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INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS: PATHWAYS TO NEW TEACHER RETENTION AND SUCCESS

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INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS: PATHWAYS TO NEW TEACHER RETENTION AND SUCCESS

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
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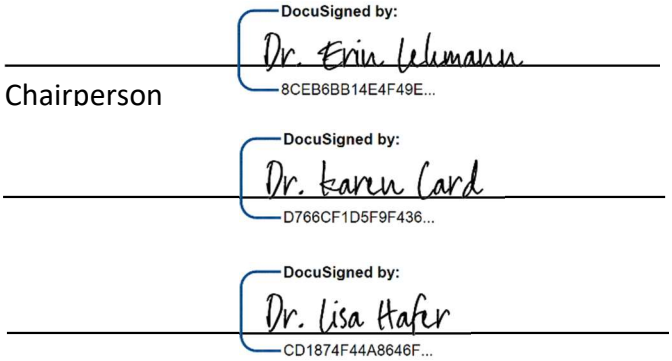
The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Valerie Seales find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.



ABSTRACT

Dissertation Advisor by Dr. Erin Lehmann

The pipeline of college students seeking teaching positions is shrinking. The teacher shortage makes finding and retaining new teachers even more challenging. The cost of replacing existing teachers who leave is tremendous, and new teachers leave the profession at an alarming rate. This dissertation explored the lived experiences of new teachers who recently completed their induction and mentoring program. The study addresses three primary research questions: (1) What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program (2) What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to improve their work experience in our schools? Using a phenomenological research design, 10 study participants were selected to create a purposeful sample that included diverse ages, genders, self-efficacy, and teaching assignments. This study sought to understand how new teachers perceive the current induction and mentoring program. And how school districts can change that trajectory of turnover using effective induction and mentoring programs. The research findings suggest teachers value the induction and mentoring program and the support they receive, which may positively impact whether they stay in their teaching positions.

Dissertation Advisor _____

Dr. Erin Lehmann

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Teacher quality matters for student achievement. Teachers account for 30% of the variation in their students' achievement (Hattie, 2003), which means teacher preparedness and effectiveness are critical to student success. Unfortunately, many new teachers feel less than prepared for the reality of their first teaching position. Such first-time teachers require ample professional development and support systems to aid in their transition to the classroom. Additionally, many first-year teachers report feelings of overwhelming isolation and lack of support, in direct contrast to the environment of their teacher preparation programs, which offered cooperating teachers, collaborative peers, and university supervisor support (Whitaker & Fiore, 2004). New teacher efficacy and job satisfaction diminish when the classroom transition lacks adequate support. This loss of effectiveness directly impacts both the teacher and their students negatively.

A significant relationship exists between teaching efficacy and job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012). Efficacious teachers believe in their ability to positively impact their students' learning outcomes, allowing them to remain resilient despite their professional challenges or obstacles. "Efficacy expectations determine how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences" (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). Research has proven that for teachers to remain in the field despite their obstacles and challenges, they must develop collegial relationships with their coworkers and access support systems that promote their sense of efficacy.

Demand for teachers, especially in the U.S., is partly driven by the relatively high rates of teachers moving from a particular teaching assignment or leaving the field entirely (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, teacher turnover is detrimental to schools, both financially and functionally.

The financial costs associated with teacher attrition and turnover are estimated to be as high as 30% of the leaving teacher's salary (Barnes et al., 2007). High turnover's functional impacts result in shortages, which leads to hiring inexperienced or underqualified teaching staff that negatively impacts student achievement. National enrollment in teacher education programs saw a 35% reduction between 2009 and 2014, while teacher attrition levels hovered at 8% throughout the United States (Sutcher et al., 2016). New teachers leave the profession more than their colleagues, with estimated departure rates ranging from 19% to 30%. Investment in new teacher support and development through induction and mentoring has been proven to increase teacher retention and improve student achievement when done correctly (Carver-Thomas et al., 2019; Ingersoll, 2001; Smith et al., 2004).

Teachers new to the profession need support structures such as mentoring and quality induction programs. "To remain globally competitive, it will take the investment of all stakeholders letting go of the status quo and creating structures to support the ongoing development of teaching and learning" (Van Zandt, 2013, p. 89). This statement is particularly relevant for novice teachers, who lack the experience of their veteran peers, which can negatively impact their effectiveness level. Support structures of mentoring and induction at the school district and school site level can promote new teachers' self-efficacy while developing their knowledge and instructional skills (Lambeth, 2012). Developing and retaining new teachers requires appropriate professional development and a welcoming environment where teachers form collegial relationships to foster the novice teacher's bond with the school community.

This study aimed to analyze the experiences of teachers new to Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) to determine the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring program and ascertain additional support new teachers recommend for future hires. Rolling Hills School

District is the name selected for this upper midwestern school district in a rural state to maintain anonymity. This information guides the refinement of RHSD's new teacher induction program, which includes mentoring, collaborative teaming, and professional development to support new teachers' transition to the classroom.

Teacher turnover creates a financial burden for school districts while negatively impacting organizational and building levels of the K12 education system. Estimated costs associated with replacing teachers range from $4,400 to nearly $18,000 per teacher (Barnes et al., 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016). The negative impact teacher turnover creates on the school's instructional program is of greater importance. Teachers leaving the profession take their organizational knowledge with them, and teachers new to the school district have yet to develop this organizational knowledge. Turnover makes it challenging to sustain consistent implementation of instructional programs (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Teacher turnover significantly negatively affects students' academic achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013), and teachers are an essential factor in student achievement. Research points out the wide range of teacher effectiveness as a primary issue that negatively impacts student achievement (Barnes, 2013; Brown, 2015; Kyriadikes, 2013). Therefore, improving teacher effectiveness can most significantly improve results for students. In addition, the results show a wide variation in effectiveness among teachers. The immediate and clear implication of this finding is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor (Carver-Thomas, 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; Marzano, 2003).

Students and teachers benefit from a collegial and collaborative school setting, but the revolving door of teachers is detrimental to the overall stability of a school. According to Carver-

Thomas et al. (2017), a primary factor in teacher turnover is the pre-service preparation and the administrative support they receive upon transitioning to their teaching position. Carver-Thomas et al. (2017) offers the following: “High-quality induction programs that reduce attrition include mentoring with observation and feedback, time for collaborative planning with colleagues, a reduced teaching load, and a focus on high-leverage activities such as analyzing student work and discussing instructional strategies.” Creating an environment for new teachers that is both welcoming and supportive while simultaneously producing a culture of collaboration is paramount in stemming the tide of new teacher attrition.

Statement of the Problem

The RHSD employs 1,050 certified teaching staff and replaces between 100 and 145 of those staff annually. While retirements cause approximately 25% of those openings, the remaining openings result from movers (those teachers who change positions but remain in teaching) and leavers (those teachers who abandon the teaching profession). The exact number of movers and leavers is not readily identifiable, given the current state of human resources tracking in RHSD.

Teacher turnover is high, and the number of students choosing education as their major continues to decline. There has been a reduction of 240,000 prospective educators in 7 years (Sutcher et al., 2016). Open teaching positions in RHSD as little as ten years ago would garner 35-50 applicants per open position. However, the average applicant pool has been reduced to under 10 applicants per vacant position within the last five years. For positions that are hard to fill, including science, mathematics, special education, and positions in Title I schools, applications dwindle to 5 or fewer on average. Once a position is filled, the new teachers often express a sense of under-preparedness for their demands. An increased understanding of what

new teachers need to transition to RHSD successfully will improve the mentoring and induction program moving forward. These programmatic improvements will address the following significant influences identified for teacher attrition: working conditions, preparation, and early mentoring support (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers new to the school district in this study, Rolling Hills School District (RHSD). This study sought to determine the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring programs and to determine what additional support new teachers recommend for future hires. How do these benefits improve working conditions and preparation, and what more can be done to enhance the experience of future generations of new teachers in RHSD?

Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this study was: What are the lived experiences of teachers new to RHSD in their first years of employment? Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program in RHSD?
2. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program in RHSD?
3. What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to improve their work experience in RHSD?

Significance of the Study

While numerous studies evaluate the effects of mentoring and induction programs on teacher attitudes, efficacy, and retention, few compare and contrast new teacher experiences and perspectives from mentored and non-mentored new teachers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). I sought to explore new teacher perceptions from various perspectives by establishing the sample through a purposive design. The sample included teachers with high and low levels of self-efficacy from Title I-eligible schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The sample consisted of teachers who did and did not participate in the state mentoring program and those who have informally arranged mentor teachers. All teachers in the sample participated in the induction activities provided by RHSD.

Supporting new teachers improves the student experience by increasing teacher effectiveness, efficacy, and job satisfaction. Similarly, satisfied teachers are more likely to remain in the teaching profession than those who are dissatisfied. Determining the effectiveness of the induction and mentoring programs employed by RHSD inspired programmatic improvements to best support beginning teachers' needs. As the Director of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation for RHSD, I have the authority to make programmatic improvements that will improve the experience of new teachers and support an effective learning environment for their students.

Improving the induction and mentoring programs new teachers receive creates the supportive environment novice teachers need to succeed in their careers. Analyzing teachers' feedback new to the Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) provided critical perspectives to guide programmatic improvements. Meeting the needs of teachers new to education ultimately improves student outcomes and certified teaching staff retention rates.

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms are provided to give the reader an understanding of the keywords used throughout the research process.

Culture: The guiding beliefs and values are evident in how the school operates. This includes attitudes, expected behaviors, and values that impact a school's functions (Fullen, 2007)

Induction: A professional development intervention designed to systematically train and support teachers in their first years in the classroom (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012, p. 304).

Informal Mentoring: Relationships between novice and veteran teachers that are not formally arranged but instead occur naturally without prescribed agreements or guidance.

Formal Mentoring: the process of an experienced teacher providing support to a new teacher through various activities, including co-planning, sharing of resources, modeling of instruction, and collaborating to solve problems of practice. For this study's purpose, formal mentoring is supported at the District and State Department of Education level, and mentors and mentees alike receive training in effective mentor/mentee practices.

New Teacher: Any teacher within their first two years of employment, also called novice teachers.

Self-Efficacy Theory: Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977, 2012). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's motivation, behavior, and social environment.

Student: Individuals enrolled in the public school system ranging from kindergarten to 12th grade.

Teacher Self-efficacy: Teachers' individual beliefs about their abilities to successfully perform specific teaching and learning-related tasks within the context of their classrooms (Aldrige et al., 2015).

Tenure: In the state in this study, teacher tenure is reached in the fourth consecutive year of employment. A teacher who has reached 'tenured' status requires a "just cause" rationale for the non-renewal of their contract.

Title I Schools: Schools where students from low-income families comprise at least 40% of the student population.

Theoretical Framework

This study was framed through the theoretical lens of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) as a social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy theory is born from social cognitive theory and includes "personal aspirations, outcome expectations, perceived opportunity structures, constraints, and conceptions of personal efficacy" (Bandura, 2012, p. 10). When new teachers experience a district climate of support, there may be a reciprocal relationship between efficacy and school climate (Hoy, 1993). This framework sits well with a phenomenological study of this type.

Self-efficacy should not be confused with self-esteem or perceived self-worth. In the case of this study, a teacher may show low efficacy levels in the classroom without any sense of lowered self-esteem. In fact, that teacher is likely to blame influences outside their personal control for any performance issues. "The evidence is relatively consistent in showing that efficacy beliefs contribute significantly to the level of motivation and performance" (Bandura, 1977, p. 61).

New teacher induction and mentoring programs offer a level of support to new teachers that can directly impact teacher self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy beliefs come from multiple sources, including experiences, persuasion, and social influences. “Enactive mastery experiences” (Bandura, 1997, p. 80) significantly influence efficacy beliefs as success boosts personal efficacy attitudes. Early failure undermines efficacy, mainly when the failure occurs before efficacy is well established. Consequently, it is imperative to develop support systems that promote early success for new teachers. According to Bandura, “Enactive mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed” (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). Success promotes belief in one’s efficacy, while failure undermines one’s personal efficacy. Because of this, the induction and mentoring program must provide the knowledge, professional learning, and support that will increase the new teachers’ successful teaching interactions in their first years.

In RHSD, teachers new to the district receive an additional five days of dedicated time for their professional learning, which allows for thirteen days of professional development embedded in the school calendar when paired with the existing professional learning days. The Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation for RHSD developed the new teacher induction program and participated in the State Department of Education’s mentoring program. The mentoring and induction programs have been in place for five years in their current form. The programs were designed to address the following needs of teachers new to the profession:

- Professional development related to curriculum and instructional materials of RHSD
- Professional development related to the technology employed by RHSD to include Learning Management Systems (LMS) and instructional materials

- An overview of student management expectations and the Whole Child initiative of RHSD
- Collaboration in instructional planning
- Mentoring activities to include observation, feedback, and routine assistance

Rolling Hills School District staff and the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation believe that a job-embedded combination of professional learning, peer connections, and mentoring will ease new teachers' transition into the school setting while improving their effectiveness and self-efficacy. New teachers can self-select professional learning sessions based on their needs, and teacher colleagues lead all sessions, strengthening the experience for both new and veteran teachers (Arnett, 2017). New teachers opting into the mentoring program are placed with veteran teachers in similar content and grade-level positions. Both mentor and mentee training are provided through the Department of Education. The time for collaboration and observation is provided by acquiring substitutes and additional leave time for mentors and mentees. The intent of the induction and mentoring activities provided to new teachers is to provide adequate support, assistance, and collegial collaboration necessary for their success in transitioning to the classrooms of RHSD. New teachers who experience success have higher self-efficacy levels and are likelier to remain in the profession and the current teaching assignment (Ingersoll, 2001; Ware et al., 2011).

Background and Role of the Researcher

I conducted this study through the role of a central office administrator for the RHSD. One of my responsibilities is to provide professional development, induction, and mentoring programs for teachers new to the RHSD. The findings of this study will aid my department and

similar departments in making programmatic improvements that meet novice teachers' professional needs.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations are present in this study:

1. The small sample size represents a fraction of the teachers new to the district (10).
2. Teachers in the study have variable teaching assignments in a wide range of schools that offer varying support levels to staff.
3. The study is limited to the candidness and honesty of the teachers included in the purposeful sample.

Organization of Chapters

This study contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the general context and purpose of the research and establishes the theoretical framework. Chapter 1 also identifies the research questions, the significance of the study, and the assumptions. Chapter 2 reviews the literature that explores teacher efficacy, teacher mentoring and induction, and the relationship between the two. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology employed to study new teachers' perceptions and needs.

Summary

New teachers face multiple challenges in their first years of teaching. New teachers have the least experience in the classroom but are expected to perform the same duties as their veteran peers from day one (Jones et al., 2003). Providing ample support as teachers transition into the classroom can increase new teachers' effectiveness and self-efficacy, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will overcome the challenges that they will face in their early years in the classroom (Taylor, 2013; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001, Zee, et al., 2016). New teacher success

plays a role in the retention of teachers as well. Quality mentoring and induction programs increase teacher effectiveness and feelings of success while reducing their attrition rate (Smith et al., 2004). An analysis of what the new teachers consider to be the benefits and deficits of RHSD's mentoring and induction program led to systemic improvements for future generations of new teachers and the students they serve.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and research related to teacher retention and attrition, new teacher support systems, and the role of teacher efficacy. The research reviewed for this dissertation was acquired from the electronic library databases within the University. The primary searches conducted included teacher retention, teacher attrition, teacher induction and mentoring, and teacher efficacy. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) introduction, (b) teacher turnover, causes, and impact, (c) induction and mentoring, and (d) the role of teacher efficacy.

The success of public education depends on the quality of teachers and school leaders. Ample evidence supports teachers' critical importance regarding students' academic success or failure (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hattie, 2003). This chapter will provide a comprehensive review of the literature on the conditions impacting new teacher retention and attrition, the effectiveness of support structures for new teachers, and explore the efficacy effects of those support structures.

Introduction

This study sought to inform practices related to the induction and mentoring of new teachers in the public school system in an urban district within a rural Midwestern state. Teacher turnover within public schools throughout the United States remains high, especially among novice teachers with 1-3 years of experience. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2014), among novice teachers, 20% had left their position within the 2012-2013 school year. More recent studies show nationally that 30% of new teachers left the profession within their first five years, with turnover rates in high-poverty schools 50% higher than in more

affluent schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling Hammond, 2017; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001). With consistent turnover rates and a dwindling candidate pool, school districts must focus their attention on practices to attract, onboard, support, and retain new teachers to ensure students' program consistency and success (Lazarev et al., 2017).

Predominantly rural states such as the one in this study face additional challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers, including challenging working conditions, lower pay, and geographic isolation (Curtin, 2018). In a study conducted in one primarily rural state, the average rate of teachers achieving tenure is a paltry 70%, supporting the conclusion that rural districts had faced even more significant challenges in attracting and retaining teachers (Lazarev et al., 2017). With consistent turnover rates and a dwindling candidate pool, school districts must focus their attention on practices to attract, onboard, support, and retain our new teachers to ensure students' program consistency and success.

New teachers often feel overwhelmed and underprepared for the reality of their first teaching position, which explains the growing research on teacher stress, efficacy, and job satisfaction (Gagen et al., 2005; Kardos et al., 2010). Job dissatisfaction is critical in determining whether a teacher leaves their school (mobility) or the profession (attrition). According to the Learning Policy Institute's 2018 report, job dissatisfaction was a factor in 55% of attrition cases and 66% of teacher mobility cases (Carver-Thomas et al., 2017, p. 6). Teacher burnout can occur due to excessive job-related stress, typically related to emotional exhaustion, feelings of inefficacy, and cynicism toward the field of education (Iancu et al., 2018). Teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction lead to increased attrition rates in the novice teacher population. Knox et al. (2013) conducted a review of the literature related to the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) (Lester, 1987). They found that there are nine variables directly connected to job

satisfaction for teachers. Those nine variables are supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, responsibility, the work itself, advancement, security, and recognition. Quality induction and mentoring programs can provide collaboration among colleagues, which is essential to teacher job satisfaction.

Ensuring all students have access to highly qualified teachers to improve student learning outcomes requires public school systems to adopt policies and practices to prepare and support new teachers early in their careers. Induction programming that includes mentoring, professional learning, and collegial support is critical in creating a supportive transition into a teaching career and determining teacher satisfaction and mobility. Supporting new teachers is urgent, as the pipeline of qualified educators is not meeting the system's current demands (Cowan et al., 2016).

Teacher Turnover

Demand for new teachers continues to grow and is an enduring concern in education. The need to fill positions is driven partially by increased student enrollments and substantially by relatively high turnover rates (Ingersoll, 2001). Overall difficulties in recruiting exist with consistently hard-to-fill positions identified in specific content areas, including special education, science, mathematics, and particular types of schools, including urban, rural, high-poverty, and high-minority and low-achieving schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Couple this teacher demand with a dwindling candidate pool, and turnover becomes a more significant cause for concern. Between 2009 and 2014, teacher education enrollments plummeted from 691,000 to 451,000, which is a reduction of 35% (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 3). This dwindling candidate pool makes finding the best candidates to fill teaching positions caused by turnover even more challenging to manage at the local school level in districts nationwide.

Not all turnover is the same. The National Center for Education Statistics classified teachers into three categories, ‘movers’ - changing schools or districts, ‘leavers’ - leaving the profession entirely, or ‘stayers’ - remaining at the same school (2017, p. 4). The National Center for Education Statistics reports that during the 2011-2012 school year, 84% of public school teachers were identified as stayers, with 8% identified as movers and 8% identified as leavers (2014). The 8% of teachers identified as leavers constitute our nation’s teacher attrition rate. The current annual attrition rate represents a 3% increase since the early 1990s. While this may seem inconsequential, an increase in attrition of 3% has a significant national impact, resulting in roughly 90,000 additional teacher openings per year (Carver-Thomas et al., 2017, p. 3).

Teacher turnover represents the percentage of leavers and movers or the sum of attrition and mobility rates. Most recent statistics place the national average for teacher turnover at 16%. However, there are significant increases by region, by primary teaching assignment, and in schools identified as Title I (schools serving a high percentage of low-income students) as well as those primarily serving students of color. In these high-need schools, turnover rates far surpass the national average. The turnover rate in Title I schools is approximately 50% greater than in non-Title I schools, and hard-to-fill positions in math and science find teacher turnover nearly 70% greater in Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 14.). This high turnover rate creates additional problems for high-need schools where a disproportionate number of staff are new or early career, including additional professional development, resource utilization, and a curricular knowledge base among the staff at large. Leaving teachers take with them their knowledge of the organization and their school, disrupting instructional programs and maintenance of social resources (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The result is a school where students experience relatively inexperienced teachers year after year. Societal inequity is perpetuated in

high-turnover Title I schools, and according to Dyches & Boyd, "schools act as sites that both perpetuate and reproduce social inequities" (2017, p. 478).

Causes of teacher turnover. Retirement accounts for less than 20% of total attrition nationally (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 18). The remaining open positions are created by what was previously described as 'movers' and 'leavers.' For those teachers who change schools or districts, or leave the profession entirely, the most frequently cited reasons teachers provide for leaving are job dissatisfaction and unsatisfactory working conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The schools hardest hit by high turnover rates are those serving predominantly low-income students and students of color, further contributing to the "revolving door" of new teachers. These new or replacement hires often have less experience, and research has repeatedly shown that well-prepared, experienced master teachers are critical in determining student achievement levels. Well-prepared, experienced teachers with developed instructional expertise influence student achievement positively (Darling-Hammond, 2010). A stable teaching force of experienced teachers can become increasingly effective and improve student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Frequent, substantial turnover makes it more difficult to maintain staff relationships and institutional knowledge from prior initiatives and professional learning (Sutcher et al., 2016).

Teacher job satisfaction is an essential factor in retention and is equally important in shaping teacher attitudes and feelings, which can positively or negatively impact job performance. Teachers who lack job satisfaction have weaker relationships with students and are less likely to desire to improve their efforts or engage in ongoing professional learning (Knox et al., 2013). Sutcher et al., (2016) found that job dissatisfaction, personal motives, career change, and financial reasons are the leading factors in teacher attrition. The causes of job dissatisfaction

include lack of administrative support, physical conditions such as class size and resources, and lack of teacher autonomy.

All teachers face work stress, but novice teachers have the additional burden of entering a complex profession with work stress, for which they often feel underprepared (Callahan, 2016). This reality can cause teachers to leave their current position or the profession altogether. Research has shown that stress and lack of efficacy can lead to teacher burnout and attrition (Bandura, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Sass et al., 2011; Tillman, 2005). The administration's role is to provide support and coping strategies to mitigate stress factors. A teacher's sense of efficacy influences classroom interactions and ultimately connects to stress, burnout, and attrition (Bandura, 1997).

Perceptions regarding school climate can predict a teacher's sense of stress and overall job satisfaction, contributing directly to decisions regarding ongoing employment. As many as one-third of teachers are "stressed or extremely stressed" (Collie et al., 2012). When teaching stressors are paired with a low sense of efficacy, they increase the detrimental impact on job satisfaction, causing higher attrition rates. These effects are compounded when teachers work largely in isolation from colleagues, particularly for new educators who may find themselves in a sink-or-swim environment (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In a study that analyzed the impact of school climate on teacher retention, teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction were considered as the antecedents to retention (Aldridge, et al., 2015). That same study identified school principals as critical in a positive school climate, teacher self-efficacy, and job satisfaction. School leaders who are approachable and supportive positively impact job satisfaction and teacher retention. Additionally, the study identified the relationships between colleagues, specifically willingness to collaborate, share ideas, and collaborate as the second climate factor impacting efficacy, job

satisfaction, and retention. The building principal has a primary role in establishing a positive climate and positive school climate, which in turn increases new teachers' sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, and willingness to preserve through those initial years of teaching.

In a study of the impact of school climate on novice teachers as they transition from training to teaching, McLean, et al. (2017 defined climate as the "quality and character" of school life. Their study concluded that climate, including quality relationships with principals and teachers, collaboration, and cooperation, account for 76% of the variance in teacher mobility. This study concluded that under-supported new teachers who work in a negative school climate significantly reduce the new teachers' mental health, sense of well-being, and longevity in the field.

Teacher turnover financial impact. The negative fiscal impact of teacher turnover varies widely but is worth noting. Estimates of $4,400 per replacement in rural districts to nearly $18,000 per replacement in urban districts were made a decade ago (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 42), with a total national cost exceeding $7 billion annually. The estimated cost per replacement in Chicago Public Schools was $17,872 per replacement and $15,325 per replacement in Milwaukee (Barnes et al., 2017, p. 5). Categories of teacher turnover costs include separation, replacement, and training costs (Waitlington et al., 2010). The calculations of turnover costs historically have lacked standardized measures schools and districts could use to calculate actual attrition costs until the development of the Turnover Cost Calculator (TTCC) in 2007. Barnes Turnover Cost Calculator (TTCC) (cited in Watlington et al., p. 2) was created to standardize the calculation of turnover costs. It considers the cost categories of recruitment, hiring, induction, and professional development costs associated with novice teachers.

The cost of turnover is significant, regardless of the model employed to calculate actual costs. However, some studies support the following premise: the higher the cost of teacher turnover, the lower the rate of teacher turnover (Barnes, et al., 2007; Watlington, et al., 2010). The rule of thumb is that the higher the students' social, emotional, and academic needs, the higher the turnover rate. However, funds that are invested in teacher retention can reduce the cost of teacher turnover by mitigating the rate of departure. Turnover is more significant in at-risk schools with low-performing, high-minority, and high-poverty students. Investment in teacher retention can mitigate turnover by implementing effective retention strategies (Barnes et al., 2007). That same study of five school districts resulted in recommendations to invest in new teacher induction programming and to target retention strategies at high-needs schools for the best potential for return on investment. A consistent measure of retention statistics is a missing element in both the state and local education agency levels at the current time.

Teacher turnover, student achievement, and school climate. Teachers who leave the profession early not only cause a financial burden to the system but also create a challenge for implementing instructional programs. Chronic teacher turnover may lead to a disruptive school climate, making establishing a sense of community difficult. Ideally, a school and school district are collaborative communities where new teachers are paired with veteran teachers and feel supported. Persistent and prevalent turnover has a negative impact on a school's "social resources," including the quality of teacher relationships (Hanselman et al., 2016; Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). Strong relationships are fundamental to improving instructional practice through collaboration to achieve a shared mission and vision. Relationships that are characterized by trust and a sense of community provide support systems that allow teachers to face challenges collectively and pursue improvement in practice through professional learning communities.

These relationships are challenging to establish in a system experiencing chronic turnover. Experienced teachers in high-turnover schools routinely devote time and energy to supporting their novice counterparts, which demands additional time and energy for the veteran teacher (Brown et al., 2009; Collie et al., 2012).

Teacher shortage and retention problems have been confirmed to negatively impact at-risk students and low-performing schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2003; Guin, 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). These indicators of teachers' perceptions of their jobs affect the teachers and their students (Collie et al., 2012). A recent study found a significant association between teacher job satisfaction and student achievement in reading. Additionally, this same study concluded that teacher job satisfaction impacts job performance and effectiveness (Banerjee et al., 2017). Teacher stress and subsequent burnout are associated with low job satisfaction levels and severely affect educational outcomes (Iancu et al., 2018). Furthermore, chronic turnover impacts student achievement by disrupting a school's collegiality, relational trust, and institutional knowledge. Whether teachers migrate to new positions in different schools or school districts or leave the profession altogether does not change the disruptive nature of our schools' so-called "revolving door."

Induction, Mentoring, and Teacher Support

Induction is a series of professional development opportunities intended to thoroughly train and support novice teachers in their initial years of teaching (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2004). Induction programs, including mentoring, professional development, and overviews of educational programs and curricula, are meant to offer new teachers support and assistance to successfully assimilate into their role as an educator. Induction programs may be facilitated through a centralized district function, a site-based building function, or a combination

of the two. Induction programs are based on the understanding that teaching is complex and that new teachers are not fully prepared for the demands and have much yet to learn (Martin et al., 2016). In response to chronic teacher turnover and to assist novice teachers in meeting the increasing demands, induction programs have dramatically increased in recent decades (Smith et al., 2004). Further research opportunities exist in attempting to determine what specific processes achieve the desired result of reducing teacher attrition. It is difficult to find definitive answers regarding the critical components of induction and mentoring programs that hold the greatest impact in reducing attrition.

Novice teachers are seeking collegial and collaborative environments. Still, for many, this need remains overlooked by school systems despite years of research characterizing education as an occupation with high attrition rates. Teachers with collegial interaction that includes the critical elements of aid and assistance, opportunities for sharing, and critical dialogue exhibited higher retention rates than their peers without these prospects for interaction (Charner-Laird, et al., 2016). To lessen the disruption of teacher turnover and promote teacher retention, school districts are seeking ways of implementing induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers to include multi-tiered levels of support based on the diverse needs of new teachers (Lambeth, D. 2012)

Induction programs that balance staff development, team planning, observation, and assigned mentors provide the most wrap-around support new teachers need. Nationally, nearly two-thirds of teachers report participation in an induction program, and nearly three-fourths report having a mentor (Martin et al., 2016). However, the quality and consistency of these supports have great variability. Comprehensive induction programs that include learning communities, observation, frequent mentor visits, and professional growth plans have been

linked to improved teacher retention (Smith et al., 2004). Still, programs that capture a comprehensive program's critical elements are harder to come by.

Mentoring Program Characteristics

Induction is a support system designed to assist teachers in their first years in the classroom, and mentoring is often a component of a broader-based induction program. While induction programs primarily aim to support transition and reduce turnover of new teachers at large, mentoring is an approach of individualized support in which a novice teacher is paired with a veteran teacher for collegial support. Numerous studies have established the effectiveness of well-designed mentoring programs in improving retention rates, instructional expertise, and feelings of efficacy (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 24; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016). Ideally, this support contributes to assimilation into the profession through collegial guidance, apprenticeship, and critical dialogue. Mentoring has been shown to improve teacher retention; nationally, teachers involved in a teacher mentoring program left the field at a rate of 15%, while beginning teachers who did not have any induction support left education at a rate of 26% (Sparks et al., 2017).

Mentoring is a well-known practice utilized in various fields, and using mentors in education has become widespread. The quality of mentoring programs falls short of ideal in many cases because of failure to establish mentoring as integral to the approach to teaching and learning (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). A broad range of mentor program variability exists; therefore, the effectiveness of mentoring as a means of decreasing teacher turnover is variable as well (Smith et al., 2004).

Critical elements in a mentor program include assigning mentors from the same field or job type who are allowed common plan time with their mentee for instructional planning and

collaboration, as well as allowing time for reciprocal observation (Ingersoll, 2005). Other factors that impact a mentor program's effectiveness include the criteria utilized in the mentor selection process, the amount of time and training mentor teachers receive for their role, and shared planning opportunities. Effective mentor-related experiences have improved new teachers' self-efficacy, self-reflection, and observable instructional quality (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012).

To promote effective mentoring, every attempt should be made to assign mentors matching subject areas, situations, and personality types where possible. Additionally, mentors need training for their role as a mentor (Gagen & Bowie, 2005; Tillman, 2005) to be best prepared to give and receive effective feedback. Finally, school climate and culture also play a role in mentoring effectiveness. As Lambeth pointed out (2012), leadership support and an environment of trust play a role in determining a new teacher's willingness to welcome feedback and constructive criticism. This is important as a willingness to reflect on practice and give and receive feedback is essential in a mentor/mentee relationship.

Efficacy and New Teachers

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief regarding their abilities and capacities to impact situations and produce desired outcomes. Regarding teachers, efficacy beliefs are connected to their perceived capacity to manage student behavior, engagement, and learning (Tschannen-Moran, et al., 2001). Regardless of how it is measured, teacher efficacy can influence teacher performance, student outcomes, and teacher satisfaction. Teachers, including those new to the profession, are more likely to persist through the obstacles and challenges of teaching if they are self-efficacious (Bandura, 1977). Suppose a teacher feels inadequately prepared for challenging student behaviors, for example. In that case, their job satisfaction is more likely to be negatively impacted than if they have a higher confidence level in managing student behaviors (Collie, et

al., 2012). According to Bandura (1977), “the strength of people’s convictions in their effectiveness is likely to affect whether they will even try to cope with given situations” (p. 193). Teachers’ perceptions regarding support from colleagues and administration significantly impact self-efficacy, and in turn, self-efficacy is a predictor of teacher burnout (Ware, et al., 2010).

Self-efficacy is specific to the circumstance of the task or situation, and self-efficacy beliefs are thought to influence teacher behaviors in the classroom (Holzberger, et al., 2013). According to Bandura (1977, 2012), self-efficacy beliefs come from multiple sources, including experiences, persuasion, and social influences. “Enactive mastery experiences” (Bandura, 1977, p. 80) hold the greatest influence on efficacy beliefs as success boosts personal efficacy beliefs. Early failure undermines efficacy, especially when the failure occurs before efficacy is established, which hints at the importance of establishing support systems that promote early success in new teachers. While ample research exists on the role of teacher self-efficacy, far fewer sources connect the support of induction and mentoring to new teachers' self-efficacy levels. Teachers' Instructional strategies and their expectations of their students may be tied to their self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Efficacy beliefs drive instructional behaviors and, ultimately, students' learning outcomes; therefore, induction and mentoring programs must build resiliency and promote efficacy among novice teachers. Efficacy has been found to affect the amount of effort teachers are willing to expend and their persistence in the face of challenges, directly impacting students (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Higher efficacy rates have also been found to increase teacher enthusiasm, commitment to the job, and the likelihood they will remain in the teaching profession.

Measuring teacher self-efficacy is a complicated matter, and various existing measures were reviewed for the purpose of this study, including the Rand measure, the Webb scale, and

Gibson and Dembo's teacher efficacy scale. Many of the reviewed efficacy measures focus almost exclusively on reaching difficult or unmotivated students but neglect the myriad of needs in a typical classroom, including capable and motivated students. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale Short Form (Woolfolk Hoy, 1993). will be the measure utilized to determine the self-efficacy scale of new teachers in RHSD. This study examines whether the perceived benefits of the mentoring and induction activities of RHSD are related to a new teacher's sense of self-efficacy. I seek to understand how to develop or support efficacy, which improves the likelihood of new teachers remaining in the field while simultaneously improving student academic success. According to Hoy (1993), the relationship between teacher efficacy and the organization of the school climate creates a reciprocal relationship with positive culture and efficacy, creating a sense of ability to motivate all students.

The Role of Leadership

Ample research establishes the importance of mentors in supporting novice teachers. Less evidence is available regarding the principal's role in the facilitation of those mentor relationships in a fashion that meets individual teachers' needs (Cowan et al., 2016). Central office and building administrators work together to identify the key components of a mentoring program and provide a comprehensive training program for new mentors. The principal's role extends to identifying potential mentors with the skill sets necessary to provide effective mentoring, not merely offering the role to any veteran teacher who volunteers.

Schools with high administrative support levels, fewer student discipline problems, and shared teacher decision-making have higher teacher retention rates (Brown et al., 2009; Ingersoll, 2001). Conversely, in schools where teachers perceived a lack of leadership, vision, and administrative support, teachers were twice as likely to leave teaching or move schools, even

after controlling for student and teacher characteristics (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Working conditions play a major role in teacher retention, and most important are those conditions that teachers consider key to their success: administrative support, strong collegial relationships, and shared decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 21).

Finally, school administrators play a significant role in promoting a supportive school atmosphere that determines the experiences of new teachers as it relates to feelings of support versus isolation. While teacher age, experience, and personal characteristics have a predictive role in determining teacher longevity, the role of leadership surpasses all these factors combined (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The overall management of a school plays a key role in working conditions, which may have the single most impact on a teacher's retention in that school (Grissom et al., 2015; Podolsky et al., 2017). Effective leadership, including shared mission, vision, and goals, is critical to retaining high-quality teachers, particularly regarding mobility. In Ingersoll's analysis of the organizational impact on teacher turnover (2001), high turnover rates serve as a barometer of underlying conditions within the school itself.

Summary

A remarkable amount of research exists on teacher turnover and the negative consequences it causes in school systems. Mentoring and induction programs have been popular since the early 2000s to address the growing teacher turnover and retention crisis with varying results. When well implemented, robust induction and mentoring programs increase the likelihood of retaining novice teachers. Smith and Ingersoll said, "Teachers participating in combinations or packages of mentoring and group induction activities were less likely to migrate to other schools or to leave teaching at the end of their first year" (2004, p. 706). This study

intends to determine which support combinations are most impactful on teacher retention to replicate these supports systemically throughout the school district.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

As discussed in previous chapters, the quality of teaching directly impacts student achievement. In the Rolling Hills School District (RHSD), the number of new teachers hired yearly ranges between 10% and 15% of the entire teaching population. That equates to approximately 100 to 135 teachers new to RHSD annually, with as many as 65% of new teacher hires starting their first year in the teaching field. Teachers new to the profession need support structures such as mentoring and quality induction programming to ensure a smooth transition and success for the new teacher and the students assigned to their classrooms. The school district plays a significant role in providing the needed support to ensure teachers' successful transition to the field, ultimately providing students with better learning outcomes.

This study aimed to analyze the lived experiences of teachers new to RHSD to determine the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring programs and what additional supports new teachers recommend for future hires. Rolling Hills School District is the pseudonym selected for this upper midwestern school district to maintain the anonymity of the district and the study participants. This study and its conclusions guided the refinement of RHSD's new teacher induction program, which included mentoring, collaborative teaming, and professional development to support new teachers' transition to the classroom.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology utilized for this phenomenological study of the mentoring and induction programming offered by RHSD, as perceived by new teachers. The data collected from participants was analyzed, and the results were interpreted to determine common themes of the new teacher experience in RHSD. Specifically, I seek to

understand which supports provided to new teachers are perceived as most and least beneficial and determine any gaps in support. This chapter will include a discussion of:

- the researcher's background and the setting of the study
- the research design
- the research questions
- the population and sample, as well as the selection process
- the procedures for data collection and analysis
- the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Research Questions

This study will explore teachers' lived experiences in their first year of being new to the Rolling Hills School District (RHSD). The teachers involved in this study will all have participated in the mandatory new teacher induction program. The novice teachers in this study have received professional development geared toward supporting new staff; some new teachers also participated in the state mentoring program, which was optional. This phenomenological study sought to analyze the experiences of teachers new to Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) to determine the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring programs and what additional supports new teachers recommend for future hires. This study will also explore teachers' sense of self-efficacy and how that does or does not influence their experiences with new teacher induction and mentoring. The following are the research questions guiding this phenomenological study:

1. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program in RHSD?
2. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program in RHSD?
3. What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to be successful in RHSD?

Research Design

I selected a qualitative phenomenological study for this research to investigate the new teacher development program through new teachers' perceptions. This qualitative research study allowed me to understand the opinions and experiences of teachers new to RHSD. Many new teachers feel unprepared for the reality of teaching in their first years of employment. I sought to delve deeply into the lived experiences of teachers new to RHSD within a specific time frame, the 2019-2020 academic year. I aimed to suspend my interpretations of the new teacher mentoring and induction program and, as such, will employ Husserl's transcendental or psychological phenomenology (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Peoples, 2021). According to Peoples (2021), "the purpose of phenomenological research is to generate the lifeworld experiences of a certain population" (p. 47).

This transcendental phenomenological study employed two phases. Phase one is a response to a computer survey that asks for demographic information and administering the TSES Short Form (Appendix J). From phase one, a purposive sample of participants is selected, including teachers from all levels, from elementary to high school, representing a range of efficacy beliefs to be promoted to phase two of the study. Phase two participants will complete a semi-structured interview via Zoom and meet with the researcher to clarify findings. Because the COVID-19 pandemic had a detrimental effect on the ability of RHSD to provide extensive face-to-face professional learning, the focus was on those teachers who were new to RHSD in the 2019-2020 academic year. Those teachers engaged in face-to-face professional learning sessions and in-person interaction (if applicable) with their mentors. These returning teachers were currently in their second year of employment and were still eligible to participate in the mentoring program through their second year of teaching. The additional professional

development offered to these teachers occurred primarily before school was in session before their veteran peers returned from the summer. Additional professional development was provided throughout the school year as well, and the new teachers who voluntarily attended these workshops received a stipend for their participation. The workshops were designed to support the development of effective instructional and classroom management practices, to increase understanding of the curriculum in RHSD, and to support effective assessment practices.

Phase one of the study included all new teachers in RHSD. This phase requested all new RHSD teachers to complete a short demographic survey and to complete the Teacher Self Efficacy (TSES) Short Form (Hoy, 1990). To conclude phase one, the surveys were reviewed, and a purposeful sample was selected to represent elementary, middle, and high school teachers with varying self-efficacy scores reported.

Next, individual interviews were scheduled with the ten teachers selected as phase two participants. My role was to analyze data provided by new teacher interviews and meetings and organize the data into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, I developed textural and structural descriptions to explain how new teachers experienced the support systems offered to them through induction and mentoring. I conducted my analysis while being mindful of the process of Epoche (Cresswell et al., 2018), which required intentionality and keeping an open mind when working with my data. Moustakas (1994) describes the Epoche process as setting aside the researcher's experiences to allow a different perspective of the phenomenon under investigation. While I was once a new teacher within the district in this study, it was many years prior to the current practices of providing new teachers additional professional support through induction and mentoring. This distant removal from the phenomenon prevented bias or prejudice from

entering my data interpretations. I understood the demands placed on new teachers but have not personally experienced the phenomenon of new teacher induction and mentoring within RHSD.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in this study was that of the Director of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (TLI). The TLI department oversaw curriculum adoptions, assessment, professional development for certified teaching staff, and the induction and mentoring program for teachers new to RHSD. I have been employed in RHSD for over 20 years. I have worked as a teacher, elementary principal, middle school principal, and Human Resources Director before accepting my current role at TLI.

Within the Department of TLI, I employ ten certified staff who work under my supervision to provide professional learning opportunities for new and continuing contract teachers throughout RHSD. The TLI staff were identified as Teaching and Learning Specialists, all with a minimum of a master's degree in education. All TLI staff are trained in mentoring, coaching, and curriculum design. RHSD provides new teachers with five additional professional learning days in addition to the ten embedded professional learning days established for all certified teaching staff, and the TLI Department played a foundational role in establishing the content for those additional days.

Additionally, all new teachers were offered the opportunity to attend further training beyond their duty day for an additional pay stipend. These training sessions were typically support sessions for implementing instructional materials, planning for instruction and assessment, instructional technology, and managing student behaviors. These trainings were conducted through the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation of the RHSD. All teachers new to RHSD were offered the opportunity to participate in the RHSD and Midwestern State's Department of Education's Mentoring program. Those new teachers who participated in the

mentoring program provided by RHSD and the Midwestern State's Department of Education are provided a salary stipend and were granted substitutes to allow for classroom observations and collaboration with their assigned mentor. My experiences in recruitment, support, and retention of new teachers provide the backdrop to my academic interest in this field of study.

Context

This study was conducted within a K-12 public school system in the upper Midwest in a rural state. The school district employs just over 1,000 teachers and has 13,500 students enrolled in the 23 schools that compose the school district. The teacher-to-student ratio for Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) is 16.18. The teaching staff's average years of experience is 11.6 years (Midwestern State's Department of Education Statistical Digest, 2020).

Participants

This study's population of interest were teachers new to the school district in 2019-2020 and were in their second year of employment. The study utilized a purposive sampling of the approximately 125 eligible teachers within their first two years of employment in RHSD (The number of employees identified as 'new' varies monthly throughout the school year.) I deliberately selected the sample to ensure an even distribution of teachers who best represented various experiences and perspectives. Electing purposive sampling could "increase the scope or range of data exposed as well as uncover a full array of perspectives from the sample participants" (Rudestam & Newton, 2015, p. 123).

I sought to understand new teachers' perspectives in various elementary, middle, and high school content areas. Phase one of the study was the initial demographic and self-efficacy survey. An invitation to participate was sent to all new teachers from the 2019-2020 school year. From the information obtained through the demographic and self-efficacy (TSES) survey, a purposeful sample of ten teachers was selected to continue to phase two, the semi-structured

interviews. I sought to select participants who represent a variety of ethnicities, ages, levels of instruction, and levels of self-efficacy. Because the COVID-19 pandemic had affected RHSD's ability to deliver systemic induction activities for new teachers, I focused on returning teachers in their second year of employment – those new teachers hired in the 2019-2020 school year.

All new teachers in this study participated in the induction programs for RHSD in the 2019-2020 academic year. It was optional for these new teachers to participate in the formal mentoring program provided by RHSD and the South Dakota Department of Education. The sample selected to participate in this study included both teachers who did and did not opt into the mentoring program made available to them. Teachers who opted into the mentoring program had mentor support available for their first two years of employment. I acknowledge that informal mentoring may or may not have developed at the school-building level. I sought to understand what supportive relationships the new teachers have found outside of what is made available to them through the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation.

The demographic and self-efficacy survey (Appendix E) was utilized to provide perceptions of new teachers on both ends of the self-efficacy spectrum. I utilized the scoring guide for the TSES provided by the author, Dr. Woolfolk Hoy (Appendix J). The subscale scores determined efficacy in engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. In phase two, I selected individuals with high and low scores within these three domains to request participation in phase one of the study. Ultimately, candidates for phase two represented a range of efficacy levels, ages, grade levels, teaching assignments, and genders. Those teachers who were omitted from continuing in the study were thanked for their time. New teachers selected to continue in the study were provided with informed consent (Appendix B) and, upon agreement,

were interviewed and recorded with the Zoom web conference software. Participation in phases one and two of the study is entirely at the discretion of the new teachers.

This study's primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview (see Appendix F) conducted with a purposeful sample of teachers new to RHSD in the 2019 – 2020 school year. The semi-structured interviews were conducted using questions that aligned with the research questions. This study's findings were generated from analyzing the results collected from the TSES, the semi-structured individual interviews, and the follow-up meetings. The results of this study will guide the improvement efforts of the induction and mentoring programs for RHSD.

Data Collection

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the data related to this study was collected from the Rolling Hills School District. As the researcher, I had access to the information needed to contact all teachers new to the district in the 2019-2020 school year and received verbal permission to contact those individuals for the study. Additionally, I had attendance records for induction sessions and a list of teachers participating in the mentor program. All information collected from the study participants in phases one and two of the research will be stored on a password-protected, secured server. of South Dakota.

To select a broad range of teacher demographics and levels of self-efficacy, the entire population of teachers new to RHSD was asked to complete a set of demographic questions and complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale Short Form (TSES) (Woolfolk Hoy, 1990). The TSES Short Form measured efficacy in the following three areas: efficacy in student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management. Consisting of a 12-item nine-point Likert scale set of questions, the TSES has been utilized in numerous studies about teacher self-efficacy. Each question asked the survey participant to rate

their beliefs on how much they control as it relates to engagement, instructional strategies, and management in their classrooms. The six-point Likert scale ranged from (1) Nothing to (9) A Great Deal. Teachers were asked about their beliefs on four questions related to engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management (see Appendix I). All new teachers who will be invited to complete the survey were provided the informed consent form as an attachment to their email (Appendices A and B).

The TSES and demographic survey were administered with the intent to represent a broad range of self-efficacy levels and teachers of different genders, ethnicities, and teaching levels (Appendix E). The demographic and teacher efficacy survey information included new teachers' names and demographic information, their sense of personal efficacy for student engagement, instruction, and management. The sample population of ten will include teachers with low self-reports of self-efficacy and teachers with high self-reports of self-efficacy in student engagement. These ten study participants were assigned pseudonyms, and the data from phase one of the study was destroyed.

Scoring of the TSES was completed using the guidance document provided by Dr. Woolfolk Hoy (Appendix J). The survey provided demographic information that was used to select a broad range of new teacher ethnicities, genders, and teaching levels. By introducing a variation of self-efficacy scores and teaching assignments, I have obtained a wide array of perspectives representative of the new teacher population at large within the boundaries of the study.

In phase two of the study, the primary data collection method was one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The purposive sample of ten teachers were interviewed using Zoom to enable discussion. These virtual interviews will be recorded to provide an audio transcript of the

interview. Each participant will be given a pseudonym to maintain their confidentiality, and all recorded Zoom interviews will be saved on the password-protected SharePoint site provided by the University of South Dakota. Each interview will begin with my reading of the verbal consent form script (Appendix C) and will be scheduled for one hour but will not be restricted to the confines of one hour.

Interview Process

Individual, one-on-one interviews were conducted via Zoom video conferencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability to record the Zoom meetings allowed me to focus on the new teacher at a greater depth and allowed me to return to the recording of the interview as often as desired. Each interviewee was assigned a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality, and all recordings were stored on a secure, password-protected computer. These semi-structured interviews were the primary data that was collected for this study. The interviews were scheduled at a time selected by the consenting study participants. Before participating in the interviews, participants received a consent form informing them of the study's purpose, assurance of confidentiality, and a description of how the results would be used. Participants were informed of their rights and that participation in the study is voluntary. At the start of each scheduled interview, I read the interviewees the verbal consent form (Appendix C). All study data collected in phases one and two were stored securely, and digital files will be password-protected. Paper files, such as the written consent form, were held under lock and key and available only to me.

Data Analysis

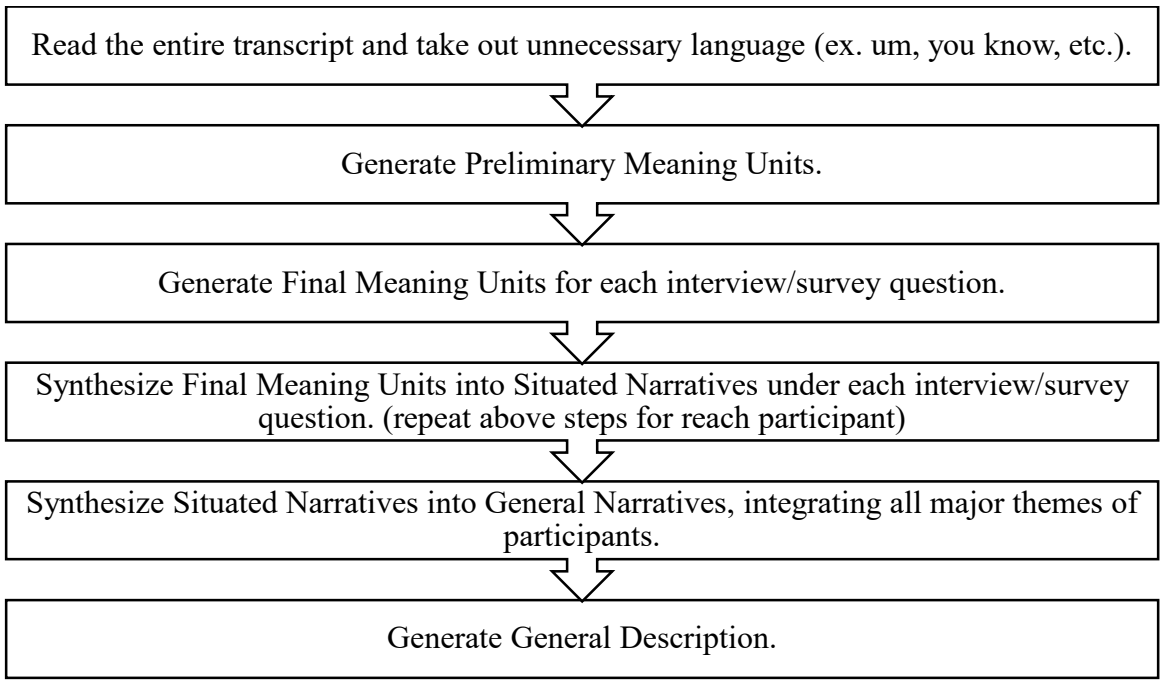
With this study, I sought to immerse myself, through research, into the lived experiences of new teachers. The act of data analysis leads to research detachment from the experiences of study participants. To avoid this, I followed the suggestions offered by Peoples (2021).

1. Journaling to track reactions to the data,
2. Multiple viewings of the video recordings to deepen understanding and stay immersed in the experiences of the new teachers,
3. Rereading transcripts,
4. Sharing transcripts (with pseudonyms) with colleagues to determine what stands out as themes for them.

Additionally, Peoples (2021) provided a step-by-step process for data analysis (see Figure 1), which served as a guide in this study. This required reading and rereading the transcripts from start to finish to remove unnecessary wording and generate preliminary meanings. Further review led to the generation of final meaning units for each interview question. I then synthesized those final meanings into situated narratives for each survey question. From the synthesized narratives, general narratives were constructed that included all significant themes emerging from the study participants. The final analysis step was the generation of general descriptions.

Figure 1

Data Analysis Flow Chart (Peoples, 2021)



After each interview, the video recording was reviewed, and a digital transcription service transcribed the audio content. Multiple readings of all transcriptions allowed me to increase my understanding of each participant's experiences as a new teacher in RHSD. Microsoft Excel was used to organize the meaning units derived from the synthesized situated narratives and general narratives (Peoples, 2021). Again, these general narratives were reviewed with study participants in a follow-up meeting to confirm their validity.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is fundamental to assure the validity and reliability of phenomenological research studies (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Peoples, 2021). I utilized Peoples' (2021, p. 83) suggested proofs of validity and reliability:

1. Credibility – trustworthy findings,
2. Transferability – findings that can be generalized,

3. Dependability – the ability of the study to be replicated, and
4. Confirmability – the use of unbiased research practices

Credibility

To ensure the credibility of the research findings, I immersed myself in new teachers' experiences using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, member checking, and peer review. I utilized the data interpretation strategies described by Moustakas (2014) and Peoples (2021). Furthermore, I deeply understood the induction and mentoring programs offered in RHSD. Member checking through follow-up meetings allowed for participant validation and ensured the general descriptions matched the participant's experiences.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the ability of the study to be generalized to other settings. To ensure that the findings and conclusions of this study can be transferred to other school systems, great care was taken to create a diverse, purposeful sample of study participants. The study participants represented a wide range of new teachers throughout elementary, middle, and high school buildings within RHSD. Each participant had unique and developing instructional skills and understanding of education. I relied on the TSES screener to further broaden the sample variation based on the diversity of self-reported teacher efficacy. This participant selection process allowed for a broad range of opinions and experiences within the participant group. Furthermore, detailed descriptions arrived at through data analysis allowed readers to determine the findings' transferability to other contexts and settings.

Dependability

Yin (2009) recommended a “chain of evidence” to increase the reliability and dependability of a qualitative study. A thorough explanation of the study's methodology was provided so that the research can be replicated. According to Creswell & Poth, “both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process” (2018, p.256). The TSES has been widely utilized in research for reporting teacher’s self-efficacy. The semi-structured interviews I used in my study were aligned to the approved research questions of this study and were audited by my peers in RHSD. Descriptions of data collection, interview processes, and data analysis processes were provided within the study.

Confirmability

According to Creswell and Poth, “both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process” (2018, p. 256). To protect from researcher bias, I established my relationship to the phenomenon in Chapter 3 and used immersive practices to concentrate on the participants' lived experiences in this study. Journaling was employed to track my reactions to the data, allowing the researcher to avoid biases and focus on the emerging themes. Limitations of the study’s methods and design have been recognized.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

As previously mentioned, the study's limitations include the small sample size, the variable levels of support for new teachers found from school to school, and the openness and honesty of the study participants. This study was restricted to a sample of new teachers from one mid-western school district and was limited to new teachers' experiences and perspectives within that district. The mentoring and induction program being analyzed was specific to the setting of the study. It was assumed that the study participants answered questions openly, honestly, and to

the best of their ability. It was further assumed that the sample group's various opinions and experiences were similar to those of the larger new teacher population as a whole. Finally, this study was limited by COVID-19, which required selecting participants who were in their second year of teaching in the Rolling Hills School District. These teachers received the full professional development opportunities; however, the fact that it was nearly two years ago may limit their level of detailed recollection.

Ethical Considerations

I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification and received IRB approval before conducting this research study. The email soliciting participation in the study ensured the confidential and voluntary nature of participation with potential study candidates. Before data collection in the survey or interviews, participants were provided consent forms informing them of the study's purpose, confidentiality, and how the results would be utilized. Again, participants will be made aware that their involvement in the study is voluntary, and they may decline participation at any time. The data collected in phase one's demographic survey and TSES provides personally identifiable information, which was stored in a secure, password-protected server. Once participants for phase two were identified, the demographic and TSES survey were destroyed, and phase two study participants continued in the study with an assigned pseudonym for confidentiality.

Summary

This phenomenological research study aimed to delve deeply into the lived experiences of new teachers in the Rolling Hills School District. Transcendental phenomenological research was selected as I sought to suspend all personal judgments to focus entirely on analyzing the new teachers' experiences. This chapter detailed the researcher's role and the study's context. Semi-

structured interviews will be organized into themes, and detailed textural descriptions of the phenomenon will be provided. The findings of this study are provided in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter presented the themes and the data that support them as a result of conducting this phenomenological study into the lived experiences of new teachers. This section was organized into six sections: a) purpose of the study, b) research questions that guided the study, c) participant profiles, d) emerging themes, e) findings, and g) summary. To maintain anonymity, the name of the district and participants have been altered. The pseudonym “Rolling Hills School District” (RHSD) was employed as a substitute for the school district's name.

All study participants were also provided a pseudonym to protect their privacy and confidentiality, and it is under their assigned pseudonyms that a profile of each participant is provided. Emergent themes derived from recorded materials and transcript data analysis are presented. This chapter concluded with an overview of key findings, recommendations for practice, and opportunities for future studies.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers new to the Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) school district. This study sought to determine the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring programs and what additional support new teachers recommend RHSD should provide future hires. Additionally, this study aimed to understand how the perceived benefits of induction and mentoring improved working conditions and teacher preparation and identified what could be done to improve the experience of future generations of new teachers in RHSD. Self-efficacy, a social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) was used as the theoretical framework for the study. Self-efficacy theory was born from social cognitive theory and includes “personal aspirations, outcome expectations, perceived opportunity structures,

constraints, and conceptions of personal efficacy" (Bandura, 1977, p. 10). Furthermore, this study sought to understand if self-efficacy scores are associated with the perceived benefits and weaknesses of the district's induction and mentoring program from the perspective of the study participants.

Research Questions

The overarching question guiding this study is: What are the lived experiences of teachers new to RHSD in their first years of employment? Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program in RHSD?
2. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program in RHSD?
3. What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to improve their work experience in RHSD?

The interview questions used with each study participant can be found in Appendix F.

Demographic Information

Rolling Hills School District is a large school system in an upper-midwestern rural state. The district serves students PK-12 in 23 individual school sites, including 15 elementary schools, five middle schools, and three high schools. The district employed approximately 1,050 certified teaching staff and experiences an attrition rate of 10-18% annually; however, this number has increased substantially over recent years. The attrition rate of RHSD was further complicated by the significant decrease in the number of qualified applicants seeking a position in the district. A purposeful sample of new to RHSD traditionally certified teachers was selected for study participation. Teachers with plans of intent or alternative certification were purposefully omitted from the study. Study participants represented diverse teaching assignments, varying levels of

teacher efficacy, ages, and genders. Most of the teachers in this study were entirely new to the profession, but a small sample had teaching experience outside RHSD and were simply new to the district. All teachers new to RHSD in the 2019-2020 school year were invited to participate in phase one of the study: a short demographic survey and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) (Appendix I).

Providing ample support as teachers transition into the classroom increased new teachers' effectiveness and self-efficacy, which in turn increases the likelihood that they will overcome the challenges that they will face in their early years in the classroom (Taylor, 2013; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001, Zee, et al., 2016). Following the administration of the TSES, the sample size was reduced to ten participants based on their efficacy rating, school and subject matter, age, and gender. Phase two of the study included a 45–60-minute virtual interview with open-ended questions related to the participant's experiences as a new teacher in our school district (Appendix F). After those results were scripted and analyzed, a follow-up interview of up to 30 minutes occurred to clarify the intended message of some of the study participants. Trustworthiness was established by confirming credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to ensure the validity and reliability of the study (Peoples, 2021). The unstructured follow-up interview employed differentiated questions based on the study participants' initial responses.

This study sought to explore new teacher perceptions from various perspectives by establishing the sample through a purposive design. The sample included ten teachers distributed across Title I schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, representing varying degrees of self-efficacy in teaching as measured by the TSES. The sample does not include

teachers who underwent an alternative certification program; all participants have a traditional four-year teaching degree.

The sample included teachers who did and did not participate in the state mentoring program and those who had informally arranged mentor teachers. All teachers in the sample participated in the induction activities provided by RHSD. All potential participants were apprised of the purpose of the study, submitted their informed consent, and gave consent to complete the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). Once the TSES was completed and scored, the study participants were narrowed down to ten participants for phase two based on grade and subject level taught, TSES scores, and gender to provide a wide range of perspectives. Phase two study participants provided written consent to continue participation by agreeing to a structured open-ended interview via Zoom.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale

The TSES Short Form was administered to all study participants in phase one of the study. The survey measures teachers' evaluations of how likely they are to be successful in teaching.

> The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) conceptualizes teaching as a complex activity, and teacher efficacy as a multi-faceted construct representing at least three distinct factors: Efficacy for Classroom Management, Efficacy to Promote Student Engagement, and Efficacy in Using Instructional Strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 803) This scale is designed for and has been used by researchers and school leaders to measure teacher self-efficacy at a particular point in time, as well as before and after participating in professional development programs.

The short form of the TSES is a 12-item survey with a Likert scale of 1-9 where a respondent answers questions about their teacher's beliefs. Teachers are asked how much they can control classroom management, student engagement, and instructional outcomes. Their responses represent their level of efficacy or belief that they can change student engagement, learning, and behavior. Teachers who score low on engagement believe in their ability to create lessons and an instructional environment that encourages engagement; these teachers think student engagement is largely out of their control. Teachers who score low on instruction question their ability in areas such as questioning, assessment, and differentiated instruction. Teachers who score low on Management believe they have little control over disruptive classrooms and students. Table 1 shows the TSES mean scores nationally compared to RHSD mean scores.

Table 1
TSES Short Form Norms

	Engagement	*Instruction*	*Management*
TSES Short Form Mean	7.2	7.3	6.7
RHSD Mean	6.95	7.68	7.50

Participant Profiles

Braxton has his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and Education from a Board of Regents school in the state's eastern side. He is endorsed to teach secondary mathematics at the middle and high school levels and is currently teaching geometry at a high school in RHSD. He and his wife elected to move to RHSD not for the schools but for the location and activities available in the area. Braxton self-reported the lowest levels of self-efficacy across all three

categories. His scores on the TSES Short Form were as follows: Engagement 5.25, Instruction 6.0, and Management 6.25.

Lois graduated with her Bachelor of Science degree from a local Board of Regents school. She worked some years in education-related jobs before obtaining her first certified teaching position in RHSD. Lois relocated to the area from Texas and is currently teaching ninth-grade social studies. In her completed self-efficacy survey, Lois reported low levels of efficacy for student engagement, with above-average scores for instruction and management. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 6.25, Instruction 8.0, and Management 8.0.

Sophia has her bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education. She is employed in the special education program at one of our elementary schools. Sophia relocated to the region of this study upon graduation with her degree from within this midwestern state. Sophia's perceived efficacy for engaging students was below the national and local average. However, her efficacy for instruction was well above the norm. Her beliefs regarding her ability to manage students' behavior were average. Sophia's self-reported efficacy levels were slightly below the national and local norms for engagement, instruction, and management. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were as follows: Engagement 6.25, Instruction 8.75, and Management 7.0.

Mia has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a minor in reading and is employed as a kindergarten teacher. She attended school in Rolling Hills during her K-12 experience, and her degree comes from a local Board of Regents school. This is her first teaching experience. She did participate in the formal mentoring program. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were as follows: Engagement 7.75, Instruction 7.75 and Management 7.

Willow graduated from a local Board of Regents school with her bachelor's in education after first attending two other universities to pursue a degree outside of education. Willow spent

several years substitute teaching in RHSD before obtaining a position in an elementary school as an intervention strategist. Willow self-reported an above-average self-efficacy score in student engagement, instruction, and management. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 7.5, Instruction 8.5, and Management 8.0

Chloe graduated from a local Board of Regents school with her bachelor's degree in education with a composite in Theatre Education and Communications. She currently teaches English at the high school level in grades 10 and 12, as well as coaching debate and speech. Chloe works in the high school she attended when she was a student. Chloe had the highest reported self-efficacy rating for instruction out of the study participants, with below-average engagement scores and average management scores. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 6, Instruction 9, and Management 7.25.

Charlotte has her Bachelor of Science in Education from a Board of Regents school. She is endorsed at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and teaches 9^{th} – 12^{th}-grade Spanish classes. She grew up attending RHSD schools throughout her education. Charlotte's self-efficacy score for instruction is well above the national norm, and her efficacy for engagement and management was in the average range. Her scores on the TSES Short Form TSES Engagement 6.75, Instruction 8.25, and Management 7.25.

Stella grew up knowing she wanted to be a teacher. She spent over a dozen years teaching in Florida before moving to RHSD. She is a new teacher to RHSD but an experienced teacher with over 12 years of experience outside of this district. She is assigned to a first-grade classroom in one of the fifteen elementary schools in the district. Stella reported the highest levels of self-efficacy for student engagement, well above the national and local norms. She reported the lowest sense of efficacy for instruction in the pool of study participants and an

average score for her ability to manage student behaviors. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 8, Instruction 6, and Management 7.25.

Hailey moved to our state from an urban K-12 education program in an urban state. Upon graduation, her family relocated to this region, and she enrolled in a local Board of Regents school. She has her Bachelor of Science in education and is endorsed to teach middle school language arts, social science, and science. She currently teaches both language arts and social studies to 8th-grade students. Hailey's self-efficacy for engagement and instruction is below the local and national norms, but her efficacy for classroom management is above the national and local norms. Her scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 6.75, Instruction 6.75, and Management 7.25.

Maverick obtained a degree in Graphic Design and spent several years working for Caterpillar within his degree field. After nine years in his chosen field, he decided to join his wife in the education profession and attended a local Board of Regents school to obtain his master's in education. He is currently employed in RHSD as a computer teacher at the middle school level. Maverick scored himself as slightly above average for the ability to engage students, well above average for instructional efficacy, and he reported the highest efficacy rating for student management among the study participants. His scores on the TSES Short Form were Engagement 7.25, Instruction 8, and Management 8.75.

Table 2
Participant Profiles

Participant Name	*Degree*	*Years of Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Position*	*TSES Instruction*	*TSES Engagement*	*TSES Management*
Braxton	BS Math	0	HS Geometry	6	5.25	6.75
Lois	BS Ed	0	HS Social Studies	8	6.25	8
Sophia	BS Elem/SPED	0	K-5 Special Ed	8.75	6.75	7
Mia	BS Elem Ed	0	Element 1st Grade	7.75	7.75	7
Willow	BS Elem Ed	0	Interventionist	8.5	7.5	8
Chloe	BS Educ	0	HS English	9	6	7.25
Charlotte	BS Educ	0	HS Spanish	8.25	6.75	7.25
Stella	BS Elem Ed	12+	Element 3rd Grade	6	7.25	7.25
Hailey	BS Educ	0	MS Eng. Social St	6.75	6.75	7.25
Maverick	BS Graphic Design MS Educ	0	MS Computer	8	7.25	8.75

Emerging Themes

This study's emerging themes were recognized in relation to the study's research questions. Five themes related to the induction experience surfaced from initial interviews and the subsequent member checks that were conducted. The five themes are lack of time, learning space and learning style, session value, session structure, and implications for practice. Three themes related to the mentoring program also emerged: coaching and trust, emotional support, and modeling. These themes were identified as collections of reoccurring statements and were organized from the transcriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, study participants made

recommendations for improvements to induction and mentoring that are presented as the concluding theme. The goal of this transcendental phenomenology study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) was to shed light on the phenomenon of the experience of being a new teacher in RHSD. By analysis of the lived experiences of new teachers, programmatic enhancements ensued. The following section describes the essential themes that emerged from those experiences.

As a research method, phenomenology helps the researcher and their audience learn from the experiences of others. Transcendental phenomenology described the meaning of experiences "both in terms of *what* was experienced and *how* it was experienced" (Neubauer et al., 2019, p. 91). Participants were asked to consider and reflect on the professional development topics they participated in as part of their induction programming for teachers new to RHSD. They were explicitly asked what the perceived benefits and deficits of induction programming were in their experience. Five themes related to induction programming emerged through the data analysis process: lack of time, learning space and learning style, session value, session structure, and implications for practice. Three themes related to the mentoring program were identified through the analysis of the data: coaching and trust, emotional support, and modeling.

Induction Program at RHSD

The induction program in Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) occurred during the month of August during a five-day period where new teachers begin their contractual days. These five-day sessions occurred before returning teaching staff were on contract, and all session participants were newly hired teachers who were in their first year of teaching in RHSD. Induction sessions are either required or self-selected and generally focus on elementary or secondary educators. However, some sessions were more global and offered regardless of

teaching assignment. Time is also set aside for building-level work and time in new teachers' classrooms.

Lack of Time. For elementary teachers, the first five days of induction included required sessions for four out of the five induction days. Secondary staff had mandatory induction sessions for less than three full days. If new teachers weren't assigned a session, they selected various optional session topics or used the open time for working in their classrooms. The elementary participants of this study reported feeling overwhelmed and sought a balance between learning sessions and work time to prepare for their incoming students. *Mia* stated, "Induction was intense!". *Stella* reported induction as "extremely busy." She indicated her transition to RHSD felt like starting over during her induction days. "I had been nominated for the Teacher of the Year two times, and then coming here, I just felt like I was back at the bottom again." Six of the study participants stated that induction needed more time to allow for a better distribution between district and building sessions. The induction session in RHSD occurred during five preservice days. New teachers were assigned five additional contract days, which are not reimbursed. Many study participants noted that their time for induction should be paid, not just added to their contract with no reimbursement. All study participants described the induction program as overwhelming; they described the rushed nature of the days and sessions. Most participants also described a desire for more time in the building, whether in facilitated sessions by their own building staff or simply as a time to spend with their instructional resources and preparing their classrooms for students.

Secondary teachers had more time for free choice, yet the majority felt the induction days were still rushed. *Hailey* explained, "For me personally, I just feel like it's me being someone

who likes to learn, and I am always looking for strategies to put in my toolbox." Still, she described the balance of time as detrimental, as she felt rushed to prepare for her students. Elementary teachers reported supportive building-level induction activities as a positive experience. "My principal covered building expectations, discipline, and how to manage little things such as ordering print and supplies," said *Sophia*. *Willow* is a study participant with a unique perspective, having subbed throughout RHSD before taking a certified teaching position. "Every one of the fifteen elementary schools in RHSD do most things differently; building sessions are critical for me to understand expectations and how things are done in my school."

One study participant had little to no building-level induction activities. Three participants alluded to open time at their buildings as a pro and a con. *Braxton* described feeling lost in his environment, not knowing the simplest things needed to prepare for the school year. One high school seemed to offer nothing to their new teachers during building time other than space and time in their classrooms. Common concerns emerged, such as not knowing department leads, and as such, many managerial and discipline questions remained unanswered when students arrived for their first days of school.

Seven of the ten participants expressed time in the classroom as a missing induction component. *Willow* states, "My sessions were great, yet I felt like I was falling further behind in my preparation for students." Descriptions of implementation gaps arose. Participants learned new concepts and procedures but had little time to practice this new learning. More time in the classroom was the most common theme of the study participants' responses related to induction programming improvements. *Chloe* described the perceived lack of time: "I would have loved additional work time to set our classrooms and actually prep for the year." Participants largely agreed and described overall a shortage of time for learning their building's expectations and

management routines, as well as for prepping their rooms and understanding their instructional materials. “Everything was good, but it felt so rushed,” said *Lois*. She felt sessions should be stretched out and not covered in the initial days of instruction. Others agree, with a consensus, that study participants felt rushed, overwhelmed, and lost.

Learning Space and Learning Style. Induction sessions that were most beneficial to participants shared one or two of the following characteristics. They were action-oriented sessions that employed an instructional strategy of “I do, we do, you do,” which gradually shifted the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students. Another quality session characteristic was whether the session was physically or mentally engaging using role-playing or implementing strategies. These sessions required an appropriate learning space that allowed for flexible grouping and movement. Study participants commented on sessions that were held in too small spaces to allow for grouping and small teams; these rooms interfered with the learning environment.

Learning sessions typically employed an instructional strategy that attempted to build learners' skills and confidence over time through active learner engagement. This strategy may also be recognized as the ‘gradual release of responsibility’ or the ‘I do, we do, you do’ method. Most notably, these preferred sessions had a learning space allowing work time and collaboration. The sessions that study participants reported as high value were more memorable and applicable, such as the active engagement of the ALICE training, (ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate. Established in 2000, and the training is a widely adopted active shooter response training method.) Technology training, or other sessions that allowed for practicing a specific skill, such as the district-mandated Acadience assessment administration. *Mia* noted the ALICE training model “teach, model, practice” and direction

instruction with guided practice as the most memorable of all her induction sessions. These sessions were rated higher because participants felt engaged in relevant learning. *Willow* preferred her Acadience training, which strictly followed the "I do, we do, you do" instruction strategy. Most teachers in this study also highly rated the technology sessions, which used an explicit instruction methodology.

Session Value. Sessions that were identified as most valuable were active and utilized a gradual release of responsibility model of instruction. Conversely, sessions that employed a 'sit-and-get' or passive learning model were rated least relevant in preparing novice teachers for their new teaching assignment. Participants broadly expressed an inability to articulate the content of these types of sessions, often stating they no longer remembered or could describe the sessions themselves or their learner outcomes. *Maverick* described a lack of memory of specific sessions, noting that "could be a sign they were good or not good, I'm not sure." Several study participants indicated that the first two weeks out of the classroom to attend new and returning teacher sessions seemed a blur due to the flurry of activities. Most described the amount of content provided to new teachers as overwhelming.

Study participants expressed that the opportunity to practice what they learned during a session allowed for greater understanding and practical use in their classrooms. Furthermore, the importance of the topics in a session, such as school safety and student reading development, increased participants' value. *Braxton* described sessions that engaged the audience of new teachers in an 'I do, we do, you do' structure, Project-Based Learning, and Using PLCs as beneficial to his learning and his work as a teacher new to RHSD.

Braxton held high value to sessions and activities that "allowed socialization and an overview of the interesting intricacies of the district itself," these sessions helped him "know

what he was walking into before the school year actually started." An opposing sentiment came from *Sophia*, a special educator who is assigned to a self-contained classroom. She held little value to these types of sessions. She stated, "I work on an island," and described a desire to attend small, focused groups that included staff in similar assignments. While *Sophia* recognized the value of opportunities for Q&A with veteran staff, she understood that veteran teachers were not on duty at this time. Most study participants described the opportunity to socialize and meet with one's peers as a positive and engaging experience.

Session Structure. Smaller sessions allowed new teachers in this study to see themselves as part of a community. *Charlotte* described this phenomenon as "a building up of a community between new teachers and being a part of a group." In the district-developed induction activities and those held at the building level, teachers found the benefit in forming connections with people they could continue to learn from and lean on. Conversely, teachers assigned to unique positions felt they were outliers and would have benefited from structured sessions with teachers in similar situations. *Catherine* was assigned to a special education structured academic classroom and found difficulty relating to the more extensive, general education-focused induction sessions. She stated, "There's really not that many outlier positions, but I definitely think our district-level rooms are one of them." In a follow-up interview, *Catherine* suggested smaller sessions that would include veteran teachers engaging in a learning discussion with new teachers in their like positions. Furthermore, she thought that the opportunity for observation and discussion with these veteran teachers during the school year should be a mandatory component of the sessions and that the structure of a live classroom would add authenticity to the learning.

Study participants broadly preferred the smaller structure sessions, except for the kick-off session that brought all new teachers together in a comfortable social space. Over half of the

study participants mentioned the ability to mingle during the kick-off as a valuable addition to their introduction to our schools. Sessions allowing time for networking and relationship-building were frequently cited as engaging and welcoming. *Charlotte* was one of the participants who expressed this sentiment,

> "One of the greatest benefits was the community that was built between new teachers, being able to be in that group and get to know some of those people, it builds a lot of relationships that I still lean on at this point that I communicate with those people regularly."

Conversely, *Stella* "felt energized by the large group opportunities…connecting with the other teachers and knowing my fellow graduates got a job within this district was a benefit. Study participants described a sense of belonging when allowed to meet and confer with others new to the RHSD, whether in small or large group sessions.

Implications for Practice

Student Management. Six of the ten study participants desired more classroom management techniques in their induction sessions. *Mia* felt so fortunate to learn about Conscious Discipline. that she pursued further learning on this topic. "Conscious Discipline has been one that really has stuck out, so I followed up and took a train the trainer program and a book study to learn more." However, *Mia* recognized that the elective nature of the Conscious Discipline sessions would make it difficult to expect complete implementation by new teachers. Conscious Discipline is a framework that utilizes everyday events to cultivate emotional intelligence through a self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning. *Mia* believed such vital topics should be mandatory, even if it means adding additional days to the novice teacher's contract.

Charlotte stated, “I think refreshers on classroom management, like tips and tricks, should be included.” *Charlotte* also described a lack of training on de-escalation techniques, increasing engagement, and building a healthy classroom culture. Finally, *Willow* described a lack of engagement and relationship sessions. *Willow* described her struggles with student behaviors and needed more support in dealing with challenging students. Classroom management was one of the most discussed themes, and participants generally requested more sessions of this type. Participants felt like what was offered to manage behavior and establish a culture for learning was minimal. The consensus was that more learning sessions should be offered to provide teachers with actionable steps to manage behaviors and create a learning environment. *Chloe* described a lack of management sessions; she expressed concerns over the increased negative student behavior and her ability to address behaviors. Additionally, Chloe felt she lacked an understanding of building behavior expectations and her school's student management processes. *Maverick* asked for future induction sessions to increase learning on engagement strategies and de-escalating student situations. “Managing the environment and building a healthy classroom culture takes time. I would have felt better supported if follow-up sessions were made available throughout the school year because it is too much to cover before school starts with students,” explained *Maverick. Braxton* stated, “My college preparation didn’t prepare me for today’s students. Management was barely mentioned during induction, and I struggle with behaviors.”

Conversely, *Lois* felt that induction prepared her to establish a classroom environment and manage student behaviors. When asked if more sessions on student management should be offered, *Lois* shared, “I honestly don’t think so. There was a good balance of having our own time and required learnings that helped get the ball rolling for me in management and

instruction." Most of the study participants also described engagement strategies as poor or missing altogether. Student engagement improves student behaviors.

Curriculum. There is a heavy emphasis on providing an overview of the instructional materials and curriculum of the district during the *RHSD* induction sessions. However, *Mia* relied on her grade-level team to implement the purchased instructional materials. "I think that it would be much more beneficial for the teachers to have a chance to really dig into the lessons or maybe model a lesson using the instructional materials." *Mia* and other study participants felt that the induction sessions that provided overviews of instructional materials were not as helpful as the learning that occurred with their teacher teams. *Maverick* said, "I didn't really remember his sessions," which focused on teaching math using Carnegie materials. "We never really had time to prepare or see a lesson using the instructional materials," stated Willow.

Several additional study participants suggested that building or district learning opportunities should occur monthly after the new teachers have started the school year, citing a lack of time to really learn the instructional materials. Assessments, pacing guides, and the online content teachers use in RHSD were never explained in depth. "More learning should be provided for us to thoroughly understand how to successfully implement the instructional materials supplied to us," according to *Hailey.* For elementary schools and all core curriculums at the secondary level, instructional materials are provided to new teachers. The training that was offered to all teachers when the materials were adopted was in-depth and often 2 to 3 days in duration. Novice teachers receive an extremely condensed version of veteran teachers' training. According to the new teachers in the study, the complex instructional materials were difficult to understand and navigate during the relatively short induction sessions.

Working with Students of Poverty and Indigenous Students. Rolling Hills school district has many students living in poverty, from all ethnic groups. Additionally, roughly 30% of students identify as being Native American. The Native American population has a higher poverty rate than all other student populations. New teachers need to understand the impacts of poverty on their students and ensure their teaching is culturally inclusive. In her other teaching positions, Chloe had never worked with a high level of indigenous or students living in poverty. "Preparing for work with students of poverty and indigenous populations was totally ignored during my induction sessions," lamented Chloe. *Chloe* stated, "I understand demographics are different from school to school, but in our poverty schools (in RHSD), the percentage of Native American students is high." Chloe described her former school district as predominately Caucasian and black/mixed race. She described lacking the tools or cultural understanding to support her Native American students. Others mentioned a lack of tips for working with low-income families and homeless students." Chloe later described learning about resources available in the district: "I learned later about McKinney Vento; I did not know about that program until I was five months into teaching." McKenny Vento is a federal law that provides federal money for homeless students and other protections.

Efficacy. During the interviews and follow-up sessions, novice teachers were asked to describe the perceived value of induction activities. Overall, teachers with higher efficacy scores on the TSES ranked the quality of their induction sessions higher and more valuable. Additionally, sessions that allowed time and space for establishing relationships emerged as an event that improved teacher efficacy and their beliefs about their ability to engage and manage students.

Teacher self-efficacy scores were related to how study participants rated the quality of the induction and mentoring programs. *Mia* entered this study with above-average efficacy scores that showed a strong belief in her ability to instruct students. *Mia's* responses to induction and mentoring questions were very positive, and her efficacy scores were above the national average on the TSES. She expressed enthusiasm for all professional learning opportunities and described the chance to network and see the new teachers as "fantastic." Participants described the process of building relationships as a positive outcome of their induction activities and shared high value on the induction sessions that were related to quality teaching practices. No relationship exists between grade level, or subject teachers taught and their scores on the TSES.

In contrast, *Braxton,* who teaches math, did not remember anything from his math sessions or the other professional development offered to him. *Braxton* also had the lowest efficacy for engagement, Instruction, and Management. *Hailey* had very high efficacy levels for instruction and management, and she considered all her building and district induction sessions helpful and a positive experience. Generally, most participants in this study had efficacy scores that were at or above the national norm, except Braxton (see Table 2).

Participant Recommendations for Future Induction Reforms

Each study participant was prompted to consider their final recommendations for the induction program during their follow-up interview. *Braxton* recommended more time specific to content areas teachers are assigned to. This is a common message of the secondary teachers who had both fewer induction sessions assigned and fewer optional induction sessions to choose from. *Braxton* described coming from a student teaching placement that utilized traditional approaches to math instruction. "My sessions on mathematics materials removed the guesswork. Knowing the district's instructional expectations made me feel good about coming here." Braxton described a sense of enthusiasm to work in a district that employed a different approach

to math instruction than the one he had in his teacher preparation. Other novice secondary teachers desired to learn more about the content and resources available to them. The exception to this statement came from teachers assigned to specific roles, such as self-contained special education or non-core teaching assignments.

Collaboration and networking opportunities were appreciated, but most of the study participants thought the program would improve with more opportunities for connecting and networking. *Willow's* experience of the district induction activities was viewed as a "positive experience. I made connections I continue to use today." Her building-level induction activities were viewed less positively. "I would not say it was very welcoming in my building. I think this program would be more beneficial if the whole school had to come together and meet and work collaboratively.

Additional opportunities to improve the induction program exist, such as adding structured time in schools with building administrators to learn general operating procedures and student behavior expectations. Allowing time for the inclusion of specialized teachers to meet and plan together. Avoiding sessions that do not include active learning and collaboration, and allowing teachers, particularly elementary teachers, more time in their buildings to prepare for the start of school. *Chloe* said the building induction time lacked administrative information: "I didn't know where the copier was, much less where building resources were located." *Maverick* thought he lacked knowledge as a singleton (a specialized teacher with no building matches) and that his induction should have allowed him time with other computer teachers in the district. Stella, a special educator in a self-contained classroom, is also a singleton in her building. She, too, requested time with teachers in her very specific position. "I personally feel like my time would have been better spent with other colleagues in my position. There were no in-building

colleagues for me and no time to connect with other teachers in the district who shared my super specific job." *Willow*, who works as an intervention strategist, described a lack of purpose to the induction activities she participated in at her school building, "there are seventy people on staff. Still, only ten participated in our building's open house." This was a time that was set for us to meet each other and get to know each other better, and *Willow* described the event as "kind of sad."

Mentoring

Not all study participants enrolled in the mentoring program the state Department of Education offered in collaboration with RHSD. Six participants were enrolled in the mentoring program, and four were not. Of the novice teachers who did not participate in the program, two study participants described establishing an informal mentor relationship in their assigned school. Some mentees had mentors who taught the same grade or content, while others did not. Additionally, some mentees worked in the same building as their mentors. The following four themes emerged during interviews: coaching and trust, emotional support, modeling, and placement considerations.

Coaching and Trust. A recurring theme in mentoring was a feeling of trust and support. "My mentor didn't teach my content, nor was she working in my building," said *Sophia*. *Hailey* said, "We had to use technology and strict scheduling to meet as often as I needed." *Hailey* felt the move to 'digital' mentoring due to Covid made it more difficult for her and her mentor to establish a strong relationship. Despite the digital mentoring sessions and the mismatch of content and location, *Hailey* still described her mentoring relationship as vital and trusting in nature. *Hailey* did not think a mentor match of building or content was necessary for a positive learning experience. *Sophia's* mentor was not a content or placement match, but "having her (my mentor) in a different building allowed me the confidence to really open up." *Sophia* described

her mentor relationship: "My mentor was there for me without judgment. We established a relationship that is so strong we still collaborate often." *Sophia* felt she could open up more honestly because her mentor was not part of the culture of her own school, and being removed from the same building established a send of security for her to share her concerns and struggles.

Maverick, one of the secondary teachers in this study, had a content and building match with his mentor; he states, "Being able to meet my mentor before and after school and to observe his instruction made a fast track to a trusting relationship between my mentor and me." In contrast, *Mia* had an assigned mentor who worked in a different building in RHSD and felt "most of my help came from my grade level teachers, not so much my administration or my mentor." In contrast, *Mia* felt the schedule of the mentoring sessions was stifling. She said, "The frequency of meeting with my grade level team created a level of trust and support that was lacking with my mentor." She further stated that the simple fact that there were assigned activities for the mentoring program made it feel disingenuous: "It felt like we were checking off boxes and going through the motions." Her day-to-day experience with her grade-level peers allowed for more authentic, trusting relationships. Mia further stated that the simple fact that there were assigned activities for the mentoring program made it feel disingenuous: "It felt like we were checking off boxes and going through the motions." Her day-to-day experience with her grade-level peers allowed for more authentic, trusting relationships.

All teachers with mentors assigned to them described a strong relationship leading to trusting conversations. "I could ask my mentor anything; I didn't feel that secure with my content-level colleagues," says *Maverick. Chloe* described the mentor experience like this: "Honestly, it became such a great relationship, rather raw if I can say that. We were deeply

honest about how we were feeling and what was happening. Most participants described their trust in their mentor as the most positive influence of the mentoring experience.

Emotional Support. Participants were asked to consider the effectiveness of the formal and informal mentoring they received during their first two years of teaching for the Rolling Hills School District. More specifically, they were asked if the mentor relationship assigned provided the emotional support they needed during their first year in RHSD. Study participants may have participated in the formal mentoring program offered by RHSD, they may have had an informal mentor assigned to them by their building administration, or they may not have had a mentor at all during their first year of teaching. Mentees largely described the mentor/mentee process as a strong emotional support for them as they began work in the RHSD.

"As a new teacher, I often felt inadequate and lacking the skills I needed to be a good teacher," said *Charlotte.* She adds "My mentor was always there for me and boosted my ego. I felt I had a supportive relationship with my mentor partly because of their proximity. I had a content and location match with my mentor, who was just across the hall from me. We frequently met before or after school or even during passing times." "I knew I could count on my mentor for the support I needed to survive my first year," said *Maverick*. Study participants described the challenges of student behaviors as exhausting and challenging, but that their mentor's support improved their emotional state. As participants reflected on their first year, they described teaching as an emotionally challenging profession and stated that other teachers were the life support they needed to meet the challenges. *Hailey* described her mentor this way, "I feel like we have a really good relationship. I need a person to just learn from and talk to." Another study participant, *Mia*, said she and her mentor created such a positive and fulfilling relationship that they met more frequently than the mentor program required.

Modeling. Throughout the questions on mentoring, study participants with mentors spoke about the importance of modeling. *Hailey* explained, "Watching my mentor teacher interact with students in his classroom improved my instruction and student management." Two teachers with mentors, *Sophia and Hailey,* described the observation of their mentor teachers; seeing what and how they teach in action in their classrooms gave me something to try back in my schoolroom. They described the greatest benefit of mentoring as the ability to observe classrooms and learn. When referring to their college studies and the induction sessions, most teachers in the study described a lack of observation opportunities for live teaching. *Maverick's* mentor took him to a different school to see what they did in the classrooms. *Maverick* expressed the positivity of this learning experience, and his appreciation of learning how other teachers manage their classrooms through effective classroom practices and routines. "I struggle with keeping my students on task, and managing day-to-day procedures is difficult for me. I liked seeing how other teachers accomplish both," stated Maverick.

Placement Implications. *Hailey's* mentor was in a different location, making managing their time together difficult. Yet one of the most affirmative outcomes she describes were the days her mentor stepped in, modeled the workshop model, and dealt with student behaviors. *Hailey* says, "I had some trouble with classroom management during the sixth block. They were a little bit crazy. My mentor dropped in and taught that section while I was able to observe." On a different visit, Hailey's mentor observed her while she was teaching and took notes. "My mentor could see how my loose classroom routines were affecting my students' behavior and provided me with suggestions I continue to utilize with my students today," said Hailey. In general, the participants with mentors felt the supportive nature of the mentor/mentee relationship had a positive impact on their first year of instruction.

Mentoring has been shown to improve teacher retention; nationally, teachers involved in a teacher mentoring program left the field at a rate of 15%, while beginning teachers who did not have any induction support left education at a rate of 26% (Sparks et al., 2017). The mentor program in this research location does not require mentors to have similar content areas or building assignments.

This study revealed conflicting thoughts regarding the placement of the mentor/mentee assignments. The mentor content match was essential to most study participants, while there were contradictory thoughts about the importance of mentor-building assignments. Other studies (Callahan, 2016; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Jones & Pauley, 2003) have shown the power of an effective mentoring program, which means mentor/mentee assignments are critical considerations. Contrastingly, mentor match and location were not seen as critical components of an effective mentor-to-mentee experience. *Hailey* described a powerful relationship and impact that her mentor provided her despite having both a content and placement mismatch. Her mentor taught a different subject area and was assigned to a building far from hers. *Hailey* states, “My mentor is a positive influence that I can go to with both little and big issues related to my teaching.” *Hailey* felt the relationship she developed with her mentor was far more important than having a content or placement match.

Conversely, *Mia* felt that a mentor match in content and grade level was more important to her than having her mentor in her school. Mia describes her mentor as having a different perspective that she was not connected to these people (in my school) and had that outside perspective and unbiased opinions on issues we discussed.”

Maverick's experiences led him to believe that mentor location was more important than a match in content. “There was no one in my building to connect to for learning because no one

taught my content," said *Maverick*. *Maverick* said, "My mentor is a content match but placed in a different type of school from mine, serving students who live above the poverty line. My school has different students and cultures." Despite the disparity of students between schools, *Maverick* overall described the importance of a content match. When describing both the induction and mentoring programs in RHSD, *Catherine* stated, "My only complaint, and it's a pretty common complaint that I have, is there weren't enough specialized learning opportunities for specialized teachers like me." *Catherine* teaches in a self-contained special education classroom, and other specialized teachers are "singletons" in their buildings in placements such as band, CTE, or intervention strategist. *Catherine* was thankful to have a mentor with a content match and explained how her mentor kept her sane, regardless of her mentor's location. She appreciated the years of experience her mentor brought to the relationship.

Numerous studies have established the effectiveness of well-designed mentoring programs in improving retention rates, instructional expertise, and feelings of efficacy (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 24; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016). Ideally, this support contributed to assimilation into the profession through collegial guidance, apprenticeship, and critical dialogue.

Discussion

This research study corroborates the importance of supporting novice teachers with quality induction and mentoring practices. (Boyd et al., 2005; Callahan, 2016; Carver-Thomas et al., 2017; Lambeth, 2012). Teachers in this study identified the following perceptions of the induction and mentoring program in RHSD: induction, keeping sessions active, engaging learners, and allowing for connections to be made with other teachers. The guidance on the mentoring program was mixed; all participants who had a mentor described their importance to

them, but they shared differing opinions on the importance of mentor match by building and content.

The success of public education depends on the quality of teachers and school leaders. Ample evidence supports the idea that teachers are critical to students' academic success or failure (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hattie, 2003). Preparing novice teachers for teaching experiences by providing induction and mentoring programs is critical to the ongoing success of these new teachers. Ensuring all students have access to highly qualified teachers to improve student learning outcomes requires public school systems to adopt policies and practices to prepare and support new teachers early in their careers. Induction programming that includes mentoring, professional learning, and collegial support is critical in creating a supportive transition into a teaching career and determining teacher satisfaction and mobility (Darling-Hammond, L., 2010). Supporting new teachers is urgent, as the pipeline of qualified educators is not meeting the system's current demands (Cowan et al., 2016). Schools and school districts must identify and implement supportive structures so new teachers can successfully transition into the profession and find the success and satisfaction to stay in their positions. Determining new teachers' perceptions and experiences in their first year of teaching is a first step toward enhancing the beginning teacher induction and mentoring services to promote increased teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

Induction and mentoring are lengthy and complex processes that ideally will produce the desired outcomes by meeting individual teacher needs. Because of this, induction and mentoring must be flexible and differentiated to allow for the successful results desired: teacher efficacy, effectiveness, and longevity in the school district. Through describing the lived experiences of novice teachers, this study sought to understand if there is a connection between teacher self-

efficacy and the perceived benefits and weaknesses of the district's induction and mentoring program. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief regarding their abilities and capacities to impact situations and produce desired outcomes. Teacher efficacy is essential for novice and veteran teachers; teachers with higher efficacy believe they can meet challenging situations that arise, making them more likely to persevere in challenging situations. From the perspective of the study participants, this study sought to describe the benefits and deficits of the induction and mentoring program in RHSD and to compare those perspectives to the study participant's self-reported teacher efficacy.

Regarding teachers, efficacy beliefs are connected to their perceived capacity to manage student behavior, engagement, and learning (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Regardless of how it is measured, teacher efficacy can influence teacher performance, student outcomes, and teacher satisfaction. Teaching may be a stressful job, but novice teachers have the additional burden of entering a complex profession with work stress for which they often feel underprepared (Callahan, 2016). This reality can cause teachers to leave their current position or the profession altogether. Research has shown that stress and lack of efficacy can lead to teacher burnout and attrition (Bandura, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Sass et al., 2011; Tillman, 2005). This study's findings suggest a connection between teachers' efficacy beliefs and the benefits they experienced during mentoring and induction sessions.

Induction programming that includes mentoring, professional learning, and collegial support is critical in creating a supportive transition into a teaching career and determining teacher satisfaction and mobility. Supporting new teachers is urgent, as the pipeline of qualified educators is not meeting the system's current demands (Cowan et al., 2016; Podolsky et al., 2017; Sutcher et al., D. 2016). Schools and school districts must identify and implement

structures so new teachers can successfully transition into the profession and find the success and satisfaction to stay in their positions. Determining new teachers' perceptions and experiences in their first year of teaching is a first step toward enhancing the beginning teacher induction and mentoring services to promote increased teacher efficacy and job satisfaction. Overall, teachers in this study shared a positive perspective of the experiences that they engaged in during their mentoring and induction experience. Sutcher (2016) found that teacher job satisfaction is an essential factor in retention and is equally important in shaping teacher attitudes and feelings, which can positively or negatively impact job performance.

All participants in the mentor program described positive and trusting relationships established with their mentors. The findings from this study revealed the importance of a mentoring program. Teachers who lack job satisfaction have weaker relationships with students and are less likely to engage in ongoing professional learning (Knox et al., 2013). In that study, the research found that job dissatisfaction, personal motives, career change, and financial reasons are the leading factors in teacher attrition. Participants from all teaching roles described positive experiences due to their participation in the induction and mentoring program. Mentees explained the benefits they received through participation, such as timely support, feedback, observation, and collegial dialogue. Still, those with the highest ratings of the mentoring and induction program were also those with higher self-efficacy, as established by their scores on the TSES.

Novice teachers were asked to expand on their experience during the five additional days assigned to all new teachers, which offered a broad range of induction activities. Teachers broadly described induction as a positive and impactful experience. Engaging in active experiences that allowed for connections with other new teachers in the district was a positive

learning experience for participants. Sessions that were active, engaging, and presented critical content for new teachers were described as impactful. When asked to expand upon the barriers they encountered during induction, teachers explained sessions with limited social opportunities and those with 'sit and get' sessions. The teachers preferred sessions that utilized explicit instruction with a change for participant modeling. The least practical induction activities were those found to be less engaging. The highest-rated sessions were the opportunities to connect with other new teachers during induction. This study determined time and (how it is spent) as a common theme. Participants were overwhelmed by the district induction activities and expressed a need for more time in their buildings and classrooms. Participants explained feeling overwhelmed and needing more time. Suggestions, based on participant feedback, would be to offer induction content throughout the year instead of five pre-service days.

Frequent, substantial turnover makes it more difficult to maintain staff relationships as well as institutional knowledge from prior initiatives and professional learning (Sutcher et al., 2016). Induction and mentoring opportunities that promote new teacher learning and success will likely raise the new teacher's perspective of their ability to succeed in the classroom. Successful scenarios with students, in turn, will raise the efficacy levels of the novice teacher. (Bandura, A., (1977), (1993). This study corroborated the findings of other studies that addressed the needs of new teachers, addressing attrition and providing supportive practices of induction and mentoring to increase teacher preparedness and overall job satisfaction (Brown et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2016; Podolsky et al., 2017, Smith, et al., 2004).

Recommendations for Practice

Research studies, including this phenomenological study, suggested that induction and mentoring improve the capacity and experience of new teachers as they manage their classrooms and their instruction (Brown et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2004; Iancu et al., 2018). Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the administration of RHSD review the induction program at large. Removing or revising sessions to ensure that they employ active engagement strategies and promote opportunities for teachers to engage with other new teachers. Furthermore, it is recommended that administrators revise the induction program to allow more time for teachers to engage in their buildings with guided support from their peers and administration. This time in the building should be facilitated by building-level administration and provide a structure that allows for relationship-building between new teachers, their colleagues, and the administration of the building. The district administration should consider requiring building administration to train new teachers on their buildings' management, such as ordering supplies, or writing up student discipline and expectations such as dress policy, and student supervision responsibilities. The district would preferably provide a common template for these building sessions to be built upon to provide equity of leading and learning from school to school.

The results found a lack of consistency in responses to the benefits of the mentoring program. All participants with mentors described a positive experience that provided the necessary support they needed to find success in their buildings and classrooms. Interestingly, study participants disagree on the importance of their mentor match in teaching content and building location. Based on the findings from this study, it is advised that district administration purposefully assign mentors. A short survey of new teachers might reveal their preferences

regarding mentor content and placement match. Additionally, more should be done to increase awareness of the state and district mentoring program, as two study participants described a lack of knowledge that this resource was available to them.

Limitations of this study

This study was conducted in a large school district in a rural state, and Title I schools provided the common ground for research participants. Study participants were diverse in their self-efficacy beliefs, as well as in their gender, age, and the teaching placements assigned to them. The study was limited to include only new teachers with bachelor's or master's degrees in education who were placed in Title I buildings. The study was further limited to include only new teachers who participated in Phase 1 of the study, where all new teachers were asked to complete a short survey form and express their interest in participation. Fewer than 20% of new teachers participated in Phase 1 of the study, limiting the study participant pool. Teachers with alternative certifications or educational backgrounds were omitted from the study, further limiting the participant pool. Because of this, the study was restricted, which confines the transferability of results to other schools with different demographics, locations, and settings. Therefore, future studies should explore mentoring and induction experiences in different settings, socio-economic statuses, and with varying teacher participant parameters.

Examining the lived experiences of new teachers as they participated in both the induction and mentoring programs was a broad look at both programs. Future studies might benefit from focusing solely on the induction or the mentoring experience, but not both.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of this study relative to the identified research questions. Through data analysis, meaning statements were collected from the initial and follow-

up interviews to select the emerging themes. These themes were further explored to establish the lived experiences of teachers new to the Rolling Hills School District. Chapter 5 provides a manuscript of this study for potential future publication.

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Induction Programs: Pathways to New Teacher Retention and Success

By:

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Abstract:

The pipeline of college students seeking teaching positions was shrinking. This made the work of finding and retaining new teachers even more challenging. The financial burden of replacing teachers who depart was significant, and the profession witnessed a worrisome trend of high turnover among newly hired educators This study researched the lived experiences of ten new teachers who recently completed an induction program. The study addressed two primary research questions: (1) What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program? (2) What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to improve their work experience in our schools? Drawing on a phenomenological research design, ten study participants were selected based on their self-efficacy scores, as determined by the Teachers Self-Efficacy Survey (TSES), as well as their age, gender, and teaching assignment. This study sought to understand the factors leading to early exits of new teachers from the profession and explored how school districts could alter this trajectory through the implementation of an effective induction program.

Keywords: qualitative, phenomenological, new teacher, self-efficacy, induction program

Introduction

Teacher quality matters for student achievement. Teachers account for 30% of the variation in their students' achievement (Hattie, 2003), which means teacher preparedness and effectiveness were critical to student success. Unfortunately, many new teachers feel unprepared for their first teaching position. Such first-time teachers required ample professional development and support systems to aid in their transition to the classroom. Additionally, many first-year teachers report overwhelming isolation and lack of support, unlike their teacher preparation programs' environment, which offered cooperating teachers, collaborative peers, and university supervisor support (Whitaker & Fiore, 2004). New teacher efficacy and job satisfaction diminished when the classroom transition lacked adequate support.

Demand for teachers, especially in the United States, is partly driven by the relatively high rates of teachers moving from a particular teaching assignment or leaving the field entirely (Ingersoll, 2001). Additionally, teacher turnover was detrimental to schools, both financially and functionally. The financial costs associated with teacher attrition and turnover was estimated to be as high as 30% of the leaving teacher's salary (Barnes et al., 2007). High turnover's functional impacts resulted in shortages, which led to hiring inexperienced or underqualified teaching staff that negatively impacted student achievement. National enrollment in teacher education programs saw a 35% reduction between 2009 and 2014, while teacher attrition levels hovered at 8% throughout the United States (Sutcher et al., 2016). New teachers left the profession more than their colleagues, with estimated departure rates ranging from 19% to 30%. Investment in new teacher support and development through induction has been proven to increase teacher retention and improve student achievement when done correctly (Carver-Thomas et al., 2017; Ingersoll, 2001; Smith et al., 2004).

Teachers new to the profession needed support structures such as mentoring and quality induction programs. "To remain globally competitive, it will take the investment of all stakeholders letting go of the status quo and creating structures to support the ongoing development of teaching and learning" (Van Zandt, 2013, p. 89). This statement was particularly relevant for novice teachers, who lack the experience

of their veteran peers, which can negatively impact their effectiveness level. The supportive nature of induction at the school district and school site level could promote new teachers' self-efficacy while developing their knowledge and instructional skills (Holzberger et al., 2013; Lambeth, 2012). According to Carver-Thomas et al. (2017), a primary factor in teacher turnover was the pre-service preparation and the administrative support they received upon transitioning to their teaching position. Creating an environment for new teachers that is both welcoming and supportive while simultaneously producing a culture of collaboration was paramount in stemming the tide of new teacher attrition.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of teachers new to the school district, Rolling Hills School District (RHSD). This study sought to determine the induction program's benefits and deficits and determined what additional support new teachers recommended for future hires. This study sought to inform practices related to the induction of new teachers in the public school system in a large school district within a rural Midwestern state.

Research Questions

The overarching question that guided the study asked: What are teachers' lived experiences new to RHSD in their first years of employment? Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program in RHSD?
2. What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to improve their work experience in RHSD?

Theoretical Framework

This research was framed through the theoretical lens of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) as a social cognitive theory. Self-efficacy theory was born from social cognitive theory and includes "personal aspirations, outcome expectations, perceived opportunity structures, constraints, and conceptions of

personal efficacy" (Bandura, 1977, p. 10). When new teachers experienced a district climate of support, there was a reciprocal relationship between efficacy and school climate (Aldridge & Frasier, 2016; Hoy Woolfolk, 1993). This framework sits well with a phenomenological study of this type.

Self-efficacy should not be confused with self-esteem or perceived self-worth. A teacher may have shown low efficacy levels in the classroom without any sense of lowered self-esteem. That same teacher is likelier to blame influences outside their control for performance issues. New teacher induction programs offer a level of support to new teachers that can directly impact teacher self-efficacy. According to Bandura (2012), self-efficacy beliefs come from multiple sources, including experiences, persuasion, and social influences. Early failure undermined efficacy, mainly when the failure occurs before efficacy is well established. Consequently, it was imperative to establish support systems that promote early success for new teachers. Success promoted beliefs in one's efficacy, while failure undermines one's efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Because of this, the induction program provided the knowledge, professional learning, and support that increased the new teachers' successful teaching interactions in their first years.

Review of the Literature

Teacher Turnover and Self-Efficacy

Demand for new teachers continued to grow and was an enduring concern in education. The need to fill positions was driven partially by increased student enrollments and substantially by relatively high turnover rates (Ingersoll, 2001). Overall difficulties in recruiting existed with consistently hard-to-fill positions identified in specific content areas, including special education, science, mathematics, and particular types of schools, including urban, rural, high-poverty, and high-minority and low-achieving schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014, as cited in Goldring, 2014). Couple this teacher demand with a dwindling candidate pool, and turnover became a more significant cause for concern. Between 2009 and 2014, teacher education enrollments plummeted from 691,000 to 451,000, which is a reduction of 35% (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 3). This dwindling candidate pool made finding the best

candidates to fill teaching positions caused by turnover even more challenging to manage at the local school level in districts nationwide.

Not all turnover is the same. The National Center for Education Statistics classified teachers into three categories, ‘movers’ - changing schools or districts, ‘leavers’ - leaving the profession entirely, or ‘stayers’ - remaining at the same school (2017, p. 4). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the 2011-2012 school year, 84% of school public-school teachers were identified as stayers, with 8% identified as movers and 8% identified as leavers (2015, as cited in Lazarev, 2017). Of the 8% of teachers identified as leavers constitute our nation’s teacher attrition rate. The current annual attrition rate represents a 3% increase since the early 1990s. While this may seem inconsequential, an increase in attrition of 3% had a significant national impact, resulting in roughly 90,000 additional teacher openings per year (Carver-Thomas et al., 2017, p. 3).

Teacher turnover represented the combined total of the percentage of leavers and movers or the sum of both attrition and mobility rates. Most recent statistics placed the national average for teacher turnover at 16%. However, there were significant increases by region, by primary teaching assignment, and in schools identified as Title I (schools serving a high percentage of low-income students) as well as those primarily serving students of color. In these high-need schools, turnover rates far surpassed the national average. The turnover rate in Title I schools was approximately 50% greater than in non-Title I schools and hard-to-fill positions in math and science found teacher turnover nearly 70% greater in Title I schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 14) This high turnover rate created additional problems for high-need schools where a disproportionate number of staff are new or early career, including additional professional development, resource utilization, and a curricular knowledge base among the staff at large. Leaving teachers to take with them their knowledge of the organization and their school, disrupting instructional programs and maintenance of social resources (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). The result was a school where students experience relatively inexperienced teachers year after year. Societal

inequality was perpetuated in high-turnover Title I schools, and according to Dyches & Boyd, "schools act as sites that both perpetuate and reproduce social inequities" (2017, p. 478).

Self-Efficacy

Teacher efficacy beliefs were connected to their perceived capacity to manage student behavior, engagement, and learning (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Regardless of how it was measured, teacher efficacy influenced teacher performance, student outcomes, and teacher satisfaction. Teachers, including those new to the profession, were more likely to persist through the obstacles and challenges of teaching if they were self-efficacious (Bandura, 1977, p. 194). While ample research existed on the role of teacher self-efficacy, far fewer sources connected the support of induction to new teachers' self-efficacy levels. Teachers' Instructional strategies and their expectations of their students may be tied to their self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001).

Efficacy was found to affect the amount of effort teachers are willing to expend and their persistence in the face of challenges, directly impacting students (Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). Higher efficacy rates were also found to increase teacher enthusiasm, commitment to the job, and the likelihood they will remain in the teaching profession.

Measuring teacher self-efficacy was a complicated matter, and various existing measures were reviewed for this study, including the Rand measure, the Webb scale, and Gibson and Dembo's teacher efficacy scale. Many of the reviewed efficacy measures focused almost exclusively on reaching difficult or unmotivated students but neglected the myriad of needs in a typical classroom, including capable and motivated students. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale Short Form (How, 1990), however, met the diverse needs of this study.

Causes of Teacher Turnover

Retirement accounted for less than 20% of total attrition nationally (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 18). The remaining open positions were created by what was previously described as 'movers,' and

'leavers.' For those teachers who changed schools, districts, or left the profession entirely, the most frequently cited reasons teachers provided for leaving are job dissatisfaction and unsatisfactory working conditions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). New teachers often felt overwhelmed and underprepared for the reality of their first teaching position, which explained the growing amount of research on teacher stress, efficacy, and job satisfaction (Gagen et al., 2005; Kardos & Johnson, 2010). Job dissatisfaction was critical in determining whether a teacher left their school (mobility) or the profession (attrition). New teachers left the profession more than their colleagues, with estimated departure rates ranging from 19% to 30%. Investment in new teacher support and development through induction has been proven to increase teacher retention and improve student achievement when done correctly (Carver-Thomas et al., 2017; Ingersoll, 2001; Smith et al., 2004).

Teacher job satisfaction was an essential factor in retention and equally important in shaping teacher attitudes and feelings, positively or negatively impacting job performance. Teachers who lacked job satisfaction had weaker relationships with students and were less likely to improve their efforts or engage in ongoing professional learning (Knox & Anfara, 2013). Sutcher et al., (2016) found that job dissatisfaction, personal motives, career change, and financial reasons were the leading factors in teacher attrition. The causes of job dissatisfaction included a lack of administrative support, physical conditions such as class size and resources, and a lack of teacher autonomy.

All teachers face work stress, but novice teachers had the additional burden of entering a complex profession with work stress, for which they often felt underprepared (Callahan, 2016). This reality caused teachers to leave their current position or the profession altogether. Research has shown that stress and lack of efficacy led to teacher burnout and attrition (Bandura, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Sass et al., 2011; Tillman, 2005). The administration's role was to provide support and coping strategies to mitigate stress factors. A teacher's sense of efficacy influenced classroom interactions and is ultimately connected to stress, burnout, and attrition (Bandura, 1997).

Teacher Turnover's Financial Impact

The negative fiscal impact of teacher turnover varied widely but was worth noting. Estimates of $4,400 per replacement in rural districts to nearly $18,000 per replacement in urban districts were made a decade ago (Sutcher et al., 2016, p. 42), with a total national cost exceeding $7 billion annually. The estimated cost per replacement in Chicago Public Schools was $17,872 per replacement and $15,325 per replacement in Milwaukee (Barnes et al., 2007, p. 5). Categories of teacher turnover costs included separation, replacement, and training costs (Waitlington et al., 2010).

Some studies supported the following premise: the higher the cost of teacher turnover, the lower the teacher turnover rate (Barnes et al., 2007; Watlington et al., 2010). The rule of thumb was that the higher the students' social, emotional, and academic needs, the higher the turnover rate. However, funds invested in teacher retention reduced the cost of teacher turnover by mitigating the rate of departure. Turnover was more significant in at-risk schools with low-performing, high-minority, and high-poverty students. Investment in teacher retention mitigated turnover by implementing effective retention strategies (Barnes et al., 2007, p. 5). **Teacher Turnover, Student Achievement, and School Climate**

Teachers who left the profession early not only caused a financial burden to the system but additionally presented, "significant challenges to the successful and coherent implementation of instructional programs" (Guin, 2004, p. 13). Chronic teacher turnover led to a disruptive school climate, making establishing a sense of community difficult. Persistent and prevalent turnover harmed a school's *social resources*, including the quality of teacher relationships (Hanselman et al., 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Strong relationships were fundamental to improving instructional practice through collaboration to achieve a shared mission and vision. These relationships were challenging to establish in a system experiencing chronic turnover. Experienced teachers in high-turnover schools routinely devoted time and energy to supporting their novice counterparts, which demanded additional time and energy for the veteran teacher (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Collie et al., 2012). Chronic turnover impacted student achievement by disrupting a school's collegiality, relational trust, and institutional knowledge. Whether

teachers migrated to new positions in different schools or school districts or left the profession altogether does not change the disruptive nature of our schools' so-called "revolving door."

Induction and Teacher Support

Induction is a series of professional development opportunities intended to thoroughly train and support novice teachers in their initial years of teaching (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2004). Induction programs, including mentoring, professional development, and overviews of educational programs and curricula, were meant to offer new teachers support and assistance to assimilate into their role as an educator successfully. Induction programs may be facilitated through a centralized district function, a site-based building function, or a combination of both. Induction programs were based on the understanding that teaching is complex and that new teachers needed more preparation for the demands and have much to learn (Martin et al., 2016). In response to chronic teacher turnover and to assist novice teachers in meeting the increasing demands placed on them, induction programs dramatically increased in recent decades (Smith et al., 2004). Further research opportunities existed to determine what specific processes achieved the desired result of reducing teacher attrition. It was difficult to find definitive answers regarding the critical components of induction programs that significantly reduced attrition.

Teachers with collegial interaction that included the critical elements of aid and assistance, opportunities for sharing, and critical dialogue exhibited higher retention rates than their peers without these prospects for interaction (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). To lessen the disruption of teacher turnover and promote teacher retention, school districts sought ways of implementing induction programs for beginning teachers to include multi-tiered levels of support based on the diverse needs of new teachers.

The Role of Leadership

Schools with high administrative support levels, fewer student discipline problems, and shared teacher decision-making had higher teacher retention rates (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Ingersoll, 2001). Conversely, in schools where teachers perceived a lack of leadership, vision, and administrative support,

teachers were twice as likely to leave teaching or move schools, even after controlling for student and teacher characteristics (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Working conditions play a significant role in teacher retention, and most important are those conditions that teachers consider key to their success: administrative support, strong collegial relationships, and shared decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 21).

These same school administrators played a significant role in promoting a supportive school atmosphere that determined the experiences of the new teachers as it related to feelings of support versus isolation. While teacher age, experience, and personal characteristics have a predictive role in determining teacher longevity, the role of leadership surpasses all of these factors combined (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The overall management of a school played a key role in working conditions, which may have the single most impact on a teacher's retention in that school (Grissom et al., 2016; Podolsky et al., 2017). In Ingersoll's analysis of the organizational impact on teacher turnover (2001), high turnover rates serve as a barometer of underlying conditions within the school.

Because of the teacher shortage, high teacher attrition rates, and a dwindling number of postsecondary students electing education as their major, it is crucial for school leaders to establish quality induction programs to best support novice teachers in their schools to increase job satisfaction, teacher efficacy, and job stability. Transcendental phenomenology offered an opportunity to capture the essence of new teachers' experiences in their induction programs.

Methodology

This study was guided by a transcendental phenomenological research design, the primary purpose of which was to capture the universal essence of a phenomenon (Cresswell et al., 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019). Transcendental phenomenology offered an opportunity to capture the essence of new teachers while engaging in an induction program. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the lived experiences of the participants. People's (2021) approach to transcendental phenomenology

provided a process for analyzing and synthesizing data, leading to the identification of themes that formed the unified description of the study's findings.

Context

The setting for this study was a large school district in a rural Midwestern State. The district had 23 schools, including 15 elementary schools, 5 middle schools, 2 high schools, and an alternative instruction high school. The student enrollment averages 13,500 students and approximately 1,000 teachers and the pseudonym used was Rolling Hills School District (RHSD).

Participants

This study's population of interest was teachers new to the school district in 2019-2020 and are in their second year of employment. The study utilized a purposive sampling of the approximately 125 eligible teachers within their first two years of employment in RHSD. The selection of participants was deliberate to ensure a sample with an even distribution of teachers representing various experiences and perspectives. Electing purposive sampling can "increase the scope or range of data exposed as well as uncover a full array of perspectives from the sample participants" (Rudestam et al., 2015, p. 123).

The criteria used to identify participants in this phenomenological study were teachers new to the district, teaching in Title I schools. All participants held bachelor's or master's degrees in education and were assigned various positions within the district. Individuals meeting the criteria were asked to participate in a brief demographics survey and to answer the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) short form. Individuals meeting the criteria and consenting to participate were selected and interviewed after completing the survey.

Data Collection

Phase one consisted of a short demographic survey and the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Short Form. The TSES Short Form measured efficacy in the following three factors: efficacy in

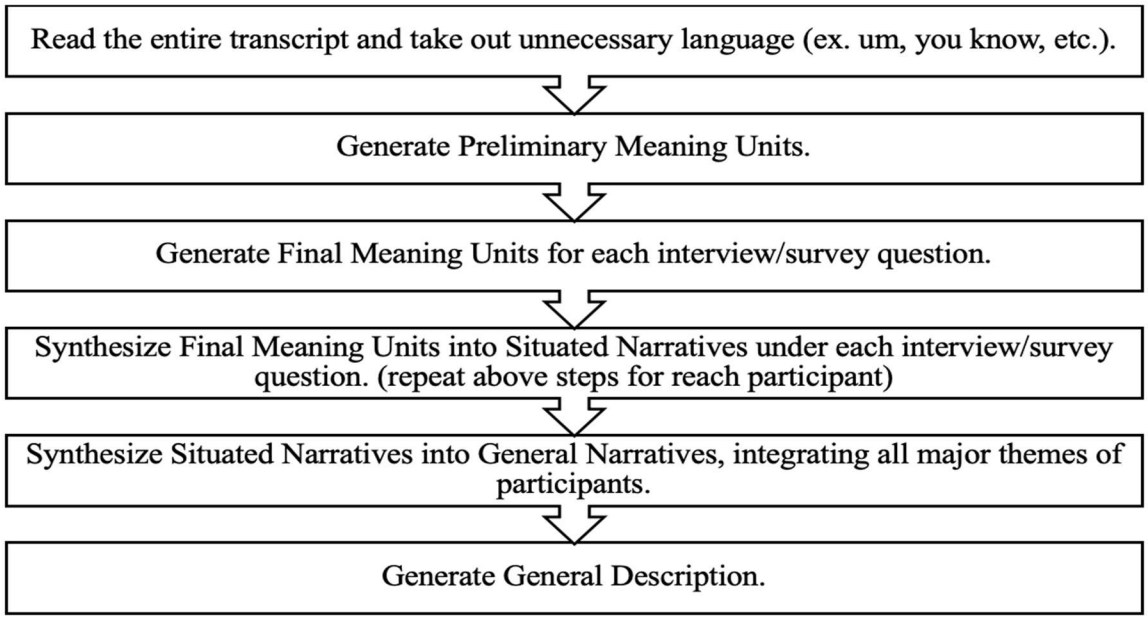
student engagement, efficacy in instructional strategies, and efficacy in classroom management (Hoy, 1990). In phase two of the study, data was collected from the participants through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews conducted virtually using Zoom. After the initial interviews, follow-up one-on-one Zoom meetings were established to share the common themes that arose and to member-check the validity of the themes.

Data Analysis

The transcendental phenomenological data analysis methods outlined by Peoples (2021) guided the analysis within this study. Peoples (2021) provides a step-by-step process for data analysis (see Figure 1) and served as a guide in this study. This required reading and rereading the transcripts from start to finish to remove unnecessary wording and generated preliminary meanings. Further review led to the generation of final meaning units for each interview question. Meanings were situated into narratives for each survey question. From the synthesized narratives, general narratives were constructed that included all significant themes emerging from the study participants. The final analysis step was the generation of general descriptions.

Figure 1

Data Analysis Flow Chart (Peoples, 2021)



After each interview, the video recording was reviewed, and a digital transcription service transcribed the audio content. Multiple readings of all transcriptions allowed an increased understanding of each participant's experiences as a new teacher in RHSD. Microsoft Excel organized the meaning units from which the synthesized situated narratives and general narratives (Peoples, 2021) were derived. Again, these general narratives were reviewed with study participants in a follow-up meeting to confirm their validity.

Limitations of this Study

This study was conducted in a large school district in a rural state, and Title I schools provided the common ground for research participants. Study participants were diverse in their self-efficacy beliefs, as well as in their gender, age, and the teaching placements assigned to them.

Findings

This study's emerging themes were recognized with the study's research questions. Five themes related to the induction experience surfaced from initial interviews and the follow-up interviews conducted to fill in gaps during the data analysis process. Those five themes were lack of time, learning space and learning style, session value, session structure, and implications for practice. These themes were identified as collections of recurring statements and were organized from the transcriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Additionally, study participants made recommendations for improvements to the induction program that were presented as the concluding theme. The goal of this transcendental phenomenology study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) was to shed light on the phenomenon of the experience of being a new teacher in RHSD. By analysis of the lived experiences of new teachers, programmatic enhancements ensued. The following section described the essential themes that emerged from those experiences.

Induction Program at RHSD

The induction program in Rolling Hills School District (RHSD) occurred during August during a five-day period where new teachers began their contractual days. These five-day sessions occurred before returning teaching staff were on contract, and all session participants were newly hired teachers who were in their first year of teaching in RHSD. Induction sessions were either required or self-selected and generally focused on educators in either an elementary or secondary setting. However, some sessions were more global and offered to anyone regardless of their teaching assignment. Time was also set aside for building-level work and time in new teachers' classrooms.

Lack of Time. For elementary teachers, the first five days of induction included required sessions for four out of the five induction days. Secondary staff had mandatory induction sessions for less than three full days. If new teachers were not assigned a session, they selected various optional session topics or used the open time for working in their classrooms. Six of the study participants stated that induction

needed more time for a better distribution between district and building sessions. All study participants described the induction program as overwhelming; they described the rushed nature of the days and sessions. Most participants also described a desire for more time in the building, whether in facilitated sessions by their building administrators or simply as a time to spend with their instructional resources and preparing their classrooms for students.

Willow stated, "My sessions were great, yet I felt like I was falling further behind in my preparation for students." Descriptions of implementation gaps arose. Participants learned new concepts and procedures but had little time to practice this new learning. More time in the classroom was the most common theme of the study participants' responses related to induction programming improvements. Participants described overall a shortage of time for learning their building's expectations and management routines, as well as for prepping their rooms and understanding their instructional materials.

Learning Space and Learning Style. Induction sessions that were most beneficial to participants shared one or two characteristics. They were action-oriented sessions that employed an instructional strategy of "I do, we do, you do," which gradually shifted the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the students. Another quality session characteristic was whether the session was physically or mentally engaging using role-playing or requiring participants to practice implementing strategies. These sessions required an appropriate learning space that allowed for flexible grouping and movement. Study participants commented on sessions that were held in too small spaces to allow for grouping and small teams; these rooms interfered with the learning environment.

Learning sessions typically employed an instructional strategy that attempted to build learners' skills and confidence over time through active learner engagement. Most notably, these preferred sessions had a learning space allowing work time and collaboration. The sessions study participants reported as high value were more memorable and applicable, such as the active engagement of the ALICE training (ALICE is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate). Established in 2000, the training was a widely adopted active shooter response training method. Alternatively, the technology

training, or other sessions that allowed for practicing a specific skill, such as the Acadience assessment administration, were favored by participants. *Mia* noted the ALICE training model "teach, model, practice" and direct instruction with guided practice as the most memorable of all her induction sessions. These sessions were rated higher because participants felt engaged in relevant learning. Most teachers in this study also highly rated the technology sessions, which used an explicit instruction methodology.

Session Value. Sessions identified as most valuable were active and utilized a gradual release of responsibility model of instruction. Conversely, sessions that employed a 'sit-and-get' or passive learning model were rated least relevant in preparing novice teachers for their new teaching assignment. Participants broadly expressed an inability to articulate the content of these sessions, often stating they no longer remembered or could describe the sessions themselves or their learner outcomes. *Maverick* described a lack of memory of specific sessions, noting that "could be a sign they were good or not good, I'm not sure." Several study participants indicated that the first two weeks out of the classroom to attend new and returning teacher sessions seemed a blur due to the flurry of activities. Most described the amount of content provided to new teachers as overwhelming.

Study participants expressed that the opportunity to practice what they learned during a session allowed for greater understanding and practical use in their classrooms. Furthermore, the importance of the topics in a session, such as school safety and student reading development, increased participants' value. *Braxton* held high value to sessions and activities that "allowed socialization and an overview of the interesting intricacies of the district itself," these sessions helped him "know what he was walking into before the school year started." An opposing sentiment came from *Sophia*, a special educator who is assigned to a self-contained classroom. She held little value to these types of sessions. She stated, "I work on an island," and described a desire to attend small, focused groups that included staff in similar assignments. While *Sophia* recognized the value of opportunities for questions and answers with veteran staff, she understood that veteran teachers were not on duty at this time. Most study participants described the opportunity to socialize and meet with one's peers as a positive and engaging experience.

Session Structure. Smaller sessions allowed new teachers in this study to see themselves as part of a community. *Charlotte* described this phenomenon as "a building up of a community between new teachers and being a part of a group." In the district-developed induction activities and those held at the building level, teachers found the benefit in forming connections with people they could continue to learn from and lean on. Conversely, teachers assigned to unique positions felt they were outliers and would have benefited from structured sessions with teachers in similar situations. *Catherine* was assigned to a special education structured academic classroom and found difficulty relating to the more extensive, general education-focused induction sessions. In her follow-up interview, *Catherine* suggested smaller sessions that would include veteran teachers engaging in a learning discussion with new teachers in their like positions. Furthermore, she thought that the opportunity for observation and discussion with these veteran teachers during the school year should be a mandatory component of the sessions and that the structure of a live classroom would add authenticity to the learning.

Study participants broadly preferred the smaller structured sessions, except for the kick-off session that brought all new teachers together in a comfortable social space. Over half of the study participants mentioned the ability to mingle during the kick-off as a valuable addition to their introduction to our schools. Sessions allowing time for networking and relationship-building were frequently cited as engaging and welcoming. *Charlotte* was one of the participants who expressed this sentiment,

> One of the greatest benefits was the community that was built between new teachers, being able to be in that group and get to know some of those people, it builds a lot of relationships that I still lean on at this point that I communicate with those people regularly.

Study participants described a sense of belonging when allowed to meet and confer with others new to the RHSD, whether in small or large group sessions.

Implications for Practice

Classroom Management. Six of the ten study participants desired more classroom management techniques in their induction sessions. *Mia* felt so fortunate to learn about Conscious Discipline. She pursued further learning on this topic. “Conscious Discipline has been one that really has stuck out, so I followed up and took a train-the-trainer program and a book study to learn more.” However, *Mia* recognized that the elective nature of the Conscious Discipline sessions would make it difficult to expect complete implementation by new teachers. Conscious Discipline was a framework that utilized everyday events to cultivate emotional intelligence through a self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning. *Mia* believed such vital topics should be mandatory, even if it meant adding additional days to the novice teacher’s contract.

New teachers requested more refresher sessions on classroom management. *Charlotte* also described a need for more training on de-escalation techniques, increasing engagement, and building a healthy classroom culture. Finally, *Willow* described a lack of engagement and relationship sessions. *Willow* described her struggles with student behaviors and how she needed more support in dealing with challenging students. Classroom management was one of the most discussed themes, and participants generally requested more sessions of this type. Participants felt that what was offered to manage behavior and establish a culture for learning could have been more extensive. The consensus was that more learning sessions should provide teachers with actionable steps to manage behaviors and create a learning environment. *Chloe* felt she lacked an understanding of building behavior expectations and her school’s student management processes. *Maverick* asked for future induction sessions to increase learning on engagement strategies and de-escalating student situations. Some participants described a lack of college training to work with students' behaviors. One study participant expressed the opposite, describing a good balance between behavior and instruction sessions.

Curriculum. There is a heavy emphasis on providing an overview of the instructional materials and curriculum of the district during the *RHSD* induction sessions. However, *Mia* relied on her grade-

level team to implement the purchased instructional materials. “I think that it would be much more beneficial for the teachers to have a chance to really dig into the lessons or maybe model a lesson using the instructional materials.” *Mia* and other study participants felt that the induction sessions that provided overviews of instructional materials were not as helpful as the learning that occurred with their teacher teams. *Maverick* said, “I didn’t really remember his sessions,” which focused on teaching math using Carnegie materials. “We never really had time to prepare or see a lesson using the instructional materials,” stated *Willow*.

Several additional study participants suggested building or district learning opportunities should occur monthly after the new teachers have started the school year, citing a need for more time to learn the instructional materials. Assessments, pacing guides, and online content teachers use in RHSD should have been explained in depth. Participants asked for more learning on successfully implementing the instructional materials they were required to use. For elementary schools and all core curriculums at the secondary level, instructional materials were provided to new teachers. The training offered to all teachers when the materials were adopted was in-depth and often 2 to 3 days. Novice teachers received a highly condensed version of veteran teachers’ training. According to the new teachers in the study, the complex instructional materials were difficult to understand and navigate during the relatively short induction sessions.

Working with Students of Poverty and Indigenous Students. Rolling Hills School District has many impoverished students from all ethnic groups. Additionally, roughly 30% of students are Native American. The Native American population has a higher poverty rate than all other student populations. Serving these student demographics requires that teachers understand the impacts of poverty and culture in the classroom. In her other teaching positions, *Chloe* had never worked with a high level of indigenous or poverty students. “Preparing for work with students of poverty and indigenous populations was ignored during my induction sessions,” lamented Chloe. *Chloe* stated, “I understand demographics are different from school to school, but in our poverty schools (in RHSD), the percentage of Native American students

is high." *Chloe* described her former school district as predominantly Caucasian and black/mixed race. She described lacking the tools or cultural understanding to support her Native American students. Others mentioned a lack of tips for working with low-income families and homeless students. *Chloe* said it was months into the school year before she learned about McKinney Vento and the available services for her students living in poverty. McKenny Vento was a federal law that provided federal money for homeless students and other protections for students, like free choice in school selection.

Efficacy. During the interviews and follow-up sessions, novice teachers were asked to describe the perceived value of induction activities. Overall, teachers with higher efficacy scores on the TSES ranked the quality of their induction sessions higher and more valuable. Additionally, sessions that allowed time and space for establishing relationships emerged as an event that improved teacher efficacy and their beliefs about their ability to engage and manage students.

Teacher self-efficacy scores were related to how study participants rated the quality of the induction program. *Mia* entered this study with above-average efficacy scores that showed a strong belief in her ability to instruct students. *Mia's* responses to the induction questions were positive, and her efficacy scores were above the national average on the TSES. She expressed enthusiasm for all professional learning opportunities and described the chance to network and see the new teachers as 'fantastic.' Participants described building relationships as a positive outcome of their induction activities and shared high value on the induction sessions that were related to quality teaching practices.

In contrast, *Braxton,* who teaches math, did not remember anything from his math sessions or the other professional development offered to him. *Braxton* also had the lowest efficacy for engagement, instruction, and management. *Hailey* had very high efficacy levels for instruction and management, and she considered all her building and district induction sessions helpful and a positive experience. Generally, most participants in this study had efficacy scores that were at or above the national norm, except Braxton (see Table 2). The TSES Short Form universal mean scores were 7.2 for Engagement, 7.3 for Instruction, and 6.7 for Management.

Table 2

Participant Profiles

Participant Name	*Degree*	*Years of Teaching Experience*	*Teaching Position*	*TSES Instruction*	*TSES Engagement*	*TSES Management*
Braxton	BS Math	0	HS Geometry	6	5.25	6.75
Lois	BS Ed	0	HS Social Studies	8	6.25	8
Sophia	BS Elem/SPED	0	K-5 Special Ed	8.75	6.75	7
Mia	BS Elem Ed	0	Element 1st Grade	7.75	7.75	7
Willow	BS Elem Ed	0	Intervent ionist	8.5	7.5	8
Chloe	BS Educ	0	HS English	9	6	7.25
Charlotte	BS Educ	0	HS Spanish	8.25	6.75	7.25
Stella	BS Elem Ed	12+	Element 3rd Grade	6	7.25	7.25
Hailey	BS Educ	0	MS Eng. Social St	6.75	6.75	7.25
Maverick	BS Graphic Design MS Educ	0	MS Computer	8	7.25	8.75

Participant Recommendations for Future Induction Reforms

Each study participant was prompted to consider their final recommendations for the induction program during their follow-up interview. *Braxton* recommended more time specific to the content areas teachers are assigned to. This is a common message of the secondary teachers who had both fewer induction sessions assigned and fewer optional induction sessions to choose from. *Braxton* described

coming from a student teaching placement that utilized traditional approaches to math instruction. “My sessions on mathematics materials removed the guesswork. Knowing the district’s instructional expectations made me feel good about coming here.” *Braxton* described a sense of enthusiasm to work in a district that employed a different approach to math instruction than the one he had in his teacher preparation. Other novice secondary teachers desired to learn more about the content and resources available to them. The exception to this statement came from teachers assigned to specific roles, such as self-contained special education or non-core teaching assignments.

Collaboration and networking opportunities were appreciated, but most of the study participants thought the program would improve with more opportunities for connecting and networking. *Willow’s* experience of the district induction activities was viewed as a “positive experience. I made connections I continue to use today.” Her building-level induction activities were viewed less positively. “I wouldn’t say it was very welcoming in my building. I think this program would be more beneficial if the whole school had to come together and meet and work collaboratively.”

Additional opportunities for improvement of the induction program exist. Providing structured time in their schools with school administrators to learn general operating procedures and student behavior expectations is one area for growth. Several study participants stated that there was little to no interaction with the administrators in their buildings and described that as a program deficit. *Maverick* and *Stella* both thought that as singletons in their building, they needed to be offered content-specific professional learning.

Similarly, determining the effectiveness of the induction program employed by RHSD inspired programmatic improvements to best support beginning teachers’ needs. Improving the induction program for new teachers created the supportive environment novice teachers needed to succeed in their careers. Meeting the needs of the novice teachers new to education ultimately improved certified teaching staff retention rates.

Discussion

Supporting new teachers as they navigated the complexity of their first teaching experience was a top priority for RHSD and in many districts across the country. Satisfied teachers were more likely to remain in the teaching profession than those who were dissatisfied (Callahan, 2016; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Jones & Pauley, 2003; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2001). The success of public education depends on the quality of teachers and school leaders. Ample evidence supported the idea that teachers are critical to students' academic success or failure (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Hattie, 2003). Preparing novice teachers for teaching experiences by providing an induction program was critical to the ongoing success of these new teachers and ensuring all students have access to highly qualified teachers to improve student learning outcomes required public school systems to adopt policies and practices to prepare and support new teachers early in their careers.

One way to do this was through an induction program which included mentoring, professional learning, and collegial support. All of this was critical in creating a supportive transition into a teaching career which determined teacher satisfaction and mobility (Darling-Hammond, L., 2010; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016).) Supporting new teachers was urgent, as the pipeline of qualified educators was not meeting the system's current demands (Cowan et al., 2016). Schools and school districts must identify and implement supportive structures so new teachers can successfully transition into the profession and find the success and satisfaction to stay in their positions. Understanding new teachers' lived experiences in their first year of teaching was a first step toward enhancing the beginning teacher induction service to promote increased teacher efficacy and job satisfaction.

Induction programs were lengthy and complex processes but will ideally produce the desired outcomes by meeting individual teacher needs (LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2012; Martin et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2004). Because of this, induction must be flexible and differentiated to allow for the successful results desired: teacher efficacy, effectiveness, and longevity in the school district. This study sought to

understand the lived experiences of the RHSD induction program to ensure the new teachers find success and satisfaction for them to remain in their positions.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Email

Dear Prospective Participant:

Many of you have received messages from me in the past from the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (TLI). For those of you that do not already know me, my name is Valerie Seales, and I am the Director of TLI for the school district. I am also a doctorate student at the University of South Dakota, and I am conducting my dissertation research on the experiences of teachers in their second year of employment in our school district. This study seeks to identify the experiences of new teachers specifically as it relates to our new teacher induction program (professional development) and the mentoring program (if participating). The working title of my dissertation research project is Induction and Mentoring Programs: Pathways to New Teachers' Retention and Success.

You are invited to participate in phase one of a confidential, voluntary dissertation research study as a teacher in their second year of employment within our school district.

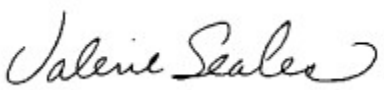
Phase one of this study is limited to completing 10 Likert Scale questions regarding your beliefs on your impact as an educator. You will be asked to answer a few demographic questions as well. This online survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

From this initial survey, 10 participants will be selected to continue participation in phase two of the study, a process that will include a 45-60-minute virtual interview with open-ended questions related to your experiences as a new teacher in our school district. After those results have been analyzed, a follow-up interview of up to 30 minutes will occur to confirm validity of the findings. Participants who are selected and volunteer to participate in part two of the study will receive a $40 Amazon for their time after the conclusion of the study.

Attached, please find the consent form for participation. Should you choose to participate, please affirm your agreement with the consent form. I will then send you the link to the survey. I will ask for verbal consent if you are selected to proceed in the study through phase two. I would like to schedule interviews throughout the months of May and June.

Please respond to this email if you are interested in participating. I look forward to hearing from you. ***Please respond by May 7th, 2021.***

Thank you for considering participation in this research that will ultimately lead to program improvements for future cohorts of new teachers.



Valerie Seales
Director of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation
Doctoral Candidate, University of South Dakota

Appendix B Informed Consent

Consent Form

Title of Project:	INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS: PATHWAYS TO NEW TEACHERS' RETENTION AND SUCCESS
Principal Investigator:	Dr. Mejai Bola Mike Avoseh, Delzell Education Center 201E, USD, Vermillion, SD 57069
Other Investigators:	Valerie Brablec Seales, Doctoral Candidate – USD (605)390-2938 valerie.seales@coyotes.usd.edu

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study about the Induction and Mentoring Program offered to new teachers in Rapid City Area Schools. The title of the research study is "Induction and Mentoring Programs: Pathways to New Teachers' Retention and Success."

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you have before agreeing to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research study is to better understand the experiences of teachers new to Rapid City Area Schools and how the new teacher induction and professional development opportunities have and have not benefitted the new teacher. Additionally, this study seeks to understand what drove decisions to or not to participate in the mentor program. Those study participants that elected to have a mentor will be asked for the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program as well.

Why am I being selected to participate?

Why am I being selected to participate?

You are being asked to participate because you were hired to teach in RCAS within the last 18 months, and as such, you have relevant perspectives on the experience of new teachers within RCAS.

What will be required of me if I choose to participate?

You will be asked to answer a short survey delivered in a Microsoft Form that will ask you to respond to 12 nine-point Likert scale belief statement questions. From there, you may be asked to participate in a follow-up one-on-one Zoom interview that will last between 45 and 60 minutes. This interview will be scheduled at the participant's convenience and is completely confidential. Topics that will be covered during the interview relate directly to your experiences

as a new teacher within RCAS, as well as any suggestions you have for programmatic improvements to the new teacher induction and mentoring program.

What risks might result from being in this study?

There are no known risks associated with this study.

How could you benefit from this study?

Although you may not benefit directly from participation in this study, other new teachers stand to benefit. The results of the study will be utilized to make programmatic improvements to the new teacher induction and mentoring programs for the school district, which will directly impact future cohorts of new teachers.

How will we protect your information?

The records of this study will be kept confidential. To protect your privacy, we will not disclose your identity, and you will be assigned a pseudonym. The research data collected will be stored in a secured, password-protected server. Any report published with this study's results will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission or as required by law.

Anyone allowed access to the information collected about you would be people who work for the University of South Dakota or other agencies as required by law.

I give my consent to participate in this study.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to being interviewed via Zoom.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I give my consent to being videotaped during this study.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to being quoted in the research, I understand my identity <u>will not</u> be disclosed.

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

How will I be compensated for participating in the study?

Participants who elect to be part of this research study will be given a $40 Amazon card to recognize their time and efforts.

Informed Consent

Title of Project:	INDUCTION AND MENTORING PROGRAMS: PATHWAYS TO NEW TEACHERS' RETENTION AND SUCCESS
Principal Investigator:	Dr. Mejai Bola Mike Avoseh, Delzell Education Center 201E, USD, Vermillion, SD 57069
Other Investigators:	Valerie Brablec Seales, Doctoral Candidate – USD (605)390-2938 valerie.seales@coyotes.usd.edu

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study about the Induction and Mentoring Program offered to new teachers in Rapid City Area Schools. The title of the research study is "Induction and Mentoring Programs: Pathways to New Teachers' Retention and Success."

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you have before agreeing to participate in this study. Participation is voluntary.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this research study is to better understand the experiences of teachers new to Rapid City Area Schools and how the new teacher induction and professional development opportunities have and have not benefitted the new teacher. Additionally, this study seeks to understand what drove decisions to or not to participate in the mentor program. Those study participants that elected to have a mentor will be asked for the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program as well.

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You are being asked to participate because you were hired to teach in RCAS within the last 18 months, and as such, you have relevant perspectives on the experience of new teachers within RCAS.

What will be required of me if I choose to participate?

You will be asked to answer a short survey delivered in a Microsoft Form that will ask you to respond to 12 nine-point Likert scale belief statement questions. From there, you may be asked to participate in a follow-up one-on-one Zoom interview that will last between 45 and 60 minutes. This interview will be scheduled at the participant's convenience and is completely

confidential. Topics that will be covered during the interview relate directly to your experiences as a new teacher within RCAS, as well as any suggestions you have for programmatic improvements to the new teacher induction and mentoring program.

What risks might result from being in this study?

University of South Dakota
IRB-21-111
Approved on 4-29-2021

Appendix C: Verbal Consent

Script for Verbal Consent to the Informed Consent Form

I am conducting this research as a student at the University of South Dakota. The study intends to examine the experiences of teachers new to our school district, specifically as it relates to the induction and mentoring (if applicable) programs. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may opt out of participation at any time.

The purpose of this study is to determine the benefits and deficits of the new teacher induction and mentoring programs through an examination of the experiences of new teachers. This study has two phases; phase one was a short survey of demographics and teacher beliefs. All new teachers hired in the 2019-2020 school year were invited to complete the survey. Phase two will include up to 10 participants. Phase two will include a one-on-one interview via Zoom and a follow-up meeting to confirm my understanding of your responses. The interviews will last from 45-60 minutes, and the follow-up meeting will take 30 minutes or less.

All the information obtained in this study, including your name and any identifying information, will be kept confidential. I will assign a pseudonym to all participants of this study; you will remain anonymous in the findings presented as a result of this study. I may want to use direct quotes from you, but only with your prior permission.

Participating in this study has no expected risks, as your responses will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions for me at this time?

If questions arise during your participation in this study please contact me or Dr. Avoseh using the contact information provided to you in the informed consent form. This research project has been reviewed by a committee from the University of South Dakota to ensure your rights and welfare are protected. Should you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Protection at (605)677-6184.

Do you agree to be quoted in this research under an assigned pseudonym?
Do you agree to the Zoom interviews and meetings being recorded?
Do I have your consent to begin asking the interview questions?

Appendix D

Script for Verbal Consent to the Informed Consent Form

I am conducting this research as a student at the University of South Dakota. This study intends to examine the experiences of teachers new to our school district, specifically as it relates to the induction and mentoring (if applicable) programs. Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may opt out of participation at any time.

The purpose of this study is to determine the benefits and deficits of the new teacher induction and mentoring programs through an examination of the experiences of new teachers. There are two phases to this study. Phase one is a short survey of demographics and teacher beliefs. All new teachers hired in the 2019-2020 school year will be invited to complete the survey. Phase two will include up to 10 participants. Phase two will include a one-on-one interview via Zoom and a follow-up meeting to confirm my understanding of your responses. The interviews will last from 45-60 minutes, and the follow-up meeting will take 30 minutes or less.

All the information obtained in this study, including your name and any identifying information, will be kept confidential. I will assign a pseudonym to all participants of this study, and you will remain anonymous in the findings presented as a result of this study. I may want to use direct quotes from you, but only with your prior permission.

Participating in this study has no expected risks, as your responses will remain anonymous.

Do you have any questions for me at this time?

If questions arise during your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Avoseh or me using the contact information provided to you in the informed consent form or me. A committee has reviewed this research project from the University of South Dakota to ensure your rights and welfare are protected. Should you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Human Subjects Protection at (605)677-6184.

Do you agree to be quoted in this research under an assigned pseudonym?
Do you agree to the Zoom interviews and meetings being recorded?
Do I have your consent to begin asking the interview questions?

Appendix E: Interview Protocol

1. Welcome and introduction
2. Establish the purpose of the interview,
3. Establish the purpose of the study,
    a. gain perspectives of teachers new to RHSD
    b. understand the perceived benefits of the induction program is RHSD
    c. understand shortcomings or unmet needs of the program in RHSD
    d. understand perceived benefits of the formal mentoring program
    e. understand shortcomings or unmet needs of the formal mentoring program
    f. identify additional supports that would support new teacher success in RHSD
4. Review of informed consent
    a. safe and open space for honest discussion
    b. confidentiality
    c. participant opportunity to ask clarifying questions before the interview

Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Opening Questions:

1. Tell me about your educational background.
2. What interested you in a teaching position in our school district?
3. What school and grade/subject are you assigned to in our district?

Research Question 1: What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the induction program in RHSD?

Interview Question 1: Tell me which professional development topics most benefited you when you attended your induction sessions. Why were these the most beneficial?

Interview Question 2: What professional development topics were lacking and/or missing from your induction sessions?

Interview Question 3: Tell me about any other professional development sessions you attended in your first year.

Interview Question 4: What support or benefits did you receive as a result of your participation in the new teacher induction program?

Interview Question 5: What induction activities would have improved your experience as a first-year RHSD teacher?

Research Question 2: What are the perceived benefits and deficits of the mentoring program in RHSD?

Interview Question 6: Did you participate in the RHSD and SD DOE mentoring program? (If no, proceed to question 13, if yes, proceed to question 8)

Interview Question 7: Was your mentor a teacher in our district? In your school? Your content area or grade level?

Interview Question 8: Describe for me the relationship you have with your mentor.

Interview Question 9: What was the frequency of formal meetings with your mentor?

Interview Question 10: How frequently did informal (unscheduled) interactions with your mentor occur your first year?

Interview Question 11: What were the most beneficial activities you engaged in with your mentor that supported you as a new teacher?

Interview Question 12: What could have improved your mentor experience?

Interview Question 13: Did you experience any informal mentorship in your first year of teaching, and if so, please describe the experience.

Research Question 3: What (if any) additional support do new teachers need to be successful in 3RHSD?

Interview Question 14: What would have improved your experience as a first-year teacher in RHSD?

Interview Question 15: What changes to the induction program would benefit future generations of new teachers?

Interview Question 16: (if applicable) What changes to the mentoring program would benefit future generations of new teachers?

Appendix G: Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) Permission

Permission to use the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (Short Form) is granted through a blanket permission by the survey's authors on the following website: https://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/#Short. In addition to the blanket permission, the researcher directly contacted Dr. Anita Woolfolk Hoy to obtain direct permission for use of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The permission letters are shown on the following page, followed by a copy of the survey questions. The author of the study utilized an online version of the TSES Short Form and is located on the secure server provided by the University of South Dakota. The survey can be accessed using this link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=U9RY82ZZnUWFokyYFWxUZZ4LSqDJkYZPtAnXjBNpZn5UREs2QVRVV1MzS1AwR1lGTTJQS0JLWkJaNy4u&sharetoken=n2URrv8GnD0KBAoLHNEb. 2/27/2021 Mail - Seales, Valerie - Outlook

Re: Permission to use Teacher Efficacy Scale (short form)

Anita Woolfolk Hoy <anitahoy@mac.com>
Sun 1/31/2021 12:11 PM

To: Seales, Valerie <Valerie.Seales@coyotes.usd.edu>

You are welcome to use the Teacher Efficacy Scale in your research as you describe below. This website might be helpful to you:

http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/

instruments/ Best wishes in your

work.

Anita

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, PhD
Professor Emerita The Ohio State University
7655 Pebble Creek Circle, Unit 301
Naples, FL 4108 anitahoy@mac.com 415-640-2017

Ohio State Website: http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/

Personal Website https://anitawoolfolkhoy.com

> On Jan 31, 2021, at 12:51 PM, Seales, Valerie <Valerie.Seales@coyotes.usd.edu> wrote:

Good morning Dr. Hoy –

My name is Valerie Seales. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at the University of South Dakota. I am writing to ask for written permission to use the Hoy and Woolfolk's short form of the Teacher Efficacy Scale as part of my research. I am investigating the effectiveness of my school district's new teacher induction and mentoring program through a qualitative case study. I am seeking to determine if a connection exists between a new teacher's sense of self-efficacy and the value they place on professional learning and mentoring provided to them by Rapid City Area Schools.

My research is being supervised by my advisor, Dr. Mejai Bola Mike Avoseh (Mejai.avoseh@usd.edu), a professor in the School of Education at the University of South Dakota. I am seeking permission to use the attached Teacher Efficacy Scale (Short Form) with my sample of new teachers via a secure online survey platform provided by USD. The form I am requesting is attached for your reference. In addition to seeking permission to use the instrument, I also ask your permission to reproduce it in my dissertation appendix. The dissertation will be published in the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database.

I will include a statement of attribution and copyright on all copies of the instrument, and at your request, I will provide a copy of my research to you upon completion.

If you approve of my use of the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Short Form), please respond to me at valerie.seales@coyotes.usd.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,

Valerie Seales

ANITA WOOLFOLK HOY, PH.D.

PROFESSOR
PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION

Dear

You have my permission to use the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* in your research. A copy the scoring instructions can be found at:

http://u.osu.edu/hoy.17/research/instruments/

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
29 WEST WOODRUFF AVENUE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43210-1177

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PHONE 614-292-3774
FAX 614-292-7900
HOY.178OSU.EDU

Appendix H: Demographics Survey and TSES

Teacher Efficacy Scale (Short Form)*

A number of statements about organizations, people, and teaching are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinion. Your responses will remain confidential.

Instructions: After completing the demographic information questions you will be asked to indicate your personal opinion about each statement by selecting the appropriate response that most closely matches your opinion.

*In Woolfolk Hoy, A. (1993). Teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational health of schools. The Elementary School Journal 93, 256-372.

* Required

1. Please enter your full name. *

2. Do you have public school teaching experience prior to working for this district? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes
   ◯ No

3. What is your gender? *

4. Are you of Spanish or Latino origin? *

   Mark only one oval.

   ◯ Yes
   ◯ No

5. What would best describe you? *

Mark only one oval.

- African American
- Asian
- Native American
- White
- Mixed-Race
- None of the Above

6. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in a classroom? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing										A Great Deal

7. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing										A Great Deal

8. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

9. How much can you do to help your students value learning? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

10. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

11. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

12. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

13. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

14. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

15. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

16. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

17. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom? *

1 - Nothing 3 - Very Little 5 - Some Influence 7 - Quite A Lot 9 - A Great Deal

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
Nothing	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A Great Deal

Appendix I

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Survey (short form)

	Teacher Beliefs	How much can you do?								
	Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.	Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite A Bit		A Great Deal
1.	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2.	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
3.	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
4.	How much can you do to help your students value learning?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
5.	To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
6.	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
7.	How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
8.	How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
9.	How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
10.	To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
11.	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
12.	How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

APPENDIX J

Scoring the TSES Short Form

Directions for Scoring the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale[1]

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Construct Validity

For information the construct validity of the Teachers' Sense of Teacher efficacy Scale, see:Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17,* 783-805.

Factor Analysis

As we have used factor analysis to test this instrument, we have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: *Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management*. At times, however, the make up of the scales may vary slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full scale (either 24-item or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

Subscale Scores

To determine the *Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices*, and *Efficacy in Classroom Management* subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally, these groupings are:

Short Form

Efficacy in Student Engagement:	Items 2, 4, 7, 11
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:	Items 5, 9, 10, 12
Efficacy in Classroom Management:	Items 1, 3, 6, 8

Long Form

Efficacy in Student Engagement:	Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22
Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:	Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24
Efficacy in Classroom Management:	Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

Reliabilities

In the study reported in Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) above the following reliabilities were found**:**

	Long Form			Short Form		
	Mean	SD	alpha	Mean	SD	alpha
TSES	7.1	.94	.94	7.1	.98	.90
Engagement	7.3	1.1	.87	7.2	1.2	.81

	7.3	1.1	.91	7.3	1.2	.86
Instruction Management	6.7	1.1	.90	6.7	1.2	.86

[1] Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University; it is sometimes referred to as the *Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale*. We prefer the name, *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale*.