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Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job Support, and Job Satisfaction

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Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job

Support, and Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job
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by

Suzanne Freeman Redman

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers in 1

school district regarding their professional experiences. Novice teacher was defined as someone

with 5 years or fewer in the teaching profession. The study was of an emergent design using

phenomenological qualitative methods that included face-to-face interviews, triangulation of

information, and analyzation with specific adherence given to understanding the social

phenomena of the lived experience from the participants' perspectives. Specifically, the study

addressed possible relationships between novice teachers' experiences and perceptions of

success and self-efficacy that contribute to their choice of continuing in the profession of

teaching. Participants in this study ranged from 23-55 years of age, represented male and female

gender, encompassed all levels of grade configuration within the school district (elementary,

middle, high school), and covered experiences within each of the 5 years of defined novice work.

Information was collected through individual one-on-one interviews covering preparatory

programs, individual school sites, district induction programs, and the relationships developed

within each spiraled experience. This study identified reasons for retention in the population of

novice teachers and possible obstacles that might cause a novice teacher to leave the profession

during or at the end of the 5 year apprenticeship. Information collected revealed that age, timing

of entrance into a teaching career and preparatory programs had an effect on novice efficacy and

job success. In addition data suggested that job support, job fulfillment, as well as future career

choice were influenced by experiences a novice lived through within a school culture including

type of administrative support, peer mentoring, collegial socialization, district expectations, and induction involvement.

DEDICATION

First and foremost I dedicate this work to my heavenly Father who continues to give me strength, joy, and peace in living the journey of life. I will forever praise Him for all He has done for me through this endeavor as my constant friend and helper through this work with His Word and prayer. I have been constantly reminded during this adventure of His promise; Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. He did, He does, and He will forever. If you are reading this and do not know that promise I pray you see the reality of His love and grace!

I would also like to dedicate this work to my mother Doris Freeman who passed away during this journey. She was the best listening ear and advisor anyone could have. I will keep in my heart forever the life lessons and her words that kept me going through this degree: "You're never too old to learn new things," "You won't know until you try," and most importantly, "Whatever you do, give it your best and remember that God will take care of the rest." I miss you every day! I pray to be half the Godly woman and teacher you were. I love you, Mom!

Finally I dedicate this to my loving and supportive family and friends. No one could be as blessed as I am to have both immediate and extended family and friends who have loved and prayed me through an experience like this. I am forever grateful for all you have done to get me to this point!

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I acknowledge all the family and friends who have prayed me through these past couple of years. Thank you! Who could be as blessed as I have been to have you? No one!

To my novice group of participants; thank you for allowing me the honor of being part of your world for a brief time. I pray you will have a career of longevity and joy! This quote is for you and all novice teachers: *"As you prepare for your first day and each day, when your students enter and you encounter their attitudes, ranging from eager, enthusiastic anticipation to uncomfortable, uncertain apathy, recall the powers you have within ... from poet to philosopher... and present yourself to those students as a person worthy of the noble title ... Teacher."-Trish Marcuzzo*

Finally and of most importance I praise my Heavenly Father and acknowledge Him as the giver of everything I have, I am, and ever hope to be! Thank you for all those whom you placed in my life for this time and this journey. Use this work to help others like so many helped me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of public schools education reformers and commentators have perpetually called attention to the challenges encountered by those new to public school teaching (Ingersoll, 2012). Although the National Center for Education Statistics has surveyed attrition and mobility among school teachers for over 2 decades, little was known about the specifics of early career patterns of beginning or novice teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). A novice teacher, also known as apprentice, beginner, or neophyte, refers to an educator who is working in the first 5 years of teaching (Kim & Roth, 2011).

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics report of 2004 teachers who chose to leave the profession within the first 3 years to pursue other careers remained at an unacceptable high level of 33.5% (Yost, 2006). Consistently in the last decade researchers and policymakers have told educational leaders and the public that severe teacher shortages confront our schools. They point to two demographic trends that resulted in increased demand for teachers; increasing student enrollments and increasing numbers of teachers reaching retirement age (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Carroll and Foster (2010) noted the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) conducted a comprehensive study of the education workforce and gave special attention to retirement but with focused questions on:

1. Who is leaving or staying?
2. How fast are they going?
3. Will we replace them? How?
4. How are teacher retirement policies influencing teachers' career choices?
5. What can policymakers do to turn the potential crisis into an opportunity to improve education?

These questions are responded to by the close examination of the novice experience.

Looking at these experiences include studying and assessing data from the dialogue of those working the reality as a novice teacher in public schools, finding connections between what is perceived and what is lived, and seeking truth by having intentional conversations. Analysis of these conversations yields deeper observation, further probing, seeking to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people (Patton, 2002). Vesely, Saklofske, and Leschied (2013) found that teaching was one of the most important and demanding occupations in contemporary society. As teacher success and positive student outcomes have been linked to a strong psychological well-being and enhanced self-efficacy, the contrast has been associated to the demands of the job that included occupational stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction.

According to Costigan (2005) over the last 3 decades there have been many studies conducted within the educational research community to determine the process of how new teachers come to understand themselves as teachers. This knowledge is very important as teachers are seen as playing a pivotal role, if not *the* pivotal role, in student learning and achievement, (Vesely, 2013). Retaining teachers beyond their novice years to become more experienced is believed to be a key component of successful student learning and creating schools of excellence (Ingersoll, 2012). Without retention, high teacher turnover rates result in a deficit of quality teachers and instruction, a loss of continuity and commitment compounded by time, attention, and funds devoted to recruitment versus support (Brown & Wynn, 2007).

There is a growing consensus among educators and researchers that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers (Haynes, 2005). We have the opportunity to create a teaching profession that can educate 21st century students for the world of college, work, and civic engagement. To make this opportunity go

beyond a possibility to a reality there must be an abandonment of the 20th century human capital solutions that have become 21st century problems (Carroll & Foster, 2010). A modern education workforce must be developed, and we will have to rethink the teaching career from recruitment through retirement.

Educators and school stakeholders admit America is facing a precipitous decline in teacher experience. In 1987 the typical teacher had 15 years of experience; however, by 2007 teachers most commonly had only 1 year of teaching experience (McAdoo, 2013). After citing the oft-quoted statistic that 50% of teachers drop out of the profession in the first 5 years, researchers Woods and Weasmer (2004) delineated sources of new teacher dissatisfaction including lack of support from administration, lack of authority in designing curriculum, and lack of a sense of personal importance to the culture of the school.

For students this means the odds of having a novice teacher are high, but for schools it means more and more of the faculty are new to the profession and on their way out of a teaching career. Loss of new teachers plays a major role in the teacher shortage, but pouring more teachers into the system will not solve the retention problem (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This is strictly at odds with the goal of building a highly effective teaching force when you ask any stakeholder; parent, principal, student, or teacher (McAdoo, 2013). Until the retention problem is recognized our country will continue to engage in costly annual hiring and recruitment cycles, draining public tax dollars, pouring more and more teachers into classrooms only to lose them at faster and faster rates. This will undermine teacher quality and is reported to certainly hinder the ability to close the achievement gap of our student populations (Carroll, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Estimates by the U.S. Department of Education state that over 2 million new teachers will be needed in both public and private school districts nationwide as teachers in both beginning novice years and those of retirement age are leaving faster than they can be replaced. Therefore, these shortages in the teacher population are predicted to remain until the problem of retention is addressed (Morrison, 2012). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) agreed that while recruitment and retention go hand in hand, it is more important to address retention and possible ways to keep quality novice teachers in the profession.

It was estimated that for school districts nationwide to recruit, hire, and retain replacement teachers to fill vacancies nationwide the cost in 2009 was approximately $7.34 billion yearly (Education, Beginning teacher longitudinal study, 2009). Too little attention has been paid to holding onto and retaining the quality teachers hired (National Education Association, 2007). Considering the cost of recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers, the purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between the novice teacher experience and lack of retention in the population of novice teachers.

This study was conducted in a small district in northeast Tennessee and was an investigation of what issues might cause a novice teacher to leave the profession and likewise identified what aspects created a motivating environment for novice teachers to stay past the first 5 years, defined as the novice experience. The researcher looked at responding to the needs of novice teachers in the first years considering any disconnect associated between teacher preparation programs with on the job reality. The researcher also examined types of induction programs such as mentoring, in-service, and professional development opportunities that yield a positive experience and increase proficiency and confidence within a novice teacher.

Purposefully studying what teachers within this population reported about their experiences that helped keep them within the ranks of educators by building a strong sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Building and supporting positive self-efficacy would hopefully lead novice teachers within the study to choose teaching as a career of longevity and passion.

Research Questions

A fundamental research question guided this qualitative phenomenological study: how do novice teachers perceive their experience of teaching as a career from a personal and professional perspective? Many reasons and relationships are defined in this study that are part of the process a novice educator goes through to make a choice of becoming a career educator or leaving the profession of teaching altogether. Additionally considered in this study were broad subquestions as follows:

1. How do novice teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to their current career?
2. How do novice teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?
3. How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and community affect a novice teacher's self-image and effectiveness?
4. What relationships exist between novice teachers' perception of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?
5. Where do novice teachers see themselves in the future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave?

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited to novice teachers in a small school district in northeast Tennessee. Delimitations included the fact that involved participants worked for a local school system within schools years 2011-2014. Not all of the participants did student teaching or residency in the same school district prior to beginning their job experience in the school system of this study. There were many educators who began work as teachers of record during the years of this research. Unfortunately, I was not able to include all of them in the study.

The interview guide used in this study was designed and implemented for the first time during this research. Due to my background of teaching related arts, having experiences mentoring other teachers, combined with the longevity of my career there may be bias or limitations associated with phrasing, wording, and the order of questions within the interview guide and observation tool. To minimize these limitations the interview guide was piloted with two teachers outside the study's school system who were within the boundary of novice teacher experience. This resulted in some minor revisions of the research tool providing greater validity of data secured within the study.

To protect the authenticity of the phenomenological approach and ensure validity of the findings from any bias, a proxy interviewer was selected and trained for the interview phase of the research process. The proxy successfully conducted all interviews with the aid of a digital audio recorder. Interviews were uploaded electronically to a certified transcriptionist, and the transcripts were provided for review and evaluation. Notes from the interviews and observations were cross referenced, providing for a thorough review and acknowledgment of common themes, trends, and issues regarding the novice experience and giving a valid triangulation strategy.

The findings of this study are limited to perceptions, feelings, reflections, and experiences of novice teachers in one school district in northeast Tennessee. Due to the limitations of participant population, results are not generalized to other novice teacher populations. Findings may be appreciated by other school systems, state legislatures, and departments of education seeking ways to increase novice teacher retention by reducing novice teacher attrition. Staying abreast of current data and strategies to teacher retention not only addresses financial issues on every level; local, state and national, but more importantly the educational achievement and success of generational constituents to come.

Definitions of Terms

For clarification of this study the following terms and definitions are used:

Induction: Activities or programs that can be inclusive of workshops, orientations, seminars, in-service, professional development, and mentoring within a school or district for teachers, specifically novice or beginning teachers (Ingersoll, 2011).

Novice Teacher: A term used to define a teacher who is working within the first 5 years of teaching experience. This term is also used interchangeably with beginning teacher, apprentice, and neophyte (Kim & Roth, 2011).

Preparatory Program: Term given the type of training or degree program for students attending college or university level in pursuit of a teaching degree and certification (Darling-Hammond, 2006)

Retention: The act of retaining something or the condition of being retained referring to keeping a teacher in a position of teaching (retention. 2011. In *Merriam-*Webster.com. Retrieved August 1, 2014, from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/retention).

Self-Efficacy: A term commonly defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome (Bandura, 1997).

<u>Significance of Study</u>

This study is an effort to identify the issues that surround retention in the population of novice teachers. This research study provided an analysis of the perceptions of novice teachers and their current jobs within a small school district in northeast Tennessee. Targeting teacher self-efficacy leading to retention, this researcher specifically studied the perceptions of novice teachers regarding personal job preparation, job support, and issues related to job satisfaction.

Through this study the district and school leaders will have the opportunity to learn what evidence there is that might affect novice teachers' perceptions of their jobs. Analyzing data from this study could be helpful in identification of reasons why novice teachers might choose to stay or leave their chosen field and placement of teaching within school districts. This information may possibly help a district plan recruitment programs and provide further insight into types of successful induction programs needed to sustain and retain novice teachers. Information that builds a novice teacher population into an experienced teacher workforce facilitates more opportunities for the future in school districts with ongoing personal and professional growth.

As more knowledge is acquired about the obstacles alongside the building blocks that support novice teachers, problems become possibilities regarding retention. This knowledge has the potential to lead to successful public school experiences for other novice teachers, school districts, teacher education programs, and state human resource agencies providing the best possible teacher population for students, school communities, and beyond.

<div align="center">Overview of Study</div>

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction for the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, research bias and limitations, delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature organized by topic in relationship to the study. Chapter 3 is a description of the methods and procedures used in this qualitative phenomenological study. Chapter 4 introduces the participants of the study and presented findings of the research and the data analysis. Chapter 5 consists of a summary with findings, limitations and delimitations, conclusions, with recommendations for further research and strategies for practice.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This is a review of relevant literature about the retention of novice teachers. Issues that

affect the retention of novice teachers in this review include:

- teacher education programs and licensure
- relationship of induction programs and mentoring to novice teacher retention
- importance of staff and stakeholder relationships to novice teacher retention
- importance of teacher efficacy to novice teacher retention
- possible solutions and strategies to increase retention of novice teachers

Resolving the teacher shortage is not just a numbers game of hiring new teachers. Many

educators and policy holders alike believe that too little attention has been given to retaining the

quality teachers that are hired (National Education Association, 2007). It is essential to identify

ways to improve novice teacher learning and support as first year teachers comprise nearly 20%

of the teaching workforce and there are no signs this trend will change soon (Desimone, 2014).

The literature within this review includes the reasons, cost, and increasing turnover rate of new

teachers as well as the importance and strategies to retain high quality educators. Teacher quality

is recognized as the most powerful school-based factor in student learning (Haynes, 2014).

Combined with the reasons supporting and resulting in novice teacher retention within

this review, the literature also includes the relationship of novice teacher retention to student

success and the cost of attrition in the novice teacher population to stakeholders, school districts,

states, and beyond. As the current teacher workforce is younger, less experienced, more likely to

turnover, more diverse in preparation and experiences than the workforce of 2 decades ago,

research revealed that inexperienced teachers are less effective (Henry et al., 2014). Hoy and

Miskel (2008) found in their studies that teachers have a very important role in student

achievement and success. Studies have revealed that in contrast to principals, teachers directly influence student learning and are the most important school related factor to higher student achievement and confidence (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Researchers Ingersoll and Smith (2003) agreed that while recruitment and retention go hand in hand, it is more important to address retention. Even though the loss of new teachers plays a major role in the teacher shortage, pouring more teachers into the system will not solve the retention problem. The U.S. Department of Education reported it would take 2.2 million teachers for the current year of 2015 (Morrison, 2012). The most recent report from the National Center for Education Statistics projects a 12% increase in the number of teachers in elementary and secondary schools over an eleven year period from 2011 to 2022, versus the previous report that had a 12% increase in the same populations over a fourteen year period 1997 to 2011 (Hussar, 2013). Both reports projected an increased need for teachers to cover gains in student populations even though some research demonstrated a continuing trend in many areas of teachers leaving faster than they could be replaced (Morrison, 2012).

<u>Retention</u>

Evidence suggests that without serious progress in the management, organization, and funding of public schools, retention is unlikely to increase (Boe, 2008). Three factors that are vital in teacher retention are 1) providing caring and support, 2) setting and communicating high expectations, and 3) providing opportunities for meaningful participation (Malloy, 2007). Darling-Hammond and Sykes focused on meeting the challenge of retaining highly qualified teachers noted that meeting the need for successful retention of this population resulting in higher student achievement, and success will require policy change on many levels including national, state, and local principalities (Darling-Hammond, 2003). In their research Darling-

Hammond and Sykes (2003) argue that training and recruitment of highly qualified teachers should be modeled on U.S. medical manpower efforts supplying well-prepared teachers to poverty and high risk school communities just as doctors are recruited to similar areas.

Research conducted on the experiences of novice teachers in schools noted that a gap exists between the relevance of their professional education and the demand of their work realities (Kim & Roth 2001). Kim and Roth found many novice teachers leave the work force because there is not enough support to create a successful environment. Many studies have suggested teachers most likely to leave the profession are those who are most qualified and academically superior (Benders, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 1984; Murname & Pauly, 1988). According to Benders and Jackson teachers voiced the major reasons for leaving the field were working conditions that included a lack ofsupport from administration and peers, lack of respect, limited opportunities for advancment, and salary level (2012).

A study measuring the effectiveness of teachers by years of experience found that the highest achievement of students occurs within the first 5-10 year range proving the need to retain and support the novice teacher past the first 5 year period (WISSP, Washington State). The Center for Public Education reported that 5 years or more teaching experience produces higher student results, while further research reports the effect of inexperienced teachers can be a significant obstacle to student achievement (CPE, 2005). The Center for Public Education (2002) highlighted three positive effects of teachers on student learning:

1. The effect of teaching on student learning is greater than student ethnicity or family income, school attended by student, or class size.
2. The effect is stronger for poor and/or minority students than for their more affluent and/or white peers, although all groups benefit from effective teachers.
3. The effects accumulate over the years.

Brown and Wynn (2007), interviewed administrators to investigate what they had to say about hiring new teachers and the retention of this population. They found a shared belief among leaders of schools that school systems need to be aware of the possible disconnect between teacher prep programs and classroom life. Morrison (2012) found one way to overcome this disconnect was to keep the new teachers involved and equipped and not allow isolation. When describing efforts to recruit, retain, and support new teachers, most of the participants in Brown and Wynn (2007) study had similar informal strategies in keeping new teachers informed, renewed, and inspired. There must be a conscious attempt to provide conditions and resources needed to support new teachers in their continuous learning, growth, and professional development (Morrison, 2012).

A common theme among novice teachers that emerged in one study was shared norms and values and their connection to teacher retention that includes the moral purpose of meeting student needs with the importance of high expectations dictating teachers' work (Brown & Wynn, 2007). This shared purpose of student learning among the teachers and principals kept the focus on a mission bigger than themselves, that one focus being what was best for the students (Huling, Resta, &Yeargain, 2012). Huling et al. (2012) stated that principals found themselves looking for new teachers with a passion for educating the whole child and in turn educating themselves. Another study by Brown and Wynn (2007) relating perception of leaders to retention of teachers found leaders felt the need to provide support to these beginning teachers in the form of professional development, in-service, mentoring programs and ensuring a school culture that promotes collegiality of the apprentice teacher within a school and the school district.

Malloy and Allen (2007) studied a specific rural school district and found the answer to recruiting and retaining apprentice teachers was to identify a plan that would emphasize the

benefits of teaching in a rural district. They found a similar plan in the work of Rosenholtz

(1989), who devised 10 essential components of recruitment and retention from his studies that

could aptly be applied to rural settings as well as other school communities. These components

were designed to decrease high turnover rate and increase stability and longer tenure of teaching

experience. In summary, these 10 components included;

1. carefully selected initial assignments of new teachers
2. opportunities to participate in decision making
3. clearly set administrative goals
4. a nonthreatening environment
5. encouragement from colleagues and administration
6. clearly set school rules for student behavior
7. regular and clear feedback with suggestions for improvement
8. opportunities for discussion with experienced colleagues
9. opportunities to react with parents
10. support to experiment and discuss results with colleagues

(Mallory & Allen, 2007).

School districts are currently finding some success by adopting retention strategies that

include mentorship, induction programs, creating small schools, and recruiting new teachers

from within the local community (Scherer, 2012). More recent trends to school organization

around teacher team building and professional learning communities have mitigated the former

autonomous setting and teachers feel more a part of their work, their school, and stake holder

community (Ingersoll, 2003).). Plans that include multiple strategies can provide major benefits

that help improve teacher retention (Scherer, 2012).

<u>Job Preparation</u>

<u>A Brief Overview</u>

From the beginning public education has been considered a cornerstone of American

democracy with a commitment to equal opportunity for all (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, &

Fetters, 2012). The late 1960s and 70s saw Baby Boomers (people born between 1944 and 1964) flood the teaching ranks and consequently in 1976 the average age of a teacher was 36 years of age, creating one of the youngest teaching forces in history with most being women who often encountered limited options in other professions (Carroll & Foster, 2010). Carroll and Foster also stated how this population of teachers made a career commitment to education and by 2004 accounted for more than 54% of the teaching workforce. As this group continued in the classroom they also became seasoned veterans, hundreds of thousands of whom are among our most accomplished educators having decades to develop effective teaching practices (Carroll, 2007). Concern of teacher quality to meet the supply and demand of the labor market has also increased since the mid 1980s in response to the demographic trends of increased enrollment due to the World War II baby boom and retirement of an aging teacher workforce (Borman, 2008).

Teacher Preparation

Research has shown that inexperienced teachers are less effective than those with experience, but little is known about the effectiveness of teachers with different types of preparation programs (Carroll, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Henry, 2014).In many current teacher preparatory programs across the country the most powerful models are where courses and student teaching are woven together like a spiral requiring collaboration between faculties in both the school and university (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Darling-Hammond described the old style teacher preparatory program as one where students took a predetermined list of courses, learning things in the abstract, followed by 8 weeks of student teaching. The weeks during student teaching Hammond's (2012) study found students typically forgot much of what they learned in program courses especially when practices in their student-teaching classroom experience did not resemble those described in the coursework.

A major disagreement found in the review of more than 300 research reports on teacher preparation was consideration of what truly constitutes a good teacher preparation program (Lassonde, Michael, & Rivera-Wilson, 2008). In a recent study of the National Council of Teacher Quality's review of teacher preparation programs there were many flaws cited in the report's validity (Fuller, 2014). Fuller found numerous issues in the report's findings that included the following:

1. Omitted research
2. Missing standards
3. Failure to use existing evidence to validate report findings
4. Poor methodology
5. Failure to conduct member checks
6. Incorrect application of research findings
7. Narrow focus on inputs
8. Lack of strong research base
9. Exclusion of alternative certification programs

(Fuller, 2014)

Fuller contended taking any of the issues listed in the report into consideration when reviewing teacher preparation programs left a less than adequate response to the problem (Fuller, 2014). Ideally, new teachers should be taught some practical "survival skills" in their teacher preparation programs and teacher education courses should address new teachers' concerns, giving preservice teachers strategies for finding the answers to questions that might arise on their first teaching assignment (Mandel, 2006). There is a need to understand the purpose of teacher preparation programs as much more than creating workers for the labor force (Lassonde, 2008). Too many new teachers are being thrust into classrooms with minimal practical teaching knowledge or even actual student teaching experience, especially true in accelerated credential programs (Mandel, 2006).

Strong school to university relationships should provide teacher candidates frequent interactions with powerful classroom educators and authentic classroom experiences at all levels of teacher education to build resiliency within individuals (Bernshausen, 2001).

Licensure

Darling-Hammond asserted that those who have traveled a more traditional path of licensure with student teaching, or those who have been coached and observed in a classroom or who have had a chance to study child development, learning, and curriculum are less than half as likely to leave after the first year of teaching than students who have not had any one of the same opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2012). New teachers' needs differ markedly and even though they are likely to face a number of obstacles and challenges in meeting the expectations of teaching skills and showing competence, most preservice teaching assignments attached to content knowledge courses provide the basic teaching and pedagogical experiences before students start a teaching career (Onafowora, 2004). In a study by Onafowora, it was revealed the transition from learning about teaching theory to a brief teaching internship prepares individuals to teach, but the "mastery" of teaching and instructional effectiveness is likely to occur several years into the teaching practice. According to Darling-Hammond, many current teacher education programs have changed and offer strong clinical experience connected to coursework while strengthening preparation for curriculum development, assessment, and differentiated instruction, all things that matter for keeping teachers in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

<u>Traditional Path</u>

From research on teaching and learning there is strong evidence that teachers need expertise in both teaching and subject matter content with a logical realization that novice teachers will develop pedagogical expertise the longer they teach (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Onafowora, 2004). Darling-Hammond (2012) asserts teacher candidates who have done the following are less than half as likely to leave after the first year of teaching as students who have not had any one of the same opportunities.

1. Those who participated in student teaching
2. Those who were coached and observed in a classroom
3. Those who have had a chance to study child development, learning, and curriculum

One of the strongest influences in the development of teacher efficacy are mastery experiences during student teaching (Hoy, 2005). A study of first year teachers offered the following suggestions from participants to improve traditional teacher education programs:1) include more coursework that focused on elements of classroom management that included discipline strategies and effective means of interacting parents; 2) elimination or limited classes in philosophy and research requirements; 3) addition of opportunities for more interactive field experience beyond observation; 4) more instruction in special education programs; 5) intensified reading instruction; 6) encourage professors to visit school sites to see realism of the classroom and then model effective strategies and theories that reflect the same realism to students (Dillon, 2004).

<u>Alternative Path</u>

Alternative routes and many graduate level programs were first and foremost designed to provide a pathway into teaching for those who already had a bachelor's degree (Scherer, 2012).

Teaching licensure offered to graduates not certified in traditional preparatory programs addressed teacher shortages in particular subjects and districts providing a larger group of applicants with diverse backgrounds (Smith, 2008). One study focused on different paths to teacher education licensure found a challenge with some alternative licensure programs was an issue of clarity in specific coursework and practice teaching experiences that matched desired job training (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Darling Hammond contended that while some programs are very thorough, graduates well prepared, and supported once they get in the classroom, other alternative programs studied put graduates into a classroom without enough background knowledge, practice teaching, and little or no support, resulting in a feeling of failure for the beginning teacher.

In 2005 Teach Tennessee, an alternative licensure program designed to get teachers in the classrooms of hard-to-fill areas of math, science, and foreign language boasted an 83% retention rate (Huffman, 2014). Huffman (2014) reported the program had a goal of creating an effective entry-point for mid-career professionals. A study of alternative certification and early career special education teachers found an increase in job satisfaction among the study participants (Voris, 2011). This finding aligns with the 2010 MetLife Teacher Survey of 1,000 teachers that indicated job satisfaction for teachers at an all-time high finding an increase from 40% in 1984 to 62% in 2008 (Markow, 2013). According to the survey's findings teachers are more satisfied with their jobs now than they have been in the last 25 years (Markow, 2013). Information from a study that focused on alternative certification educators and special education teachers revealed a decrease in attrition and reduced turnover in classrooms leading to increased student achievement based on research findings of the relationship between teachers experience and student success (Voris, 2011). However, there is widespread concern that there are many

alternative programs that offer too little course work and practice teaching experience leading to job routes that tend to have very high attrition rates from the profession affecting not only the beginning teacher but their students as well (Darling-Hammond,2012).

A more current trend in the political arena is to remove any barriers to alternative routes into teaching as a career. The National Council for Teacher Quality recently recommended that with mechanisms in place to monitor and ensure teacher quality, prior to states to receiving their ESEA (Elementary Secondary Education Act) funding there should be a precondition for alternative certification opportunities to exist, removing any barriers into the teaching profession by alternate routes (NCTQ, 2011).

Induction Programs

Induction programs have been defined as specific programs designed to be a bridge between the student teacher or a candidate who has completed the last component of practice teaching to becoming a teacher of students (Smith, 2004). During the first years of teaching it is imperative for novice teachers receive a quality support system in order to realize success (Jones, 2003). New teachers at risk of leaving the profession cite lack of adequate resources, inadequate mentoring support, and frustration with the politics of the profession as reasons for taking an early exit from the career (Tait, 2008). Due to new licensure programs and continued changes in the teacher workforce induction programs have seen an increase in use across states and districts for beginning teachers (Ingersoll, 2012). Analysis in a study by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) suggested a gradual increase in the percentage of beginning teachers who reported participation in some kind of induction program over the past 2 decades. As one study has suggested, there is a relationship between induction programs and teachers' intentions and decisions to stay or leave the profession, especially in the beginning years (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). Further studies

by Ingersoll and Merrill (2010) have indicated three changes in the demographic character among the teacher workforce with possible compelling effect on induction programs. These included:

1. Growing population or "ballooning" in the teacher work force
2. Increase in novice teacher population
3. Increase in number and instability of new teachers = teacher attrition
(Ingersoll, 2012)

Induction continues to be a major topic in education policy and reform as the purpose of such programs is to develop and enhance teacher skills and performance thereby increasing retention with the ultimate goal of improving student growth and achievement (Ingersoll, 2012).

Increasing novice teacher retention has been attributed to providing quality induction programs to meet the social and emotional need of novice teachers as well as curriculum training and development of good teaching strategies (Joiner, 2008). Ingersoll conveyed the importance of novice teacher induction programs as a means to improve the performance and retention of new hires enhancing their skills in turn preventing the loss of new teachers with the ultimate goal of improving student growth and learning (2012). One NCTAF report concluded that high quality induction programs have been proven to help teachers develop the skills they need to create effective learning environments for their students thereby reducing teacher turnover and in at-risk schools this type of induction helped stabilize the teaching staff giving principals the opportunity to develop genuine learning organizations (NCTAF 2003). Joiner and Edwards found what they defined as a positive significant correlation between the success of the induction program and the climate and culture of a school building affecting novice teacher experiences (2008). In a study by Smith and Ingersoll (2003) of induction and mentoring programs, it was found while there is a relationship between beginning teachers receiving support and retention

rate, the strength of that relationship is dependent on the type of support and the number of supports received.

Angelle (2002), Everhart and Vaugh (2005), and Ingersoll and Smith (2004) state that entering the profession of teaching requires additional on-the-job learning and specialized preparation beyond what these beginning teachers have already learned through teacher certification programs. With the exception of some alternative teaching certification programs, many teachers complete teacher certification programs through colleges and universities. Even with teaching internships and student teaching field experiences, many researchers, including Robinson (1998), Angelle (2002), and Ingersoll and Strong (2011), have said that the greatest amount of preparation for the teaching career comes from actual classroom experience.

Mentoring

One of the most common programs of induction for new teacher learning and support is formal mentoring where a mentor is assigned by a school or district to a novice teacher (Desimone et al., 2014). New teacher mentoring programs continue to develop the understanding of the relationships between mentoring, teacher recruitment, and retention being seen as one of the most visible forms of systematic professional development currently for teachers (Norman, 2004). According to Darling-Hammond of the novice teacher population about three fourths report they have had a mentor assigned to them and participated in an induction program. Being in a classroom with an effective mentor teacher that included observation and graduated responsibilities has a huge positive impact on teacher retention (Darling-Hammond, 2012). Other benefits of a successful mentoring program in early years of a teaching career have been cited to foster not only increased teacher retention but added positive self-efficacy, job success, and student achievement (Solis, 2009).

In a study focused on mentoring programs and teacher retention it was revealed there were four major elements in successful mentoring programs that were: frequency of support, mentor characteristics, professional development and training, and facilitative administrative structures (Waterman, 2011). Aslan and Ocal (2012) found similar components suggested by mentors who were part of a teacher development program. In this study mentors called for three provisions to improve the relationship between mentor and mentee that involved more interaction in the relationship providing needed support, qualification of mentors to include years of experience with specific mentor training, and a need for revision of observation content structure and procedures addressing both parties in classroom teaching, management, and technique (Aslan, 2012). With the expansion in types of teaching certification and licensure, effective mentoring programs acknowledge the role of mentoring programs in recruiting and retaining teachers, a growing prominence of new types of beginning teachers, expansion of routes leading to a teaching career, and aligning mentoring to standards and licensure (Norman, 2004).

It is important to establish clear goals for both mentors and mentees for a successful mentoring program. (Carney et al., 2013). A study of mentoring within a special education population of South Carolina found training mentors to meet the needs of their mentees as imperative to the success of the mentoring relationship (Whitaker, 2000). In the study Whitaker (2000) found two areas of need cited by the mentee population that addressed mentors lack of responding to discipline and classroom management questions and specific curriculum and instructional content issues. According to Danielson and McGreal mentors have specific tasks with their mentee that include to; 1) meet the procedural demands of the school, 2) receive moral and emotional support,3) receive access to other classrooms to observe different models, 4) gain

knowledge about new materials, planning, curriculum, and teaching methods, 5) obtain strong

classroom-management and discipline procedures, 6) develop an understanding of diverse

classrooms,7) engage in self-assessment and reflection, and 8) experiment and develop new ideas

and strategies (Danielson, 2000).

Many novice teachers face their first year with the reality of isolation having no assigned

mentor, little or no professional training to develop teaching skills, and limited contact with

colleagues (Bickmore, 2013). A study of middle school novice teachers placed in effective and

less effective schools found the role of a mentor imperative to the transition of a new teacher

from novice to veteran (Angelle, 2002). Angelle (2002) found a huge gap in the provisions of

mentors between types of schools that went from facilitating professional guidance and nurturing

to no attention at all beyond signatures and check of state mandated lesson plans. Giving new

teachers the right tools to succeed through a successful mentoring program that contained key

principles and practices replaced feelings of uncertainty and anxiety with a sense of value, job

fulfillment, and consideration of teaching as a life-long career (Solis, 2009).

Professional Development and In-service

Belief in one-size-fits-all professional development program aimed at building skills of

new, mid-career, and the most experienced teachers all at the same time may no longer be an

effective option (Klassen, 2010). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future

recommended induction for beginning teachers to extend over the first 3 years of teaching

incorporating a well-planned and sequential program (Wood, 2005). In addition to mentoring for

novice teachers, schools and school districts alike should continue the process of helping the

beginning teacher to meet practical classroom challenges (Mandel, 2006). Mandel (2006)

concedes this type of support can be found in providing professional development training with

content derived from expressed needs of the novice teacher such as a session on practical tips that could include how to design a positive parent conference or the process of figuring grades before the first report card is due. There must be strong training to educate novice teachers in content and methods of their work providing professional development linked to their daily work with standards and students (Lassonde et al., 2008). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found a majority of studies showed beginning teachers who were part of similar induction programs performed better in classroom instructional practices that included differentiation of student work, effective student questioning, classroom management skills, maintaining a positive classroom environment, and lesson planning. Professional development opportunities aligned with specific subject domains including math and science have been found to have positive effects on teacher development, instructional practices, and student achievement (Rolf, 2009).

Brown and Wynn (2007) found school leaders who provided professional development and in-service training sessions supporting novice teachers were linked to ensuring a school culture that promoted collegiality of the same teachers to their school and school district. In a study by Wood (2005) principals were found to have five leadership roles in a successful induction program. These roles included the principal being a novice teacher recruiter, advocate and retainer, culture builder, instructional leader, and coordinator of mentors (Wood, 2005). Strong induction programs that incorporated varied forms of support including mentoring, multiple forms of collaboration, and communication with peers as well as school leadership have been associated with improved retention rates of beginning teachers at the end of their first year (Davis, 2008).

Job Support and Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been noted as an important factor influencing teacher enthusiasm, teacher-student relationships, and teacher retention (Skaalvik, 2010). According to Bruce (2007) every teacher who succeeds in teaching develops a mature teaching style unique to him or her. This style encompasses three major threads: a cognitive thread, which is the knowledge base from which he or she works; a skill thread, which comprises the repertoire of skills a teacher develops; and an affective thread, which sums the outlook from which the teacher views what he or she does. (Bruce, 2007, p.11) When teachers are motivated and have a high degree of job satisfaction students do better in school, become motivated, and, as a result, teachers become motivated by their students' success and the positive cycle continues (Czubaj, 1996). Lumsden (1998) found that when teachers were provided with what they need to remain excited, inspired, and satisfied, maintaining a sense of optimism for teaching, both students and teachers were the beneficiaries. Teachers who enter the teaching profession with resiliency encompassing attributes of optimism, competence, a sense of belonging, and effectiveness are found to have a positive effect on student success, collegial atmosphere, and personal self-efficacy (Bernshausen, 2001).

The personal success of being a school teacher has drastically changed over the past few years (Darling-Hammond, 2012). There is evidence that the exodus of the novice teacher population is due to what has been termed quality-of-life issues (Costigan, 2005). MacBeath (2012) found that poor working conditions, stricter demands for accountability, high stakes testing, coupled with fewer opportunities to build important relationships among peers and school community have been cited as leaving novice teachers with a possible feeling of dissatisfaction and failure. Schools where teachers have been shown to exhibit feelings of

discontent, less gratification and fulfillment, have been associated with increased stress, teacher illness, and absenteeism (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012).

Teacher burnout has been a serious problem in today's workplace as indicated by Maslach and Leiter (1999). Described as a feeling of diminished competence, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased personal skills, burnout has specifically been linked with the career of teaching along with other professions and experiences where a special relationship exists between provider and recipient (Maslach et al., 1999). Garton and Robinson (2006) found that job satisfaction played an important role in determining whether or not graduates remained in their chosen career. A study of early career agriculture teachers by Blackburn and Robinson (2008) determined the existence of a relationship between teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction. They found the shortage of teachers in this area follows the same school of thought the majority of education has followed; 1) recruiting additional quality potential teachers and 2) retaining current teachers, understanding the factors that influence them to leave the profession. Findings of the 2008 study suggested a positive and substantial relationship between overall job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy recommending further research to follow a group of first year teachers throughout the course of the novice experience to more accurately measure the evolution of job satisfaction and teacher self-efficacy (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008). Research has been clear, teacher efficacy is important in contributing to teachers who are persistent, resilient, and can work together effectively to influence student outcomes resulting in a feeling of job fulfillment (Chong et al., 2010).

School Culture and Community

Novice teachers should be supported, valued, and nurtured by the greater school community even though they can individually take steps to preserve their own professional job

satisfaction and morale (Parks, 1983). Joiner and Edwards (2008) suggest that if the climate and culture of a school building do not support induction activities of collaborating, mentoring, and developing educators professionally, new teachers will not be successfully socialized into the school organization. A nurturing school culture and climate has been suggested to reduce risk factors in the lives of children and therefore necessitates creating the same environment for all school personnel including that of the novice teacher (Mallory, 2007). Henderson and Milstein (2003) stated, "We need to promote a healthy, self-confident, effective workforce if we expect educators to be willing and able to support the resiliency needs of students" (p.55). Henderson and Milstein go even further to define the process involved to procure the type of environment it takes to promote a resilient climate and forthcoming work force. They give six steps for building resiliency and mitigating risk factors in the school environment for both students and teachers that include: 1) high expectations that are communicated and set, 2) caring and support, 3) opportunities for meaningful participation, 4) increased prosocial bonding, 5) clear and consistent boundaries, and 6) an environment where life skills are taught. Incorporating these six steps into the daily structure of a school's culture can foster success for both teacher and student acquiring a more positive climate and work place for all (Henderson & Milstein 2003).

A research study by Price (2012) showed that an atmosphere of trust, shared vision and openness creates a positive school climate where the whole school community prospers. Further studies have found that a school's climate has a direct influence on the decision of a teacher to leave or stay (Carroll & Foster, 2010). The health or illness of school climates has been found to be transferred from the members of the school community to the novice teacher and the opposite is true (Angelle, 2002). A study by Fuller and Brown (2014) found novice teachers experienced three stages during their first years; survival, teaching concerns, and pupil concerns. Previous

research supported these same findings that demonstrated the need of placement to be in a positive school culture for the novice to be supported in order to meet the differentiating needs of students (Gould, 2004). In a case study by Angelle, where the termed "syndrome" of a healthy or ill atmosphere of a school community was defined to exist, there was a direct impact on the socialization experiences of novice teachers and their intention to remain or leave the field of education altogether (Angelle, 2002).

<u>Staff Support</u>

Common planning time with other teachers, scheduled collaboration on instruction issues, regular participation in a network of teachers on the Internet or outside district agency, consistent communication with department chair and or school administration, and seminars for beginning teachers are examples of strong staff support needed for novice teachers (Smith, 2004). New teachers who are encouraged and supported with frequent interaction and communication with peers, school administration, and interactive teaching are found to be fostered in resiliency (Benders, 2012).Schools that encourage a sense of collective responsibility among all teachers for student achievement as well as teacher success have been found to provide a culture that is positive, trusting, and comfortable specifically to the novice teacher (Boyd et al., 2011). Socialization is an important issue many induction programs focus their attention on, meeting the needs of all teachers even though many forget that new teachers also struggle with the curriculum (Joiner, 2008). In one study it was reported teachers leave the profession before they have had time to become proficient educators who know how to work with their colleagues to improve student learning (Carroll & Foster, 2010). The outcome is a tight balance in the development of interpersonal exchanges that build satisfaction, cohesion, and commitment (Brown & Wynn, 2007).

Much of the time a novice is isolated from other adults having little opportunity to share successes resulting in a dependency on student responses instead of collegial interaction for professional satisfaction (Lumsden, 1998). A lack of social support and social climate has been associated with teacher burnout (Skaalvik, 2010). Strategies providing higher levels of professional interaction such as teaming novice teachers with at least on veteran teacher in grade level for planning, creating new teacher support groups, and assigning fewer out of class duties to novice teachers allowed more time for collaboration and social interaction. (Stansbury, 2000). Building relationships of novice teachers especially in their first year have been shown to influence a teacher's decision to stay in his or her school (Ingersoll, 2011).

Principal Support

Principals are central figures in schools and have direct influence on a school's climate, while teachers are considered the central figure of influence on their classroom atmosphere (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Beginning teachers have reported what they defined as a "lack of adequate support" from their school administrators as one of the main factors attributing to their decision to leave a position (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Poor communication citing unclear expectations are frequently given as issues for novice teachers giving reason to transfer or leave their chosen profession altogether (Tickle, 2011;Wood, 2005). The importance of the school principal in lowering teacher attrition and increasing retention rates has become a vital part of the solution to this continuing problem facing our schools (Ritchie, 2013). According to Ritchie an administrator who relies on core beliefs and has reliable operating principles is very critical to nourishing and creating the best possible environment for teaching and learning. An emergent theme was found in schools that experience low attrition and transfer rates. These were schools with leaders who encourage and support collaboration among the

apprentice teacher and experienced teacher rather than competition (Price, 2012). Price found these schools were environments where leaders make collective learning possible by creating a family like atmosphere, serving as an advocate, protector, and mentor to new teachers, providing a balance of flexibility and support, direction and guidance, while at the same time maintaining high expectations for both novice and experienced teachers (Price, 2012).Tickle (2011) found effective administrative support to be leadership that focuses on four practices: 1) developing a collaborative school culture, 2) building school visions, 3) developing specific goals and priorities, and 4) offering individualized support. Principals and school leadership who see themselves as learners alongside teachers facilitating collaboration, seeking and giving feedback with focused communication on instruction and expectations have been noted to have a positive impact on student learning and teachers' attitude toward success (Ringler, 2013). Principals play a key role in retaining teachers by providing sustainability in a school community providing clear staff expectations, ensuring accountability, and securing personnel access to necessary supports through creative use of limited resources (Strickland-Cohen, 2014).

Leukens (2004) found nearly 40% of teachers, many beginners in the first years, cited lack of administrative support as a key factor in leaving the profession. A study of first year teacher experiences found teachers placed in schools where principals were all "about the kids" and building socialization and relationships created an attitude among new teachers that inspired loyalty to the school and a desire to stay in teaching due to the positive culture (Angelle, 2006). Leaders who had a focus on assimilation of beginning teachers into the school climate played a vital role in the outcome of novice teacher support as they were found to set high expectations for both novice and veteran teachers alike in classroom activity and beyond (Angelle, 2002). As leaders shared decision making with new teachers on substantive issues, worked collaboratively

with others within a school staff, and shared goals teacher leadership capacity grew within the ranks of new teachers raising confidence and experience (Brown & Wynn, 2007). A resilient bond built in relationships between principal-teacher, teacher-teacher, teacher-student, and teacher-community, supports a process that takes time, effort, planning, and purposeful work by each individual and group (Price, 2012). School leadership that supports novice teachers making their work easier and more meaningful by providing professional development opportunities, time for socialization and interaction with peers, and strong communication between themselves and the novice have been found to be a strong predictor of teachers' intentions to stay in the profession (Boyd et al., 2011).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy may begin at the student level as a teacher candidate experiences confidence and success during his or her preparatory years while working with diverse groups of students in field work and placement activities (Yost, 2006). The concept of self-efficacy represents one of the core pieces of Albert Bandura's work in social cognitive theory (Schwarzer, 2008). Bandura defined self-efficacy and teacher self-efficacy explicitly in his 1997 text; "Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control" where his theory referred to individuals with high self-efficacy expectancies as those who had an inner belief system that "one can achieve what one sets out to do." His work further found that those who believed this were healthier, more effective, and generally more successful than those with low self-efficacy expectancies (Bandura, 2012). The development of self-efficacy beliefs has been identified with four sources that include mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social messages, and psychological states (Pajares, 2000). Mastery experiences are considered to be the most influential among self-efficacy in teachers (Tschannen-Moran, 2007). As an individual lives and acts through daily

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experiences, his or her beliefs can yield diverse effects on the cognitive, affective, motivational, and selection processes (Creswell, 2012).

According to Bandura a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided with an outcome that such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engagement of activities (Bandura, 1997, 2012). Creswell (2012) stated that individuals with strong self-efficacy set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them by:

- Heightened and sustained efforts in the face of failure.
- A quickly recovered sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks.
- Attributing failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills which are acquirable.
- Approaching threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them.

Teachers with a high level of self-efficacy operated on the belief that effective teaching was when all students were teachable through extra effort, using appropriate strategies, building family support, and refuting any community influences to the contrary (Bandura, 1997).

The domain of teaching in schools is one area where self-efficacy has been researched responding to the question of why some teachers succeed in setting and pursuing high goals for themselves and enriching student achievement while others have a tendency to collapse under the burden, not meeting expectations imposed on them (Schwarzer, 2008). As novice teachers encounter many challenges during the first years of their career, none are embedded more deeply to their success than one of the teacher qualification standards concerning competence in subject knowledge and teaching skills embedded within the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB,

2002; Onafowora, 2004) A number of beginning teachers leave the profession early because they do not feel effective (Scherer, 2012). It is believed the more problems new teachers encounter the more likely it is they will leave the profession coinciding with a belief that many factors influence a teacher's decision to stay or leave the profession and these frequently occur during the first few years of experience (Angelle, 2006). There is research that supports the idea that a teacher's self-efficacy and confidence level is related to successful field and student teaching experiences combined with problem solving and reflection, even outweighing positive school climate for novice teachers (Yost, 2006). Beginning teachers who participated in induction programs of mentoring and professional development were found to report reduced feelings of isolation and increased self-esteem, confidence, self-reflection, and problem solving capacities (Hobson et al, 2009). Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress, and lowers vulnerability to depression (Creswell, 2012).

Resiliency has been defined as the ability to bounce back successfully despite exposure to severe risks (Krovetz, 1999). Even though most of the focus on resiliency in education has been on developing and sustaining protective factors impacting student resiliency, it is believed to possibly overshadow the impact on teacher resilience (Mallory, 2007). Henderson and Milstein (2003) stated seven internal characteristics termed "resiliencies" typical in both children and adults based on studies of children and youth from stressful or dysfunctional environments. These seven resiliencies from the research of Woolin and Woolin are initiative, independence, insight, relationship, humor, creativity, and morality. The research suggested that even one of these characteristics can be enough to propel a person to overcome challenges of dysfunctional and stressful environments, and that additional resiliencies often develop from an initial single strength (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). High expectations, meaningful participation, and

provided care and support are the most commonly stated protective factors emerging from

resiliency research and have been practiced in schools to create a resilient climate for both

students and teacher (Mallory, 2007).

Cost of Attrition

Teaching has a relatively high turnover rate compared to other professions and

occupations (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Liu & Meyer, 2005). A substantial difference in attrition

rates was found in a recent study of different teacher preparation program across Washington

state (Goldhaber & Cowen, 2014). Goldhaber and Cowen found one possible reason for

increased attrition in some areas was the type of preparation program a teacher experienced

creating continual turn-over and loss of sustained workforce (2014). The increase in teacher

attrition is becoming a global issue, not limited to the United States (Tickle, 2011). Teacher

attrition has been reported to be especially high in the first years on the job according to data

from surveys, reports, and studies (Aaronson & Meckel, 2009; Ingersoll, 2012; NCTQ, 2011;

NEA, 2007). It has been estimated that from 40% to 50% of new teachers leave within the first 5

years of entry into their career, and first year teacher attrition rates have increased by one third in

the past 2 decades (Ingersoll, 2012). According to Ingersoll (2012) even though all organizations

and job work forces experience some loss of new workers, teaching has been found to have a

relatively high turnover rate that reflects both the number and instability of the novice teacher

population has increased in recent years compared to other professions and occupations.

First-year teacher attrition has been steadily increasing since 1994 and after 5 years over

30% of beginning teachers left the profession (Carroll, 2010). The MetLife Survey of the

American Teacher 2012 reported a 23 percentage point drop since 2008 in teacher job

satisfaction and a 12% increase in just 2 years in the proportion of teachers planning to leave the

profession (Markow, 2013). In the 2010 National Commission on Teaching and America's Future report, the commission found that beginning teacher attrition has surged nationwide by more than 40% in the past 16 years even as an unprecedented retirement wave approached (Carroll, 2010).

Schools and districts lost 2.7 million teachers in the decade between 1995 and 2005, even more than they hired. The commission wrote; "There is no way that current recruiting strategies, even in hyper drive can meet this challenge" (McAdoo, 2013). As severe teacher shortages continued to confront schools in recent years, researchers such as Ingersoll and Smith (2003) pointed at two converging demographic trends that are possible reasons for the growing demand for new teachers. One is increasing student enrollments and the other is increasing numbers of teachers reaching retirement age. For many decades the term "graying" has been implied as a trend in the teaching force that represented the aging of the baby boomer generation and the massive number of retirements from this group that precipitated a teacher shortage crisis (Ingersoll, 2012).

A study of job supply and demand by Aaronson and Meckel indicated the demand for teachers will steadily increase through 2020 due to the impact of baby boomer retirements (2009). Carroll and Foster (2010) concluded we are facing an unprecedented wave of retirements on top of which beginning teacher attrition and the inability to retain new teachers has grown increasingly worse over the past 20 years. Current recruiting strategies cannot meet the challenge by simply hiring new teachers to keep the supply-demand pipeline going (Carroll, 2007).

Whether the issue is transfer or attrition, teacher turnover has big financial cost as it is estimated that in order for school districts nationwide to recruit, hire, and retrain replacement teachers to fill vacancies nationwide the cost has climbed to $7.34 billion annually (Morrison,

2012). The cost of a growing teacher turnover problem is draining resources, diminishing teacher quality, and undermining our ability to close the student achievement gap (Carroll, 2007). Woods and Weasmer (2004) identified teacher job satisfaction as key to reducing attrition, improving job performance, and boosting student outcomes. Carroll and Foster (2010) contended that fostering collegiality through shared leadership, scheduling support meetings for new faculty, providing mentors, and providing inclusion of related arts and special education teachers in departmental gatherings are important for positive novice teacher experiences. If implemented, these strategies will equate to positive outcomes in both areas; reducing attrition and boosting retention (Carroll, 2010)

Summary

Schools in the United States will need to recruit new teachers over the next decade due to four main factors:

1. a growing student population
2. a lack of diversity among teachers to match the diversity of students
3. a need for teachers in specific types of schools geographic locations, and subject areas
4. a shrinking teaching force

(NEA, 2007)

In a 2014 report it was estimated that over one million teachers move in and out of schools every year with 40% to 50% percent quitting within the first 5 years of teaching (Haynes, 2014). The report further stated 3.4 million teachers or about 13% move schools or leave the profession every year, costing states up to $2 billion annually (Haynes, 2014). Retaining novice teachers and building an effective teacher workforce is not a new goal for America's public schools. Even though retention of teachers continues to be the subject of much study, the estimated 33.5% of teachers leaving the profession within the first 3 years of their career is alarming considering the fact schools desperately need qualified teachers (Yost, 2006).

Addressing the learning needs of the novice teacher will improve the rate of teacher retention while refining the quality of the teaching profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The challenge continues to be that of making sure the novice teacher becomes an effective experienced teacher by securing the research and models of effective teaching known to work are in place in every classroom and every teacher's repertoire of professional practice (Barry, 2010). The answer according to Barry is creating schools and school districts that put teacher effectiveness as the foundation coupled with a continuum of professional practices comprehensive of aligning hiring practices, mentoring, professional development, performance evaluation, and expanding career opportunities for all teachers (Barry, 2010). Scott Mandel, author of "The New-Teacher Toolbox: Proven Tips and Strategies for a Great First Year" found through interviews, observations, mentoring, and discussions the number one goal of most first year teachers was simply survival. His work found the concerns of new teachers fall within five broad areas:

1. Setting up the classroom and preparing for the first weeks of school
2. Grading fairly
3. Covering the required curriculum without falling behind or losing student interest
4. Dealing with parents
5. Maintaining personal sanity

(Mandel, 2006)

Carroll and Foster in their work for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that the combination of beginning teacher high turnover rate and veteran teacher loss creates a base of teaching experience that continues to grow thinner each year. During their study they encountered what they termed an emerging conventional wisdom of thought that "experience doesn't matter" which might bring comfort to schools adding novice teachers every

year, but to those teaching within high performing schools that notion is not accepted (Carroll & Foster, 2010).

Experience does matter when comparing research of what experienced teachers do provide when compared to their less experienced peers (Ladd, 2013). Ladd's findings revealed three areas where experience does matter: experienced teachers on the average are more effective in raising student achievement than their less experienced counterparts, teachers do better in teaching and learning curriculum as they gain experience, and experienced teachers strengthen education in other ways beyond the classroom (Ladd, 2013).Without retaining an effective and quality novice teacher population, the likelihood of having a novice teacher are high for students and this is at odds with the goals of building student success and achievement and a highly effective teacher work force (McAdoo, 2013).

Induction programs, educative mentoring, and collaborative relationships all aid in development of pedagogical practices and belief systems that may prohibit a decision to quit and keep a young professional in place for the future (McElroy, 2012). Creating a culture of support through mentoring and additional in-class coaches as one study suggested can increase effectiveness and confidence in a new teacher equating to classroom longevity (Carney et al., 2013). Keeping in mind things that matter to keep teachers in the profession, many teacher education programs have changed and strengthened preparation for curriculum development, assessment and differentiated instruction and offer strong clinical experiences connected to coursework (Scherer, 2012). Scherer further revealed from work of Linda Darling-Hammond that teachers who are fully prepared stay in teaching at much higher rates than those who lack key elements of preparation (Scherer, 2012). Retaining the well trained, prepared qualified

teacher should be the focus of school districts and states experiencing teacher shortages rather than encouraging alternative routes to teacher certification (Yost, 2006).

The vision a school district and principal need is to hire the best possible teachers they can find, support them by setting and exemplifying high expectations, create and insist on a positive school climate, implement strong induction programs, provide meaningful professional development, give fair evaluations, and stimulate a culture where teachers both novice and experienced as well as their students feel safe, known and challenged (Ritchie, 2013). If a combined effort to create an effective school climate is implemented and teachers feel at home, at ease, and able to do their job, teacher attrition rates will lower, teacher experience boosting retention and quality will rise, and most importantly, student expectation, achievement, and successful outcomes will follow (Joiner & Edwards, 2008).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers in one

school district regarding their professional experiences. A novice teacher was defined as

someone with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience also referred to as an apprentice,

beginner, or neophyte. Specifically, the researcher addressed possible relationships between

novice teachers' experiences and perceptions of success and self-efficacy that contribute to their

choosing to continue as professional teachers. This researcher identified reasons for retention in

the population of novice teachers and possible obstacles that might cause a novice teacher to

leave the profession during or at the end of the five year novice experience. The study was of an

emergent design using phenomenological qualitative methods (McMillian, 2010). It was

conducted in a school system in Northeast Tennessee. Based on constructivist philosophy,

qualitative research is concerned with understanding social phenomena from the participants'

perspectives (McMillian, 2010). Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) suggested the focus of qualitative

research was to arrive at an understanding of how people make sense of their world by utilizing

diverse aspects and expressions and purposefully not verifying a causal relationship by falsifying

a no-relationship hypothesis. This type of research gives the researcher and reader a highly

interpretive understanding of a natural world recognizing the multifaceted interpretations of the

human experience (Gall, et al., 1996).

In this phenomenological study the researcher addressed the perceptions, reflections,

opinions, and beliefs of a sampling of one school district's novice teacher population regarding

their roles as educators within the first five years of experience. Creswell describes a

phenomenological research approach as "a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants" (2009, p.13). Moustakas (1994) described phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method involving a small number of subjects who are studied through procedures that include extensive and prolonged engagement required to develop relationships and patterns of meaning.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and ideographically present the perceptions of novice teachers in a small school district in northeast Tennessee. Using phenomenological method enabled the researcher to accurately represent the understandings these teachers constructed as they live through their experiences. The goal was to break through the silence and loneliness that novice teachers typically seem to experience.

Research Questions

The fundamental research question guiding this phenomenological study was: How do novice teachers perceive their experience of teaching as a career from a personal and professional perspective? Secondary questions guiding this study were as follows:

1. How do novice teachers perceive their preparatory program?

2. How do novice teachers experience induction practices in their school and or school district?

3. How do relationships with students, teaching peers, administrators, parents, and community members affect a novice teacher's efficacy?

4. How do novice teachers perceive their individual futures in the education profession?

Research Procedures

Qualitative research procedures demonstrate a unique and different approach to scholarly inquiry (Creswell, 2009). Procedures are not inhibited by predetermined analytical categories but permit inquiry of selected issues to a greater depth and breadth of data with careful attention to detail, nuance, and context (Patton, 2002, p. 227). Therefore, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study. Specific focus on the participant selection, data collection techniques, analysis of data, and role of the researcher within the study are important to the knowledge and truthfulness that can be found from the data in this type of research methodology and procedures involved (Patton, 2002).

Participant Selection

This study was an effort to address the issues that surround retention in the population of novice teachers. Novice teachers also known as apprentice, beginner, and neophyte educators are those defined as being in the first 5 years of teaching (Hoy, 2008). The researcher looked at the perception of novice teachers and their current job experiences within a local school system in Northeast Tennessee. Targeting issues related to retention of novice teachers, the researcher looked specifically at perceptions of teachers in this population concerning their preparatory programs, on-the-job support, job satisfaction, and feelings of self-efficacy.

The methods selected for this study were a combination of purposeful sampling strategies. These strategies included site selection, comprehensive, and maximum variation sampling of a targeted novice teacher population within a Northeast Tennessee school system. Names of those available for participation in the research study were given to the researcher by the Human Resources Department of the school district in study. Participants for this research

study were selected from the list of names provided. Included were novice teachers as defined by the state of Tennessee; teachers within the first 5 years of teaching experience. Participants included novice teachers with diverse experiences including but not limited to elementary, middle, and high school levels, teachers of specific core subjects, special education, untested areas in related arts, and system Pre-K programs. The logic of the population size and diversity is related to the purpose, the research problem, the major data collection strategy, and the availability of information rich cases (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative research has five phases of data collection that often overlap and are interwoven. Data collection begins with planning, then beginning data collection, basic data collection, closing data collection, and completion (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Before beginning this research project, permission was secured to conduct research project from the director of performance excellence of the district where participants were working and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of East Tennessee State University. Participants of the survey were advised that all of their responses were confidential and the demographic information they provided could not identify them within the study. Data collection in this study began when permission for participation was granted from participating district, IRB authorities, and participants and after the interview guide was developed and tested by the researcher and her dissertation committee. Participants were 12 novice teachers within a Northeast Tennessee school district, ranked in the top 10 districts in Tennessee for salary of beginning teachers with a bachelor's degree.

The main data source was information obtained from responses of study participants collected in face-to-face, one-on-one interviews. In-depth interviews of participants by a proxy using a specific interview guide were planned and implemented to obtain desired information. Patton (2002) suggested open-response questions phrased in past, present, or future tense to obtain data on how participants experience phenomena. The phenomena studied were how participants experienced development, induction, and participation in the teaching profession. Keeping aligned with a phenomenological approach using 10-15 participants as Moustakas (1994) ascertained, a phenomenological strategy of inquiry is one where the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon involving a small number of participants (Moustakas, 1994). As interviews and observations with participants were accomplished, patterns of meaning and relationships as noted by Creswell, were developed through prolonged and extensive engagement of the participant about their lived experiences (Creswell, 2009). The format of questions in in-depth interviews were not as noted as the probes and pauses occurring within the interview itself that allowed a deepening trust and connection between the researcher and participant (McMillian, 2010). Therefore, in-depth interviews employed recommended strategies and were scheduled with an interview proxy and study participant defined as the interviewee.

The interview guide was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The guide with an open ended response format was focused on gathering the real life expectations, experiences, and perceptions of being a novice teacher in today's public schools within one small school district. Questions focused on the lived experience of being a novice teacher from preparatory program choice, on the job induction program experiences, day-to-day life within the classroom, and the relevance of relationships with students, staff, and school community to self-efficacy, job

satisfaction, and future professional choices. Developing what Moustakas calls an essence

description collecting information from responses to open-ended questions, significant

statements, and behaviors observed during the data collection and the following analysis

(Moustakas, 1994).

A research assistant was used as a proxy interviewer to minimize any possible bias and

was trained to be aware of the general logistics and conditions related to the data collection

process. McMillan and Schumacher (2010), suggested particular attention be paid to five

contingencies categorized in the logistics of the qualitative interview process. Those five

interview contingencies are the length of the interview session, the location of the interview

session, how many people might be present during the interview session, the number of sessions

it may take to cove the topic, and the communication style of interviewee. Resolved to stay

within those five contingences as much as possible, the researcher made sure both participant

and proxy were aware of the needs for all parties involved to be comfortable, feel safe, and

understand the procedures of the whole interview process.

The researcher asked the proxy to limit the interviews to no more than 90 minutes and to

allow breaks within the interview as needed. The proxy was encouraged to ask follow-up

questions and keep the flow of the interview focused and moving while gaging the pace of

interview questions and response incorporating supportive feedback. Supportive feedback was

defined as positive verbal recognition of responses as well as positive eye to eye and body

communication. In addition the proxy interviewer was asked to make note of interviewee's

nonverbal emotional reactions such as voice tone and inflection, physical comfort or discomfort,

and anything else the proxy perceived as pertinent. Overseeing the data collection, the researcher

upon review of each interview transcript, notes, and recording continued to meet with the

interview proxy and modify the interview protocol throughout the interview and data collection procedures.

Interviews took place in a relaxed, comfortable, and secure environment for the novice teacher participant. This included the novice teacher's classroom, school, or other comfortable place for the participant to be interviewed where the atmosphere would be pleasant, nonthreatening and private. Interviews were one–on-one, face-to-face with responses to questions and dialogue lasting from 60 to 90 minutes. All interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder. Having an audio recording during an interview can provide a much deeper reflective tool for the researcher. Audio recordings do not "tune out" conversation, record words slower than they are spoken, change what has been said either due to the interpretation conscious or unconscious (Patton, 2002).The ability to listen and rewind to listen as many times as necessary coupled with comprehensive notes taken by the proxy provided the depth associated with a phenomenological strategy. Recordings of each interview were secured as well as notes of behaviors and responses observed during the process provided important and distinctive data for individual participants.

The interview began with a brief introduction and overview of the format, need and use of audio recorder, and appreciation for participation. The conclusion of the interview repeated the importance of privacy for the participant and appreciation for participation. No one else was to be in the area for the duration of the interview. Data collected from study participants provided data for each individual that would be studied, compared, then cross referenced between the participants within the selected group, and knowledge learned from the interviews combined with the review of literature captured deeper meaning and understandings of the total novice teacher experience.

Once the instrument was created it was piloted with two nonstudy participants. Following testing, the planned and intentional face to face in-depth interviews of the chosen group of novice teachers from the selected group of participants in the Northeast Tennessee school district began. The interviews were in-depth, extensive, long, and probing. Interviews took place in the school setting of subject or other secure environment of choice by study participant, interviewer, or researcher.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The process of data analysis in qualitative research can have several components and has been referred to by some qualitative researchers as a process equated to peeling back layers of an onion (Creswell, 2009, p. 183). According to Creswell creating a plan for analyzing data for a qualitative research study involves a process that includes preparing the data for analysis, conducting the different analyses, moving deeper into understanding of the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009). Patton suggests that phenomenological analysis seeks to "grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people" (Patton, 2002, pp. 482-483). Thus, the interpretation and analysis of data in a qualitative study depends on the type of strategy used, in this case a phenomenological one that incurs several steps to ensure validating the accuracy of the information involved (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Real analysis begins with the raw data.

The raw data of this qualitative phenomenological study included more than one type of documentation and information collected and analyzed. In analyzing qualitative data there is a blending of steps in the process incorporating both the general and specific research strategies

used (Creswell, 2009). In this study the data analysis began with information collected from the one-on-one, face-to-face in-depth interviews of novice teacher participants and interviewer. Through the in-depth interviews there were four types of data collected to be analyzed from each individual interview session:

- Interview guide with suggested open-ended questions
- Proxy's notes from interview of participant responses
- Audio recording of interview
- Notation of any verbal, physical, or observed emotional reaction to interview subject

Each piece of raw data from individual interviews was organized into categories and prepared for analysis. Every study participant was assigned a number and pseudonym name for anonymity and efficiency of order. All pieces of information gathered from individual interviews were organized and prepared for analysis beginning with interview transcripts with data coded by the number and pseudonym name of participant. The analytical steps suggested by Creswell (p. 185) that followed involved listening to audio recordings, transcribing the interviews, optically scanning material, typing up field notes, and sorting or arranging into different types depending on the sources of information (Creswell, 2009).

Reading through all the organized and prepared data was the next critical step in the data analysis. The challenge of this step in qualitative analysis lies in making sense of substantial amounts of data by reducing the volume of raw information, sieving trivia from significance, identifying important patterns, building a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed (Patton, 2002). Key words were identified from each question of the interview then reading the transcripts and hand written notes revealed themes and descriptions of the phenomenon depicted by the interviews. Interpretation of data is essential to an understanding of the experience or phenomenon (Patton, 2002).The researcher must read each transcript of

interviews several times to identify themes and subthemes. Upon reading the data that included transcripts from interviews, listening to audio recording, making more observations, and taking extensive notes, a system of coding was planned and implemented analyzing data in each piece of documentation digging deeper for the true essence of the experience. The aim of a phenomenological strategy is to transform lived experiences into a description of its "essence" through reflection and analysis (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Prepared, organized, read, and reflected data were transferred to a computer file for efficiency and continued cross referencing. Formulating categories, aligning specific topics to look for, and interrelating different sources of the data granted deeper understanding, meaning, and construction of patterns depicting possible hidden similarities and differences of the phenomenon of study. The essential goal of qualitative research is the ability to make general statements about relationships among categories defined as patterns that are found within the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Continued and consistent cross checking and referencing led to unveiled understandings and important associations entrenched in the data and literature reviewed that allowed for more interpretation, analysis, and accuracy in coding and reporting of all data involved.

<center>Validity and Reliability</center>

Issues surrounding qualitative research are more concerned with dependability, transferability, and faithfulness rather than validity and reliability (Tracy, 2010). Qualitative validity is the process by which a researcher checks accuracy from data findings by using specific procedures, while qualitative reliability reveals a researcher's approach being consistent among varied projects and researchers (Creswell, 2009; Gibbs, 2007). McMillian and Schumacher suggest that validity in qualitative research with a phenomenological design refers

to "the congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.346). Validity relates to whether findings of a qualitative study are considered true and certain: "true" in the sense findings accurately reflect a real situation or experience and "certain" reflecting meaning that there are no good grounds for doubting the findings of the study (Guioin, 2002).

Validity also involves when the researcher makes all aspects of the research design explicit to the participants. In this study these aspects were communicated in steps that included each participant was privately interviewed in location of choice and interviewer clearly specified the goals of interview. The goals were to as carefully and truthfully as possible collect the perceptions of interviewee related to the research subject. The research subject defined as experiences of a novice teacher.

The degree of validity between participant and researcher increases when interpretation and concepts have mutual meaning (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). One of the procedures used in this study was participant verification accomplished by sending each transcript from interviews back to participant for authentication. Combining data collection strategies such as interviews of participant verbatim accounts, recorded interview transcripts, participant review of the transcription, and researcher thematic cross referencing or triangulation procedures intensify validity. Simply stated, trustworthiness is the outcome of shared responsibility, reflection, respect, and communication between all parties involved building both validity and reliability. Therefore, the researcher used the following triangulation techniques:

- Careful instructions to interviewer regarding data collection procedures that attempt to carefully and honestly represent the perceptions of interviewees
- Careful transcription of interviews
- Participant verification of authenticity of transcripts
- Peer review by a teaching colleague who is also completing a dissertation study

- Final review and acceptance by dissertation committee

Triangulation is a tool supporting that a researcher's construction is a process by which the researcher can guard against accusations that the findings of the study are no more than an artifact of a single method, single source, or investigator bias (Tracy, 2010). Denzin has identified four types of triangulation; data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation with a common function of locating and revealing the understandings of the object investigation from attack of various aspects of experiential reality (Denzin, 1994). Triangulation in social science research has various meanings and involves multiple corresponding procedures (Meijer, 2002). The researcher used investigator and data triangulation to align with a qualitative approach combined with the tradition of phenomenology. Phenomenological analysis seeks to interpret and grasp the structure, meaning and essence of the lived experience of a person or group of people (Patton, 2002, p. 482). Claims of validity rest on data collection and analysis techniques (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A conceptual analysis is faithfully derived from data and cross referenced against consistent different data sources. To assure trustworthiness qualitative research must develop thorough and comprehensive descriptions of the context always posing questions about the neutrality (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The Role of the Researcher

How people understand their experiences and make sense of them is what qualitative researchers are interested in (Creswell, 2012). In qualitative research the role of the researcher has three primary responsibilities. They are: participant safety, truthfulness and credibility, and ethical considerations and concern.

Participant Safety

The job of the researcher was to insure the safety and well-being of each participant in the research study sample. Participant safety includes any type of personal embarrassment, danger to home life, school performance, friendships or relationships relative to the participant (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Research should never result in physical or mental discomfort, harm or injury to a study participant. An important part of the process was for the researcher to follow the requirements of the Human Research Curriculum Report part of the IRB (Institutional Review Board) process. Because qualitative research can be more personally intrusive, the researcher was aware and cognizant of the importance to have all paperwork needed to assure confidentiality and anonymity as well as an innate sense of trust between researcher, proxy, and subject participant. A sense of caring and fairness must be part of the researcher's thinking, actions, and personal morality to invite a research subject to feel safe, secure, and important to the research work at hand.

Truthfulness and Credibility

In this study the research incorporated reflexivity in the research process as an important procedure for the researcher to establish credibility. Reflexivity is a rigorous self-scrutiny by the researcher throughout the entire qualitative research process. The researcher poses questions for self reflection, assumes they cannot be neutral, objective or detached. For the data collection during this study the researcher acquired the use of a proxy during interviews to reduce the possibility of bias. As the process of data analysis proceeded the researcher took every precaution to prevent any specific wording in the interview instrument, verbal communication

between participants and researcher, or visual cues that might be considered bias or give suggestion to anything outside of open honest research.

The researcher has been a teacher in the system studied for 12 years, served as a mentor for novice teachers, and been a leadership team member and a coworker with other teachers in the system. The researcher worked collaboratively with a research assistant who served as a proxy interviewer. The proxy interviewer had no ties to the school system or study participants. Using a proxy allowed the researcher to reduce possible bias or prejudice from interfering with data collected during the interviews. As the interviews were completed, the researcher worked to collect information and began analysis, preparing, organizing, and coding data from the interviews searching for common themes to emerge. This collaborative work between researcher and proxy during interviews encompassing data collection gave entry for constant review of the interview guide to increase certainty that information obtained was clearly communicated and collected among all parties.

Patton (2002) suggests that a very important part of the phenomenological analysis is for the researcher to have a shift to phenomenological attitude that requires an *epoche*. The Greek word, "*epoche*" means to refrain from seeing things as they are typically seen, understood, or assumed. In a study by Louis Katz (as cited in Patton, 2002) he wrote:

Epoche is a process that the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of, prejudices, viewpoints or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Epoche helps enable the researcher to investigate the phenomenon form a fresh and open viewpoint without prejudgment or imposing meaning too soon. The suspension of judgment is critical in phenomenological investigation and requires the setting aside of the researcher's personal view point in order to see the experience for itself (Patton, 2002).

<u>Ethical Considerations</u>

Credible research design involves selecting informants and effective research strategies that inherently adhere to research ethics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The reliability of the research reflects on the trustworthiness of the researcher and the work. When the researcher devises roles that elicit cooperation, trust, openness, and acceptance, his or her credibility spreads and builds up the commitment to the research work. In qualitative studies the researcher makes strategy choices in the field, some of which are based primarily on ethical considerations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Keeping a record of ethical concerns helps justify choices in data collection and analysis.

The use of discussion and negotiations were used to resolve any ethical dilemmas in the data collection stage between participant, proxy, and researcher. "Because the primary instrument in qualitative research is human beings… the philosophical assumptions underlying this type of research is that reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (Merriam, 69, 1998, p. 22). The result of this study was the researcher's interpretation of the participants' perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and observations of the benefits and potential obstacles of the novice teacher experience.

Once determination was made as to how data were to be gathered, a triangulation method involving a scrupulous process was administered to each participant's interview. Triangulation is a tool to support the researcher's construction. It is a process through which the researcher can guard against the accusation that a study's findings are a simple artifact of a single method, a single source, or single investigator bias (Qualitative Inquiry, 2014). Meticulous study of the observation and interview notes, the audio-recording of the interviews, and actual transcriptions of the interviews were compiled and discussed in this chapter. All data were analyzed to provide

the most comprehensive descriptive evidence for this qualitative phenomenological approach. Greater interest in the topic and increased credibility may occur when different strategies are used that can yield multiple insights.

Summary

Chapter 3 presented the research design. This was a qualitative phenomenological study of novice teachers regarding their perceptions of:

- Preparation
- Induction
- Lived classroom experiences

In the first section the qualitative approach used to conduct the study was described and defined. The second section stated the fundamental research question followed by secondary questions identifying depth the study depicted. Third and fourth sections of this chapter explained the data collection procedures and data analysis. The fifth section involved the role of the researcher that included the responsibilities of the researcher in relation to the selection of participants, the reason for and use of a proxy interviewer, description of the interview guide, ethical protocol, peer review, the importance and meaning of trustworthiness and validity of the study to researcher, participant, and reader. Chapter 4 presents data collected and analyzed.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers regarding

their professional teaching experiences in a small school district in Northeast Tennessee. One

overarching question guided this study and subsequent interview guide: how do novice teachers

perceive their experience of teaching as a career from a personal and professional perspective?

The study was accomplished through a process of open-ended interviews representing novice

educators from all school district building levels, elementary, middle, and high school.

Also represented by participants were multiple grade levels, individual school sites, academic

domains, and programs. The findings from this study provided an overview and broader

awareness of the novice teacher experience while examining the similarities and differences

embodied within real life occurrences. School district leadership and school staff may find the

information within this study helpful in implementing successful novice teacher experiences. As

data were revealed, administrators might find specific positive relationships between novice

teachers and their success linked to colleagues, students, academic achievement, and positive

self-efficacy. Possible keys to the retention of this population are an understanding of the lived

novice experiences as intertwined between their professional and their personal lives as revealed

within this study.

Selection of Participants

To be representative of the novice teacher population of a small school district in

Northeast Tennessee the following objectives guided the selection process. The sample

represented:

- Every year of novice experience (1-5)
- Elementary, middle, and high school levels
- Different school sites and communities
- Varied subject areas and domains taught
- Male and female
- First or second career choice

A letter of invitation outlining the goals and reasons for study was sent to the school district's Director of Performance Excellence. Upon review and approval, names of teachers within the novice educator population as defined by the state of Tennessee were requested from the district's Human Resources Department. The Director of Performance Excellence sent an email to all novice educators regarding the study with approved letter of invitation. Upon receipt of communication the researcher confirmed participants based on research sample objectives. Educators who contacted the researcher to participate in the study and did not meet the above mentioned criteria were sent an email of appreciation. For the purpose of confidentiality pseudonyms were given to all participants. Interview conversations were used with written permission as participants shared personal experiences, personal reflections, and observations.

Interview Process

Upon confirmation of participation individuals selected for the study were provided an Informed Consent Form for review a minimum of 3 days prior to an interview. Appointments for interviews were planned at a time and place convenient for the participant. Twelve face-to face, one-on-one interviews with open ended questions were recorded and conducted by the primary researcher and the IRB approved research assistant. Interviews began with a brief description of the interview process, assurance of confidentiality, use of digital recorder, and affirmation that he or she would receive a copy of the transcription for approval with an opportunity to either approve as written or revise as needed. Prior to the interview each

participant signed a consent form stating acknowledgment of study requirements and approval of the process.

<div align="center">Interview Data</div>

Handwritten notes and the process of transcribing began once the interview recordings were completed. As transcriptions of individual interviews were concluded, a paper copy was mailed to the participant for approval and request for any changes to be made. For the purpose of confidentiality no electronic data of interviews were passed between researcher and participant during the time of study. The researcher provided self-addressed envelopes for return of approved transcriptions by participants. Careful review and comparison of the data continued as approved transcriptions returned and editing was then done as needed.

A system of numbers was used to code responses. These codes were used to sort information into categories. These categories or themes involved six areas. These themes included time, degree from preparatory program, relationships to self-image and effectiveness, mentors, collaboration with novice, job satisfaction to future choice. Subcategories evolved with years of experience, grade level, gender, and domain or subject areas taught. Further analyzation categorized responses into similarities and differences regarding perceptions of feelings to the lived phenomenon. Results of this process gleaned descriptive and insightful information about the perception of novice teachers regarding their current teaching position, job satisfaction, and intent for future career decisions. The information reported in this section of data gives a summary of responses from the individual participants during their open-ended interviews. Many of the primary questions contained probing thoughts and subquestions to help guide the interviewees to discussing their experiences in more depth for greater understanding of the phenomenon of living the novice teacher experience. Patton (2002) found the challenge to this

type of analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. (p. 432)

Interview Question 1

Can you tell me about yourself and your job?

- What do you teach?
- How long have you been teaching?
- What level (Pre-K, elementary, middle, high school)?
- What type of licensure do you have?

Due to the specific information from responses to this question and possible risk of confidentiality breach, the group is described by novice years of experience as a whole sample.

The study sample group consisted of both male and female. Age range of participants was 24 – 55 years of age. The group had first, second, and third career educators among them. There were two fifth year teachers; one in high school and one in elementary. Fourth year teaching participants represented middle school and elementary. Third year novice included elementary as did second year but with different teaching positions, school communities, and subject areas. First year novice teachers included high school, middle school, and elementary levels. Specific grades taught within the participant group included kindergarten, first, third, fourth, and one SPED (special education) self-contained classroom. Related arts participants covering Pre-K through fifth grades included art, music, and physical education. Middle school participants taught grades sixth through eighth in math and literacy. High school participants taught in core areas with added CTE (career technical education) courses and special education programs.

Interview Question 2

How do you see yourself as a teacher?

- What do you like about being a teacher? Why?
- Dislike? Why?
- What adjectives or labels best describe you and why?
- How do you think others see you? Why?

<u>Perception of Self</u>

Each participant indicated being a teacher was a personal desire though in some cases it was a second or third career choice. Consistently heard throughout dialogue was a longing to make a difference in the lives of young people. Individuals felt fostering a consistent environment of support for their students no matter the subject or grade level taught characterized their expectations at work. As personal experiences, development as a teacher and reflections were shared, unique personalities and work ethic attributed to attaining their goals as teachers evolved. While there was an understanding of the anticipated work to be done, at times the responses portrayed a definite sense of uncertainty and insecurity in how an individual perceived his or her own work being accomplished.

Hal, a second year teacher, compared how he saw himself with how others saw him. He felt that gave him a true picture of how things really were if he looked at both how he saw himself and what others said. Although he appeared confident in his own identity and abilities, he felt uncertain his colleagues also perceived him this way. Hal stated:

> I'm kind of a perfectionist, and so how I see myself as a teacher is much different than what people around me see. I know when I talk to administration here and when I talk to other teachers, I hear them say I am a great teacher, I'm a good student motivator et cetera but I don't see it that way. I hear I am a great teacher and I feel that people see me as a valued educator in the school, as a positive factor. I guess I focus more on the short comings, while I motivate some students I focus more on the one that I can't motivate. I'm a great person to get people to enjoy reading but I focus more on that one or two students who don't' enjoy reading and so, because of that I kind of have conflicting views of myself as a teacher.

Barbara, a first year teacher, seemed uncomfortable when asked to describe herself. Rather than plainly answering the question she provided evidence from student feedback. She communicated:

> I've had a lot of students tell me that I am helpful. Last semester I gave them an end of the year survey. They all said they felt very cared for and they believed I did want them to succeed. Those feelings match how I try to teach and break things down into small baby steps for students to learn so they can reach their goal.

A 5 year novice, Sally, described herself in the way her classroom expectations and experiences went. She believed it was important to be a role model for students. She noticed many of her students did not understand simple, unwritten rules such as knowing to look a person in the eye when greeting them. Initiating conversations, teaching kids how to be kind and respectful was her goal as an educator.

Freda, a novice of 3 years, described herself as energetic, comical, and stern. More than adjectives describing her personality she saw a bigger picture when responding to the question as she offered this description:

> I see myself as a classroom teacher; I don't have any ambitions to go into administration or things like that. I just like being here in the room with my kids. I like younger children. I enjoy being around them and teaching them. Those are things I do enjoy. That's where I see myself. I feel like I try to put humor into the lessons and into the day. We laugh about things especially in my grade level but I also feel it's serious business. We're here and we're going to be engaged, we're going to be doing what we're supposed to be doing and I insist upon that. I can give a child the "look" if I need to. So I can be stern and also have fun with my kids at the same time.

Will, a first year teacher, enjoyed building relationships with students. He especially liked working and observing student growth and success. When asked to match adjectives to his style and personality he said:

> I think I'm energetic, enthusiastic, and excited. At least I would like to think that along with perseverance. I do not like to give up so I'm also resilient, happy, positive and encouraging.

Two year novice Sabrina saw herself as caring, adaptable, and informed. She had a difficult time understanding how any teacher could do his or her job without having those qualities. Just as Sally viewed herself as a caring teacher for her students Hank's favorite thing about teaching was being with and loving kids. Signs of uncertainty surfaced as he described his style of teaching. He had concerns about matching his teaching style to specific grade levels. Hank was concerned he would not be able to teach older children as effectively as he did younger ones. He hoped his organization and analytical thinking was an asset to diffuse his concerns as he described:

> I'm calm and as far as my curriculum, I'm skill focused and performance-based in my teaching but allow students to say what they want to learn about. We discuss what resources we have and would be needed and that seems to make them feel important. I feel like my class environment is safe. I'm organized and analytical to the point sometimes I worry about my questioning style with kids… 'Am I being too immature with fifth grade and asking questions to kindergarten students they can't respond to?' It's always on my mind. I rehearse my lessons in my head the day before just to make sure I think they will get it.

Perception of Others

All participants, no matter the level of experience, saw themselves as helpful, caring, and motivated. However, many were fearful of colleagues' perceptions due to their lack of experience. The thought that someone might consider them a "know it all" or as trying to show off when sharing ideas created anxiety for many. There was a definite desire for their colleagues to see them as helpful and caring of students and their work, but also someone willing to learn and be creative who could be an integral part of a team, school, and student success. When asked how others might see her Barbara a first year teacher revealed:

> I think it's an interesting place to be in your first year and being young. It's hard to sometimes be confident in what I know I am good at because I feel like I am young and I am new so it's taking me a while to feel comfortable sharing what I've made and my ideas with my peers. There are so many things that go through your mind. You don't want anyone to think you are trying to show off. I've had to be ok with being good at the

things I know that I'm good at and, hopefully, I think that's started to establish myself. I have shared some ideas and people come to me and say it was a good idea and they just tell me how they have tweaked it a little. I want them (colleagues) to see me as someone who is helpful and willing to learn and kind of come up with some different ideas.

Patti, a teacher of 4 years, sees herself as hardworking and a motivator having high expectations of herself and her students. She felt her colleagues saw her as a strict teacher but one who cared about her students' learning. Victor felt he was valued as a person and as a team member. He reflected how he cannot see himself teaching subjects some of his peers do any more than they can see themselves in his position. In his words, "I'm doing my thing and we've all got different jobs." While some may not understand all the reasons behind the program he is part of, he hoped his colleagues saw how what he did aligns with the same expectations all teachers have of their students every day. After 5 years in his position, Victor believed others respected him as a colleague and as a person who pulls his weight the same as everyone else.

Sabrina, another fifth year educator, perceived her colleagues thought she was a hard worker, kind, and fair in the way she worked with all students. Wilma, another 5 year novice, recalled being thought of as patient and organized by her colleagues. When asked how colleagues would describe her Freda a teacher of four years said:

> I think my colleagues think I'm a very competent teacher. They did not realize I was a new teacher. I've had people come and say, "We didn't think you were a new teacher." Maybe that's due to my age or maybe just the way I teach and handle my room.

Elsie, a second year novice and second career teacher, described herself as oblivious coming into teaching. The stress, observations, and expectations plus the amount of paperwork were difficult for her to balance. Though she loved kids and teaching, Elsie sometimes felt like the education process got in the way of teaching at times. In her own words she characterized herself and how she hoped she is perceived. "With my background in early childhood, I think my

colleagues would say I'm an advocate for the children for sure. They also might say I'm outspoken. I'm pretty cut and dry."

According to Will, he believed his colleagues may not have perceived his actions as authentic. He thought they viewed him as a naïve, first year teacher based on his personality and actions. He stated:

> Others see me definitely as a high energy personality because I hear them laugh. They tell me they appreciate my positivity with students so I guess they see me as positive. I do think some would say I am naïve because of my personality and it's my first year. But that's okay because I am loud and I just try to be larger than life in an effort to engage students and that's just how God created me to be. It's part of walking out who I am as a teacher.

Sally thought others saw her as she did herself: caring, informed, and adaptable. Hank perceived others as thinking of him the way he described himself: organized, calm, prompt, and hopefully student centered versus teacher centered. He felt his coworkers saw him as laid back because he allowed his program to be student driven and focused on what they wanted. Messing up is okay, making a mistake is part of learning so he felt others see his classroom as relaxed and enjoyed by the students.

Interview Question 3

Why did you become a teacher?

Most participants had extensive responses to this question. Sometimes it was a person who inspired them into a career of teaching and others revealed an experience they had while in school. Hal chose teaching as his second career. He indicated a job change was necessary for him due to lots of pressure and stress from his first career. Victor knew teaching would not provide as much income for his family but he felt teaching would give him a break from his stressful previous job.

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Hal always believed he was destined to be a teacher because his father was a teacher. It was not until he was in graduate school and was asked to write a paper regarding his passion for teaching that he realized he had far greater reasons to become a teacher. "I wrote in the paper and talked about how I wake up every morning and I want to try and have a positive impact on at least one person every day. What better place to do that than education?" Similar to Hal, Barbara also knew she was destined to be a teacher early in her life. She always believed she would be a special education teacher, however, in her first education class at college, Barbara quickly knew she was in the right career just the wrong concentration. She recalled:

> In high school I had an experience helping to tutor and mentor special education students and I thought I wanted to be a special education teacher. That's where I started but when I went on to college I just kept thinking about English and my love for literature and poetry and it drove me to change my major. I just know I wanted to be a teacher. I love going to school and learning and I guess this is probably as close to it as you can get.

Patti, a novice ending her fourth year, did not originally plan to be a teacher. It was not until deep reflection that she realized she had always been a teacher at heart. She said:

> Originally I wasn't going to become a teacher but when I started I did some soul searching, I mean, I have always been a teacher. I have always been a teacher at heart. My mom's a teacher, my aunt's a teacher…teaching is in our family. So I just love it. I love being able to teach people what I love. I love math. I love seeing that light bulb click. It's just…It's great.

Wilma, a novice ending her fifth year of teaching, could never see herself doing anything else. When asked why she chose teaching as a profession she simply responded:

> I just always wanted to be. I just couldn't think of anything else, I've always wanted to be a teacher. I was thinking about being a singer, but I don't have the talent for that as a career so um…that's just what I've always wanted to be.

Becoming a teacher was a third career move for Freda. Her first career was in business, banking and insurance specifically. When her family began to grow she decided to be a stay-at-home mom and raise her family. Once Freda's family was older, she made the decision to go

back to work. She did not go back to the business field but rather decided to go into teaching. She explained her choice as she stated:

> I thought teaching would be something that I could feel like was an important and meaningful profession. While I thought I would enjoy teaching I didn't think it would be all fun and games by any means but I did think I'd enjoy it. I thought that I could be very happy as a teacher and I do like kids.

During her teen years Elsie loved working with children. Even though she had worked with children for much of her life, she chose a degree in business. When asked to think back on how she came to her position today Elsie recalled the journey:

> I ended up in Tennessee leaving a management job to get married. I took a part time job at a local church preschool because I loved children and had no desire to go back into what I did before in business. I had two children and when I returned to work after staying home a while, I had decided to go back and get my teaching degree. Going through a divorce I realized I couldn't raise two boys on my own and on a part time preschool teacher's pay so I thought you know, this is just something I've always wanted to do. And so I'm just going to do it. It was time to make a decision to support my kids and to do what I just love doing and do it fulltime…teaching.

Wanda recalled being in her junior year of college before realizing that education was the place for her. Rather than her choosing education, education seemed to have chosen her. She shared:

> I was in flute performance but I was alone too much. I needed to be around people so I found some courses I was interested in and found I loved learning about the development of children. I remember thinking how much I liked it and so I kept going on with classes and then we had a chance to go into lab schools. I was working with toddlers and I never thought I could do it but I loved it. My mom was a teacher but I didn't think that was for me so I was kind of surprised that I liked teaching even though I did know quite a bit about it with my mom. I sort of fell into a comfortable place, stayed, and I liked it.

First year teacher Will stated that his reason for becoming a teacher was because of a really great band experience he had in high school. It was approximately his junior year when he knew teaching was what he wanted to do. Will's teaching career was affirmed by the positive relationships he had with students and colleagues.

Hank went back to school and received his teaching endorsement because of his love for kids. He reached that decision from a previous job where he worked with children after school. He realized he wanted to teach much more than his job allowed and he could be with children longer on a daily basis. One of his goals was to serve as a positive male role model. The demographics of his first job revealed many children do not have a positive male influence in their lives. Hank felt the need and desire to be that positive role model for the children of his community. He believed teaching would be the best job to have for more contact and a greater impact. He reflected:

> There are a lot of kids in our area that for whatever reason they don't have a positive
>
> male role model and so that's one of the main reasons I wanted to get into teaching. I
>
> wanted to be that for our young guys. I wanted to make a difference.

Interview Question 4

How well prepared were you for your teaching assignment?

- Describe the preparation program and process you experienced in becoming a teacher
- What parts (experiences, classes, interactions) were important in helping prepare you for teaching?
- Did you experience anything in your preparation for being a teacher that was not helpful or even harmful?
- Can you describe experiences that might have helped you be more prepared? Or what, if anything would have helped you be better prepared for being a teacher?

The group of novice educators who participated in this study had seven master's degrees, four bachelor degrees, and one alternative licensure. Six of the seven graduate level educators had undergraduate degrees in subjects other than education. Participants were asked about courses and experiences that were directly related to preparing them for their current job. Age,

choice of preparatory program, and predegree environments all played a role in the varied

experiences and individual perception.

Despite his belief that teachers could never be completely prepared, Hal felt comfortable

with both his undergraduate and graduate degree programs. His master's program was suited for

people who had undergraduate degrees in areas other than education. Though Hal's classes were

oriented on current events there were experiences and areas he felt were lacking. He stated:

> Undergrad I felt I had the knowledge of content, standards, and psychology of classroom management and I was as prepared as I guess I could have been. My grad degree I enjoyed the classes but I don't feel they prepared me as well. We had no type of classroom management classes in grad school. Nothing really on managing behavior or really any depth of how to deal with a student who comes and talks to you and says his parents are getting a divorce or her parents are getting a divorce.

Unlike Hal, Barbara was surprised how well her degree prepared her for teaching. She

was hired straight out of college. She recalled:

> I don't think I realized how much ETSU had prepared me because you know as you move toward the end and I felt like I was taking the same class with a different name over and over and over. It wasn't until I did my first planned observation and had to submit my lesson plan and the number one thing I thought was how I really did learn a lot. Learning objectives and how to write them were drilled into our heads.

Once she realized teaching was her true passion, Patti went straight from an

undergraduate degree to a graduate program. She remembered her program being one that

prepared her well for teaching her content area but lacked practical classroom experiences. She

reflected:

> I was very prepared in the math area which is what I teach. I felt comfortable and very confident in what I teach right now. I think the part that I didn't feel as prepared for was starting the school year. I had never been in a classroom or observed where they actually set up the structure of the class and how it was going to run. I was never in a math classroom where I saw where they did notes, where I saw how they did note taking, their instruction, how they assigned homework and how they differentiated instruction. Now the program I went through for my masters makes students spend a whole year in a school with the same teacher. They get to start the year, go through a nine weeks and start another semester. You get to see all the transition from start to finish. I think that's a

really big improvement. My first year I was just trying to survive and I feel if I had been able to spend longer in the classroom it might have made my first teaching experience go a lot smoother.

Wilma, another novice teacher, believed both her undergraduate and graduate degrees prepared her well for her development as an educator. Perhaps the biggest advantage she took away from her programs was being able to teach in a variety of systems. She believed this provided her with many valuable experiences and perspectives. Wilma said:

> I went to a small liberal arts college and I thought they really prepared me. My undergrad is in early childhood so I spent many hours getting field experience in different classrooms and with different purposes for different courses I was taking. I had a variety being in a city system and a county system for those experiences. Both were very different. I really liked having a whole year of student teaching because I had a whole semester in Kindergarten and one in fourth grade. So I thought that gave me time to really observe a teacher and practice under a mentor. The one thing I wish my undergrad and graduate program had more of were courses with ideas of how to work with parents and more strategies to work with different students.

Securing alternative licensure in order to teach quickly was part of the plan for Freda. She applied to a local university's master's program to obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching for people whose undergraduate degrees were unrelated to education. This program allowed students to earn a graduate degree with teaching licensure. She acknowledged her program's success for what she needed but also noted possible gaps for those not familiar with being around children as she explained:

> The program was basic with teaching us how to put together a math program, a reading program, learning theories of education, what it's like to be a teacher and how technology is incorporated into education today. I feel the most important part was course work on curriculum and instruction. Just because you know something does not mean you know how to teach it. The program did not require a class dealing with classroom management and many of my cohort members felt that would have helped but that's always been my strong suit.

Elsie stated that she firmly believed all teachers should first work as an assistant for a minimum of 1 year before having their own classroom. As a second career teacher, she provided

a different perspective regarding the positives and negatives of her preparation program. She

recounted:

> I do not feel like I was prepared for the real world at all. I wish I had more field practice.
> Maybe what I had was in my mind minimal for what is needed in field experience to help
> you know what classroom life is really like. You know book knowledge is book
> knowledge but the real world is a whole other ball of wax. You can read all day long
> about all the behavioral issues, IEPs, and what you might run into but until you
> experience it on a daily basis you don't have a clue.

Wanda had a great deal of coursework and experiences in her program. Working on a

bachelor's degree she gained much knowledge about theories of learning. She believed the most

beneficial to her was working in the field particularly at laboratory schools. In addition to a

yearlong student teaching experience Wanda completed a Pre-K practicum where she designed

and created a variety of classroom curricula. She reflected upon the short comings of her

preparatory program:

> There were two areas I felt we could have had more practical knowledge on. One was
> classroom management and the other special education or special needs students. We had
> book knowledge of names of things but being able to talk about what to do and how to
> react when you have certain behaviors and children with specific needs would have really
> been helpful.

Interview Question 5

Describe your experiences after completing your formal training in finding a teaching position

and the things done within the district to prepare you for your work?

- Do you have a mentor?
- Was this mentor:
    - Assigned by the district?
    - Someone who offered to help?
    - Someone with whom you just developed a relationship?
- Is your mentor helpful? How?
- What kinds of training, in-service, and professional development have you experienced since you started teaching?
- Has it been useful? How?
- What do you think could have been done differently by the district to help you transition into your current position?

Participants shared perceptions regarding the varied induction programs currently offered by the district. Common themes emerged that emphasized the importance of sustaining and maintaining specific induction programs for new teachers. Participants believed these programs were needed to support and nurture success, confidence, and self-efficacy. These programs included ongoing mentoring, in-service training, and professional development opportunities. The discussion revealed open conversation about individual experiences which are stated below in no specific order or level.

> We have a lot of meetings. There are grade level meetings, we also have the vertical team and it's hard to get to all but everybody is so willing to share what they've made so we also use Dropbox which is probably the greatest thing in the world because we don't have to talk to each other. We also have a professional book assigned to read and discuss with a lead teacher. The book we did had lots of good ideas about how to talk to students and just vocabulary to use as teachers. The teacher meetings and talking with other new teachers and knowing that I'm not the only one has really been helpful.

> The district assigned someone from central office to check in on me about once a month and we would just talk about how it was going. I applaud the district for the way they took care of me and my school had meetings for the whole group of new teachers. This went on through my first year and it was great. I still say the best training I ever received was having kids of my own. And the school district was really gracious letting us go observe other programs in other school systems that are similar to ours and that has been outstanding.

> As a first year teacher the unit studies are helpful since there's so much to get ready but I'm not sure they are as helpful after the first year or two. They sort of feel repetitive. The DMI training helped to think about how to explain that to students. My principal let me go to observe teacher at another school and that helped me to see veteran teachers in the classroom.

> I've been to a lot of trainings. Our district offers a lot and I've been to any they offer to me on math, literacy, and we used to have science ones, plus I also go to special education trainings. After you have been a few times they start to say some of the same things so I just try and take away what I can from that and then feel like okay, let me see what's of value from this. The most helpful for me have been on common core and math when I taught it.

There are all the regular trainings that everyone goes to. There were new teacher meetings going on but I wasn't asked probably because of the way I came in, so I asked if I could come but honestly I didn't get that much new information.

Being a new teacher we had a whole week of trainings and meetings. First it was just orientation like insurance, dress code, state evaluation and then we had trainings on just district stuff like expectations for classrooms, programs, testing, and lots more. The DMI trainings were really, really helpful. We had a math coach and she was amazing. She was really, really helpful and came in maybe once a month to observe and let me know what I was doing well, what I needed help on, and encourage me.

There have been lots of trainings and PD meetings. Some of it has been applicable to my position and some not. What is most helpful are the days and meetings when we get together in subject areas. We talk about standards and curriculum and what they are doing and we share. There were new teacher sessions and they were helpful especially the TEAM rubric and just general district information. We also had some new teacher meetings like Q and A but not many. Those were really helpful so we could ask questions. The technology sessions have all been good and helpful.

The employee orientation meetings were helpful as far as getting to know and understand about the district and what the expectations of the teachers are on a professional level. As far as actual help to know about teaching in the classroom, the introductory orientation I didn't feel was helpful in that area. The most helpful meetings are the ones with other teachers of my domain. Hearing from some of the teachers who have been at it 20 years or more; I mean that's where I get a lot of knowledge, ideas, best practices, and I think they pick up ideas from the younger ones like me too. The other trainings like literacy meetings I've had to go to are helpful some because they at least make me aware of what is going on in other classrooms and I try to pick up tips to use.

The implementation of mentoring within the study population revealed a broad array of practices as well as participant expectations. This was easily detected in conversation as participants shared their individual mentoring experiences. Some participants were assigned mentors while others had no mentor at all. Others had people they referred to as mentors who were not assigned to them but who helped the novices in a variety of ways. Many of these relationships grew into friendships beyond mentoring as recorded from the interviews. A common theme that evolved was the importance of having a mentor or someone in the field to

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just be there for the novice. The truth of mentoring implemented in different ways and levels was

reflected in shared participant responses:

> I was assigned a mentor teacher my first year and met with them maybe three times over the course of the year. I know other new teachers at my school who were not assigned a mentor.

> I was assigned a mentor my first year in my school and he was fantastic. It was absolutely a positive experience for me. Even though he wasn't in my department or knew much about what I taught he was the same temperament as me and that was really good.

> My principal hooked me up with a seasoned teacher in my area at another school. They weren't assigned as my mentor but they met with me outside of school time and looked at what I was doing. We met to talk about my classroom management, class expectations and lesson plans. She took time out of her life to do that and it really helped. I did have a mentor assigned at my school but that person was not in my area of teaching or even in a classroom so it was more like telling me where the copier was. That relationship was not very helpful. The person would check and ask if everything was going okay but that's as far as we ever went. There was no consistency.

> This is my first year without a mentor. I had an assigned mentor for 4 years and honestly this year not having one I'm not sure if I could really tell you the difference. I had more than one over the first four years and we also had a co-teacher to help in any way, but that can be awkward since you plan things together. I understand that we all have a lot on our plates but I had to do all of the reaching out. It would have been nice to have some more mentoring. During my first 2 years I went to one and she told me I was just overwhelmed and then said, 'If I were you I would get out while you're not invested in retirement.' Maybe they were close to retirement but it was discouraging.

> My first 3 years I had a mentor, but now that I'm a professionally licensed teacher I do not have a mentor. They were assigned to me and of course I sought out other mentors on my own, people I met here who I thought were doing a good job and who I noticed seem to have a real handle on teaching and how we're supposed to do it. My assigned mentors I would go to for advice and that was about it.

> This is the end of my second year and I have not had a mentor. I have a teacher I call my champion who was down the hall and unsolicited she just popped in one day and asked if I knew how to put in grades. Since then she and one more teacher have come to my rescue. I can ask them anything and also my lead team teacher. I would call my first team leader a sort of mentor my first year but she was not assigned that. She just was a great leader and helped me a lot. My administration would ask if I was good and if I had everything I needed and I told them how things really were.

> I did have a mentor but I don't think it worked out very well. I think it was assigned by the principal or assistant principal. But I think the problem was just access to that person.

The second year it was the same. The person assigned was in a different place in the building and it was hard to get with them.

There was not a mentor assigned to me. No one officially was introduced to me as that. I think the team I work with just took me under their wing. That has been huge. There are others in the district that helps me when I ask. That's who I really look to as my mentors but no one at my school as an individual one on one.

I did have a mentor but she wasn't really in my area. I think she was assigned by the principal. She was a teacher at the school and even though she is wonderful and has become a really good friend, many of my questions I had she couldn't answer. A retired teacher from my classroom came and met with me and that helped.

My true mentors are the teachers I spent a year with during my internship. I still talk to them today and they continue to help me tremendously as I have grown into my job. They are great for tips on how to teach curriculum or the standards. I do have a mentor at my school assigned by the principal. I consider my student teaching mentors to be my real mentors for learning how to be a teacher.

Although each participant spoke of induction programs in his or her district, there was a clearly stated need for more tailored programs. Participants believed such programs would help to fill a variety of distinctive needs during the novice experience. The following statements were recorded by research participants.

I feel the district could have done better on training us with what we were going to be doing in our jobs. Part of my job is teaching literacy and we have this huge benchmark series that's not textbooks but small individual books based on common core like informational, opinion-based texts.

I know that everybody likes those [teacher in-service days] to grade and you can get a lot of stuff done, but I think it would also be nice if those could be days we had workshops to figure out how to use technology for example.

In the past we have had to go to trainings but we never had any results out of what we did. That made it seem like busy work, you know. Last year we were able to have professional development that was just for our area. It's been great but we had to ask for it, create a proposal, plan it, develop it, and do it. If we had someone from the district who could support us like that it would really help the new teachers and the rest of us. Having real honest conversations about what is going on.

I feel like the system could be more systematic in their new teacher training. It sort of feels sporadic and maybe your first year teaching you observe another teacher in your

grade level at a different school to see another teacher, maybe twice a month or just to get your feet wet on what the district wants you to do.

Technology trainings are important because they really want us to use it. I hear we are going paperless but the problem we have is the application of what they show us. Sometimes I feel like they are trying to put money into technology and say they have it but you know technology for the sake of technology versus are we using technology to teach what we teach which is reading and writing. My kids need to read and write. I think for the first 3 years there needs to be that support like scaffolding to help us get in the groove. Maybe even the first 5 years. I know I would take anything they offered me in the way of just knowing the rudimentary things of how to do my job better. It would be nice if we had support beyond just our own administration but from the district to make sure we are okay.

But what would have been wonderful would have been someone to tell me about draft books before I was given draft books. I don't think I had a full understanding of what the district expected of me as far as model writing. I know about other types of writing like shared writing but not model writing. I just wish we had a little more training and understanding of how the whole literacy block works.

One type of support I really wish we had is a mentor that is in our area that could come and observe me teach and give me feedback once a month or so. That would really help me be better in the classroom and understand what I'm doing that's good and what I need to improve. Someone that has taught what I teach like a veteran teacher maybe not from my school.

Even though everything has been helpful in training and since I started in the district I think it would be nice if they could find a way to have mentors that are from your area or at least interested in your content area.

Interview Question 6

How would you describe the relationships with teachers and others in your school?

- Relationships with teacher peers
- Relationships with principal and other administrators
- Relationships with students
- Relationships with parents

Participants made it clear that relationships played an important role in their success as a teacher and in overall job satisfaction. They shared that laughter and tears, whispers and shouts were sometimes encompassed within one single conversation. One novice simply stated that all his relationships were good between teachers, parents, administrators, and students. Study

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participants offered these comments when asked to describe their relationship with peers and

colleagues at school:

> I enjoy working in the team I do. While we have personal differences for the most part we are compatible and we work well together and we work efficiently. Sometimes I feel disconnect between upper and lower grades but that's due mostly because of the way our rooms are laid out. I have a strong relationship with the related arts team.

Victor, a 5 year novice, noted he had great relationships with everyone but he expressed a

deeper relationship with teachers who could identify with his background. After being in the

same school for 5 years Sabrina stated that her school had a family atmosphere. Personal

hardships are weathered by everyone within her school. That continued to be a positive

experience at her school. The only negative aspect of relationships with peers was expressed as

Sabrina commented:

> Sometimes it is very difficult for people to step out of their roles. I think sometimes we have a difficult time trying to see someone else's point of view. So we assume things that are not necessarily true or can be inflexible with. Strong personalities which teachers often have and points of view can cause some negativity.

Wilma, a fifth year teacher, spoke candidly about relationships with her peers. She

described positive aspects in her relationships with her coworkers and like Sabrina, offered a

negative side. She stated:

> I think my relationships overall with peers are amicable; especially with my coworker. There is a lot of turnover for us and it's hard to be consistent and cohesive as a team. It's also hard and a little tiresome have to explain things over and over because the new person doesn't have it or know it when you have a new team member every year. The rest of the staff it's hard to see just because we are all busy. Maybe faculty meetings but again you sit with your team and don't really get time to fellowship. The only time is when we have staff celebrations or holiday gatherings so maybe three times a year.

Elsie just finished 2 years of teaching. She explained her survival as a full time teacher

largely depended upon a wide variety of colleagues. Elsie had prior experience at the school as

an assistant. She believed the assistant job helped her get to know the school staff on a personal

level. She shared:

> Relationships with my coworkers are supportive. I couldn't live without them. I get along with anybody. I stay away from negativity, not that we have any but if I hear it I stay away because it's a killer for a school and attitudes in my opinion. My best friends were my colleagues first. The closest relationship I have is a teacher who is probably 12 years younger than me. I also think you tend to bond with people of same personality and sense of humor. I love the school and we are a family.

Sally, a teacher of 2 years, had a positive experience with colleagues. She loved the

school and the staff but also realized she doesn't get to see or talk to many people during the day.

Her closest relationships are with colleagues she sees on a daily basis. She explained:

> I haven't really had any negativity. I think my closest relationships are really my assistants. They are rock solid and keep me going. Both have been there a long time much longer than I have so they know so much and keep me straight and we work really well as a team. There is a flow of constant communication. We work so close together it is a very personal relationship. Even outside of my classroom, it's almost always positive. I work with another grade level closer than the others just due to schedules and they are so flexible and adaptive. The only time things have been a little strained is when some classroom teachers are asked to come to meetings. I think it was a lack of understanding. Overall things go really well between all of us I think.

Just as Sally created close relationships due to frequency, Hank created close

relationships due to proximity. Hank stated his closest relationships were to teachers who were

on the same schedule and same hall as he was. He shared:

> On my team we kind of have the same schedule and see each other more than the other classroom teachers. Quite honestly, unless we have a faculty meeting or some type of school performance I don't get to see other teachers or co-workers at all or as much as I would like to. We might pass in the hall but I don't get to talk to them. I really do know my team and I feel positive about sharing with them. I guess it's possibly due to the proximity of my classroom to everybody else outside my team.

Administrators were seen by all participants as a key factor in how their individual

schools functioned as a community of caring professionals. While most participants revealed a

positive attitude toward their administration's impact on the success of a school, some felt a

disparity in their personal support as teachers. On relationships with administration the following

experiences were shared:

> I think I have the most interaction with the department principal and then the head principal. Since I'm new they do all of my observations. Though I was nervous about my post conference but he really did a good job telling me about the positives. He wanted me to know if I felt I did a good job then it was okay to say that you did a good job in this profession. He has helped me with different strategies in my room and that's been a really great collaboration.

> All my administrators have been superb to communicate with. I get lots of feedback and especially on my evaluations. My whole department gets a lot of support and good feedback from our administrators.

> During my five years my school has transitioned from more than one administrator. Both were very supportive but also had very different expectations. Both lead principal and associate complement each other in skill and personality.

> There is a new associate principal but I already knew the person so it feels a little more unapproachable now not necessarily better. I feel both of them are becoming less approachable.

> My experiences with both principals I have served under have been positive. The current leader is very helpful. I could go to them about any issue and they would help me. The same with associate principals we've had during my novice years.

> The administration I serve under now are eager to answer my questions, they are supportive, helpful, and give great feedback on observations. It's a relationship between both of them that is built on respect. I'm super happy with how they do things at school and excited about the future plans we are working on. It's nice to have a team working like that.

> My experience with the first principal I worked with was more negative. We started out really, really good and then I don't know. Every time we had some type of interaction it was never good. It was just discouraging and made me want to get out of this school and even made me question if I was going to be able to do the job of teaching. Now I feel like I have support. The big difference is that I know the current principal and associate are there for me. They are willing to listen and help me.

> The administration team at my school could not be more supportive. I love them. They are very eager to learn about what I do in the classroom, they are flexible and encouraging. I really couldn't ask for more. I can go talk to them about any educational concern and they make time for me. Their leadership style works for me. I need that positivity and encouragement. I thrive off that. Because of them at school I feel like I am thriving as a young teacher.

Participants felt strongly that a relationship between teachers, students, and parents had a huge impact on student success. Many alluded to their own self-efficacy being fostered when positive relationships existed within the working triangle of teacher, student, and parent. A key point participants made was the immense amount of time it took to nurture those relationships and keep them going. Whether positive or strained some communication was viewed as better than no communication at all. In sharing the importance of these relationships participants remarked:

> It takes time to build relationships with students. I think my main role has been an encourager for them. I think parents have a greater appreciation for what I do because their child excels in my room. They talk to me more and I try and keep in touch with them even after the student has moved on. When a parent shares how much their child enjoys what we do in class that means a great deal to me and I try and keep in touch with the family and that really means a lot to them and me.

An older novice noted that relationships with students are always building and constantly going back and forth. He said he believed that a lot has to do with the home environment. He perceived how students communicate with the teacher reveals how they communicate at home. He believed his job was to educate the parents of his students as well. One teacher expressed her concerns and weaknesses when talking to parents:

> Talking to parents I think is my weakest area. I only have one parent who emails. It's hard to get hold of them. My students always have needs so I get with them as soon as possible. This helps build our relationship so no matter what goes on at home my students know I care. I do a lot of one on one talking, I try to coach them one on one to make better choices. With parents I typically hear from the ones whose child has had an issue but sometimes those are the best relationships because they know I care and once the parent knows that we can be a team for the child. That is the best scenario. I also have support with parents if needed from staff liaison and administration.

Building a relationship with students and parents was a process of give and take for Freda. As a 3 year novice she felt that while many parents seemed pleased with their child's

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learning, others believed there was too much required from their children. Discussing the home

to school relationship between teacher, students and parents she said:

> As an older, fairly new teacher I think the relationships with my students are great. I've had many students that I've taught twice due to changing grade levels so I know the kids and their parents' real well. That has been positive for me. I find that with parents if you sit down with them at the first conference or any time you can at the first meeting of the year to just go over expectations and how things are done and tell them something positive about their child.

Elsie contended a strong relationship with the student starts a good relationship with a

parent as she described her strategies and work:

> Being an inclusion classroom and having lots going on it's important to communicate with my parents. The kids know I love them just by the way I care for them in the room and outside the doors of school. It's important to me to make that bond between both child and parent. Overall with parents, I think we have good relationships and that is important to me as a teacher. I try really hard to establish good relationship with parents and it's sometimes hard to do in certain socioeconomic circles. I've given parents my phone number and no one has abused it. It helps some to communicate with me. I try to let them know as their child's teacher there is a certain level of respect that I expect with that but at the same time we have to be in this together if these kids are going to succeed.

It is difficult for a new teacher to create a personal style and program when compared to

the former teacher. This young novice has taken that situation and created his own environment

with a positive attitude and acknowledgment of the excellence before. Things are different as he

stated:

> It's improving with students and parents. The teacher in this room before me was excellent so I have had to build on what they did and also deal with some negative feedback but that is expected. At first students were hesitant and at times resistant relationally but I feel we have turned the corner. The second semester they seemed to embrace me not replacing the former teacher but realizing we are just adding on to what was done.

Interview Question 7

Thinking about your work and all of the people in your professional life, who and what

have really helped you develop as a teacher?

Every participant had an immediate response to this question. Most mentioned a person

or group of people as having the strongest impact on development of the teachers they are today.

Others spoke of an experience that impacted their choice of what to teach or helped to influence

a complete change of careers into teaching. No matter the level of impact or the reason for it, the

truth revealed in responses was consistent. Teachers are influenced, developed, and molded by

life experiences and relationships into the person they are today or the person they hope to

become. Some responses included:

> I can't really narrow it down to one. For me it's my team mate I consider my mentor
> though they were not assigned to me in that capacity. The other is our associate principal.
> She is someone who I can just always talk to and that's the big thing with both of these
> teachers. I can go and talk to them when there's something else going on in life. They are
> always there to discuss and talk and go from there.

> After 4 years one novice teacher gave credit for who she was as a teacher to her

colleagues. "I have a wonderful team of ladies I work with who have taught for ten plus years. I

think they help me keep things in perspective."

> Wilma noted a person from her present job environment and one from the past as people

who have helped mold her into the teacher she is. She explained:

> Our family liaison is the person who has helped me the most giving advice and help with
> problems that come up with students and parents. In meetings with parents where I feel
> the weakest in relationships; I watch as they ask questions and get information we need to
> know that I could not do on my own. I also still keep in touch with my mentor teacher
> from my internship. We still talk to each other and communicate about what is going on.

> Proximity of another colleague helped to develop Freda as a teacher. Similar to Hank, she

formed the strongest bond with her colleague across the hall. Freda demonstrated the importance

of relationships built between teachers in a school building as she noted:

> The teacher across the hall who is younger than me and who also just got her professional
> license is who I feel has helped develop me into the teacher I am today. She is a very
> smart young lady. When I was moved into a teaching grade she spent a lot of time

working with me and showing me what needed to be done over here. She has just been the most helpful person. To me she is a real leader. She has helped me more than anybody to really step into a tested grade and know what it is that we need to do and she was not my mentor.

Elsie was older when she chose teaching as a second career. She quickly discovered her teaching career created a variety of special relationships. Elsie had the support and friendship of many teachers within her building. She described one particular relationship:

> She was teacher and administrator and her knowledge of the system and just teaching in general started my career with advice on going back to school, the journey through, and the process to getting where I am today. She is a great friend and has given a ton of stuff to me as well as advice all along the way. I still call her on behavioral issues. People in the building who have been with me from day one and championed me through the transition of assistant into teacher process I could not be who I am today without them. Some are older some are younger. I also have a couple of professors from my graduate work I stay in touch with and get advice from and just check in with.

Will believed his family made the largest impact on his choosing to become a teacher. He mentioned:

> First I would say my uncle. He has been there to help me just develop as a person and learn to become who I am and be content with me. Then there is my sister who is older and a teacher. She has been such an encourager and helped me throughout my life and college work. Last of all I would say the district team here in my subject area. They are always right there to help when I need it giving me suggestions and support anytime I need it.

Sally felt her development as a teacher continued to be influenced the most by the assistants in her classroom. She summed up their influence as she relayed:

> I would have to say the most important people in developing me as a teacher are probably my assistants. Their experience is much longer and I really go to them for feedback about our room. They do their job because they have a passion for the children. One of them could have a job paying a ton of money but instead she chooses to be at school with the students we have. Her heart is there in our room and she teaches me grace above all things.

Hank recognized two entities that had the most influence on his choice and development as a teacher. The first was a job experience. His career in an afterschool childcare and coaching

position helped him to recognize his passion for working with children. He also felt this experience helped prepare him for what the real world of teaching might be like as he watched students of different ages react with each other, work together, and grow together. The second influence continues to have impact today. Hank reflected on the teacher he had as in internship mentor. He said she was in his opinion the very best at what she did and helped him understand how to take his passion for being with kids to create a classroom for learning, respect, and a safe environment. He shared:

> Being with students and communicating, I would give credit to that first job experience doing after school coaching and childcare. Influencing me as a teacher and having an impact on my development of those first job skills into a full time educator would have to be my elementary internship mentor. Her program was really strong and she had a good classroom connection. Her attitude was awesome and she knew how to build a program step by step and taught me so much. She continues to help me and I have adapted my class to be like hers because I always figured if it worked for her, it would work for me.

Interview Question 8

Who or what do you feel has interfered with your work and development as a teacher?

The following statements were made by participants regarding their negative experiences. Responses detailed a wide array of reasons they felt setback or continued to feel hindered in their own personal growth as a teacher. They reported experiences as follows:

> At times I feel the makeup of our team as a whole has been a detriment to my development as a teacher. Even though we get along in the day to day grind, there is a definite divide within the team possibly because of the way subjects are divided up and how that affects our communication. Whenever an occasion arises where there is conflict of ideas and we don't move forward as fast as I think we should I get discouraged and then my teammate mentor has to bring me back to reality.

> I would reference a team member who I had a debate with in writing class. The situation was really distracting and I felt like it was hard for me. Some people are debbie downers and I've learned to just stay clear of them.

For me it was a professor I had during my first undergrad program. I'm a teacher pleaser even when I go to exercise class. I just love teachers. But, she didn't' believe in me, and we just had a very difficult relationship.

The barrier that I see is that we are married to certain things in this system. For example the way we write and all the expectations for that to be done. We have common core and now we've got RTI on board and I feel like you know while we don't need to throw the baby out with the bathwater we need to keep those good things that we're doing.

The only relationship I can think of that hindered my development was a past administrator who told me they had my back and would put in a good word for me but I found out that never happened. It was a trust issue. It has taken a while to trust any administration again but I'm working on it and getting over that experience. My current situation is not like that.

A 5 year novice became emotional as she recounted an experience with a former

principal that was such a discouraging experience. Thanks to the support of colleagues and a new

administration team she said that was just a bad memory she could deal with now. Without

hesitation, Will automatically reflected upon a memory of the college professor who made him

feel unworthy, not good enough, and worked with a negative attitude. He remembered feeling

that he had no value or worth from the interactions with that one educator.

For second-year teacher, Sally, the interference in her development as an educator was

not a person but a collective group. With conviction she conveyed:

Am I allowed to say the State Board of Education? I think they are who create obstacles for me and all of us. They keep sending all the changes, mandates, and new additions to our job without giving us any more time to do their expectations. That interferes with student learning. They think its helping but it's not. A teacher's place is to be with the students not behind a desk or pushing paperwork.

Interview Question 9

What do you think your future will be?

- Are you planning to stay in teaching?
- How have your teaching experiences compared to what you anticipated?
- Do you want to remain in the same teaching position? School? District?
- Do you wish you had chosen another career? If so, what?

Each participant was asked if he or she had plans on staying in education. Of the 12 participants, 9 responded with "Yes", two said "Maybe" and one said "No." The participants who stated they had plans to remain in education also indicated they were satisfied staying in the same school district. Of the 10 responding positively to staying in education there were mixed reasons and realities to their choice at the time. Some of their decisions will be made based on what happens in the near future, and others plan to stay in teaching no matter what. Even though there were emphatic statements for staying in teaching their reasons varied.

> I don't know. I hate that question more than anything. Where I am right now is trying to make the decision if I have one more degree in me. It's either going to be get my doctorate in Educational Leadership going into administration or it's going to be going back and get my MBA so I can get into the financial sector or business sector. I kind of know I'm not going to be a 30-year teacher. Quite frankly I don't see myself being a 5 year teacher at one school.

Patti's future will be decided based on the location of her husband's job. He is out of the country most of the time and in order to be with him, she would have to quit and move overseas within the year. When asked if she would teach there she replied:

> Possibly, if we needed to financially I would but I would also like to travel with him and see the world. I think I will always be a teacher in some way whether it's teaching, substitute teaching, or doing internships. I would miss it.

For Victor, teaching is a second career and as a 5 year novice he felt he had many more years of productive service. Because his own children are students within the school district he has found teaching to be a job that is indeed productive and fun. He had no desire to leave his current position.

Sabrina had considered her future frequently throughout her novice years. She found this question humorous as she responded:

> It's funny because the first few years I don't think I could have told you I would be a teacher for the rest of my career. But now I think so. I do. I think that it is very important

to find ways to manage stress and ways to keep fresh and excited with an exhausting schedule. That is going to be pretty crucial for me to stay with this field. I had no idea how difficult it would be.

As Wilma ended her fifth year she said that currently her future does not include teaching. She expressed her sadness and loss of optimism as she explained:

I knew it would be difficult, but I thought there would be more teaching to my job and what is the actual art of teaching students and not filling out paperwork and spreadsheets and checking all the boxes on my list. I've lost a lot of passion in just these few years. This is the first year I feel like I've got my feet under me and part of it is because I care less a little bit. Like I can leave and not have all my ducks in a row thinking I'll figure it out tomorrow. It makes me sad to think I would even say I care less about teaching.

Freda was older than most novice teachers because teaching was her third career choice. Age and a lack of experience did not hinder her optimism and clarity for her future in teaching. She confirmed her passion for teaching with her words:

I see that I will remain a classroom teacher until retirement. There has been some talk that I might move grades because I've proven I can teach tested grades. I don't know if that will happen or not. In a way I feel it's an honor to be asked to move. No matter what I'm here to stay in this district and hopefully at this school.

Second-year teacher Elsie saw herself staying in teaching. Her expectations of the job were far from the real world as she relayed:

It's like a thousand times harder than I ever expected it to be. It was a bit of a culture shock. There was so much more to learn than I was ever prepared for but I love it. I used to think I wanted to go into administration but I'm not so sure now. I don't think you get to have the time with children I love.

Will, a first-year teacher, saw his future as good and an adventure. He was uncertain of his location for the remainder of his teaching career but knew he was in the right profession for him. He noted:

I'm not sure where God will have me to be in the future, near or far. If it is here at this school then I will have the enthusiasm and joy to do so. I definitely want to stay in this district and I am happy where I am. In my timeline I see myself staying three to five years in this grade level and then moving maybe up to middle school or high school. I eventually would like to teach college but I want those levels of experience so I can work

with future students and future teachers and I can have the experience to say I've been here and here or been there done that. Maybe at the end of 15 years pursuing a doctorate and teaching college. I think I would like that.

Another novice of 2 years believed moving grade levels and possibly subject matter was

is a wise thing to do every few years. Her future evolved as she said:

I like where I am but I think it's always good to just keep having a plan not lying stagnant or anything. I'm going to go and get my master's in administration and hopefully get a principals license and pursue a possible doctorate. For the next 5 years I see myself exactly where I am but 10 years or so hopefully administration then after more years of experience possibly move into a supervisory or coordinator role.

Interview Question 10 (If more than 1 year experience)

Do you think your perceptions of the questions asked during this interview have changed since your started teaching? In other words, if interviewed with the same questions during your first year of teaching would your responses have been different? If yes, then how so?

A 2 year novice said:

Yes, most definitely. Part of the difference would be due to a change in administration at my school. I have a totally different relationship with the new administration that I had with the former leader. I think my year's experience has been different in some ways due to that change so my responses are also different because of what I have experienced.

As she concluded her fourth year teaching, Patti responded with confidence that her responses would have been different if this had been her first year. She stated:

Oh, I'm sure. My first year I tried to do it all. I was here. The joke was I had an apartment somewhere in this building or I had my own bed. I was here at school most nights till 8 pm and on Fridays I was staying till 10 or 11 pm. Part of it was my husband was out of town and the other part was because I felt like I had to be that far ahead and I had to do it all. From my college training I thought I had to have every lesson with one amazing activity after another in the lesson plan. I had to do everything. It was like I was trying to put on a show every day. And I learned that some days you're going to have great amazing lessons and some days you're not.

A 5 year novice responded:

I think I would have answered. Part of it was coming from another career and moving to a new area with my family real fast. It was a brand new paradigm for me and I had to deal with it. Plus in my other career I had it good, I was treated well, had my own secretary and all of the sudden I was just a rookie teacher. I knew that going in but there's the knowledge of it and then there's the reality of it.

Wilma taught two grade levels during the novice experience and finished her fifth year of experience said:

They would have been different because I started my first year on the cart. The next year I was in a different grade with a classroom. I think the biggest thing that has been taken away so to speak over the years is my optimism.

After only 4 years as a teacher, Freda said:

The first year probably would have been very different really and truly. I came in mid-year and I'm not sure I could have fully answered your questions. If it was last year when we talked after my third year the answers would have been about the same as now.

Completing what she called her first real full year Elsie commented:

I think my responses would have been the same. Like I said I feel like this is my second first year of teaching. My first year from the get go and changing grade levels it's been starting again from the ground up.

At the end of the fifth year Wanda was confident that her responses would have been different as she explained:

My responses would've been different because I would've hoped it would've gotten better. By now I mean I can see that it's gotten better or I would've done something else. I think my first year I didn't feel very successful. Since then like I can say now I think I've had a successful year. I think my students are where they need to be and we've actually enjoyed it. So my responses would have been different based on what changes I see in myself and my students.

Upon completion of her second year Sally felt her responses were the same as if this was the end of her first year. Even though he had one more year of experience than Sally, Hank revealed the same response. He stated that after 3 years of teaching his responses would have been the same. His career so far has been pretty seamless and status quo with staff, program,

students, and community. He was learning and feeling more comfortable about the art of teaching but experiences so far were very similar to previous years.

Interview Question 11

Is there anything else you would like to add for now concerning your experiences so far?

Not many participants had more to add. Those who did shared insight from experiences they felt would help the novice experience. Most were not sure the ideas could become a reality but just shared from their own perspective what would continue to make their novice experience a better one.

A first-year teacher offered:

I think probably the biggest thing that I've learned as a new teacher is there's so many teaching styles. I'm not sure they could do it but I think it would be really neat if we could meet with other new teachers at their planning time within the month or just the school year and talk about how they teach and strategies used. I would like to see what other teachers do because we all talk about the different things and you try to figure out how to adapt it for yourself but it would be really neat to sit in on the other teachers' lessons.

Closing the interview Patti offered one issue she continued to struggle with as she voiced:

The thing I'm having the hardest time with now is motivating students. I don't know that I ever realized there were students who didn't have the support like I did, who don't have parents who don't care if their child does well in school or not. I'm motivated to see that they do well and it's very hard sometimes to see that they don't share my motivation.

A 5 year novice offered a different perspective on new teacher experiences as they concluded:

I really don't see how a person can be an effective teacher without having been a parent. I've pulled so many lessons from my children applying to these children and I sympathize. I just don't see how a brand new, fresh eyed, unmarried young lady or young man can be an effective teacher. I know they're out there but I would say maybe based on my prejudice as an older person married for 25 years I don't see how they can do it successfully. The stress has got to be astronomical.

Another 5 year novice suggested:

I think what you are doing is really important for our school system to know because I know they really don't want us to be out there floating out in space and it's just really how you feel. A person on my team just explained to our group how she had no idea about the six professional development hours that we have to get on our own. She said no one told her so she was grateful our group told her and helped her understand how that worked. She didn't feel well informed. We need to do different for new teachers. We need to give them support because if this if your first job and not having the support of the skills you need to be successful it's a difficult job.

Freda offered a new vision on teaching in elementary for leaders, veteran teachers, novice, parents, and others to think about. "Working as an assistant first really helped me know what was going on in the district. I learned so much from that year of work and knew why things were done as they were." Concluding what she termed her first full year Elsie stated:

I don't think new teachers have a voice very much. Nobody's really asking us how it is really going. Both my rooms I've been assigned to have been bare. Nothing, no materials were there. I had to beg, borrow, and hit garage sales. We need stuff to teach. I mean even basic things. It's expensive to get a room together and we need help to know how to do that. And even though mentoring might be good, I can't see any teacher putting one more thing on their plate. Also, I think some of the administrative days could be used more wisely. I love to come clean up my room and get copies done but I would much rather have a two hour session on how to do DRAs or model writing or draft books.

Finishing her novice experience Wanda had advice for new teacher programs as she suggested:

There's a lot to teaching. There's a lot to figure out. I've been in two school districts but I think having a little bit more detail in the explanation of what you're expected to do if you're coming into the district.

In the closing comments of his interview, Hank, a novice with 3 years felt things were going smoothly but there was concern heard for other new teachers as he noted:

I feel like our district does what they need to in order to prepare first year teachers on the expectation side. Even though I don't get as much classroom content area training due to what I teach. I think for classroom teachers there is more our district can do as far as training in best practices and techniques like what some of the veteran teachers use.

Summary

    Data from interviews were presented and analyzed in this chapter. There were 12 participants engaged in face-to-face, one-on-one interviews. The interview was comprised of of 10 open-ended questions with extended subquestions for a deeper probe of the phenomenon. Individual statements were collected, transcribed, approved by participants, then triangulated to respond to four research questions. Triangulation of the data included analyzation of handwritten notes, interview recordings, and transcriptions. During the analyzation process themes emerged as important building blocks to interpreting and synthesizing the data. In Chapter 5 the data are further discussed and conclusions drawn for possible future implications and research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Introduction</u>

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers in one school district regarding their professional experiences and possible effect of these experiences on their plans to continue working in the field of education. A novice teacher or apprentice teacher was defined as someone with 5 or fewer years of teaching experience. Specifically, the study addressed possible relationships between novice teachers' experiences as well as perceptions of success regarding their preparation program, induction program support, relationships with stake holders, personal job satisfaction, and fulfillment leading to choices for the future. The researcher also identified possible reasons that would create a desire in novice teachers to stay in the profession of teaching as well as obstacles that might cause a novice teacher to leave the profession during or at the end of the 5 year novice experience.

This emergent design study used phenomenological methods for acquiring and analyzing data (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Study population included a purposeful sampling of the novice teacher population within the district and was completed through a process of one – on-one, face-to-face, open-ended interviews. Participants included novice teachers with diverse experiences including but not limited to elementary, middle, and high school levels, teachers of specific core subjects, special education, and untested areas in related arts. Other target goals of the purposeful sample included representation of every year of novice experience, varied school sites within district, gender, age, and teaching as a first or second career choice. Participants were given the opportunity to share their personal experiences, observations, and reflections regarding their work. Responses from interviews were reviewed and synthesized through a

triangulation process in an attempt to reach for truth of the lived phenomenon of each teacher. For interpreting these results Patton (2002) suggested what emerges from this point as a "depiction of the experience and a portrayal of the individuals who participated in the study" (p.487). This chapter contains a summary of the findings, discussion of conclusions, and recommendations for practice and future research. The district of study is a school system in Northeast Tennessee with an already respected population of highly qualified leaders and educators. The Human Resources Department maintains high standards that result in the hiring of highly qualified teacher candidates. Strong induction programs are already in place and leadership from the district and within individual schools promote a productive school culture and successful school communities throughout the district. School district leadership and school staff may find the information within this study helpful in implementing successful novice teacher experiences leading to positive self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and academic achievement in attempting a result of retention.

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

In 2014 data revealed 13% of the American workforce of 3.4 million public schools teachers either moved (227,016) or left (230,122) the profession each year (Haynes , 2014).The cost for school districts nationwide to recruit, hire, and retain replacement teachers to fill vacancies in 2009 were approximately $7.34 billion yearly (Education, Beginning teacher longitudinal study, 2009). Too little attention has been paid to hiring and retaining high quality teachers (National Education Association, 2007). In consideration of current data to the transition within the novice teacher workforce combined with the cost of recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified teachers, the purpose of this study was to identify the relationships between the novice teacher experience and possible retention within the population of novice teachers.

<u>Conclusions</u>

A fundamental research question guided this qualitative phenomenological study: how do novice teachers perceive their experience of teaching as a career from a personal and professional perspective? The use of phenomenological reflections acquired through interviews gave an articulation of perceptions into what is termed "eidetic structures" or the essence of the conscience world as it appears (Packer, 2011). Many perceptions, reflections, and relationships are defined in this study as part of the process a novice educator experiences in making a choice of becoming a career educator or leaving the profession of teaching altogether. Additionally considered in this study were broad subquestions as follows:

1. How do novice teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to current career?

2. How do novice teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?

3. How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and community affect a novice teacher's self-image and effectiveness?

4. What relationships exist between novice teachers' perceptions of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?

5. Where do novice teachers see themselves in future? Why will they stay? Why will they leave?

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discussed reasons for using this type of research. They questioned the appropriateness of issues needing to be explored, the accuracy in understanding details when talking directly to people, and empowerment of individuals in sharing their stories, and in researchers hearing their voices (p.48). Using this type of qualitative inquiry allows a

researcher to interpret the practices individuals use in their daily lives. The findings from Chapter 4 provided insight into perceptions of novice teachers and their experiences. Responses revealed the effect of individual's experiences on their personal and professional lives.

Research Question 1

How do novice teachers perceive the usefulness of their preparatory program to current career?

Teacher preparation programs completed were selected by participants to meet their licensure and certification needs. Six participants secured a teaching certificate as an add-on degree when they entered a graduate program to obtain a master's degree. Four went through a traditional four year program. Two acquired teaching certification through alternative licensure.

Usefulness

All participants felt they received a strong background in the historical perspective of teaching, teaching theories, and skills in specific fields of teaching. Those with a concentrated focus in a specific subject area felt they were well-trained in content knowledge. Individuals who came from a four year degree outside of education followed by a master's degree in teaching indicated that coursework gave a good overview and understanding of what teaching was about. They also reported the importance of learning different strategies in the art of teaching and the accountability piece of expectations with evaluations. Two participants with alternative licensure expressed satisfaction with their previous work and experience. Both felt having a prior career with accountability and responsibility helped them commit to the required certification coursework for teaching and were sufficient to prepare them for their assigned position in teaching grade and content area.

Needs

When looking at all interviews and probing deeper to see what was needed in traditional four year, master's degree, and alternative certification programs, there were two areas consistently mentioned, a desire and need for more classroom management and extended time working in a classroom. An influence on students who felt unprepared for a real job was the scheduling of student teaching or internship hours in spring semesters. Spring assignments did not allow adequate time for teaching experience or observations of normal classes because grades 3 through 8 were mainly preparing for testing in most cases. Study participants assigned to these grade levels felt they did not receive adequate preparation and experience during their preparation programs. Most individuals spoke of needing more classroom management courses and agreed that if they had been able to spend more time in a real classroom observing and teaching, their classroom management skills would have been improved or at least attainable with on-job support. As one participant shared, "I had never seen a real math class taught until I got hired." Another reflected, "The behaviors I've seen in my job have been shocking, so I would like to have had more classroom management instruction." Eight out of 12 commented in their responses a desire for more classroom management training or help. Ten out of 12 mentioned needing more time teaching or observing in a classroom setting. However, it was emphasized that the classroom assignments needed to be in their field of study and at comparable grade level. The only coursework area mentioned as needing additional emphasis and understanding was special education. Novice teachers desired more knowledge of special education than just laws and labels given in acronyms. Even after being in the classroom for only 1 year, they expressed a desire for more training in how to deal with students of special needs and for strategies and resources to teach this population. One participant with alternative

licensure expressed the frustrations of a lack of course work or training that transferred to the reality of classroom organization and management.

<u>Research Question 2</u>

How do novice teachers perceive induction programs that include support through mentoring, professional development, and in-service opportunities?

As a new teacher enters into a challenging, complex, and ever changing profession, it is strongly suggested that he or she have a solid foundation of quality induction programs. This type of program can serve as a support system provided through a district giving new teachers introduction to a position, as well as helping with curriculum planning, professional development, evaluation, guidance, and support. Kaufmann's (2007) research revealed that new teachers who were engaged with induction programs experienced more job satisfaction and adjustment to the teaching profession. This resulted in increased retention as contrasted with their peers who exited the profession after receiving little or no induction support (Kaufmann, 2007).

Participants in the study were very open about their experiences with district induction programs. Overall participants felt that the district provided more than adequate information concerning benefits and personal advantage to employment within the district. Positive feedback was also given in respect to experiences regarding opportunities to learn about teaching strategies, trainings, and development as a professional educator. Training that did not meet the needs of participants were spoken of specifically relating to subject and grade level. Participants spoke of required trainings they did not feel adequately prepared for with their limited experience and other experiences of training where there was too much repetition creating a

feeling the meeting was a waste of time. Responding to the specific opportunities listed within the subquestion, the study sample shared the following reflections.

<u>Mentoring</u>

During conversation regarding induction programs, the most diverse responses were focused on mentoring. Mentoring has been defined as a sustained relationship between a novice and an expert where the expert provides support and guidance helping the novice develop necessary skills to enter or continue his or her career path (Denmark, 2013). Participants shared experiences that provided a glimpse to a possible gap in the district mentoring program. One participant said, "I've been paired with a great mentor at my school who has been there since day one," and another, "One of my mentors told me I was just overwhelmed, and if she were me, she would get out before being invested in retirement." These two statements reflect opposing impacts of the influence from mentors.

Strong mentoring relationships are built on eight key components: respect, listening, challenging, collaboration, celebration, truth, safety, and empathy (Long, 2014). Data collected in this study reported within the group of 12 individual teachers interviewed 10 were assigned a mentor by school administration. Of these 10 who had assigned mentors only one individual described an assigned mentor who defined what a strong mentoring relationship looked like. The other nine participants did not see their assigned mentor as having a strong impact on how they taught or felt about themselves but only as someone who would respond to questions if approached. One participant shared: "I have a mentor and while they are a wonderful person, they are not in my area of teaching, so a lot of my questions could not be answered."

The information gathered for data on mentoring from participant responses revealed a wide array of mentoring experiences and perceptions about mentoring. One common theme

heard by all participants regarding mentors was the distinct desire, need, and perceived

importance of having a mentor either in the same field of curriculum taught or one closely

related to their teaching area. While two participants had no mentor, the participants in the study

who experienced some form of mentoring relationship expressed the desire and need for a

successful mentoring experience. Research has shown that an effective relationship between

mentor and mentee requires a supportive process where all parties know what is expected of

them (Pitton, 2006)

Professional Development

Responses regarding training and professional development after securing a position

within the district were as varied as needs of individuals. The different responses were mainly

related to grade level and subject areas taught, with overall comments positive in how the district

provided many opportunities to learn and grow professionally even outside the district. One

participant shared how he was allowed to go outside district to observe programs in other

systems that were similar to what he was doing and how important that was in learning how to

do his job. In his words it was an "outstanding" opportunity. Blank, Alas, and Smith (2008)

found three important components related to quality professional development: gains in teacher

knowledge, change in classroom instructional practices, and improvement in student

achievement.

Novice teachers within this study reported experiencing extensive training and

professional development related to their jobs. Many participants shared experiences of meetings

with renowned speakers and educators where they learned more in-depth about "why" they do

their job. Many perceived the most helpful training was where they met in subject area groups

and discussed standards and curriculum, shared techniques and strategies used successfully in the

classroom, and application focused on "how" to do the job. Both experiences led participants to reveal in responses a growth in knowledge and self-efficacy.

An area of concern heard within conversation was the amount of information given during some district meetings regarding expectations related to knowledge of local and state standards and curriculum to be accomplished within classrooms. Some participants said the combination of expectations and their own innate desire to "do it all" evoked anxiety, feelings of fear, and inability to accomplish everything in order to perform at expected levels. Individuals especially in the elementary level expressed a need for more time to assimilate and practice the given strategies before implementation, thus possibly nurturing confidence and self-efficacy especially in the new teacher population.

In-service Opportunities

Every participant who came into the system at the beginning of a school year felt the district did a great job providing in-service training with basic information of procedures, policies, benefits, and general expectations. Within the participant group there were two individuals who came into their job after the school year started. One described her feelings as she stated, "I came in late and then I kind of felt like nobody knew I was a new teacher. I missed all the new teacher training days so I called the next summer to see if I could go to the new teacher orientation I had missed even though I had taught almost a whole year. I felt I had missed something and needed a group to identify with."

Other in-service training the district provided included information on state-tested core subject areas. While the training may not have applied to each individual's subject area, most participants agreed the training allowed them to see, hear, and engage in conversation about classroom activity by their grade and subject area colleagues. The most productive and positive

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in-service meetings referenced during interviews were those where in-service training was specifically geared for subject, grade level, or specialized programs. These meetings were smaller groups where novices felt more comfortable in sharing their experiences and in learning new strategies through ideas for their own use from other colleagues in the same field.

District teacher leaders lead monthly trainings for grade levels in literacy and math that all teachers are expected to attend. There were feelings of frustration as related to these meetings. Three incidents were reported: 1) required attendance even though the training was not in their curriculum area 2) training content seemed repetitive and not as useful as the discussion of new ideas or strategies, 3) large groups where lack of time for discussion, questions, and answers on implementation was also complicated by the reticence of participation by new teachers.

The study participants reported that the most meaningful induction programs they experienced were the district's new teacher meetings. They were held throughout the year with all new teachers attending. As one novice stated; "I applaud the district for the way they took care of me. My school had meetings for the whole group of new teachers that whole first year, and it was great." When districts and local schools provided new teacher meetings for the study participants, the teachers reported greater self-confidence and efficacy. The extra support translated as caring and a feeling of family and belonging. This was reported in many responses as contributing a significant part to their current attitude toward their work.

Research Question 3

How do relationships with school staff, administration, parents, and community affect a novice teacher's self-image and effectiveness?

Many new teachers leave the profession because of poor working conditions including low pay and status, while others leave because of a lack of support from administrators, colleagues, students, and parents (Ingersoll, 2001). Relationships of any kind were extremely important to the novice study group as referenced in their responses. All participants spoke of relationships that influenced their decisions to teach, caused them to continue teaching, or gave them reasons to plan for the future. Participants stated throughout the study the importance of different personal and professional relationships and the influence each had on their job satisfaction.

School Staff

All participants spoke to the importance of their colleagues to daily life. All but one individual had had positive experiences with school staff, and two reported negativity with people in the same department or team setting. Relationships with other staff members seemed to be perceived by participants as essential for their professional survival. Overall staff relationships are the ones novice teachers depend on for survival. Where there were no mentors assigned or available participants spoke of seeking a colleague for help or consultation.

Two issues surfaced as reasons for a lack of collegiality among more staff members. One was lack of proximity to other staff members due to building and classroom layout, and the other was a lack of time for conversation. Even when there were faculty meetings and in-service training at the school site, there was not time for socialization and becoming acquainted. Lack of time was given as the number one reason for not knowing more staff members at the school site and within the district. Building stronger relationships requires more time and energy than new teachers had as their work load continued to increase. Participants also mentioned a declining lack of interest on the part of their colleagues.

<u>Administration</u>

All 12 participants were in schools with at least one full-time principal and full-time associate principal. Those in middle and high school had as many as seven administrators in one building. A strong relationship between administrators and teachers was indicated by participant responses. One novice associated her perception of an open and honest environment due to an administrator's presence. The novice felt included and important to the culture of the school. Relationships between novice and administrators were positive as in statements like: "I'm super happy with how my leadership is doing things at school." "I could go to them about anything and they would help me." "All my administrators have been superb to communicate with." "My new administration is supportive, helpful, and gives great feedback on observations."

Any negative comments only reinforced the realization that one person's actions and words can be unduly influential on novices. As individuals shared, this became obvious. "I feel both administrators are becoming less approachable." and "It was just discouraging and made me want to get out of this school and even made me question if I was going to be able to do the job of teaching." Listening to responses of positive and negative interactions gave new meaning to the power of one person, one personality on another's career. Overall novices reactions to leadership whatever the level, district or school site, was positive with all novices finding support at some point.

The ability to have a consistent feeling of support and development varied from school to school. A principal may support, develop, and evaluate new teachers best when making choices based on three considerations: perceived or stated learning needs of the novice, availability of school-based resources, both human and material, and the principal's own skills and preferences

as leaders (Carver, 2003). Administrative support has been found to be one of the top four reasons new teachers choose to stay or leave the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2003).

Within the study group only two individuals shared experiences that negatively affected their attitudes toward teaching and even prompted thoughts of a possible change of career path. Both individuals stated they did not see themselves in the same job more than a couple of years unless there was a change in leadership, addition to administrative staff, or change in current relationship.

Students, Parents, and Community

All participants felt it was important to have communication with all stakeholders of their classroom. Novices included students, families, and those within the school community as stake holders. All agreed that even though technology has made communication easier by cell phones and social media, communication between the classroom and home can still be difficult to develop and sustain. About half of the study group was totally at ease giving parents a cell phone number in order for communication to be more efficient and consistent. One novice shared how she gives parents her cell number right at the beginning so they can communicate with her. She stated it let them know there was trust, care, and a shared bond for the child's well-being. Data from interviews found that a common element for strong relationships among novice, student, and parents was developed where the novice had a positive self-efficacy and felt supported within their school environment. More confidence in doing the job yielded improved teacher communication with others about their experiences.

Time was a common and reoccurring theme in this study. As one novice responded, "It takes time to build relationships." The ability to develop and nurture trust, respect, confidence, and successful communication doesn't happen in one day or even in two, but as part of a daily

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routine and frequent communication through varied media. Though some participants did not feel that communication was their greatest strength as a teacher, their awareness of this inefficiency prompted them to work to build a stronger tie to that student-home-community relationship.

<u>Research Question 4</u>

What relationships exist between novice teachers' perceptions of themselves and job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals?

Participants described themselves with varied adjectives and expressed how they felt others regarded their work when responding to why they became a teacher. All participants indicated feeling that teaching was their calling, their mission to use their talents and share with others, specifically children. Their desire went beyond teaching academics to making an ongoing difference in lives, creating a stronger efficacy in the student and like themselves becoming a better person, more confident and successful. Relationships with mentors, family members, colleagues, and students had the greatest impact on the teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, and goals. Reasons shared for who the novice participants had become and where they were in life were the result of experiences and individuals from the past. Since becoming a teacher the reasons to stay or move on, however, had changed. These changes in attitude, beliefs, and interests, while continuing to evolve, were all a result of living the novice experience. Who they were now, where they were going, what they were thinking, planning, and experiencing continued to be influenced by situations and people currently around them. The more positive culture a novice worked in, the more they expressed confidence in themselves as a teacher and in continuing their passion.

Those experiencing adverse situations were trying to see beyond the present, looking toward what things could be. Some shared that they were working in a collaborative effort to change a culture, even if it was one step or, as one novice described, "one baby step" at a time. Many participants revealed their surprise, and a few individuals shared the shock of how hard being a teacher was. One novice said, "much harder than I ever imagined." In spite of the amount of paperwork, dealing with changes in curriculum and expectations, and obligations outside of building, relationships and teaching evolved as a strong influence in how a novice felt about his or her own success. A feeling expressed throughout the data was the expectation they felt professionally and personally to "get everything done." This continued to affect how novices viewed themselves as they questioned whether they were being successful or whether teaching was a career of longevity.

Data reported in Chapter 4 suggest that these novice teachers are influenced, developed, and molded by their lived experiences. These life experiences appear to be important factors in how the teachers see themselves today and what they hope to become in the future. As recorded in the previous chapter, teachers are influenced, developed, and molded by life experiences and relationships into the person they are today or who they hope to be. Teaching was chosen by the participant group as the job of their passion. With the job came the realization that teaching was much more than anyone or any program could have prepared them for. Due to constant changes in the "lived experience," planning for the future and attaining goals to secure a feeling of fulfillment and self-worth would require support as well as initiative on the part of the novice. The support to not only survive but thrive was also a goal for their students, and not one novice felt he or she could do the job alone. Only as a part of a team effort within and outside the classroom could they experience fulfillment and success.

Where do novice teachers see themselves in future? Why will you stay? Why will you leave?

The interview responses revealed some interesting plans among the study participants. At least half of the participants were not comfortable at first responding to the question. One stated, "I don't know… I hate that question more than anything because where I am right now; I am trying to make that decision." The individual did not feel he had a specific plan but rather some dreams and ideas not "nailed down for sure' as another participant described.

Asked if they would stay in education and in the same district nine of twelve participants replied yes to both choices while three indicated maybe. One participant of the three "maybe" group shared her plan to leave teaching in the near future. This novice had not experienced the vision she felt teaching was going to be and dreamed about from a young age. Consequently the individual felt teaching was not the right career choice for her. At this time future plans are to move in another career path. The remaining two "maybe" responses were due to the possibility of a spousal job change and subsequent move from the area. Of the nine participants responding "yes" to stay in education and near area, all would like to continue a career in the same district. Beyond staying in education and the same district, plans began to diverge. Decisions for the next 5 to 10 years can best be understood from the following responses to the final question.

Where do you see yourself within next 5 to 10 years?

- 10 of 12 participants indicated they would stay in the district where they were employed at the time
- 4 of 12 indicated they would stay in current position
- 6 of 12 had a desire to move within the system to a different school and grade level
- 6 of 12 indicated they would begin work on an advanced degree
- 2 of 12 stated they would leave for other career opportunities outside of district, possibly out of education

<u>Recommendations for Practice</u>

<u>Preparatory Programs</u>

The findings in this study suggest that while participants felt confident in the content knowledge provided from their preparatory program, classroom opportunities in the art and practice of teaching were lacking. Specifically, participants reported a need for additional classroom management strategies and training. Accordingly, the following recommendations for practice are proposed.

- Extending internships to a minimum requirement of no less than a year of internship prior to graduation and certification.

- Assigning placements during fall and winter semester so beginning teachers will see the beginning and end of school year operations.

- Providing strategies on how to plan, teach, and execute a successful relationship with special needs population. Giving opportunities to observe and experience inclusion settings within a school and classroom.

- Offering additional training with and teaching application experiences in strategies and practices related to classroom management.

<u>School District</u>

The findings of this study indicated a mentor teacher was a very important part of the novice teacher experience. This relationship helped them to build confidence and success. A second finding revealed the need for additional training time for novices to learn and implement district programs. Based on these findings, the following are recommendations for improving novice teacher experiences, performance, and retention in the school district.

- Providing ongoing support with new teacher meetings scheduled throughout the novice years on a district and school site platform. Within these meetings, providing time for collaboration, socialization, and opportunity for participants to feel part of a group with freedom to ask questions and discuss concerns in a safe atmosphere.

- Generating high quality mentoring programs that meet the specific needs of mentors and mentees. Making available mentors of like job roles. If a mentor is not available on school site that matches job of novice teacher, allow a district mentor of like job role to co mentor novice especially during the first years.

- Extend mentor opportunities to use the population of retired teachers. This population has a wealth of knowledge and information about the system, individual schools, and grade levels. They are also likely to have an interest in sharing their experience and expertise of the district and specific subject areas with novice teachers. This group could possibly be used to bring consistency and depth to the mentoring program through a team experience of collaborators encouraging, and providing support for each other.

- Refining of the district's professional development offerings through differentiated training and scaffolding to meet individual teacher needs specifically of novice teacher group. The novice teacher population would likely need to be surveyed annually to ascertain what kind of training would be most beneficial to meeting their needs.

- Surveying teachers who are just out of the novice population years and inquire as to what induction programs and training would have better served their needs during the novice experience.

<u>School Site</u>

Findings related to the school site suggest novice teachers value a positive culture, feelings of collegiality, collaboration with peers, and professional accessibility to administration. Participant information revealed that future decisions of career choice were influenced by individuals' perceptions of success and acceptance as part of a school family and community. The following practices are recommended to school sites for possible implementation and practice.

- Providing training for all school faculty regarding needs of novice educators. There is a positive correlation between the climate and culture of a school and the success of novice teachers that involves activities of socializing, collaborating, and growing professionally between all parties (Joiner, 2008).

- (School In-service) Pairing a veteran teacher who will create a safe atmosphere for questions and appropriate clarifications and who is well-versed on the needs and training strategies for the novice educator.

- (Administration) Providing a climate where the novice feels welcome and is secure in asking questions, in gaining support, and in taking risks. To optimize success effective principals make sure to place novice teachers in areas of licensure and expertise providing them with adequate resources, assigning limited responsibilities, and scheduling extra duties to optimize opportunities for success (Carver, 2003).

<u>Implications for Further Research</u>

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of novice teachers regarding their experiences in one school district and the effect of shared experiences on their future career

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choice. The openness and depth of information gathered in this small study suggests a need for further studies of qualitative inquiry to gain a deeper sense of understanding and truth of the lived phenomenon of the novice teacher. Further studies connecting specific novice experiences to positive outcomes resulting in successful retention strategies would add to the body of this research.

The following are recommendations for further research:

1. Based on conclusions in this study, the type of preparatory programs were influential in novice teachers' job satisfaction. Further examination of preparatory programs whether traditional, graduate, or alternative as related to retention of novice teachers could provide valuable information for preservice education institutions.

2. The findings of this study indicate a direct relationship between years of service and choosing teaching as a second career. It might be beneficial for further studies to examine the influence of age of entry into the profession and its influence on job fulfillment, satisfaction, and retention in the teaching profession.

3. The study results indicated that a mentoring relationship between a novice and a veteran teacher resulted in increased job satisfaction, fulfillment, and self-efficacy. Further studies could examine consistency and effects of mentoring programs including, but not limited to mentor assignment, type of mentor (gender, subject area, years of experience), mentor training, and possible relationships of mentor to novice self-efficacy and future career choice within the first 5 years are recommended.

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4. This study highlighted the relationship between novice teachers' sense of belonging and positive relationships within a school community. Future studies relating retention of novice teachers to their perceptions of relationships within a school community should be considered.

5. Findings in this study revealed the influence of non mentor veteran teachers on novice teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Further studies are recommended to explore novice teachers' feelings of acceptance, support, and teaching success as related to non mentor veteran teacher activities within teaching teams, individual school sites, and districts.

6. Further studies are recommended to investigate the population of novice teachers who left the profession within the first 5 years. The review of literature and responses from this study's novice sample revealed the reasons for choosing to leave the teaching profession are closely related to the success or failure of relationships. Exploring reasons for novice attrition during the first 5 years might give opportunities to implement changes needed to keep novice teachers within the ranks of the teaching profession beyond the first 5 years building a strong experienced teaching force and leading to successful student learning and positive school culture and communities.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Large numbers of new teachers leave the profession within their first 3 to 5 years just as they are getting their professional feet wet (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This qualitative study regarding the phenomenon of the novice teacher experience was presented as it relates to the

perceptions of those working in that defined span of 1 to 5 years. Patterns and relationships of meaning were developed from extensive engagement of a small number of subjects marking phenomenology as a strategy of inquiry identifying the essence of the lived experience (Creswell, 2009). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions and reflections of novice teachers within one school district as they related to the research questions. The focus of the questions was in regard to preparation programs, district support of induction and professional development, relationship of peers, administration, students, and parents, and the effect of these relationships on novice self-efficacy, job fulfillment, and future goals. The findings revealed that the type of preparation program does have an effect on how confident a beginning teacher felt in the classroom. Support from induction programs was found to be integral in a novice teacher's successful transition into a career that was long lasting. More than anything, data revealed that relationships between stake holders that included administrators, teacher colleagues, students, and families had the most affect on whether a person stayed or left the field. Cooley's 1902 metaphor of the looking glass illustrates the idea and power of others' perceptions as he argued that we tend to become what we think other people think we are (Pajares, 2000). Data established that findings may not be generalized to other school districts, and the commonality of the meaning and understandings are left to the reader.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL FORM

EAST TENNESSEE STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

Office for the Protection of Human Research Subjects • Box 70565 • Johnson City, Tennessee 37614-1707
Phone: (423) 439-6053 Fax: (423) 439-6060

IRB APPROVAL – Initial Expedited Review

February 12, 2015

Suzanne Redman

Re: "Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job Support, and Job Satisfaction."
IRB#: c0215.4sd
ORSPA #: n/a

The following items were reviewed and approved by an expedited process:
- xform New Protocol Submission; Site Permission; Informed Consent Document (version 2/6/15, stamped approved 2/12/15); Email Script (stamped approved 2/12/15); Interview Questions; References; CV

On **February 12, 2015**, a final approval was granted for a period not to exceed 12 months and will expire on **February 11, 2016**. The expedited approval of the study will be reported to the convened board on the next agenda.

This study has been granted a **Waiver of Requirement for Written Documentation of Informed Consent** under category 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2) as the research involves no more than minimal risk to the participants as it is an interview with benign questions. The research involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context because written consent is not usually required to talk with people.

The following **enclosed stamped, approved Informed Consent Documents** have been stamped with the approval and expiration date and these documents must be copied and provided to each participant prior to participant enrollment:

- Informed Consent Document (version 2/6/2015, stamped approved 2/12/2015)

Accredited Since December 2005

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APPENDIX B

KCS RESEARCH APPROVAL FORM

Kingsport City Schools
Approval Form for Research Proposals

Please complete the top section of this form and submit it with the information requested on the Kingsport City Schools Research Proposal Guidelines form to the Director of Performance Excellence.

Researcher's Name: **Suzanne Redman**   Agency/Institution: **E.T.S.U.**

Researcher's Email: **sredman@k12k.com**   Phone Number: **423-773-2569**

Title of Research Proposal: Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job Support, and Job Satisfaction

Type of Research Proposal (Check): ✓ Dissertation _____ Thesis _____ Independent

Step 1:

✓   Read the Research Proposal Guidelines and submit the appropriate paperwork to the Department of Performance Excellence.

✓   Submit questionnaires, surveys, and/or interview questions in advance for review.

Pending System Approval   Submit a copy of the IRB approval. This must be completed before final approval will be granted.

Step 2:

✓   The research proposal and any supporting documentation will be reviewed by the Department of Performance Excellence.

✓   The researcher will be notified via the phone or email of the approval status.

Approval Status:

_____   The research proposal is denied. You may contact the Director of Performance Excellence for further clarification.

_____   The research proposal has been approved. You may proceed with the research in accordance with the Kingsport City Schools Request for Research Proposal Guidelines.

✓   The research proposal is approved pending the receipt of the IRB.

_____   The research proposal is pending upon the resolution of the following condition(s) :

Michael Hubbard   9-17-14

Superintendent of Schools or Designee   Date

Director of Performance Excellence   400 Clinchfield Street, Suite 200   Kingsport, Tennessee 37660   Ph.: (423) 378.2125

PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

Letter: Regarding need of Novice Teachers for research study

To all KCS Novice Teachers

If you are in the first five years of your career as a new educator your help is needed. We are conducting a qualitative research study about the experiences of novice teachers within the KCS district. The study focuses on the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers on their job support, relationships, and satisfaction as it leads to retention.

Title of the study is: Self-Efficacy and Teacher Retention: Perception of Novice Teachers on Job Preparation, Job Support, and Job Satisfaction

If you would be willing to participate please email me within the next 5 days to set up an interview time!

Email: sredman@k12k.com

Looking forward to talking with you,

Suzi Redman

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

This informed Consent will explain about being a participant in this research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a participant volunteer.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is to observe and discover through conversation with you, the "lived experience" of novice teachers in the Kingsport City School district. The study will focus on issues surrounding your job satisfaction, job support, and job preparation leading to retention.

Duration

A face to face interview with the researcher lasting approximately 60-90 minutes about your experience as a novice teacher will take place at a time and place of your convenience.

Procedures

Interviews will take place at a time and environment convenient and comfortable for you as a participant. Interviews will be recorded by a digital audio recorder, as well as notes taken, then transcribed. A pseudo name and number will be assigned to you as a participant for safety and confidentiality. Once the interview takes place and data is analyzed you will be given a copy of the responses and analysis from your interview to check for truth and authenticity.

Alternative procedures: There are no alternative procedures.

Possible Risks and Discomforts

There are minimal,(if any) risks involved to a participant. Since participation is voluntary and all interviews are done at convenience and in environment of participant there are no discomforts or risks anticipated during study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, benefits from participation in the study may exist for the district and your personal knowledge of how the novice teacher experience exists in the district. Discovering what we do and why we do our job

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

Interview #_____   First Name _____   Assigned Pseudo Name _____

I. *Can you tell me about yourself and your job?*

- What do you teach?
- How long have you been teaching?
- What level (Pre-K, elementary, middle, high school)
- What type of licensure do you have?

II. *How you see yourself as a teacher?*

- What do you like about being a teacher? Why?
- Dislike? Why?
- What adjectives or labels best describe you and why?
- How do you think others see you?   Why?

III. *Why did you become a teacher?*

IV. *How well prepared were you for your teaching assignment? (the + and -)*

- Describe the preparation program and process you experienced in becoming a teacher.
- What parts (experiences, classes, interactions) were important in helping prepare you for teaching?
- Did you experience anything in your preparation for being a teacher that was *not* helpful or even harmful?
- Can you describe experiences that might have helped you be more prepared? Or What, if anything would have helped you be better prepared for being a teacher?

V. *Describe your experiences after completing your formal training in finding a teaching*

position and the things done within the district to prepare you for your work.

- Do you have a mentor?
- Was this mentor
  - assigned by the district
  - someone who offered to help
  - someone with whom you just developed a relationship
- Is your mentor helpful? How?
- What kinds of training, in-service, and professional development have you experienced since you started teaching?
- Has it been useful? How?
- What do you think could have been done differently by the district to help you transition into your current position?

VI. ***How would you describe the relationships with teachers and others in your school? Please feel free to discuss both the positive and negative ones and why. Is there anyone that just "irks" you or someone you could not have survived without?***

- Relationships with teacher peers.
- Relationships with principal and other administrators.
- Relationships with students.
- Relationships with parents.

VII. ***Thinking about your work and all of the people in your professional life who and what have: really helped you develop as a teacher?***

VIII. ***Who and/or what do you feel has interfered with your work and development as a teacher?***

IX. ***What do you think your future will be?***
- Are you planning to stay in teacher?
- How have your teaching experiences compared to what you anticipated?
- Do you want to remain in the same teaching position? school? district?
- Do you wish you had chosen another career? If so what?

X. ***If more than 1 year experience: Do you think your perceptions of the questions asked during this interview have changed since you started teaching? In other words, if I had interviewed you with the same questions during your first year of teaching would your responses have been different? How so?***

XI. *Thank you so much for sharing your experiences and future plans. As you know, the recording of our conversation will be transcribed and a copy sent to you, so that you may make any changes or modifications that might better explain your perceptions.*

Is there anything else you would like to add for now?

VITA

SUZANNE FREEMAN REDMAN

Education:	Ed.D., Educational Leadership East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN December 2015
	M.Ed., Early Childhood and Elementary Education Milligan College Milligan College, TN 1999
	B.A., K-12 Music Education East Tennessee State University Johnson City, TN 1979

Professional Experience:	Music Specialist, George Washington Elementary
	        Kingsport, TN, 2003-Present
	Adjunct Instructor, Milligan College
	Elementary and Curriculum Music Methods
	        Milligan College, TN, 2002- Present
	Music Specialist, Town Acres Elementary
	        Johnson City, TN, 1999-2002
	Director Children's Ministry, First Christian Church
	        Johnson City, TN, 1997-1999
	Music Specialist, Towne Acres, Cherokee, North Side, South Side
	King Springs Elementary
	        Johnson City, TN, 1979-1997

Professional Organizations:	Kingsport Education Association, Tennessee Education Association National Education Association National Association for Music Education DKG Delta Kappa Gamma

Honors:	Teacher of the Year, SCORE 1st District K-4th 2014-2015
	Teacher of the Year, Kingsport City Schools Elementary K-4
	        2014-2015
	Teacher of the Year, George Washington Elementary School
	        2004-05, 2007-2008, 2014-2015
	Presenter, Mid-South Educational Research Association
	Conference Mobile, AL, 1999
	Teacher of the Year, Johnson City Schools, K-4, 1990
	Teacher of the Year, Towne Acres Elementary 1983, 1990, 1997