essential to driving educator improvement; therefore, we want to look at how teachers deliver instruction and what students learn from those lessons. By using observations and data together, TEAM allows teachers and school leaders to have an ongoing dialogue about how what happens in the classroom impacts student performance. Ultimately, growth in a teacher's skills leads to growth in student achievement. Like the reflective practices the TEAM observation system promotes for educators, the Tennessee Department of Education is committed to reflecting on and refining the observation system through feedback loops and careful study over time. Educators were instrumental in the design of TEAM and will continue to have a hand in refining the system in the months and years ahead.
Distance Learning Best Practices Suite	The distance learning best practices suite includes a trio of documents designed to support teachers and observers as they implement TEAM in a distance learning environment. These documents, developed with feedback from practitioners across the state, include: • Best Practices for Implementing TEAM Processes in a Distance Learning Environment: Pre-Conferences, Observations, and Post-Conferences • Best Practices for Implementing TEAM Processes in a Distance Learning Environment: Educator Strategies and Additional Observer Questions • Best Practices for Implementing TEAM Processes in a Distance Learning Environment: Frequently Asked Questions Each document is designed to support high-quality feedback and coaching for teachers in a virtual learning setting by building upon the strong foundation of the TEAM rubric in which observers are already grounded.

Appendix B

Sample 2-Day New Teacher Induction Program Agenda

July 26 Agenda	
8:00 am to 8:30 am	Registration
8:30 am to 8:50 am	Welcome
9:00 am to 10:00 am	Breakout Session 1 (technology, special education, board policy, or WIDA/English learners standards)
10:10 am to 11:10 am	Breakout Session 2 (technology, special education, board policy, or WIDA/English learners standards)
11:10 am to 12:45 pm	Lunch and Local Tennessee Education Association Presentation
12:45 pm to 1:45 pm	Breakout Session 3 (technology, special education, board policy, or WIDA/English learners standards)
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Breakout Session 4 (technology, special education, board policy, or WIDA/English learners standards)

July 27 Agenda	
8:00 am to 8:30 am	Registration
8:30 am to 9:50 am	Technology (Library)
10:00 am to 11:00 am	TEAM Evaluation Training Student Services: Resources and Supports
11:00 am to 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm to 3:30 pm	First Year Classroom Teachers and School Counselors ONLY: First Days of School
3:30 pm	Submit completed passport and Dismiss

Appendix C

Sample of New Teacher Professional Learning

Moving Beyond Survival is a six-part professional learning series designed to assist beginning teachers in developing effective classroom management and instructional practices. Each 2-hour session focuses on best practices that align with the TEAM Rubric domains and indicators. Participants will have the opportunity to learn, collaborate, and share ideas and strategies with other new teachers. Eligible participants include new teachers in their first three years of employment.

Part 1: Teacher Center Tour and Resources (September)

You are invited to tour the Teacher Center and discover resources available to you as a teacher in this county. Meet the Media & Materials Coordinator and learn about the materials and services available to support you during your first year. We provide services such as Poster Creation, Lamination Services, Color Printing, Die Cuts, Professional Learning Books, Class Sets of Books (Crates), and Textbooks
Plus we will share information on how to access your Online Textbook materials and where to find support for online resources.

Part 2: Creating Positive Classroom Environments/Using Effective Classroom Management Practices (October)

Effective teachers use proven classroom management practices to help create safe and positive classroom environments. Move from chaos and confusion in the classroom to calm and orderly by implementing these practices. This session will outline expectations, routines, and procedures designed to create systematic classroom environments and build positive student relationships.

Part 3: Planning and Presenting Quality Lessons (November)

Well planned lessons are essential for student learning. While state standards are the foundation for all lessons, other components are also essential in planning and presenting quality lessons. This session will focus on the components of the Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI) framework and other instructional practices proven to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Part 4: Asking Effective Questions and Differentiating Instruction (January)

Effective questioning and differentiated instruction are critical components of quality instruction. Quality questions enhance any lesson and promote student thinking and problem solving. Differentiated instruction provides all students with opportunities to be successful in mastering the content being taught. This session will address how to design and ask quality questions and how to incorporate the components of differentiated instruction to meet the academic needs of all students.

Part 5: Assessing the Learning and Providing Academic Feedback (February)

Assessing student learning and providing academic feedback is essential to improving student learning and modifying instructional practices. Using quality formative and summative

assessment techniques is an effective tool to monitor student learning. Providing specific and timely academic feedback helps students understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to move forward in their learning. This session will highlight effective formative and summative assessment practices and outline steps to provide quality academic feedback.

Part 6: Looking Back and Moving Forward (March)

Reflection and planning are essential tools that teachers should use daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly to evaluate the effectiveness of their management and instructional practices. In this session, participants will reflect on the events of the school year, identifying both successes and challenges of the past several months. In addition, participants will look forward to the next school year by setting goals and outlining steps to organize, implement, and manage future classroom settings and instructional practices.

Appendix D

Research Matrix

Research Question(s)	Constructs	Instrumentation	Data Collection	Data Analysis Method
1. To what degree was the district induction program implemented with fidelity?	frequency of induction program components (e.g., district-level meetings, district-mandated school-based meetings, mentoring)	novice teacher survey (Chaney et al., 2020)	once	Descriptive Analysis
		semistructured interviews	once, post-survey analysis	Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
2. How do novice teachers perceive the district teacher induction program in relation to their professional growth?	induction program components (e.g., district-level meetings, district-mandated school-based meetings, mentoring); aspects of professional growth (technical [e.g., time, administrative tasks], professional [e.g., curriculum, classroom management], affective [e.g., motivation, relationships; Shwartz, 2016)	novice teacher survey (Chaney et al., 2020)	once	Descriptive Analysis
		semistructured interviews	once, post-survey analysis	Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
3. How do novice teachers precieve the district mentoring program in relation to their professional growth?	Mentoring process components (e.g., classroom observations, one-on-one meetings, modeling) (technical [e.g., time, administrative tasks], professional [e.g., curriculum, classroom management], affective [e.g., motivation, relationships; Shwartz, 2016)	novice teacher survey (Chaney et al., 2020)	once	Descriptive Analysis
		semistructured interviews	once, post-survey analysis	Theoretical thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Appendix E

Survey Recruitment Email Script

Dear prospective study participant,

My name is Toni Richards, and I am a doctoral candidate at Austin Peay State University. I am writing this email to invite you to participate in a research study regarding the district's Novice Teacher Induction program that you participated in. *The purpose of this study is to investigate the supports given to new teachers during their first year of teaching, including how well the program was implemented and which components you found most useful to your professional growth.*

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board and the Robertson County Board of Education.

This study will be conducted during spring of 2022. During that time, I will collect and analyze data related to the implementation and usefulness of the induction program. If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey using Microsoft Forms, which is expected to take less than 20 minutes to complete. Your survey responses will be anonymous unless you indicate you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, in which case you would be asked to provide a contact email address.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you can stop your participation at any time. Participation or non-participation will have no bearing on your teacher evaluations or future employment.

By participating in this study, you will provide insights in the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the district Novice Teacher Induction Program and the components within the program. These finding would be used to guide future program development and implementation in this district as well as other districts.

If you are interested in participating, please respond to this email. The Federal Program Department in central office will send a confirmation email with consent document. You will return the completed consent for via email.

Thank you very much for your consideration,
Sincerely,

Toni L. Richards, Ed.S.

Appendix F

APSU IRB Approval

Austin Peay State University
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: 4/6/2022

IRB 22-021

TITLE OF PROJECT: Novice Teachers' Perceptions of their Year 1 Induction Program Experiences

Dear Dr. Prosser and Ms. Richards,

We appreciate your cooperation with the human research review process. This letter is to inform you that study 22-021 has been reviewed on an expedited level. It is my pleasure to tell you that your study is approved.

This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subject research. The IRB reserves the right to withdraw approval if unresolved issues are raised during the review period. Any changes or deviations from the approved protocol must be submitted in writing to the IRB for further review and approval before continuing.

This approval is for one calendar year and a closed study report or request for continuing review is required on or before the expiration date, 4/5/2022. If you have any questions or require further information, you can contact me by phone (931-221-7059) or email youngh@apsu.edu).

Sincerely,

Harold A. Young, Ph. D. Chair, APIRB

Appendix G

Informed Consent for Survey

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Novice Teachers' Perceptions of their Year 1 Induction Program Experiences

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education Specialties at Austin Peay State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You retain the right to refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you consent to participate in this study, you may withdraw from this study at any time without consequence. If you choose to withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this department, the services it may provide to you, or Austin Peay State University.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this mixed methods study are to determine (a) the fidelity to which the district induction program was implemented, (b) how novice teachers experience the components of the induction program, (c) how do novice teachers experience the supports of the mentoring program.

PROCEDURES

You are being asked to participate in a survey and, potentially, a follow-up interview related to your experience with the novice teacher induction program. After confirming you have read the consent form, you will be sent a link to the survey, which includes a question on your willingness to participate in a follow-up interview. The link will be open for 2 weeks. A reminder email will be sent after Day 5 and Day10 by the district's Department of Federal Programs to those who have not submitted the survey. The survey is expected to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you are willing to participate in the follow-up interview, which may last up to 50 minutes.

RISKS

The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS

A benefit of this study would be to determine the types of supports necessary for novice teachers in their first year of teaching. These findings could be used to inform school districts and state policymakers and their decisions surrounding the novice teacher induction process.

COMPENSATION

Participants will not receive compensation.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the Austin Peay State University Institutional

Review Board. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT
You are not required to sign this Consent and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to participate in any programs or events of Austin Peay State University or any services you are receiving or may receive from Austin Peay State University. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT
You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, any collected data will be destroyed and not used.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION
If you have any questions about the procedures, you may direct them to the principal investigator, Toni Richard.

CONSENT
I have read the above information and received a copy of this form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding my participation in this study. I agree to take part in this study as a research participant.

By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old.

_____
Print Participant's Name Date

_____
Participant's Signature Date

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Primary Investigator: Toni Richards
Email : trichards3@my.apsu.edu
Phone : 615.559.2320

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Sherri Prosser
Email: prossers@apsu.edu
Phone: 931.221.7516

IRB Contact Information
Dr. Harold Young, Chair
Kelly Pitts, IRB Assistant
irb@apsu.edu
(931) 221-7881

Appendix H

Interview Recruitment Email Script

Dear prospective study participant,

My name is Toni Richards, and I am a doctoral candidate at Austin Peay State University. I am writing this email to invite you to participate in a research study regarding the Novice Teacher Induction program in your district. *The purpose of this study is to investigate the supports given to new teachers during their first year of teaching, including how well the program was implemented and which components you found most useful to your professional growth.*

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board and the Robertson County Board of Education.

This study will be conducted during spring of 2022. During that time, I will collect and analyze data related to the implementation and usefulness of the induction program in your district. As part of your survey response, you indicated you would be willing to participate in a follow-up one-on-one interview. This interview will be conducted via Zoom, will be audio recorded, and is expected to take 30-40 minutes to complete.

All data will be de-identified prior to being analyzed and pseudonyms will be used for names or schools mentioned in the interview. If you choose to participate in the interview, your name and contact information will not be included in the verbatim transcription of the audio recording. Instead, you will be assigned a participant number. The specifics for confidentiality and data storage are detailed in the informed consent form.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study, you can stop your participation at any time. Participation or non-participation will have no bearing on your teacher evaluations or future employment.

By participating in this study, you will provide insights in the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the district Novice Teacher Induction Program and the components within the program. These finding would be used to guide future program development and implementation in this district as well as other districts.

If you are interested in participating, please respond to this email. The Federal Program Department in central office will send a confirmation email with consent document. You will return the completed consent for via email.

Thank you very much for your consideration,
Sincerely,

Toni L. Richards, Ed.S.

Appendix I

Informed Consent for Interview

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Novice Teachers' Perceptions of their Year 1 Induction Program Experiences

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education Specialties at Austin Peay State University supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You retain the right to refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you consent to participate in this study, you may withdraw from this study at any time without consequence. If you choose to withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this department, the services it may provide to you, or Austin Peay State University.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this mixed methods study are determine (a) the fidelity to which the district induction program was implemented, (b) how novice teachers experience the components of the induction program, (c) how do novice teachers experience the supports of the mentoring program

PROCEDURES

You are being asked to participate in an interview related to your experience with the district novice teacher induction program. The interview is expected to last up to 50 minutes and will take place at a time convenient to you. The interview will be conducted and audio recorded using Zoom. You will have an opportunity to review the interview transcript when it is available. The transcript will be emailed to you, and you will have three days to review and respond with corrections.

RISKS

The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS

A benefit of this study would be to determine the types of supports necessary for novice teachers in their first year of teaching. These findings could be used to inform school districts and state policymakers and their decisions surrounding the novice teacher induction process.

COMPENSATION

Participants will not receive compensation.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including members of the Austin Peay State University Institutional

Review Board. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT
You are not required to sign this Consent and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to participate in any programs or events of Austin Peay State University or any services you are receiving or may receive from Austin Peay State University. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT
You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, any collected data will be destroyed and not used.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION
If you have any questions about the procedures, you may direct them to the principal investigator, Toni Richards.

CONSENT
I have read the above information and received a copy of this form. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding my participation in this study. I agree to take part in this study as a research participant.

_____
Print Participant's Name Date

_____
Participant's Signature Date

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Primary Investigator: Toni Richards
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Phone : 931.221.7516

IRB Contact Information
Dr. Harold Young, Chair
Kelly Pitts, IRB Assistant
irb@apsu.edu
(931) 221-7881

Appendix J

Survey

*The following items ask about your participation in the district new teacher program. Please reflect on your **first year** of teaching while answering these items.*

1. Did you attend New Teacher Program (2 days in July)? (RQ1)
    a. Yes, please answer Item 2.
    b. No
2. Of the content covered in the 2-day new teacher program in July, rate how helpful each portion was in your professional growth. (RQ2)

	Extremely Helpful (3)	Somewhat Helpful (2)	Not Very Helpful (1)	Not Helpful at All (0)
Technology				
Special education				
Board policies				
WIDA standards				
TEAM evaluation training				
Student services (resources and supports)				
"First Days of School" content				

3. Did you attend the Moving Beyond Survival series (RQ1)
    a. Yes
        i. How many sessions did you attend?
            a. 1
            b. 2
            c. 3
            d. 4
            e. 5
            f. 6
        ii. Please answer Item 4
    b. No

4. Of the content covered in the Moving Beyond Survival series, rate how helpful each portion was in your professional growth. (RQ2)

	Extremely Helpful (3)	Somewhat Helpful (2)	Not Very Helpful (1)	Not Helpful at All (0)
Teacher center				
Accessing online textbook				
Accessing online resource (other than textbook)				
Classroom management practices				
Explicit direct instruction				
Instructional practices				
Assessing student learning				
Providing academic feedback				
Reflective practitioner practices (e.g., goal setting, self-evaluation, and future lesson planning)				

5. Did you have mentoring sessions with a **district-assigned** (not school assigned) mentor? (RQ1)
    a. Yes, please answer Items 6 and 7
    b. No

6. If you met with your **district-assigned** (not school-assigned) mentor, how frequently did you discuss or get help with the following topics? (RQ3)

	Frequently (3)	Occasionally (2)	Rarely (1)	Never (0)
Classroom management				
Student/teacher relationships				
District or school policies				
Administrative duties (e.g., data tracking, student attendance)				
Difficult or challenging parents				
Resources				
Student assessment/academic feedback				
TEAM evaluation model/peer observation				
Co-teaching/strategies modeling				
Job-related stress				
Work/life balance				

7. If you met with your district-assigned (not school assigned mentor), how helpful was your mentor for your professional growth? (RQ3)

	Extremely Helpful (3)	Somewhat Helpful (2)	Not Very Helpful (1)	Not Helpful at All (0)
Classroom management				
Student/teacher relationships				
District or school policies				
Administrative duties (e.g., data tracking, student attendance)				
Difficult or challenging parents				
Resources				
Student assessment/academic feedback				
TEAM evaluation model/peer observation				
Co-teaching/strategies modeling				
Job-related stress				
Work/life balance				

Background Information

1. Do you most identify as:
    a. American Indian or Alaska Native
    b. Asian
    c. Black or African American
    d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    e. White, Hispanic
    f. White, non-Hispanic
    g. Do not wish to answer
2. Age during your first year as a classroom teacher **in this district**:
    a. 21-25
    b. 26-30
    c. 31-35
    d. 36-40
    e. 41-45
    f. 46 and over
3. Grade taught during your **first year** as a classroom teacher **in this district:**
    (mark as many as apply)
    a. K-5
    b. 6-8

   c. 9-12

4. Which best describes your role during your **first year** of teaching **in this district**?
   a. ESL (K12)
   b. librarian
   c. mathematics (middle or high)
   d. science (middle or high)
   e. special education (K12)
   f. other k-5 teacher
   g. other 6-8 teacher
   h. other 9-12 teacher
5. Teaching experience prior to being hired by this district:
   a. No prior experience
   b. Student teaching/residency
   c. Substitute teacher
   d. Educational aide
   e. Private school (without certification)
   f. Private school (with certification)
   g. College/university adjunct professor or graduate teaching assistant
   h. Other
6. Please provide your email address if you are willing to be interviewed to discuss and expand upon your answers to the above questions to help the district understand the strengths and weaknesses of the induction program (interviews will be conducted via Zoom at a time convenient to you. Your responses will be kept confidential).

Appendix K

Semistructured Interview Protocol

Script:
Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the supports given to new teachers during their first year of teaching, including how well the program was implemented and which components you found most useful to your professional growth.

I want to ensure I capture what you say accurately so I would like to record our interview. Do I have your permission to record this interview session?

If at any time you would like clarification of a question, or if you would prefer not to answer the question, please let me know.

For this interview, please think about your first year of teaching in this this district and the supports you received. As a reminder, any names or names of schools will be replaced with pseudonyms during data analysis.

In this first set of questions, I am going to ask you about the 2-day new teacher program that occurred in July.

1. Can you describe your overall perception of the 2-day program?
2. Which sessions were most helpful to you as a new teacher? (RQ2)
    a. Prompt, if needed: technology, special education, board policies, WIDA standards, First Days of School based on Harry Wong, TEAM evaluation training, student services.
    b. Can you give me an example of how <insert participant's response(s)> was helpful to you as a new teacher?
3. Are there any sessions you would have liked to have more time in? (RQ2)
4. What could have been done to make the sessions more helpful for your professional growth? (RQ2)
    a. Can you give me a specific example or suggestion?
5. What else stands out to you about the experience of the 2-day program?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the 2-day new teacher program?

In this second set of questions, I am going to ask you about attending the 2-hour monthly "Moving Beyond Survival" professional learning meetings.

7. Were you able to attend all the meetings? If not, what were the challenges to attending?
8. Which topics covered and discussed at the meeting were most useful to you and your work in the classroom? (RQ2)
    a. Prompt, if needed: Teacher Center and resources, creating positive classroom environment, planning and presenting quality lessons, asking effective questions, differentiating instruction, assessing learning, academic feedback, reflection and planning
    b. Can you give me an example of how <insert participant's response(s)> was helpful to

you as a new teacher?
   c. Are there any other examples of sessions that were helpful to you?
9. Were there topics not covered in the Moving Beyond Surviving sessions that you would have liked to have had covered? (RQ2)
   a. How might that have helped you in your professional growth?
   b. Can you give me specific examples?
10. What else stands out to you about the sessions? (RQ2)
11. What could have made the sessions more helpful for your professional growth? (RQ2)
   a. Prompt, if needed: format, timing of session in the school year
12. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the monthly professional learning meetings?

In this third set of questions, I am going to ask you about working with your district-assigned (not school-assigned) mentor.

13. In what ways was your district-assigned mentor most impactful to your professional growth, if at all? (RQ3)

These following questions are about specific ways mentor teachers can help.

14. "Technical areas of teaching" include time management and organization of planning period, and administrative tasks such as attendance and grade reporting, purchasing and supply requests, and maintenance orders. Which of these areas do you feel your mentor helped you the most your first year? (RQ 3)
   a. Why?
   b. Can you tell me about a specific time when your mentor did this? Or, how this would look?
15. "Professional areas of teaching" include content and curriculum, student assessment, classroom discipline, and pedagogy. Which of these areas do you feel your mentor helped you the most your first year? (RQ 3)
   a. Why?
   b. Can you tell me about a specific time when your mentor did this? Or, how this would look?
16. "Affective areas of teaching" include positive aspects of the job such as friendships and motivation, as well as negative aspects of the job such as dealing with criticism and disappointment. Which of these areas do you feel your mentor helped you the most your first year? (RQ 3)
   a. Why?
   b. Can you tell me about a specific time when your mentor did this? Or, how did this look?
17. What could have made the district-assigned mentor more helpful to your professional growth? (RQ3)

For the final question, think back over the whole first year of teaching and the novice teacher induction program.

18. Is there anything else that you would like to share? (RQ3)
   a. Prompt if needed: Is there anything you would like to have had, support-wise? Or anything you would like to see changed for future novice teachers?