NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAMS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

TRACI D. MITCHELL

2020

The undersigned, approved by the Department Chair of Graduate Studies in Education, have examined a dissertation entitled:

NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAMS AND

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Presented by Traci D. Mitchell a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

Dr. Pamela Hedgpeth, Advisor/Chair
Graduate Education

Dr. Benny Fong, Committee Member
Graduate Education

Dr. Richard Asbill, Committee Member
School Superintendent

NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAMS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Graduate Education Department
Southwest Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Traci D. Mitchell, B.S., M.S.

Dr. Pamela Hedgpeth, Dissertation Advisor

Date of Graduation

December 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As an 18-year-old high school graduate, I proceeded to college and received my Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. I started working in the accounting field but knew it was not where my heart belonged. During a particularly heated school board election, one of the candidates told me he would hire teachers like me when he was finally elected to serve. I informed him I was not a teacher. His response was, "Well, you should be!" That conversation changed the trajectory of my life. I knew education was my passion. It was evident in the way I communicated with my children and volunteered at our local school district. I needed the encouragement and push to change direction and follow my heart.

Within 6 months, I was offered a full-time teaching position in a neighboring district. I signed my contract on Veteran's Day, which was fitting because the first year felt almost like I was going into battle. I was a nontraditional teacher working with very little support and zero student teaching experience. My saving grace was my teaching friends and family, especially my mother. I can only hope to be the positive influence she has been for so many others. My friends and family acted as my mentors and provided resources I did not even know existed. They encouraged me and imparted wisdom I will always treasure. I know I would not still be in the education field today if not for their guidance.

This study is dedicated to those in the education field who feel the emotional force of watching a student learn but who do not yet have the wisdom or knowledge base that comes with highly effective professional learning. My goal is to ensure all new

teachers have the resources, support, and leadership to become the educator they dream of becoming.

To my committee chair and advisor, Dr. Pamela Hedgpeth, you have been a true blessing throughout this entire process. Your encouragement and guidance is a gift. Dr. Fong and Dr. Asbill, the word “Thank you” seems inadequate. I appreciate the direction, leadership, and time each of you have provided.

The research and writing involved in this project would not have been possible without the unfailing love and support of my family. To my husband, Scott, God has truly blessed me through you. Thank you for allowing our kitchen table to be scattered with piles of books and papers for months on end. Apparently, our nice and quiet basement is filled with writer’s block and I have discovered I do my best writing with the constant noise of kids coming and going while the TV is loudly displaying the latest ballgame or western. To our four children, one son-in-law, and precious grandchildren, you are part of life’s greatest gifts. God is so good and I am so blessed. Now it’s time to give back to the One who provided this journey. I wonder what He has in store for me next…

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri through personal interviews and related documents. The three highly effective schools were U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School Award winners. The central qualitative question driving the research was this: What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri? This study aimed to explore the gap in research regarding new teacher mentoring experiences and related professional learning in Missouri school districts. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs established the importance of maintaining a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). This study established school district leaders must be purposeful and intentional in their mentoring programs when providing new teachers time for collaboration, relationships, instructional practices around data, support and encouragement, feedback, and reflection time, along with establishing strong building leadership.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

New teachers across the country are entering classrooms at the beginning of each school year with a sense of excitement and nervous energy (Wong & Wong, 2018). This positive atmosphere creates enthusiasm, which translates to other staff members in the building. Unfortunately, in many cases new teachers lose their sense of purpose and calling within the first year of their teaching career (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Ingersoll, 2001; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016). The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2017b, 2019) reported first-year teacher retention rates ranged between 60.5% and 65.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Shuls, 2019). Missouri teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience make up approximately 49.9% of educators (Missouri DESE, 2018).

Wong and Wong (2018) reported 50% of teachers leave the education profession by their fifth year. New teachers are experiencing a diminished sense of fatigue without support (O'Quinn, 2018). Beginning teachers need to be encouraged and supported, which allows them to grow into high-quality educators with multiple tools from which to draw (Dudick, 2016). Quality teachers understand schools exist for the sole purpose of student learning and the single greatest effect on student learning is the effectiveness of the teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, training quality teachers through effective profession learning opportunities is vital (Danielson, 2019). Without supports, learning to be an effective teacher is very difficult (Shanks et al., 2020). High-performing schools intentionally develop and invest in the learning of their teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

This basic narrative qualitative study explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs.

Purposive sampling of participants was used from three highly effective schools within the state of Missouri. Coordinators of new teacher programs were contacted by phone and e-mail to obtain permission to conduct the study and provide names of first- and second-year teachers along with their mentor staff members who met or exceeded highly qualified educator status in relationship to leadership, experience, and training according to Missouri DESE guidelines and the school's evaluation system. The total number of participants in this study was 12, which included six first- and second-year teachers and six mentor teachers. The three schools ranged in size, demographics, funding, and administrative support to reduce bias and weakness of the data and to gather diverse perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The three highly effective schools were chosen by identifying schools who met the following criteria:

- National Blue-Ribbon School Award winner within the last 3 years;
- recognized formal mentoring program;
- specific training provided for mentor teachers; and
- written documentation provided to new teachers outlining professional learning requirements for the school year.

Studies around the country (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Zhukova, 2018) have shown new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on developing quality teachers when implemented appropriately. Creating a culture in which teachers have opportunities for

continual learning is the likeliest way to inspire greater achievement in student learning (Svendsen, 2020). Effective teachers create positive learning environments, which lead to higher student achievement and success (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016). Based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016). Without intentional guided support, learning to teach well is extremely difficult for new teachers (Galamay-Cachola, Aduca, & Calauagan, 2018). Educational systems that effectively support new teachers are able to retain teachers, which leads to improved student academic achievement (Sowell, 2017). Although many schools employ teacher mentoring programs, schools do not implement them adequately or with fidelity and validity (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Zembytska, 2016). New teachers need to be provided high levels of support and experiences that connect theory to practice (Young, 2020). Research-based strategies must be used in order to effectively train and support beginning teachers (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017). Establishing a culture of continual learning for teachers is the best way to inspire higher student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

High-performing school systems are strategic in their approach to developing high-quality teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, & Hunter, 2016). The key to long-term successful schools was directly related to the way new teachers entering the profession were trained and supported (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Irby et al., 2020; Leuchtmann, 2019; O'Quinn, 2018; Pedota, 2015; Perry,

2016; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). Teachers who feel like they are making a difference in the lives of their students have higher job satisfaction rates and feel directly connected to the efficacy of their profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lowder, 2017; Monroe, 2017). High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond, 1998). It is vital for school systems to put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). To create an effective educational system, schools must be purposeful (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

In order for schools to be effective learning organizations, they must create structures that promote changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Teachers who are chosen as leaders in high-performing school systems must be collaborative and are held accountable for student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jensen et al., 2016). School districts must implement recruitment strategies to help draw talented and high-quality teacher graduates (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Mentoring is a significant driver and component of professional learning in high-performing school systems (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Tennison, 2015).

In Chapter One, the researcher included a problem statement along with the purpose and rationale for the qualitative study. It also included the researcher's theoretical framework, which was based on establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to increase teacher quality, research questions, definition of key terms that were used in the study, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and design controls, then concludes with a summary.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was centered on the framework for teaching, which is grounded on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2010, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). The complexity of teaching involves continuous professional learning for teachers to remain up-to-date on effective teaching strategies and to develop an understanding of how people learn (Danielson, 2007, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). By pulling together studies from more than 50 years of theoretical research, Charlotte Danielson (2013) and Wong and Wong (2018) identified qualities of effective teachers and the skills needed to promote improved growth and student learning. The qualities of an effective teacher include having positive expectations for students and knowledge of how to teach lessons for student mastery (Wong & Wong, 2018). Developing quality teachers takes time and support, with each developmental phrase building upon another, which requires effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Wong & Wong, 2018).

There is a common set of strategies in high-performing school systems when developing, supporting, and sustaining the learning and development of teachers and school leaders (Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Within the continuum for developing quality teachers, it is important to recruit talented and high-quality educators, provide a solid foundation within preservice programs, and include effective continuous professional learning opportunities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Wong & Wong, 2018). School districts must implement recruitment strategies to help

draw talented and high-quality teacher graduates (Darling-Hammond, 2013). New teacher induction programs, professional learning for all teachers, specialized training for new teachers, and a strong mentoring program are integral parts of the continuum for developing and retaining quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

High-performing school systems operate on the belief all teachers can learn and improve their performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). They invest in the profession of teaching and learning (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). High-performing academic schools are strategic in their approach to developing effective teachers (Wong & Wong, 2018). Effective school districts attribute their success to the way new teachers were trained and supported (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). Schools should become continuous learning organizations that encourage teachers to work together to pursue growth opportunities that help develop their skills around student engagement strategies and learning (Danielson, 2019). Collective teacher efficacy is the belief teachers can positively influence students and make a difference over and above other educational impacts of their homes and communities (Donohoo & Katz, 2017). Learning organizations with high teacher efficacy are more willing to try new teaching methods and are more accepting of change (Donohoo, 2017).

School districts must provide effective professional learning for their educators by understanding the framework of how to develop a quality teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). Through the work of Charlotte Danielson's (2007), *The Framework for Teaching,* and Wong and Wong's (2018), *The First Days of School*, the characteristics of an effective

teacher apply to all educators and must be grounded in quality professional learning. Effective teachers recognize a school's main purpose is to improve student learning and the greatest effect on student learning and achievement is the quality of the teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, training quality teachers through effective profession learning opportunities is vital to transform schools into high-quality learning systems (Danielson, 2019).

Problem Statement

Retaining effective and quality teachers has become a top priority for school districts in the last several years as the cost of replacing and training teachers has become a drain on school funds (Zembytska, 2016). The New Teacher Center (2016b) reported only 29 states required some type of support for new teachers but most of them were poorly implemented or infrequently executed (Leuchtmann, 2019). Almost one fourth of educators leave the profession within the first 3 years of their career and report a lack of effective training and administrative support as the chief cause of their dissatisfaction (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Zembytska, 2016). Wong and Wong (2018) also reported 50% of teachers leave the education profession by their fifth year. The lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which negatively affect student achievement and cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). Callahan (2016) stated the National Commission on Teaching and American's Future (NCTAF) estimated the average cost of replacing a teacher to be more than $12,000 while the cost of mentoring a new teacher was around $5,000 (Carr, Holmes, & Flynn, 2017).

Mentoring programs provide professional learning opportunities, but they vary in the structure, time, and level of support provided for new teachers. Learning Forward's (n.d.) Standards for Professional Learning provided a comprehensive framework for continuous professional learning to improve teacher quality using three overarching standards: (a) context, (b) process, and (c) content (Lewis, 2018). School districts often do not consider these research-based standards as lenses for how best to create effective mentoring programs. This study explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs using basic narrative qualitative research through personal interviews and related documents from three high-performing Missouri schools.

Gap in the literature. This study aimed to explore the gap in research regarding new teacher mentoring experiences and related professional learning in Missouri school districts today. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs will help define the approach for establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). It is imperative school systems put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). School districts are not assigning new teachers to effective and appropriately trained mentors and they are not allocating the necessary funds for beginning teacher training (Sowell, 2017). Studies have shown (Britt-Stevens, 2014; DeCesare, Workman, & McClelland, 2016; New Teacher Center, 2016a), the components of an effective new teacher mentoring program should include the following: multiyear mentoring, observations by the mentor and mentee, professional development specific for beginning teachers, funding set aside

for new teacher training, professional teaching standards, specific contact time during the school day with a mentor, and training for highly qualified mentors. Mentoring is a significant driver of professional learning in high-performing school systems (Jensen et al., 2016). Without intentional guided support, learning to teach well is extremely difficult for new teachers (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Creating a culture in which teachers have opportunities for continual learning is the likeliest way to inspire greater achievement in student learning (Svendsen, 2020). Research-based strategies must be used in order to successfully train and support beginning teachers, which leads to improved instructional practices (Sowell, 2017).

Need for the study. This study is also important and timely to school districts as the American Institutes for Research (2016) has tracked teacher supply versus teacher demand to be in decline since 2010 with almost 20% decreasing in the 2012-2013 school year. Missouri DESE (2017b, 2019) reported first-year teacher retention rates ranged between 60.5% and 65.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Shuls, 2019). Missouri teachers that have less than 10 years' teaching experience was 49.9% (Missouri DESE, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri through personal interviews and related documents. This study was centered on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). The continuum for developing and retaining quality

teachers establishes the value of providing effective professional learning for all teachers but starts with recruiting quality beginning teachers and then focuses on maintaining a solid foundation through teacher preparation programs and new teacher induction programs. It is imperative school systems put the necessary structures in place for teacher learning and development to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Students learn more when teachers are actively engaged in the learning themselves (Wong & Wong, 2018). Although many schools employ teacher mentoring programs, schools do not implement them adequately or with fidelity and validity (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Zembytska, 2016). Learning Forward's (n.d.) Standards for Professional Learning provided districts a blueprint for creating teacher support and is a key research framework to consider when designing mentoring programs. Learning Forward has structured the strategies for teacher professional learning by organizing them into three broad standards: context, process, and content (Easton, 2015). These three overarching professional learning standards bring teachers together in a collaborative learning community to promote shared leadership, encourage data collection with research-based decision making, guide knowledge of how people learn, prepare teachers to deepen content knowledge, and create a supportive learning environment with high expectations (Easton, 2015).

The necessity of this study was based on the shortage of people choosing education as a career and the high turnover rate of teachers in school districts today (O'Doherty & Harford, 2018). The greatest gains in student learning are attributed to teachers who are more experienced, highly trained, and who stay together within their school team (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Retaining effective and quality teachers

has also become a top priority for school districts in the last several years as the cost of replacing and training teachers has become a drain on school funds (Zembytska, 2016.) The NCTAF estimated the cost of finding and training a new teacher to range from $4,366 in some rural districts to $17,872 in large cities (NCTAF, 2007). Almost one fourth of educators leave the profession within the first 3 years of their career and report a lack of effective training and administrative support as a cause of their dissatisfaction (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Zembytska, 2016). Wong and Wong (2018) reported 50% of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years. New teacher mentoring and induction methods have proven to be highly efficient and cost effective. According to Zembytska (2016), mentoring is the core element to any new teacher program. The calculated return on investment in the state of California when providing quality new teacher mentoring programs is $1.66 for every dollar spent (Zembytska, 2016). Britt-Stevens (2014) stated school districts must be intentional to establish policies and implement strategies aimed at teacher retention in order to retain quality teachers.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) stated it is critically important to develop policies that attract, retain, and support highly effective teachers who are well prepared and committed (Darling-Hammond, 2013). High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016). Without intentional guided

support, learning to teach well is extremely difficult for new teachers (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018).

Research Questions

The researcher explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs using basic narrative qualitative research through personal interviews and related documents. The central qualitative question driving the research was this:

What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

The related subquestions for this study were the following:

Research Subquestion 1: What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 2: What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 3: What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 4: What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies that stated (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016). This basic narrative qualitative study explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding continuous professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs to develop and increase teacher quality.

The state of Missouri required all new teachers in their first 2years of teaching to be involved in a mentoring program (Missouri DESE, 2017a). Learning Forward (n.d.) identified three overarching professional learning standards that bring teachers together in a collaborative learning community to promote shared leadership, encourage data collection with research-based decision making, guide knowledge of how people learn, prepare teachers to deepen content knowledge, and create a supportive learning environment with high expectations (Easton, 2015). Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) encouraged school leaders and policymakers to develop effective strategies for retaining highly effective teachers and work to understand the reasons behind teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Schools that host a large number of beginning teachers have shown negative effects on student achievement and placed schools at a disadvantage from

those with more experienced staff members, as reported by the New Teacher Center (2016a). Many schools with high rates of teacher attrition focus on closing the achievement gap by replacing staff members when the problem actually lies in the gap of teaching quality (NCTAF, 2007; Sowell, 2017). Previous studies have shown programs that include mentoring and induction practices to effectively support new teachers in their first year of teaching have increased their effectiveness and overall teacher satisfaction rates (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

It is vital to evaluate, study, and understand effective components of mentoring programs to provide appropriate support to new teachers (Carr et al., 2017). High-performing school systems operate on the belief all teachers can learn and improve their performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This study aimed to add to the knowledge base of previous work completed in relation to mentoring programs and their effect on teacher job satisfaction and instructional practices to establish a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality.

Definitions of Key Terms

Effective teacher: Teachers who support and contribute to student learning and achievement by engaging students in a positive learning environment. Effective teachers produce results (Wong & Wong, 2018).

Fidelity: The extent to which a program adheres to the original model by which it was designed and the degree to which it is to be implemented (Wong & Wong, 2018).

High-performing schools: Collaborative school systems that train and develop quality teachers through continuous professional development and are held accountable

for student learning using data decision making (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jensen et al., 2016).

Mentoring program: A multidimensional program designed to support and instruct new teachers by assigning them a veteran teacher to guide, influence, model, and provide feedback (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016).

Mentor teacher: An experienced veteran teacher-leader and coach who provided guidance and instruction on classroom management, organization, and lesson planning to a new teacher (Dudick, 2016).

New teacher: A teacher who is in their first one or two years in the teaching profession (Dudick, 2016).

Reliability: The measurement or degree to which a tool or survey produces stable and consistent results (Mills & Gay, 2019).

Student achievement: A measure of the amount of academic content a student learns in a specific time frame (Wong & Wong, 2018).

Teacher attrition: A measure of the number of teachers who are moving out of the teaching profession (New Teacher Center, 2016a).

Teacher induction: A complete process of continuous training and support for new teachers (Wong & Wong, 2018).

Teacher retention: A measure that focuses on teacher demographic information and the factors that affect teachers and if they stay in their current school district, move to another district, or leave the teaching profession before they are eligible for retirement (New Teacher Center, 2016a). Retention is keeping teachers in the profession (Britt-Stevens, 2014).

Teacher standards: Specific written elements and criteria of knowledge and skills teachers should be able to demonstrate as indicators and evidence of an educators teaching ability (Shakman et al., 2012).

Validity: The measure of the accurate components of a program and their value. Validity verifies if the research measured what it actually intended to measure (Airasian et al., 2019).

Limitations

The researcher's intent was to provide clear and usable data for new teacher programs and every attempt was made to eliminate effects of external variables through delimiting the study. However, it should be recognized limitations existed. Educational research is a difficult field of study and thus, limitations are inherent. This qualitative study noted the following limitations, which included any variable that was outside the control of the researcher.

1. Teachers may not have responded to the interview questions honestly or may have answered questions based on what they believed the researcher was trying to confirm.
2. Teachers may not have been able to adequately describe their feelings and opinions of their learning experiences.
3. The study generalized all new teacher mentoring programs in the state based on a limited number of interviews.
4. Specific pairing of each mentee to their mentor was out of the researcher's control.

5. Additional limitations included the inconsistencies in the quality of new teachers' mentoring programs from school districts across the state of Missouri and their mentoring experiences.
6. The researcher strove to reduce bias and subjectivity due to being the only coder and analyzer of the data.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were present in this qualitative study, which was intentionally designed to provide the most accurate and relevant data.

1. Sample population was limited to the 12 Missouri interviewees.
2. This study was limited to the three schools in the state of Missouri the researcher chose based on specific criteria to be considered a high-performing school and participated in a mentoring program.
3. This study was limited to Missouri schools that were willing to participate.

Assumptions

Throughout the study, the researcher made the following assumptions.

1. It was assumed participants provided accurate and honest feedback, to the best of their ability, to questionnaires and focus group interview questions.
2. It was assumed the three Missouri schools involved in the qualitative study included the Missouri Mentoring Program Standards (Missouri DESE, 2017a) within their new teacher training since it was a required licensing component for all teachers in the state of Missouri.

Design Controls

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs from three first-year teachers, three second-year teachers, and their six mentors from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri. A basic narrative qualitative study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was used to purposefully select participants and explore mentoring practices involved in high-performing school systems. A basic narrative research strategy was used to gather information through participants' stories, interviews, and related documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In order to collect the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews followed by open-ended questions. Otter, an outside transcription service, was used for analysis of the interviews and recordings to increase accuracy of the data and to prevent bias by the researcher. To ensure the most accurate and honest data available, the researcher assured respondents the survey would be handled with complete anonymity and confidentiality for responding schools. The guarantee of confidentiality was a control to encourage teachers to answer questions honestly.

The limitations of the study included participants possibly not answering questions honestly or answering questions by trying to appease the researcher. It could have also been difficult for some teachers to adequately describe their feelings by putting them into words. Another limitation of the study included only having 12 participants and the inconsistencies of new teacher mentoring programs across the state of Missouri. The researcher endeavored to reduce bias by using an outside transcription service and being the only coder and analyzer of the data.

The delimitations of the study included the sample population being limited to the 12 Missouri interviewees. The study was also limited to the three schools in the state of Missouri that were willing to participate. The researcher chose the participating three schools based on specific criteria to be identified as a high-performing school and a recognized formal mentoring program.

The study assumed participants provided accurate and honest feedback, to the best of their ability, to questionnaires and focus group interview questions. It was also assumed the three Missouri schools involved in the qualitative study included the Missouri Mentoring Program Standards (Missouri DESE, 2017a) into their new teacher training. Participation in a new teacher training program was a required licensing component for all teachers in the state of Missouri.

In an effort to control for limitations and delimitations, the researcher focused on potential weaknesses by setting boundaries. The researcher conducted a content analysis by coding transcripts to identify and analyze themes, elements, and categories based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. Both content and thematic analysis of data was performed to dive deeper into the themes and patterns presented by the respondents.

Summary

The purpose of this narrative qualitative study was to report the stories of three first-year teachers, three second-year teachers, and their six mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools to explore perceptions of their current journey of being engaged in continuous professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs to develop and increase teacher quality. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs will provide insight for school leaders so they might better

understand how to establish a culture of continuous professional learning to increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Hattie, 2012). The study applied Learning Forward (n.d.) standards for continuous professional learning as the lens for developing and training quality teachers around the framework for teaching (Danielson, 2007). School systems must strive to put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

This research study was divided into five chapters. In Chapter Two, the researcher will provide a review of literature organized thematically with more information about effective mentoring programs including organizational methods and will list the components of effective mentoring programs such as multiyear mentoring, required observations by mentee and mentor, beginning teacher professional development, budgeting and program funding, implementing professional teaching standards, intentional contact time with mentor teachers, and quality training for mentors. In Chapter Three, the researcher will discuss the methodology for conducting the study. A basic narrative qualitative study research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) was used to purposefully select 12 participants and explore mentoring practices involved in three high-performing school systems with high state assessment scores, low teacher turnover rates, and a current formal mentoring program. The researcher conducted a content analysis by coding transcripts to identify and analyze themes based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. It includes an introduction, a description of the participants was discussed along with the research setting, design, instrumentation used, data analysis, and a summary. Chapter Four includes the findings of the study and an analysis of the data including tables and figures noting the significance of the study. Triangulated sources of

data were also examined for evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews with related data presented to reduce bias, ending with a summary of key findings in the conclusion. Chapter Five contains a brief summary of the problem along with a discussion and interpretation of the implications of the findings, which relate back to the research questions and problem statement. Implications for practice are discussed along with recommendations for further research followed by a summary of the chapter. A key list of references is presented along with appendices of related documents.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was centered on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). Studies around the country have shown (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Zhukova, 2018), new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on developing quality teachers when implemented appropriately. Creating a culture in which teachers have opportunities for continual learning is the likeliest way to develop quality teachers, which leads to greater achievement in student learning (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2013; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016; Svendsen, 2020; Wong & Wong, 2018). Research-based strategies must be used in order to effectively train and support beginning teachers (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017). Learning Forward's (n.d.) Standards for Professional Learning provided school districts with an in-depth framework for continuous professional learning to improve teacher quality (Lewis, 2018). Based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016). Although many schools employ teacher mentoring programs, school districts do not implement them adequately or with fidelity and validity (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Zembytska, 2016).

In Chapter Two, the researcher presents an extensive literature review of new teacher mentoring programs and continuous professional learning to develop quality teachers. The literature review begins by outlining and explaining what it takes to become a quality teacher, followed by a continuum for developing and training quality teachers, which includes the following: the value of recruiting appropriate teacher candidates, preparation and preservice programs, and new teacher induction programs. An in-depth review of literature will be provided related to professional learning, which is the last phrase of the continuum along with professional learning specific to new teachers. Components of effective new teacher mentoring programs are explored with sections outlining the value of multiyear mentoring, observations by mentee and mentor, contact time with mentors, mentor/mentee coaching and collaboration, and quality training for mentors. Research is also provided related to the current perceptions of new teachers about their experiences with mentoring programs to provide the researcher background information as a baseline for the study. The researcher concludes Chapter Two with a look at the price of teacher attrition, mobility, and retention to school districts as the lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). Therefore, retaining effective and quality teachers has become a top priority for school districts in the last several years as the cost of replacing and training teachers has become a drain on school funds (Zembytska, 2016).

Developing Quality Teachers

Quality teachers are defined as educators who strive to improve instructional practices by utilizing high-impact teaching strategies (Hanover Research, 2016). Teacher

quality has become an area of concern for school districts today due to the significant impact on student learning (Geeraerts et al., 2015). Charlotte Danielson (2013) and Wong and Wong (2018) have defined a framework for developing quality teachers that included having high learning expectations for students and knowledge of how to teach lessons for student mastery (Danielson, 2007, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). The centerpiece of the framework for teaching is student engagement, which requires specific professional learning for teachers (Danielson, 2007, 2013). Learning Forward's (n.d.) Standards for Professional Learning were also built around student learning and provided school districts with an in-depth framework for continuous professional learning using context, process, and content standards to improve teacher quality (Lewis, 2018).

John Hattie (2012) identified a number of teacher characteristics that have a measurable impact on student learning and achievement. His work provided insight into teaching practices that show the greatest impact on student achievement (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; Hattie, 2012). John Hattie (2012) defined quality expert teachers as being able to organize and teach content effectively, create positive learning environments, monitor student learning by providing meaningful feedback, believe all students can reach success standards, and understand the difference between surface and deep student learning outcomes. Essentially, high-quality expert teachers believe they are personally responsible for student learning (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2004; Danielson, 2019; Hattie, 2012). John Hattie (2012) challenged teachers to, "Know thy impact" (p. ix). It is vital for new teachers to understand the impact they have on students in order to become an effective expert teacher (Danielson, 2019; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). The ultimate goal for teachers is to develop the skill of evaluating and reflecting on the effect

they have on their students (Danielson, 2019; Hattie, 2012). Collective teacher efficacy is the belief teachers can positively influence students and make a difference over and above other educational impacts of their homes and communities (Donohoo & Katz, 2019; Mosoge, Challens, & Xaba, 2018). Learning organizations with high teacher efficacy are more willing to try new teaching methods and are more accepting of change (Donohoo, 2017; Mosoge et al., 2018).

John Hattie (2016) listed collective teacher efficacy as the most important factor that influences students (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Hattie, 2016; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Teachers who feel like they are making a difference in the lives of their students have higher job satisfaction rates and feel directly connected to the efficacy of their profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Donohoo, 2017). When teachers are confident in their impact, enthusiasm increases, which also results in higher student engagement and achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; O'Quinn, 2018). John Hattie (2016) reported it is more than teachers believing in the process; it is actually doing the work. Teachers must work together to generate high-quality, effective, and challenging instructional methods to create a combined belief of knowing they are the reason behind effective student learning (Danielson, 2019; Hattie, 2016).

Experienced teachers are not necessarily expert teachers (Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). The degree of challenge and the depth of learning for students should move from surface learning to deep learning as teachers exhibit an understanding of more than just concepts but integrated, more coherent content, with higher order thinking (Bransford et al., 2004; Hattie, 2012). It's not just what teachers put in; it is the outcome teachers get from students that contributes to becoming a truly effective and expert

teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). High-performing school systems are strategic in their approach to developing high-quality teachers (Jensen et al., 2016). They invest in the profession of teaching and learning by providing a structure of support (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). School districts are environments that not only promote student learning but are also learning organizations for teachers (Danielson, 2019). To move a novice teacher to a quality expert teacher, it is important to provide new teacher induction programs, professional learning for all teachers, specialized training for new teachers, and a strong mentoring program (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Svendsen, 2020).

Continuum for Developing and Retaining Quality Teachers

Developing quality teachers takes time and support, with each developmental phrase building upon another (Darling-Hammond, 2013). This study was based on the importance of creating a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and improve teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). High-performing school systems understand all teachers are capable of learning and improving their performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). They devote time and provide structure around the art of teaching and learning (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In order for schools to be effective learning organizations, they must create structures that promote changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Students learn more when teachers are also actively involved in the learning process (Wong & Wong, 2018). New teacher induction programs, professional learning for all teachers, specialized training for new teachers, and a strong mentoring

program are integral parts of the continuum for developing and retaining quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Donohoo, 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). The four levels of the continuum for developing and retaining quality teachers begin with recruiting quality beginning teachers, establishing a solid foundation through teacher preparation programs, providing new teacher induction programs, and offering effective professional learning for all teachers along with specialized training related specifically to new teachers.

Recruiting new teachers. Encouraging and advocating for individuals with the right blend of academic abilities and passion for student learning are the keys to recruiting quality new teachers (Christensen, Davies, Harris, Hanks, & Bowles, 2019). The problem is not always the number of available teacher candidates; the challenge is selecting the most promising applicants (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). It is important for districts to implement recruitment strategies to help draw talented and high-quality teacher graduates (Darling-Hammond, 2013; O'Doherty & Harford, 2018). In fact, Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) believed our nation should focus on recruiting and retaining effective expert teachers as it is the most important factor directly related to student achievement (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; Marzano et al., 2001).

To create an effective educational system, school districts must be purposeful (Darling-Hammond, 2013). There are four major factors that have strong influences on teacher recruitment and retention: (a) teachers' pay and/or benefits, (b) working environment, (c) training and/or preparation programs, and (d) mentoring and support while in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2010). High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In countries with low teacher attrition rates, universities are not trying to recruit large

numbers of teacher candidates; they are investing their time in candidates who they believe are in the field of education as a lifelong career (O'Doherty & Harford, 2018; Young, 2020).

Preparation/preservice programs. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, 2020), teacher preparation programs do not appropriately provide new educators with a solid foundation grounded in researched based tools, curriculum, texts, and assessments related to evidence-based instructional methods to properly prepare them for the classroom (Canaslan-Akyar, 2020; NCTQ, 2020). The type of teacher preparation program students attend matters and many are not appropriately preparing new teachers for the classroom (Geeraerts et al., 2015; NCTQ, 2020). A direct correlation has been found between professional development/collaboration and a teacher's confidence in their abilities, which leads to a sense of enjoyment in teaching (Donohoo, 2017). Therefore, school districts must provide quality professional learning for their teachers (Donohoo, 2017). Many teacher preparation programs allow anyone with interest to become teachers, measure their performance once in the field, and then weed out those who were not successful (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) stated this is not the way high-performing school systems function and comes at the detriment of students. High-performing school systems operate on the belief teachers can learn competency skills and can improve their performance with effective systems of support and training in place (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Today, most universities have a set of standards and curriculum expectations that teacher education majors must learn and display (Young, 2020). However, due to the

shortage of teacher candidates, Missouri DESE (2020a) has offered several different types of programs for alternative teacher certification that do not have student teaching as a requirement. This has created a serious gap in training for new teachers with no experience in what to do on the first day of school (Wong & Wong, 2018). Successful student teacher induction programs provide a solid foundation by integrating not only the content knowledge but also training on how to teach and implement the content starting on Day 1 (Wong & Wong, 2018). In recent years, effective teacher preparation programs have expanded their programs to include university partnerships that provide clinical training to bridge teaching theory with the actual practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Teacher candidates are given more opportunities to extend their learning by participating in more extensive mentoring programs with guidance and support provided by a mentor teacher in a classroom setting before they begin their teaching career (Lojdová, 2020).

New teacher induction programs. Many leaders in the education industry recognize the importance of effective new teacher mentoring and induction programs (Carr et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Shanks et al., 2020; Wong & Wong, 2018; Zembytska, 2016). The first year of teaching is the most crucial (Wong & Wong, 2018). New teachers feel vulnerable, isolated, and deeply concerned with how other teachers perceive them. Yet, they are afraid to ask for help (Wong & Wong, 2018). Recent reports revealed almost one fourth of educators leave the profession within the first years of their career due to a lack of administrative support and dissatisfaction (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Zembytska, 2016). Wong and Wong (2018) reported 50% of teachers leave the education profession by their fifth year. Missouri DESE

(2017b, 2019) reported first-year teacher retention rates ranged between 60.5% and 65.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Shuls, 2019). Missouri teachers that have less than 10 years' teaching experience was 49.9% (Missouri DESE, 2018). School districts with structured new teacher induction programs care about the success of their new teachers (Shanks et al., 2020; Wong & Wong, 2018).

Today, 29 states in the U.S. require some type of support for new teachers (New Teacher Center, 2016b). Despite the statistics, 21 states do not require any type of new teacher training, with only nine states in the U.S. requiring support for new teachers beyond the first 2 years on the job (New Teacher Center, 2016b). The problem lies in the ineffective implementation of new teacher programs (Zembytska, 2016). Many programs do not include accountability measures or structure. Today, mentoring programs across the country are not given the support and attention needed by decision makers and school leaders (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016). School districts must understand the essential need for training new teachers to become high-quality educators. In order for schools to be effective learning organizations, they must create structures that promote changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). This rationale applies not just to the students within a school district but applies to the staff members as well. Learning is a complex cognitive process through a behavioral perspective (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

New teachers should be given opportunities to explore their newfound knowledge by putting it into practice through mentoring and apprenticeship programs. The learning new teachers develop should not be a transfer of information from the mentor but should include a chance to open the vault of their own process of learning and discovery (Irby et

al., 2020). Hoy and Miskel (2008) listed five features of cognitive apprenticeships. First, new teachers should be given opportunities to observe and model an expert in the field (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Donohoo (2017) stated teachers should be provided opportunities to observe others through vicarious experiences. Secondly, support should be given to the new teacher throughout the coaching and/or tutoring cycle, which also included feedback and modeling (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). New teachers need encouragement through social persuasion to overcome challenges through collaboration and support (Donohoo, 2017). Third, conceptual scaffolding is provided to the new teacher and then gradually reduced as the new teacher becomes more comfortable (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). They should be given mastery experiences to build their collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). Fourth, the new teacher should be given time to put their learning into words (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Finally, time should be given to the new teacher to reflect on their progress and problem-solving skills (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Having an affective state of mind considers the feeling of excitement or anxiety associated with a new teacher's perceptions of their teaching capability and leads to higher teacher efficacy beliefs (Donohoo, 2017).

Professional Learning

Professional development that engages teachers and has an effect on students in the classroom is defined as professional learning (Easton, 2015). Learning Forward (n.d.) is a professional association dedicated exclusively for professional development to improve educator effectiveness, which is fundamental to student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Learning Forward (n.d.) stated professional learning should lead to

effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student outcomes. Effective professional learning should lead to change, which can be a difficult process for many teachers (Easton, 2015). However, high-performing school systems recognize all teachers, even veteran staff members, can learn and improve their craft (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.; Wong & Wong, 2018). They devote strategic blocks of time and structure to the professional teaching and learning (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.; Wong & Wong, 2018).

Learning Forward's (n.d.) Standards for Professional Learning provided an in-depth framework for continuous professional learning to improve teacher quality (Lewis, 2018). Learning Forward has structured the strategies for teacher professional learning by organizing them into three broad standards of context, process, and content (Easton, 2015). These three overarching professional learning standards bring teachers together in a collaborative learning community to promote shared leadership, encourage data collection with research-based decision making, guide knowledge of how people learn, prepare teachers to deepen content knowledge, and create a supportive learning environment with high expectations (Easton, 2015).

The first standard of context is based on creating a culture of continuous professional learning that leads to improving the schools' capacity to function as a learning community to increase the growth of both teachers and students (Easton, 2015). The Context Standard consists of Learning Communities, Leadership, and Resources (Lewis, 2018). Learning communities promote continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and an alignment of goals to strengthen educator practice and increase

student results (Learning Forward, n.d.). The goal of a learning community must be to create effective teachers, which must be grounded in quality professional learning (Danielson, 2007; Wong & Wong, 2018). Effective teachers recognize schools primarily exist to provide student learning experiences and the greatest outcome on student learning and achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, training quality teachers through effective profession learning opportunities is vital and school leaders must support collaboration time and the value it has on creating effective learning communities and high-quality teachers (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.). High-performing international countries understand the value of professional learning and collaboration by only requiring an average of 19 hours a week for teaching responsibilities as compared to 27 hours a week for teachers in the United States, which leaves more time for support and training (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The extra amount of time high-performing countries set aside for their new teachers is largely spent planning for quality instruction and engaging in cycles of instructional improvement (Jensen et al., 2016). Professional learning is viewed as the component to improve student learning and ultimately to improve schools (Jensen et al., 2016). Teachers in the United States spend 50% more time than the international average engaged in direct instruction (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Learning is more productive and meaningful if teachers are reflective, intentional, and collaborative, which does not always come naturally (Bransford et al., 2004; Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Svendsen, 2020). Effective teachers learn through interactions and conversations with each other (Bransford et al., 2004; Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, teachers must be surrounded with a positive culture of

support, solid leadership, and intentional collaboration through professional learning opportunities (Doennig, 2019; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Effective school districts create learning communities for peer-to-peer support and to maintain a consistent focus of shared goals (Learning Forward, n.d.). Leadership training is vital to model, develop, support, and improve advocacy skills along with understanding the critical responsibility of providing effective professional learning to the organization (Learning Forward, n.d.). In order for schools to promote effective professional learning, leadership must create structures to encourage changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Teachers who are chosen as leaders in high-performing school systems must be collaborative and are held accountable for student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jensen et al., 2016). Effective leaders are facilitators and identify professional learning as a key strategy to developing quality teachers to improve student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). School leaders must advocate for professional learning by modeling the importance of being a lifelong learner (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Effective resources must also be provided to produce quality data, results, and outcomes to facilitate informed decisions (Learning Forward, n.d.). Quality professional learning should be student focused and include effective curriculum/resources, instruction, and assessment to improve student growth and academic outcomes (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Zhukova, 2018). Goldman and Pellegrino (2015) defined curriculum resources as what is being taught, instruction as how the curriculum resources are taught, and assessment as how the learning is evaluated. Curriculum is the method or course of study and learning experiences that identified what students are expected to learn in a specific subject (Wong & Wong, 2018). Curriculum should not only include a textbook

but also a host of materials and learning resources that foster deeper learning using a multitude of varied representations of concepts (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Wong & Wong, 2018). The resources and learning materials teachers use to create effective lessons should be based on state standards, which are the core backbone of curriculum (Wong & Wong, 2018). Curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be in alignment and should reinforce one another to truly be effective and achieve higher student achievement (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015).

The second standard of process is the strategic selection and design of professional learning based on the needs of teachers and students in the school district (Easton, 2015). Process Standards include Data and Learning Designs to provide information to teachers for data-driven decision making (Lewis, 2018). Instructional design should begin by identifying the end goal of student learning and then working backward to determine how to get there (Wong & Wong, 2018). Learning designs must also include the research and theories behind effective learning in order to facilitate the engagement process for teachers and students (Learning Forward, n.d.). It is vital school districts use reliable, up-to-date, and appropriate data when making major professional learning decisions (Lewis, 2018). Teachers who use assessment data to understand student progress significantly enhance knowledge and skill development by using the data to plan, revise, and evaluate instructional activities and strategies (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Data from multiple sources should be used to enrich decision making for a balanced and comprehensive analysis of student performance (Learning Forward, n.d.). Douglas Reeves (2009) stated we must use a system's thinking approach when focusing on a continuous cycle of improvement, which begins by analyzing and

prioritizing data through a needs assessment treasure hunt to find out where students are performing (Reeves, 2009). Schools must use data to implement learning goals for areas of weakness and then continue to monitor student growth while continuously adjusting teaching practices (Reeves, 2009). The selection and design process of professional learning should be strategic and based on the needs of teachers and students in the school district (Easton, 2015). Therefore, data-based decision making should be the driving force to know where students are performing and be part of the process of moving them forward (Hattie, 2012; Learning Forward, n.d.).

Students do not come to classrooms as blank slates but arrive with a host of background knowledge, beliefs, and conceptions from various life experiences (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Teachers must understand and recognize preexisting conceptions of learning in order for students to grow and grasp new concepts (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Therefore, assessment data is imperative to understand where students are and where they need to be in their learning (Wong & Wong, 2018). Teachers need specific professional learning and training on collecting and analyzing assessment data in order to be effective educators (Svendsen, 2020; Wong & Wong, 2018).

The third standard is content, which must be focused with everyone moving in the same direction by connecting student data to professional learning (Easton, 2015). The content standard includes implementation and outcomes and is considered to be the most critical part of school improvement as it addresses the importance of teachers putting their learning into practice (Lewis, 2018). Implementation of research-based strategies is vital to fill the gap in learning using standards when analyzing the data through developing specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals for areas of

weakness (Reeves, 2009). The major challenge of teacher professional learning is to weed through all the learning opportunities that will not only positively impact student outcomes but that will also grow and increase teacher outcomes (Hattie, 2012; Svendsen, 2020). Implementation of professional learning in an appropriate and timely manner by providing constructive feedback and reflection leads to changes in educator practice and increases in student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Instructional strategies and focus should always be grounded on improving student learning (Wong & Wong, 2018). Outcomes and professional standards act as guides to hold students and educators accountable for their learning to increase achievement and build consistency (Learning Forward, n.d.). One of the most promising practices that leads to instructional improvement includes bringing teachers together to collaborate by analyzing samples of student work (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015).

Learning communities operate outside the classroom doors as well. Therefore, content must also improve the learning for all students in regard to equity, quality teaching, and family involvement (Easton, 2015). There is a collective responsibility for student learning in the surrounding community that involves families and stakeholders (Learning Forward, n.d.). Students benefit when teachers collaborate and combine learning experiences with stakeholders in their community (Learning Forward, n.d.). School leaders should involve stakeholders when evaluating their professional learning experiences to determine the equity and impact professional learning is having on student learning (Lewis, 2018). Using time well when working to improve the quality of professional learning can be a challenge (Easton, 2015). In order to learn effectively, teachers need to be explicitly taught teaching strategies and practice teaching skills

extensively in a variety of situations (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Teachers need to be empowered and provided with training and experiences that allow them to grow as leaders and learners (Donohoo, 2017). According to the New Teacher Center (2016a), effective teachers are surrounded with a positive culture of support, collaboration, professional learning opportunities, trust, and instructional development. Teachers, like students, learn best when they are:

- studying, doing, and reflecting;
- collaborating with fellow teachers;
- observing students at work; and
- sharing what they've learned (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Donohoo, 2017).

Strategies and standards for powerful professional learning, according to Learning Forward (n.d.), is central to a cycle of improvement when leaders and teachers know the reality of their context, select the most appropriate learning process, and then pay careful attention to the content of the provided professional learning (Easton, 2015; Jensen et al., 2016). High-performing school districts are strategic in their approach to professional learning by supporting student learning within a constant cycle of improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016). Professional learning is an ongoing practice and starts with creating context by establishing an environment that thrives when learning occurs (Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.). Teachers address the processes they will use when deciding how they will learn (Easton, 2015). All educators, veteran and new, should strive to shift from their current reality of student effectiveness to the preferred desired content with specific outcomes of enhanced student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Teachers who are able to have their voices heard and are involved in shaping their learning have reduced anxiety, are more likely to change their practices, and have deeper implementation results (Donohoo, 2017). School districts that value their teachers by intentionally providing quality research-based mentoring programs will reap the benefits through higher teacher retention rates and improved student achievement scores (Cochran-Smith et al., 2020; New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017). Effective professional learning through mentoring and induction practices effectively supports new teachers in their first year of teaching and has shown to increase teacher quality, which leads to an increase in student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Professional Learning for New Teachers

The purpose of professional learning is to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of all educators, both veteran teachers and new teachers, to improve instructional practices (Learning Forward, n.d.). However, school leaders should provide professional development opportunities specifically geared for new teachers and their unique requirements (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Perry, 2016). New teachers are expected to perform the same tasks and responsibilities as veteran staff on the first day of school without any training (Wong & Wong, 2018). However, new teachers do not have any experience teaching by themselves starting on Day 1 (Wong & Wong, 2018). Wong and Wong (2018) stated new teachers need specific professional learning focused on the first days of school with a clear plan on how to create a classroom environment that is consistent with routines throughout the year.

Wong and Wong (2018) stated the first 3 years of a new teacher's career are the most crucial. New teachers should be trained on how to be effective through supported

activities that include mentoring, working collaboratively with coworkers, and providing opportunities for meaningful mentor observations (Pedota, 2015; Zembytska, 2016). Strong education systems require all teachers have an intensive professional learning focus on pedagogical teacher content knowledge and also require new teachers to attend workshops and seminars on lesson preparation, homework, and lesson design once a month (Jensen et al., 2016). It is the district's job to ensure proper training and support through professional development opportunities are provided in a timely manner (Dudick, 2016). Therefore, new teachers should be provided with support and training on effective teaching methods as soon as possible (Sowell, 2017). School leaders should provide professional development opportunities specifically geared for new teachers and their unique requirements starting at the beginning of the school year (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Perry, 2016).

According to the NCTQ (2020), teacher preparation programs do not appropriately provide new educators with researched-based tools, curriculum, texts, and assessments related to evidence-based instructional methods to properly prepare them for the classroom. The type of teacher preparation program students attend matter and many are not appropriately preparing new teachers for the classroom (Geeraerts et al., 2015; NCTQ, 2020). Therefore, school districts must provide quality professional learning for their new teachers to help fill the gap in new teacher learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017). A study of new teacher mentoring programs in Georgia found several mentoring programs were deemed ineffective when school systems failed to provide new teachers with a mentor in a timely manner, specific standards or expectations for the program were not followed, and low-income and high-income

schools were treated unequally (Belanger, 2018). Another study on new teacher mentoring programs in Austria reported inadequate teacher professional learning opportunities led to gaps in student learning (Young, 2020). When public confidence in teacher education is low, teacher productivity suffers (Young, 2020). A direct relationship has been found between effective professional learning and a new teacher's confidence level in their skills which eventually leads to a higher satisfaction level in teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017).

In order to learn effectively, new teachers need to be explicitly taught teaching strategies and practice teaching skills extensively in a variety of situations and professional learning opportunities (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Effective professional learning should lead to change, which can be a scary process for many new teachers (Easton, 2015). The type of teaching required today is very different from the past when all that was required was merely to cover the curriculum or get from the front of the book to the back (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This is not the case anymore. Education today is not focused on what the teacher has covered in a textbook but where a student is performing in their learning and growth (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, professional learning for new teachers must lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student outcomes (Learning Forward, n.d.). Data must be the driving force to know where students are performing and where they need to be (Hattie, 2012; Learning Forward, n.d.). Wong and Wong (2018) remind us that schools exist and teachers are employed for primarily one reason, which is to help students learn and achieve.

The state of Missouri required all new teachers attend a Beginning Teacher Assistance Program, which covered classroom environment, student engagement, professional communication, and education related law (Missouri DESE, 2020b). New teacher professional development should also focus on classroom management, differentiation, working with caregivers, motivating learners, and literacy (Gjddapah, 2016). A study on teacher knowledge and understanding from Singapore reflected teachers' instructional pedagogy changed and improved over time as conceptual procedures deepened (Silver, Kogut, & Huynh, 2019). Therefore, it is vital school districts provide new teachers with appropriate professional learning experiences, tangible modeling, and effective instructional practices throughout the year (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In a study by Rita Soulen (2020), new teacher professional development should be collaborative by starting small and evolving over time to build a relationship with trust and confidence (Soulen, 2020).

The first year of teaching is the most crucial (Shanks et al., 2020; Wong & Wong, 2018). Recent reports revealed almost one fourth of educators leave the profession within the first 3 years of their career due to a lack of administrative support and dissatisfaction (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Zembytska, 2016). Wong and Wong (2018) reported 50% of teachers leave the education profession by their fifth year. Missouri DESE (2017b, 2019) reported first-year teacher retention rates ranged between 60.5% and 65.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Shuls, 2019). Missouri teachers that have less than 10 years' teaching experience was 49.9% (Missouri DESE, 2018).

To appropriately sustain and train new teachers, school districts need to be transformed into intentional learning organizations (NCTAF, 2007; Sowell, 2017). New

teachers might gain specific teaching and content knowledge but lack the experience of how to effectively implement their new learning without support and guidance (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016). School leaders must support and recognize the amount of time required for effective professional development and the value it has on teacher collective efficacy (Donohoo & Katz, 2019; Learning Forward, n.d.). Schools that allot specific time for collaboration around professional learning reap significant investments by creating quality teachers (Learning Forward, n.d.). Schools with structured new teacher professional learning and induction programs care about the success of their new teachers (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, it is important schools put the structures in place to promote changes in teachers' knowledge and behavior in order to be an effective learning organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

According to the New Teacher Center (2016a), effective teachers are surrounded with a positive culture of support through continuous professional learning opportunities, collaboration, trust, and instructional development (Learning Forward, n.d.; Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2018). The way new teachers entering the profession were trained and supported plays a critical role in the long-term success of effective school districts (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Irby et al., 2020; Leuchtmann, 2019; O'Quinn, 2018; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). Therefore, collaborative continuous professional learning should be structured into every school day for new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Jensen et al., 2016; Learning Forward, n.d.) and roles should be clearly identified from Day 1 (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2018).

Effective teacher mentoring and induction programs are fundamental in providing a culture of support for new and beginning teachers (Carr et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2018; Zembytska, 2016). Consequently, teaching should be viewed as a team sport and not an individual act of courage (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Collaboration is an imperative part of a new teacher's training and should be expanded to include supported activities that include mentoring, working collaboratively with coworkers, and observations (Pedota, 2015; Zembytska, 2016). Mentoring has become a significant driver and component of effective professional learning in high-performing school systems (Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2013, 2017; Jensen et al., 2016).

Components of an Effective Teacher Mentoring Program. Mentoring is raising people to a higher level and helping them be successful through teacher collaboration (Carr et al., 2017). Teacher mentoring programs help transition new teachers from the role of a student to the role of a professional along with the adjustment to the workplace environment (Geeraerts et al., 2015). Learning Forward (n.d.) advocated for the use of professional learning standards to articulate the critical link between teacher support systems, training, and instructional practices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). High-performing schools are strategic in their approach by understanding professional learning such as mentoring opportunities should be a constant cycle of improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016; Svendsen, 2020).

It is vital to evaluate, study, and understand effective components of mentoring programs to provide appropriate support to new teachers (Carr et al., 2017). Mentoring empowers new teachers by allowing them to feel supported along with providing

effective feedback and resources (Carr et al., 2017; Monroe, 2017). Bandura's (1977) work on social cognitive theory and self-efficacy points out it would be very difficult, even harmful, if people rely on their own actions when learning something new (p. 22). Bandura went on to state modeling new behavior through observations is the most value way to grow an action. In response to high teacher shortage rates, school districts must move away from attempting to increase the supply of available teachers and move toward providing quality organizational conditions (Ingersoll, 2001). Creating a system of change with policies to affect teaching included ensuring early-career teachers have high-quality induction and mentoring programs (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Zhukova, 2018). School districts must develop strong systems of support within their new teacher training programs in order to be effective (Carr et al., 2017). Jenni Donohoo (2017) identified mentoring as a coaching cycle that included co-planning, co-teaching, co-analyzing, and co-reflection time. Mentoring reduces isolation by providing support and offers new teachers deeper insights into student learning, which increases collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017).

A recent study of three school districts in Southeastern South Carolina found new teachers who were given a mentor during their first year on the job wanted to return to their position and experienced higher job satisfaction rates than teachers who did not receive a mentor teacher (Britt-Stevens, 2014). Sowell (2017) reported effective mentoring has the ability to completely transform and advance new teachers into lifelong learners. High-performing school systems encourage teachers to be lifelong learners who show growth in their instructional performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et

al., 2017). Educational systems that effectively support new teachers are able to retain teachers, which leads to improved student academic achievement (Sowell, 2017).

The key to long-term successful schools was related to the way new teachers entering the profession were trained and supported (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Irby et al., 2020; Leuchtmann, 2019; O'Quinn, 2018; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). More than half of school districts in the country have implemented some type of mentoring program but many do not have research-based effective components (New Teacher Center, 2016b). New teachers need extra support and scaffolding to enable them to continue to learn and develop a broad range of strategies and skills for the complex job of teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

A study of teacher preparation programs identified the vital importance and value of higher education and school systems working together to improve quality teachers (Young, 2020). A key finding was in the value of professional experience placements and integration in the classroom (Young, 2020). New teachers need to be provided high levels of support and experiences that connect theory to practice (Young, 2020). An important factor of effective mentoring programs is not the existence of mentoring programs but is in the specific characteristics and how they are implemented (Sparks et al., 2017).

New teachers report mentoring programs must include a high rate of trust in the relationship between the new teacher and the mentor in order to function effectively, which can take time (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Therefore, when pairing mentors and mentees, school districts should take the human element into consideration by

allowing time to become acquainted and to build a relationship before school begins (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016). New teachers get busy in the art of teaching and need to be encouraged to reflect on theory and practice around student learning, which takes discipline and time (Young, 2020). Through combined research from several studies around the country, effective new teacher mentoring programs should include these elements: multiyear mentoring requirement, classroom observations, mandatory contact time with a mentor, specialized training for veteran mentor teachers, and collaboration through effective instructional coaching (Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2013; NCTAF, 2007; New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017).

Multiyear mentoring. The most crucial time in a new teacher's life is during the first 3 years of their practice (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, mentoring should be required for a minimum of the first 2 years of a new teacher's career (Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; New Teacher Center, 2016a; Wong & Wong, 2018; Zembytska, 2016). A vast majority of teachers report their first year of teaching as being extremely stressful and describe it as a trial and error type experience (Zembytska, 2016). This is why the most effective learning around quality instruction through mentoring occurs during the second and third years of teaching (Geeraerts et al., 2015; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Consequently, to move a novice teacher to a highly qualified effective teacher takes three to seven years (Callahan, 2016).

The first Professional Learning Standard of Context is based on creating a culture of continuous professional learning to increase the growth of both teachers and students that does not stop after the first year of teaching (Easton, 2015). High-performing education systems recognize the value of multiyear mentoring by encouraging a majority

of teachers to partner with a mentor throughout their career (Jensen et al., 2016). According to the New Teacher Center (2016a), effective teachers should be surrounded with a positive culture of support, collaboration, professional learning opportunities, trust, and instructional development. According to Learning Forward (n.d.), effective professional learning included meaningful collaboration with other educators, which leads to stronger teacher efficacy and a system of collective responsibility and support (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Svendsen, 2020).

Missouri's mentoring program standards require new teachers to be involved in a systematic and specific 2-year mentoring and professional growth plan, which includes priority indicators for beginning educators (Missouri DESE, 2017a). Teachers need to be empowered and provided with training and experiences that allow them to grow as leaders and learners (Donohoo, 2017). Peer-group mentoring (PGM) is a new and upcoming model for mentoring that provides new teachers with a system of support through continuous multiyear professional development (Geeraerts et al., 2015). The traditional model of mentoring is based on a mentor teacher transmitting knowledge to a new teacher over several contact periods in contrast to the PGM model, which bases mentoring on a sharing of knowledge and ideas fluidly by both the mentor and new teacher (Geeraerts et al., 2015). A study in large urban school districts located in the Southern United States (Wiens, Chou, Vallett, & Beck, 2019) revealed an increase from 69% to 79% over a 4-year period of new teachers remaining in their same school district after participating in a multiyear peer mentoring program (Wiens et al., 2019). Multiyear new teacher mentoring programs are important as teachers greatly improve their

influence on student learning in the first three to five years of teaching (Wiens et al., 2019).

Observations by mentee and mentor. New teacher mentoring involves pairing new teachers with a mentor teacher to improve instructional practices and support student learning (Wiens et al., 2019). The two most common types of new teacher mentoring include an apprentice model and a laboratory model (Canaslan-Akyar, 2020). The apprentice model of new teacher mentoring identified the mentor as a role model for the new teacher to observe and emulate (Canaslan-Akyar, 2020). The laboratory model switched the roles by allowing the mentor to observe the mentee to provide constructive and beneficial feedback (Canaslan-Akyar, 2020). High-performing educational systems require mentees and mentors to observe each other at least once every 2 weeks (Jensen et al., 2016). Observations are an effective form of professional learning because they permit staff members an opportunity to see real and authentic student learning experiences (Easton, 2015). Mentees gain valuable insight when witnessing firsthand a veteran mentor teacher work through their normal routine, which allows for a better understanding of actual daily experiences rather than verbally discussing classroom structures (Easton, 2015). Collaboration around common lessons between the mentor and mentee is a valuable opportunity for mentors and mentees to observe each other and then reflect on the pros and cons of each lesson (Easton, 2015). Reflecting and feedback should be part of every observation, which leads to educator growth and development (Belanger, 2018; McCollum, 2014). The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2016, 2017a) required new teachers observe mentors a minimum of four class periods each year. Mentors aid new teachers by helping them co-plan

lessons and problem solve to improve teacher quality (Easton, 2015). Mentors should provide appropriate and timely constructive feedback to the mentee to promote change in educator practice and increase student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Reflecting on teaching practices allows the mentee to analyze instruction through the lens of student learning to improve teacher practice and student outcomes (Danielson, 2013). Research has shown an increase in instructional practices, improved student behavior, and greater teacher enthusiasm when new teachers are influenced by highly qualified and trained mentors (Leuchtmann, 2019). Direct contact with mentor teachers through observations and modeling provides valuable experiences for new teachers (Dudick, 2016). Mentors can empower new teachers when they model effective practices through coaching and instructional activities (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016). Co-teaching observations and co-planning become increasingly effective when combined with continuous professional development (Mark, 2017). The Professional Learning Standard of Content included Implementation and is considered to be the most critical part of school improvement as it addresses the importance of teachers putting their learning into practice (Lewis, 2018). The ultimate goal for teachers is to develop the skill of evaluating and reflecting on the effect they have on their students (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015; Hattie, 2012). It is also important to recognize the characteristics that define and identify effective teachers (Hanover Research, 2016). Therefore, new teachers should observe master veteran teachers and their mentor several times throughout the first 2 years in the classroom (Leuchtmann, 2019).

In a study of five states (Delaware, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas) and their teacher evaluation systems, all five required classroom observations

(Shakman et al., 2012). However, each were different in their expectations (announced or unannounced), the number of required observations (one to four), time length (15 minutes to 45 minutes), and nature of the observations (Shakman et al., 2012). The study found a need for reform in teacher effectiveness using evaluation systems through professional learning (Shakman et al., 2012). To be effective, beginning teachers need direction and focus (Zembytska, 2016). Providing teachers with feedback using standards and data-based evidence, guided instructional practices, and a solid structure ensures continuous instructional growth (Learning Forward, n.d.; New Teacher Center, 2016a).

High-performing international countries value professional learning and collaboration and therefore spend an average of 19 hours a week teaching as compared to 27 hours a week for teachers in the United States (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Mentors are not to be evaluators but should act as coaches for guidance and instruction (New Teacher Center, 2016a). Observing veteran teachers in their classroom environment is a powerful opportunity for mentees to acquire firsthand knowledge by being part of the culture in a successful classroom (Britt-Stevens, 2014). Effective professional learning should include practical real-world experiences of teaching (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Svendsen, 2020). Job-embedded professional learning designs engage teachers in pairs or teams during the workday to apply learning theories, research, and real-world models of human learning, which is extremely valuable but can be time consuming (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Contact time with mentor. Contact time is a critical factor for mentor and mentee teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Leuchtmann, 2019).

To be effective, districts must be intentional when setting time aside for mentors and mentees to collaborate (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lowder, 2017; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Mentee teachers should strive for at least one half-day to one full day each month to work with their mentor (Leuchtmann, 2019). Administrators should ensure contact time is built into new teachers' schedules and protected to allow for maximum support (Leuchtmann, 2019; McCollum, 2014; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Mentors and new teachers need ample time to reflect, observe, and collaborate to improve instruction and provide emotional support, which is vital in the first year of teaching (Belanger, 2018; McCollum, 2014).

A study of mentoring programs in Alabama recognized the vital importance of contact time by requiring mentors meet with their mentees 2.5 hours each week (Sparks et al., 2017). Participants of the study complained it was extremely difficult to find large amounts of time each week and recommended the district provide substitute teachers to cover their duties during collaboration (Sparks et al., 2017). A mentoring study from the Philippines recommended mentors and mentees also be provided more time for post conference discussion and collaboration (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Missouri DESE (2019) encouraged the importance of contact time between mentors and mentees by recommending release time through common planning or fewer additional assignments to ensure quality time was achieved.

In some high-performing school systems, new teachers are given two mentors to allow more time to participate in activities such as shadowing, research groups, and lesson observations up to three half-days per week (Jensen et al., 2016). School districts have realized the value of mentor teachers and their effect on new teachers by utilizing

them in different ways. A study from Belgium explored alternative field experience models for new teachers, which was inspired by collaborative learning such as team teaching (Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2018). Advantages of collaborative team teaching included more direct instructional time, a decreased workload, and better classroom management (Simons et al., 2018). Advantages of new teachers having access to two mentors include a wider range of observation experiences and more time to observe teaching practices (Young, 2020). Effective mentoring takes time and mentors must be committed to develop a relationship with new teachers (Hopkins, 2018). With technology today, mentoring programs do not need to always be structured in a face-to-face format as many districts are now allowing time for mentors to meet with new teachers using virtual formats (Hopkins, 2018). Effective mentors do not need to have all the answers but must strive to develop a trusting relationship by providing new teachers with problem-solving skills and various resources, which takes time and commitment (Hopkins, 2018). Districts reap significant investments in their teachers when allotting time for collaboration and professional learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). School districts that have set time aside for mentors and mentees to meet for intensive training and support have seen dramatically reduced attrition rates (Darling-Hammond, 2010). A study of mentor programs in Alabama found new teachers attributed their positive attitude toward education as a career directly to the time, emotional support, and encouragement they received from their mentor teacher (Sparks et al., 2017). School leaders must support collaboration time and the value it has on teacher collective efficacy and responsibility by allowing time for the mentor and mentee to work (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.). The culture within the building should include a

shared responsibility for each teacher's continued growth and success (NCTAF, 2007; Pedota, 2015).

Mentor/mentee coaching and collaboration. Teachers improve their practice when collaborating with their peers (Vaughan, Clampitt, & Park, 2016). The Professional Learning Standard of Content included Implementation, which is a huge part of teacher instructional improvement because it addresses the importance of teachers putting their learning into practice (Lewis, 2018). Researchers found the greatest gains in student learning were attributed to teachers who were collaborative and involved in peer learning, which created highly qualified, more experienced, and effectively trained teams of teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). New teachers also need guidance and direction from mentors dealing with the major challenge of weeding through the massive amounts of professional learning opportunities to know which would positively impact student outcomes and also increase teacher outcomes (Svendsen, 2020).

The Number 1 factor that has been shown to influence outcomes and student achievement has been collective teacher efficacy (CTE; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012, 2016; Mosoge et al., 2018). In order to appropriately sustain and train new teachers, school districts need to be transformed into intentional collaborative learning organizations (NCTAF, 2007; Sowell, 2017). CTE has been defined by Jenni Donohoo (2017), Provincial Literacy Lead of the Ontario Ministry of Education's Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch, and John Hattie (2016), Visible Learning Plus, as an educator's belief in their ability to positively influence student outcomes, including students who are disengaged and/or disadvantaged. CTE is basically a teacher's sense of competence (Donohoo, 2017). New teachers develop CTE and confidence in their

teaching capabilities through support and collaboration with their peers (Geeraerts et al., 2015).

Collective teacher efficacy is also the belief teachers can positively influence students and make a difference over and above other educational impacts of their homes and communities (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Mosoge et al., 2018). Learning organizations with high teacher efficacy are more willing to try new teaching methods and are more accepting of change (Donohoo, 2017). Therefore, professional learning should be viewed as central to new teachers and the profession through a continuous cycle of improvement (Jensen et al., 2016). New educators become motivated when they see students engaged and performing at high levels, which increases their confidence and influence (Donohoo, 2017). Mentee and mentor teachers must work together to generate high-quality, effective, and challenging instructional methods to create a combined belief of knowing they are the reason behind effective student learning (Geeraerts et al., 2015; Hattie, 2016).

Implementation of effective practices is gained through professional learning in an appropriate and timely manner by providing constructive feedback and reflection through collaboration and leads to changes in educator practice and increases student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). New teachers should be trained on how to be effective through supported activities that include mentoring, working collaboratively with coworkers, and observations (Pedota, 2015; Zembytska, 2016). Effective mentors should be strong communicators, trustworthy, nonjudgmental, sympathetic, and respectful in order to be a positive role model for new teachers (Sasser, 2018). Another study found communication to be essential between mentors and mentees to encourage effective

instructional practices (Young, 2020). Written documentation outlining professional expectations and standards of practice between the mentor and mentee provided more focus and productive collaboration around quality teaching (Young, 2020). A strong connection can be made between teacher success and a positive mentor/mentee relationship (Sparks et al., 2017). Beginning teachers need to be encouraged and supported, which allows them to grow into high-quality educators with multiple tools from which to draw (Dudick, 2016). Without supports, learning to be an effective teacher is very difficult (Kutsyuruba, 2016; Shanks et al., 2020). New teachers need to know what and how to teach effectively (Wong & Wong, 2018). Missouri teachers show competency by following Missouri Teaching Standards, which include having content knowledge aligned with appropriate instructional methods, an understanding of the growth and development of student learning using critical thinking skills, and using strategies to implement effective practices (Missouri DESE, 2013; Hanover Research, 2016). According to a study from Texas, an effective approach to promote effective practices, collaboration, and coaching between mentors and mentees is to utilize a co-teaching model (Montgomery & Akerson, 2019). Ninety-eight percent of participants in the co-teaching new teacher training program perceived themselves as better equipped to teach collaboratively (Montgomery & Akerson, 2019). Co-teaching between a mentor and mentee paves the way for effective teaching practices on a daily basis and leads to improved learning outcomes for students (Montgomery & Akerson, 2019). Another innovative format for supporting new teachers was recognized by Rita Soulen (2020) from North Carolina as she identified mentoring as moving toward

collaboration using interventions over time (Soulen, 2020). Soulen recognized mentoring contained stages of collaboration and support for new teachers by

- providing information and engagement at the beginning of the year,
- moving to empowerment through mentoring and introduction to develop a level of trust,
- building instructional skills through partnerships, and
- constructing a collegial professional relationship through co-teaching experiences.

This method of support gives new teachers confidence and builds stronger professional relationships as it starts small and then evolves (Soulen, 2020). Many school districts do not allow time for trust to develop between the mentor and mentee, which can be an important part of the mentee/mentor relationship (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). The Missouri Teacher Standards follow a developmental sequence or progressive pattern that illustrates how a teacher's knowledge and skills mature and strengthen throughout their career (Missouri DESE, 2013). Professional learning in curriculum and instruction should be a continuous cycle of improvement through collaborative experiences between the mentee and mentor (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Svendsen, 2020). Teachers are expected to use sound professional judgment and to use the standards to inform and improve their own practice. The Context Standard for Professional Learning promotes learning communities as an effective method to improve schools by encouraging continuous improvement, creating collective responsibility, and producing an alignment of goals to develop quality teachers (Learning Forward, n.d.). School leaders must support collaboration time and the value it has on creating effective learning communities and high-quality teachers (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Learning

Forward, n.d.). John Hattie (2016) reported effective professional learning is more than teachers just knowing best practices for instructional improvement; it is actually putting them in place.

Mentees and mentors must work together to generate high-quality, effective, and challenging instructional methods to create a combined belief of knowing they are the reason behind effective student learning and engagement (Hattie, 2016). According to the NCEE (2016), high-performing schools systematically plan effective curriculum and write lesson plans through collaboration with peers and colleagues (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; NCEE, 2016). Mentees and mentors must collaborate around curriculum lesson planning to provide students with knowledge to think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively (Svendsen, 2020).

High-performing school systems develop effective collaborative professional learning for new teachers through incremental improvements using student achievement data as the driving force (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016). New teachers must be able to monitor student learning by providing meaningful feedback and understand the difference between surface and deep student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2012). Therefore, assessments should be written and graded collaboratively by mentees and mentors to develop a strong shared understanding of the standards and the high expectations students are projected to reach (Svendsen, 2020). Collaborative assessment writing and grading provide substantial learning opportunities for new teachers (Svendsen, 2020). This allows for effective and active adult learning, which involves teachers collecting, evaluating, and acting on feedback to modify their teaching practices based on student data (Jensen et al., 2016).

New teacher mentoring programs are a vital component of collaborative professional learning in high-performing school systems (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Jensen et al., 2016). Mentoring provided new teachers a lifeline while giving mentor teachers a chance to leave their mark on the profession (Easton, 2015). Therefore, mentor teachers need training on collaboration and effective instructional practices (Pedota, 2015; Zembytska, 2016).

Training quality mentors. A critical factor in a successful mentoring program is selecting and training quality mentors (Belanger, 2018; Britt-Stevens, 2014; Leuchtmann, 2019). The quality of a mentor directly affects the quality of the mentee (Callahan, 2016). This is the area where most school districts drop the ball on new teacher training (Leuchtmann, 2019). Selecting a mentor using the "buddy-system" does not lead to an effective mentoring program (New Teacher Center, 2016a). Effective and successful mentors are not the type of teachers who simply want a job to earn money. They are teachers who want to make a difference in the lives of students by creating a system of support using a structure of continuous improvement through effective professional learning (Learning Forward, n.d.; Svendsen, 2020). They are driven teacher-leaders who advocate for professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.). Mentor teachers benefit by having to deepen their own knowledge by serving as teacher leaders (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Learning Forward, n.d.). Teacher leaders have their minds set on growing and collaborating with others to become more effective educators (Learning Forward, n.d.; Wong & Wong, 2018).

Mentees will emulate what they see from others (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, high-performing school systems ensure new teachers spend a large part of

their learning time in collaboration with their mentor and their peers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.). School leaders should choose mentors who are committed, dedicated, and hardworking (Leuchtmann, 2019; Wong & Wong, 2018). It takes a devoted teacher leader with these qualities to be worthy of the responsibilities of a mentor. Alaska, Hawaii, Maryland, and Washington require new teachers have full-time teacher mentors (New Teacher Center, 2016b). Full-time mentors should be specifically trained to support new teachers (Lowder, 2017). It allows them more quality contact time in which to be more focused in their training.

Strong professional development for mentors is essential to create highly qualified teachers (Callahan, 2016; Leuchtmann, 2019; Lowder, 2017). Mentors should have training on leadership, coaching, instructional skills and delivery, interpersonal skills, classroom management, and student engagement, and must be able to model these characteristics in their own instruction (Leuchtmann, 2019). Effective professional learning includes meaningful collaboration with other educators which leads to stronger teacher efficacy and accountability (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.; Svendsen, 2020). Missouri DESE (2017a) recognized this by requiring mentor teachers have a strong understanding of pedagogy and instructional expertise.

Mentor teachers play a key role in leading professional learning communities, which taps into sources of efficacy and accountability (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.). Mentor teacher leaders should advocate for the importance of professional learning for all teachers by modeling expectations through their actions and attitude (Learning Forward, n.d.). Learning Forward has developed strategies for teacher professional learning to bring teachers together in collaborative learning communities,

which promoted shared leadership, encouraged data collection with research-based decision making, guided knowledge of how people learn, helped prepare teachers to deepen content knowledge, and created supportive learning environments with high expectations (Easton, 2015). It is imperative mentor teachers share quality effective instructional practices with their protégés (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Mentors are not evaluators (Britt-Stevens, 2014). Their primary job is to promote the growth and development of the beginning teacher to improve instructional practices and learning. Their role is ultimately for support and guidance (Britt-Stevens, 2014). New teachers have often identified collaboration and engagement with their mentors as being one of the most valuable components of their New Teacher Training Program (Leuchtmann, 2019). Missouri's mentoring program standards require mentors receive comprehensive training and support on cognitive coaching skills, collaborative training, observation/feedback training, and an awareness of the phases of first-year educators (Missouri DESE, 2017a).

Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) stated it is imperative to develop procedures such as quality mentoring programs that draw, retain, support, and train highly effective teachers who are well prepared and committed (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Not only do new teachers benefit from mentoring, mentor teachers also gain by deepening their knowledge when they serve as teacher leaders (Darling-Hammond, 1998). Through combined research from several studies around the country, effective new teacher mentoring programs should include a multiyear mentoring requirement, classroom observations, mandatory contact time with a mentor, specialized training for veteran mentor teachers, and collaboration through effective instructional coaching (Callahan,

2016; Darling-Hammond, 2010; NCTAF, 2007; New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017).

Perceptions of New Teacher Mentoring Programs

Mentees entering the teaching profession have high expectations of their mentors in terms of guidance and support (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Belanger (2018) found 77.5% of first-year teachers surveyed perceived their mentors to be "very helpful" or "extremely helpful" in providing emotional support and reduced the new teacher's stress level (p. 100). Multiple studies around the country (Belanger, 2018; Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Zhukova, 2018) have also shown new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on developing quality teachers when implemented appropriately but many new teachers do not receive the intended support and benefits (McCollum, 2014). New teacher mentoring programs are recognized by federal and state education agencies as important components of teacher effectiveness (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Pedota, 2015). However, many school districts do not implement new teacher trainings appropriately or they lack the essential elements to be effective (Callahan, 2016; McCollum, 2014).

Recent studies on teacher perceptions of new teacher mentoring programs in Georgia revealed feelings of ineffectively administered programs, inequities between low-income and high-income schools, and inconsistent mentoring standards (Belanger, 2018). A separate study on mentoring programs in Austria reported low public confidence in initial teacher education, insufficient integration of quality teacher education partnerships, inadequate support for new teachers, and gaps in data of effectiveness (Young, 2020). New teachers report school systems do not put enough

value on the trust factor between the mentor and mentee as it lays the foundation for effective collaboration and productivity, which takes time (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Therefore, new teachers should be provided with a mentor for support and training on effective teaching methods as soon as possible (Sowell, 2017). New teachers in Georgia reported mentors should be carefully selected, highly trained, and provided a clear understanding of their vital role and responsibilities (Belanger, 2018). The development of a positive mentoring relationship is essential to the learning of a new teacher (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Belanger (2018) reported new teacher mentoring programs should be allotted an appropriate amount of time to develop a meaningful and trusting relationship between the mentor and the mentee (Belanger, 2018). Schools must provide new teachers with release time to reflect, observe, and collaborate with their mentors, which can become a budget concern (Belanger, 2018). Districts that implement effective mentoring programs to support and care for new teachers save money by having higher rates of teacher retention (McCollum, 2014).

Cost of Teacher Attrition, Mobility, and Retention

New teacher mentoring and induction methods have proven to be highly efficient and cost effective. According to Zembytska (2016), mentoring is the core element to any new teacher program. Britt-Stevens (2014) stated school districts must be intentional to establish policies and implement strategies aimed at teacher retention in order to retain quality teachers (p. 28). The calculated return on investment in the state of California when providing quality new teacher mentoring programs was $1.66 for every dollar spent (Zembytska, 2016). However, studies have also shown (Britt-Stevens, 2014; DeCesare, McClelland, & Randel, 2017; Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018), new

teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on teacher retention and job satisfaction rates, which can be a cost-effective approach for school districts.

Approximately 43% of new teachers make the decision to leave the teaching field for other careers or professions within the first 5 years of their career (Carr et al., 2017; Zembytska, 2016). Teacher attrition costs school districts money, time, and lowers student achievement scores (NCTAF, 2007; Sowell, 2017). Researchers have suggested it takes three to seven years for a beginning teacher to become an effective high-quality instructor (Callahan, 2016). The NCTAF estimate the cost of finding and training a new teacher to range from $4,366 in some rural districts to $17,872 in large cities (NCTAF, 2007). Callahan (2016) stated the NCTAF estimates the average cost of replacing a teacher to be more than $12,000 while the cost of mentoring a new teacher was around $5,000 (Carr et al., 2017). It is a time-consuming process to post a job, gather and sort through resumes, set up interview committees, interview potential candidates, present the teacher candidate for hire to the school board for approval, and then begin the training process. Missouri DESE (2017b, 2019) reported first-year teacher retention rates ranged between 60.5% and 65.9% from 2012 to 2016 (Shuls, 2019). Missouri teachers with less than 10 years of teaching experience make up approximately 49.9% of educators (Missouri DESE, 2018). Wong and Wong (2018) reported 50% of teachers leave the education profession by their fifth year.

Thomas G. Carroll (2007), President of the NCTAF, stated,

> Until we recognize that we have a retention problem, we will continue to engage in a costly annual recruitment and hiring cycle, pouring more and more teachers into our nation's classrooms only to lose them at a faster and faster rate. This will

> continue to drain our public tax dollars, it will undermine teaching quality, and it will most certainly hinder our ability to close student achievement gaps (p.1).

Teacher attrition rates have been an area of great concern in the education industry for several years (Zembytska, 2016). Recent studies from the NCEE (2016) have shown teacher attrition rates in the United States have not significantly changed or improved in the last 10 years. State education agencies have passed down guidelines to school districts to help with the problem but school districts have not been implementing the programs effectively or with intentionality (Zembytska, 2016). Schools that host a large number of beginning teachers have shown negative effects on student achievement and placed schools at a disadvantage of those with more experienced staff members (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). Many schools with high rates of teacher attrition focus on closing the achievement gap by replacing staff members when the problem actually lies in the gap of teaching quality (NCTAF, 2007; Sowell, 2017). A possible cause of this problem is the lack of time and support new teachers experience in their first years on the job (Wong & Wong, 2018).

Teacher turnover tends to be higher among younger teachers and those who work in low-income school districts with high free and reduced lunch rates (Di Carlo, 2015; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2019; Zembytska, 2016). Teachers often wear many hats and do not have the same resources as those in larger more urban districts. Research has shown (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016), teachers who receive little preparation tend to leave the teaching profession at rates 2 to 3 times as high as those who have quality preparation programs. The most important

finding in educational research has been defining the root problem to teacher turnover as being related to the teaching field itself (DeCesare et al., 2016; Ingersoll, 2001).

The lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which negatively affect student achievement and cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). Therefore, retaining effective and quality teachers has become a top priority for school districts in the last several years as the cost of replacing and training teachers has become a drain on school funds (Zembytska, 2016). A direct correlation has been found between professional learning/collaboration and a teacher's confidence in their abilities, which leads to a sense of enjoyment in teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017). Teachers who feel like they are making a difference in the lives of their students have higher job satisfaction rates and feel directly connected to the efficacy of their profession (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Lowder, 2017; Monroe, 2017). Studies around the country (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016) have shown new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on developing quality teachers when implemented appropriately. Based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016).

Creating a school culture that provided and encouraged effective professional learning opportunities, which included high-quality induction and mentoring programs, is the driver to retaining new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Mentoring programs

help reduce the isolation new teachers can experience by providing support and deeper insights into student learning, which also increases collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). The literature indicated new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on instructional practices when implemented appropriately (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). Creating a culture in which teachers have opportunities for continual learning is the likeliest way to inspire greater achievement in student learning (Svendsen, 2020). High-performing school systems maintain a continuous improvement cycle that produces a culture of professional learning leading to high-quality teachers (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Summary

Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs will establish a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). It is imperative school systems put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Schools districts directly benefit from the creation of effective new teacher programs through lower teacher retention rates, positive school environments, and higher student achievement scores (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Pedota, 2015). New teacher mentoring programs are recognized by federal and state education agencies as important components of teacher effectiveness (New Teacher Center, 2016a; Pedota, 2015). However, many school districts do not implement new teacher trainings appropriately or they lack the essential elements to be effective (Callahan, 2016). According to researchers (Callahan, 2016; NCTAF, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010; New

Teacher Center, 2016a; Pedota, 2015; Sowell, 2017), there are several research-based components to an effective mentoring program: (a) beginning teachers should be involved in a multiyear new teacher mentoring program, (b) new teachers and their mentors should be required to observe each other multiple times during a school year, (c) intentional contact time should be set aside for the mentor and mentee to meet, (d) new teachers should be given extensive professional development opportunities through coaching and collaboration that directly relates to their circumstances, and (e) training quality mentors is a critical factor to maintain a successful mentoring program (DeCesare et al., 2016; Missouri DESE, 2017a). Missouri's mentoring program standards require new teachers be involved in all seven research-based components of an effective mentoring program (DeCesare et al., 2016; Missouri DESE, 2017a). Without intentional guided support, learning to teach well is extremely difficult for new teachers (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Effective professional learning included meaningful collaboration with other educators, which leads to stronger teacher efficacy and a system of collective responsibility and support (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.; Svendsen, 2020).

In Chapter Three, the researcher will discuss the methodology for conducting the study. The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three first-year teachers, three second-year teachers, and six mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. Research questions are restated to maintain alignment throughout the study. The selection and sampling of the participants are discussed along with the research setting, design, instrumentation used for the study, data collection procedures, and data

analysis, and then the chapter closes with a summary. The researcher conducted a content analysis by coding transcripts to identify and analyze themes based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. Chapter Four includes the findings of the study and an analysis of the data including tables and figures noting the significance of the study. Triangulated sources of data were also examined for evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews with related data presented to reduce bias, ending with a summary of key findings in the conclusion. Chapter Five contains a brief summary of the problem along with a discussion and implications of the findings, which relate back to the research questions and problem statement. Implications for practice are discussed along with recommendations for further research, followed by a summary of the chapter. A key list of references is presented along with appendices of related documents.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of six first- and second-year teachers and six mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. This study also aimed to explore the gap in research regarding new teacher mentoring experiences and related professional learning in Missouri school districts today. Reducing the gap of research by exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs will establish a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2010; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). It is imperative school systems put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Missouri school leaders need to be made aware of the perceptions new teachers and mentors have on the effectiveness of mentoring programs while in the field. High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The researcher chose to utilize a basic narrative qualitative study approach for conducting the study. A basic narrative qualitative research strategy was used to gather information through participants' stories, interviews, and related documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2010). Inductive and deductive data analysis was used to build patterns and themes to determine if more information needed to be gathered (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative interviews were conducted that included a mixture of video, phone, and e-mail interviews in groups of one or two. Interview questions were unstructured and generally open-ended to elicit views and opinions from

participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Computer software was used to transcribe interviews and aid in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis.

Research Questions

The researcher explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs using basic narrative qualitative research through personal interviews and related documents. The central qualitative question driving the research was this:

What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

The related subquestions for this study were the following:

Research Subquestion 1: What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 2: What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 3: What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 4: What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in districts that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Participants

Participants for this basic narrative qualitative study were purposefully selected to assist the researcher in exploring the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher included six first- and second-year teachers and master mentor teachers from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri to gather different experiences from three diverse perspectives. Most new teachers enter the teaching profession with little training and no experience on how to begin the school year (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, exploring experiences from first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding mentoring programs guided the researcher in discovering professional learning growth demonstrated by new teachers in their first 2 years. Involving mentors in the study provided insight into the training and collaboration components of new teacher mentoring programs. Missouri DESE (2019) reported there were 69,082 classroom teachers from 2,413 schools in 518 districts registered within the state of Missouri. Missouri DESE (2019) found 98.6% of teachers in the state of Missouri were regular certified, .7% of teachers were temporarily certified, and 1% was teaching with a substitute certificate, an expired certificate, or are not certified at all. School districts in the state of Missouri were required to report information about their schools through a data collection system managed by the Office of Data System Management at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The two main sources of data collection in the state of Missouri were Core Data and the Missouri Student Information

Systems (Missouri DESE, 2019). School districts were required to report data items in Core Data and MOSIS six times during each school year (Missouri DESE, 2019). Data submitted from Missouri school districts were compiled and available online through an open data collection system or it could be accessed through Missouri's Office of Quality Schools.

The three schools chosen to be part of the study all received the National Blue Ribbon Award issued by the U.S. Department of Education (2020). Recipients of the National Blue Ribbon Award must be among their state's highest performing schools according to state assessments, must show exemplary performance in closing the gap of subgroup achievement scores over the past 5 years, and maintain excellence in the fields of academics, arts, and athletics (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Therefore, the researcher involved schools of differing demographics to gather diverse perspectives and viewpoints. The three highly effective schools ranged in size from a large urban city school with 217 students, to a rural school with a student population of 278 students, and a rural city school with 669 students. The three schools ranged in size, demographics, funding, and administrative support to reduce bias and weakness of the data and to gather diverse perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The researcher assured the participants of their privacy and all information was kept confidential. The 12 participants represented in the study included new teachers who were in their first 2 years of teaching and mentors who were considered master teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience. The number of participants and sample size in a study varies according to the type of research and should include a variety of perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Selection and Sampling

Purposive sampling of participants was used from three highly effective schools within the state of Missouri. Coordinators of new teacher programs were contacted by phone and e-mail to obtain permission to conduct the study and provide names of first- and second-year teachers along with their mentor staff members who met or exceeded highly qualified educator status in relationship to leadership, experience, and training according to Missouri DESE guidelines and the school's evaluation system. The total number of participants in this study was 12, which included six first- and second-year teachers and six mentor teachers. The three highly effective schools were chosen by identifying buildings who met the following criteria:

- National Blue-Ribbon School Award winner within the last 3 years;
- recognized formal mentoring program;
- specific training provided for mentor teachers; and
- written documentation provided to new teachers outlining professional learning requirements for the school year.

An e-mail was sent to each potential participant explaining the study and to request informed consent (Appendix A). Confidentiality is an essential part of research to protect the participants from stress, embarrassment, or unwanted publicity (Airasian et al., 2019). It was vital to use aliases or pseudonyms for all teachers and schools in order to protect the privacy and identities of participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Participants were identified as being from School A, School B, and School C. Mentor teachers were identified as number one and two and mentee teachers were identified as number three and four. Therefore, a mentor teacher from School A was identified as

Participant A1 and A2 and a mentee teacher would be identified as participant A3 and A4. Two new teachers and two mentor teachers were chosen from each of the three highly effective Blue Ribbon schools. The total number of participants in this study was 12, which included six first- and second-year teachers and six mentor teachers.

Research Setting

The three highly effective schools were chosen by identifying schools that were National Blue-Ribbon School Award winners, participated in a recognized formal mentoring program, provided specific training for mentor teachers, and supplied written documentation to new teachers which outlined professional learning requirements for the school year. The three highly effective schools ranged in size from a large urban city school with 217 students to a rural school with a student population of 278 students and a rural city school with 669 students. The three schools ranged in size, demographics, funding, and administrative support to reduce bias and weakness of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Schools chosen to participate in the study were all identified as National Blue-Ribbon School Award recipients, which recognizes schools with overall academic excellence or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Research was conducted through email, phone conversations, and virtual Zoom calls. The basic narrative qualitative research method included a mixture of video, phone, and e-mail interviews conducted individually. Each video and phone interview were conducted in a quiet, private room or office to eliminate distractions and interruptions. Interviews took between 20- and 30-minutes using Zoom, a video conferencing application, and Otter, an online transcription software application, to aid in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. Interview questions

were unstructured and generally open-ended to help elicit honest, unbiased views and opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Appendix B).

Research Design

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of three first-year teachers, three second-year teachers, and their six mentors related to professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri through personal interviews and related documents. A basic narrative qualitative research design was used to gather information based on participants' stories, interviews, and related documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gall et al., 2010). The researcher chose a basic narrative qualitative research design to explore the real-life stories of teachers and their experiences to capture the setting, emotion, thoughts, and other phenomena involved in mentoring programs (Gall et al., 2010). A basic research design was chosen over a case study because the researcher was seeking to study the processes of new teacher mentoring programs rather than investigating a phenomenon (Gall et al., 2010).

Coordinators of new teacher programs were contacted by phone and e-mail to obtain permission to conduct the study and provide names of staff members who met or exceeded highly qualified educator status in relationship to leadership, experience, and training. An e-mail was then sent to each potential participant explaining the study and to request informed consent (Appendix A). The first phase of basic research design involved gathering experiences from the 12 teachers and their perceptions of new teacher mentoring programs through personal interviews (Gall et al., 2010). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using Otter, an online transcription software application.

The second phase of basic research design included systematically interpreting and organizing the events described by the 12 participants by coding themes and events (Gall et al., 2010). The researcher conducted a content analysis by coding transcripts to identify patterns and analyze themes based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. Content and thematic analysis of data were performed to dive deeper into the themes presented by the respondents. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated the process for qualitative research can be emergent, meaning the process may change or shift as the researcher enters the field and begins collecting data (p. 182). This allows researchers to delve deeper into a topic to learn more about the problem or issue being addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In order to collect the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews followed by open-ended questions (Appendix B). An online transcription service, Otter, was used for analysis of the interviews and recordings to increase accuracy of the data and to prevent bias by the researcher.

Instrumentation

From the review of literature, the researcher's primary purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to report the experiences of six first- and second-year teachers and six mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. The researcher's intent was to understand the personal experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors, thus basic narrative qualitative research was a viable and effective option for the study. Research using structured interviews for data collection is an effective way to gather trends, attitudes, or opinions by studying a smaller sample of a larger population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher used a qualitative interview method, which

involved unstructured and generally open-ended questions to prompt the views and opinions of the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interviews were conducted and included a mixture of individual phone and video interviews. The literature review in Chapter Two guided the researcher when developing interview protocol. Interview questions were developed based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards, teacher professional learning, new teacher mentoring programs, job satisfaction, promoting instructional practices, and engagement.

The researcher utilized a pilot testing group made up of two first- or second-year teachers and two mentors from a separate school district to examine and vet interview questions for content and time management, and to identify any potential concerns. It is important to conduct pilot testing to establish content validity and internal consistency, and to improve questions, format, and instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Otter, an online transcription service, was the primary form of instrumentation used for this basic narrative qualitative study through structured interviews using open-ended questioning strategies. Computer software aided in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. Roberts and Hyatt (2018) stated, "Researchers seek facts and causes of human behavior and want to know a lot about a few variables so differences can be identified. They collect data that are primarily numerical and results from surveys, test, experiments, and so on" (p. 142). The researcher used semi-structured interviews followed by open-ended questions (Appendix B) to understand the following research questions. The researcher explored the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring

programs using basic narrative qualitative research through personal interviews and related documents. The central qualitative question driving the research was this:

What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

The related subquestions for this study were the following:

Research Subquestion 1: What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 2: What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 3: What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 4: What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Interviews permit researchers to obtain important data that cannot be acquired using other methods and can provide information from past events that otherwise would not be known (Airasian et al., 2019). Interviews also allow the researcher to inquire and

ask follow-up questions, which can be used for clarification to understand reasons behind particular events and gather more in-depth data (Airasian et al., 2019). Airasian et al. (2019) reminded researchers to listen more during an interview and to talk less (p. 371). Listening is the most important part of the interviewing process (Airasian et al., 2019).

Validity

Validity is the measure of the accurate components of the data to ensure the values are true and certain (Airasian et al., 2019). It also refers to the suitability, importance, and effectiveness of specific inferences that were made by participants (Britt-Stevens, 2014). The researcher included processes in the study to ensure the information given in the stories and reports were credible and trustworthy to reduce bias (Gall et al., 2010). Triangulated sources of data were examined for evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews such as evaluating the three schools' handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and hunches throughout the interview process. All three schools were also asked about new teacher program checklists to validate teacher experiences.

Qualitative validity is defined as the process by which the researcher checks for the accuracy of the finding by engaging in certain procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Validity verifies if the research measured what it actually intended to measure. In this study, the data obtained to identify the three highly effective schools were directly taken from the Missouri Comprehensive Data System and the Office of Quality Schools. The number of participants and sample size in a study varies according to the type of research and should include a variety of perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Therefore, the researcher involved schools of differing sizes and demographics to gather diverse perspectives and viewpoints. The three highly effective schools ranged in size from a large urban city school with 217 students to a rural school with a student population of 278 students and a rural city school with 669 students.

Reliability

Reliability is the measurement or degree to which a tool or survey produces stable and consistent results (Airasian et al., 2019; Gall et al., 2010). The researcher utilized a pilot testing group made up of two first- and second-year teachers and two mentors from a separate school district to examine and vet interview questions for content, time management, and to identify any potential concerns. It is important to conduct pilot testing to establish content validity, reliability, and internal consistency, and to improve questions, format, and instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). First- and second-year teachers along with mentor teachers were involved in the study to provide a wide range of responses in relation to experience and perspective. The researcher provided complete study details in the event other future researchers sought to follow the same procedures and test the reliability of the results. A researcher following the same protocol and techniques should come up with the same results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gall et al., 2010). It is important to establish trustworthiness in a study to give it value and credibility for future data analysis and to establish interrater reliability (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

Qualitative researchers must address and establish a sense of trustworthiness, understanding, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their study and findings by including as much detail as possible so others can see the setting for

themselves (Airasian et al., 2019). To ensure the most accurate and honest data available, the researcher assured respondents the interviews would be handled with complete anonymity and confidentiality for responding schools. The guarantee of confidentiality was a control to encourage teachers to answer questions honestly. Researchers must also understand and account for the factual accuracy during an interview along with the meaning and interpretation of the behaviors or words used by the participants during an interview (Airasian et al., 2019). Triangulated sources of data were used to build a coherent justification for themes by examining evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews such as evaluating the three schools' handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and hunches throughout the interview process. All three schools were also asked to participate in member checking by reviewing transcripts for accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and provided copies of their collaboration and observation schedules to validate teacher experiences.

Data Procedures

Data collection and analysis were handled systematically and with meaning (Appendix C). Data collection began after approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Southwest Baptist University. The number of participants and sample size in a study varies according to the type of research and should include a variety of perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the researcher involved schools of differing sizes to gather diverse perspectives and viewpoints. The three highly effective schools ranged in size from a large urban city school with 217 students to a rural school with a

student population of 278 students and a rural city school with 669 students. Coordinators of new teacher programs were contacted by phone and e-mailed to obtain permission to conduct the study. Names and contact information of first- and second-year teachers and mentors who met or exceeded highly qualified educator status in relationship to leadership, experience, and training according to Missouri DESE guidelines were provided to the researcher. The total number of participants in this study was 12, which included six first- and second-year teachers and six mentor teachers. The researcher contacted the 12 participants to set up the interviews and gather the data. Interviews were conducted and included a mixture of individual phone and video interviews. Interview questions were unstructured and generally open-ended to elicit views and opinions from participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Appendix B). Researchers must winnow the information during qualitative data analysis to aggregate the data into a small number of themes and focus areas (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and hunches throughout the interview process. Triangulated sources of data were used by examining evidence from multiple sources such as handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools. The researcher reviewed and organized all of the printed evidence and documents as they related to the transcribed interviews. After reading through the raw transcribed interview data and printed documents, the researcher used computer software to aid in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. Patterns were identified using coding methods to organize and discover interrelating themes of the raw data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed and organized the data collected from interviews with first- and second-year teachers and mentors along with printed documents for similarities and differences based on themes and general impressions using open coding (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Audio transcripts were transcribed using a digital transcription service, Otter, to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Printed evidence and documents related to the participating schools' new teacher mentoring programs were also provided for analysis. The researcher reviewed the data and checked all transcripts to ensure there were no mistakes during the transcription. Data analysis was handled according to Creswell and Creswell's (2018) recommendations, which included getting a general sense of the whole by reading and rereading through all transcriptions and data carefully, writing thoughts in the margins, making a list of all cluster topics, recognizing categories and interrelationships, and finally, coding the data into categories and themes based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. The researcher organized the data into a coherent story by using a coding frame designed to capture the overall meaning of the stories and narratives (Gall et al., 2010). Coding was conducted around related themes using Learning Forward (n.d.) standards of content, process, and context for continuous professional learning. Once the data were coded and themes were defined, connections and correlations were identified. Themes were evaluated by looking through several different lenses based on the theoretical framework of a basic narrative qualitative study, which included mentoring programs and professional learning. Quotes from participants were also used to aid in the development of themes. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended identifying five to seven themes for a basic narrative qualitative study.

Rationale for Data Treatment

Due to the high volume of data, the researcher was very structured when collecting and organizing information from the 12 interviews. It is very important for researchers to have a detailed research plan when managing the vast volume of data involved in qualitative research (Airasian et al., 2019). It is important to establish trustworthiness in a study to give it value and credibility for future data analysis and to establish interrater reliability (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018). Qualitative researchers must address and establish a sense of trustworthiness, understanding, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of their study and findings by including as much detail as possible so others can see the setting for themselves (Airasian et al., 2019). Member checking and peer examination were used to ensure internal validity and appropriate handling of the data. Member checking serves as a check throughout the data analysis process to ensure the participants' reality and meanings during the interview were portrayed correctly (Airasian et al., 2019). Participants were sent a transcript of the interview to ensure interruptions of the data were handled properly. The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and hunches throughout the interview process. After reading through the raw transcribed data, the researcher used computer software to aid in the development of themes and patterns for data analysis. Patterns were identified using coding methods to organize and discover interrelating themes of the raw data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Summary

Chapter Three discussed the methodology for conducting this basic narrative qualitative study by aligning the research questions with the problem statement,

methodology, design, instrumentation, data collection, procedures, and data analysis method. Participants for this basic narrative qualitative study were purposefully selected to assist the researcher in exploring the research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher included six first- and second-year teachers and six master mentor teachers from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri to explore experiences of new teacher mentoring programs. Research was conducted using a mixture of video, phone, and e-mail interviews conducted one-on-one. The researcher chose a basic narrative qualitative research design to explore the real-life experiences of teachers to capture the setting, emotion, thoughts, and other phenomena involved in mentoring programs (Gall et al., 2010). Audio transcripts were transcribed using Otter, a digital transcription service, to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Triangulated sources of data were used by examining evidence from multiple sources such as handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools. Data were analyzed and organized from interviews with first- and second-year teachers and mentors along with printed documents for similarities and differences based on themes and general impressions using open coding based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Chapter Four includes the findings of the study and an analysis of the data including tables and figures noting the significance of the study. Triangulated sources of data were also examined for evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews with related data presented to reduce bias, ending with a summary of key findings in the conclusion. Chapter Five contains a brief summary of the problem along with a discussion and interpretation of the implications of the findings that relate back to the research questions and problem statement. Implications for practice are

discussed along with recommendations for further research, followed by a summary of the chapter. A key list of references is presented along with appendices of related documents.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of six first- and second-year teachers and six mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri through personal interviews and related documents. This study was centered on high-performing schools that had a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality and to bring awareness to Missouri school leaders of the perceptions new teachers and mentors have on the effectiveness of mentoring programs while in the field. The three participating highly effective schools were U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School Award winners within the last 3 years. The central qualitative question driving the research was this:

What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

The related subquestions for this study were the following:

Research Subquestion 1: What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 2: What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 3: What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 4: What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

The researcher systematically interpreted and organized the events described by the 12 participants to identify patterns and code transcribed data based on Learning Forward (n.d.) standards. Patterns were identified when four or more participants described the same thought or content. Content and thematic analyses of data were achieved to dive deeper into the themes presented by the respondents. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated the process for qualitative research may change or shift direction as the researcher begins collecting data. This process allowed the researcher to probe deeper into a topic to learn more about the problem or issue being addressed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In order to collect the data, the researcher used semi-structured interviews followed by open-ended questions (Appendix B). An online transcription service, Otter, was used for analysis of the interviews and recordings to increase accuracy of the data and to prevent bias by the researcher.

Chapter Four includes the findings of the study and an analysis of the data including tables and figures noting the significance of the study. Participant demographics of the three chosen schools were outlined, which represented various populations from diverse locations from around the state of Missouri. The three

participating schools were identified as School A, School B, and School C. A description of the format, structure, and required components of the three participating schools' new teacher mentoring program was presented. All three schools were specific and intentional when training new teachers but each school had a different approach that guided their program.

Interview procedures were presented in Chapter Four along with coding and thematic analysis around the four research questions. The researcher coded key words and phrases using transcribed text and interview notes to develop themes from the 12 participant experiences of new teacher mentoring programs. Triangulation of data was used to increase the validity and reliability through member checking and assessment of handbooks, professional learning schedules, and evaluation tools.

The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and intuitions throughout the interview process. Each of the four research questions was evaluated separately using detailed coding procedures and theme analysis, which revealed seven common themes identified through the experiences of the 12 mentor and mentee teachers. Triangulated sources of data were also examined for evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews with related data presented to reduce bias, ending with a summary of key findings in the conclusion.

Participant Demographics

Participants in this study were all National Blue Ribbon Award winners under the category of Exemplary High-Performing School within the last 3 years and were strategically chosen by the researcher to represent various populations and demographics from around the state of Missouri. To receive the U.S. Department of Education's (2019)

Blue Ribbon School Award under the category of Exemplary High-Performing School, schools must be performing in the top 15% of the state in math and reading state assessment scores, the top 40% of the state for each subgroup performance in math and reading state assessment scores, and in the top 15% in the state for graduation rates and college and career readiness measures. Recipients of the National Blue Ribbon Award must be among their state's highest performing schools according to state assessments, must show exemplary performance in closing the gap of subgroup achievement scores over the past 5 years, and maintain excellence in the fields of academics, arts, and athletics (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). School A was a National Blue Ribbon School Award winner in 2017. School B was a National Blue Ribbon School Award winner in 2019 and School C received the award in 2020. All three schools are geographically positioned in diverse areas of the state.

School A. School A was a public charter high school located in an urban large city with 217 students in Grades 9 through 12. Students came from a designated geographical area and were selected by lottery. The predominant racial and ethnic composition of the school was 96% Black, with 65% of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. School A had 3% of its students receiving special education services, with an average student-to-classroom-teacher ratio of 15:1. The principal in the school had been in the position for 11 years.

School B. School B was a public elementary school located in a rural or small city/town, with 278 students in Grades 1 through 3. The predominate racial and ethnic composition of the school was 86% White, with 100% of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. School B had 14% of its students receiving special education

services, with an average student-to-classroom-teacher ratio of 19:1. The principal in the school had been in the position for 9 years.

School C. School C was a public elementary school located in a rural area with 669 students in Grade K through 5. The predominate racial and ethnic composition of the school was 87.5% White, with 42% of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals. School C had 10% of its students receiving special education services, with an average student-to-classroom-teacher ratio of 19:1. The principal in the school had been in the position for 1 year.

Description of Participating Schools' New Teacher Mentoring Program

This study identified three high-performing schools to bring awareness to Missouri school leaders of the perceptions new teachers and mentor teachers have on the effectiveness of mentoring programs who are in the field. High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically through the development of a culture of continuous professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). All three participating school districts had an established formal new teacher mentoring program based on Missouri Mentoring Program Standards (Missouri DESE, 2017a). Participation in a new teacher training program for 2 years was a required licensing component for all teachers in the state of Missouri. All three schools were specific and intentional when training new teachers but each school had a different approach that guided their program.

School A. School A contracted with Teach for America (2020) in Kansas City, Missouri, to facilitate training for their first- and second-year teachers, which was developed in alignment with Missouri DESE's (2020b) Beginning Teacher Assistance

Program (BTAP). Teach for America provided a formal mentor for School A's new teachers to become strong classroom and community leaders by providing 2 years of extensive coaching, modeling, constructive feedback, professional learning opportunities, and other resources. New teachers in the program were required to complete observations one time each month along with having their mentor teacher observe them, followed by feedback and coaching cycles. Mentors were trained specialists provided by TFA who modeled instructional practices, coached, and provided valuable feedback. School A also provided their new teachers with an informal buddy mentor teacher in the district based on close proximity and content area for daily support. School A had built common plan time into teachers' schedules for collaboration and data review. Three out of 4 teachers who were interviewed from School A identified collaboration and strong building leadership as key factors related to the success of their school and their new teacher mentoring program.

School B. School B utilized an outside agency, Teacher Induction Program Support System (TIPSS), to train and support mentor and mentee teachers in the district based on researched-based strategies through positive structured coaching. TIPSS provided formal training and coaching opportunities for mentor and mentee teachers using a structured modeling approach. Teacher B4 stated the program highlighted positive practices and how to make improvements rather than negative qualities, which increased new teacher confidence levels. The TIPSS program focused on three principles of learning to create a positive learning culture along with evidence related to standards and formative assessment to create high-quality teachers. Resident mentor teachers attended a full day training at the beginning of the school year before the program was

initiated. School B placed mentee teachers with trained mentors who were in close proximity and content area for daily support. School B had built common plan time into teachers' schedules for collaboration and coaching opportunities. New teachers were formally observed four times per year by the TIPSS program specialist with several other district observation opportunities taking place during the year as well.

School C. School C had a district-created new teacher mentoring program based on the Missouri Mentoring Program Standards (Missouri DESE, 2017a) and Missouri DESE's (2020b) BTAP. The *Buddy-Mentor Teacher Handbook* was structured with a monthly checklist outlining roles and responsibilities of both the mentor and the mentee. Mentor teachers received training before school began each year on their role to model and provide appropriate feedback for their mentee teacher. Teachers were required to collaborate with their mentor two times per week for an hour to plan, reflect, and work on common planning. First-year teachers were required to complete four observations each year and second-year teachers were required to complete two observations during the year. School C assigned mentor teachers based on close proximity and content area for daily support. School C had built in common plan time for their teachers for collaboration opportunities. Three out of four teachers from School C reported collaboration and being intentional about evaluating data as key factors related to the success of their school and their new teacher mentoring program.

Table 1 identifies six common components of new teacher mentoring programs from the three participating highly effective schools. Schools A, B, and C had taken different approaches when training and supporting their new teachers. However, each had provided a structured program with outlined requirements and expectations.

Table 1

Common Components of Schools A, B, and C's New Teacher Mentoring Program

Component	Number of respondents identifying component
Formal Handbook and Checklist	3/3
Provided Formal Mentor Training	3/3
Modeling and Coaching Components	3/3
Required Observations	3/3
Intentional Focus on New Teacher Training	3/3
Based on Missouri BTAP Standards	3/3

Table 1 identifies, based on coded transcribed data, the common components of all three highly effective schools' new teacher mentoring programs. All three schools' new teacher mentoring programs followed standards from Missouri's Beginning Teacher Assistance Program and had a checklist with specific expectations to guide and direct each new teacher's experience. Observations were required by both the mentor and the mentee with coaching and modeling components. All three schools also required new teachers to observe other teachers in the district outside of their assigned mentor teacher.

Interview Procedures

Interviews for all 12 participants from the three Blue Ribbon schools were conducted using a virtual meeting application, Zoom, along with email and phone communication. The researcher began the interview process by forming a pilot testing group made up of two first- or second-year teachers and two mentors from a separate

school district to examine and vet interview questions for content and time management, and to identify any potential concerns. Pilot testing is an important part of the interview process to establish content validity and internal consistency, and to improve questions, format, and instructions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Building-level administrators from the three schools were contacted by phone and email to gain permission to conduct the research and provided email addresses of individual mentor and mentee participants. Participants were contacted by email and provided the Informed Consent Letter (Appendix A). Participants responded to the researcher through email to set up an interview day and time. The researcher sent each participant a Zoom meeting invite by email. All interviews were conducted one-on-one and were recorded through the Zoom application as well as being audio recorded for digital transcription using Otter. Initial interviews were approximately 25 minutes. Follow-up emails and phone conversations were also required to confirm information provided regarding mentoring handbooks and related documents for validity and reliability of the data. Triangulated sources of data were used to build a coherent justification for themes by examining evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews such as evaluating the three schools' mentoring handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools.

Data Analysis

Participants were identified as being from School A, School B, and School C. Mentor teachers were identified as Number 1 and 2 and mentee teachers were identified as Numbers 3 and 4. Two new teachers and two mentor teachers were chosen from each of the three highly effective Blue Ribbon schools. The total number of participants in this study was 12, which included six first- and second-year teachers and six mentor

teachers. Therefore, a mentor teacher from School A was identified as Participants A1 and A2 and a mentee teacher was identified as Participants A3 and A4. Participant quotes were also used to aid in the development of themes.

Triangulation of data. Triangulated sources of data were used to build a comprehensive justification and provide validly and reliability of the data for the seven themes by examining evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews such as evaluating the three schools' handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and intuitions throughout the interview process. All three schools were also asked to participate in member checking by reviewing transcripts for accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and providing copies of their collaboration and observation requirements to validate teacher experiences. New teacher mentoring handbooks from the three participating schools were also reviewed for accuracy of interview data.

Coding procedures and theme development. Coding procedures included the researcher reading through all transcribed data and taking notes to familiarize and get an overview of the content. The researcher annotated and highlighted sections of transcribed text by repeatedly searching for similarities between pieces of data. As similarities emerged, common categories were sorted to collate data into groups and then into identified codes (Caulfield, 2019). The researcher sorted transcribed text by hand first and then analyzed data using the Otter software program to sort through each piece of data to identify similarities and differences to clearly organize each coded phrase from the data. The researcher identified 35 coded words and phrases from the 12 participant

interviews. The 35 coded words and phrases were used to describe the content of the data and were then grouped to identify patterns into a single theme. Seven themes were identified from the 35 coded words and phrases.

Once the seven themes were established, the researcher went back and examined transcribed text by individual participants for connections around coded themes. The 12 participants' interview data were analyzed around each research question in relationship to identified themes. The researcher then identified how many participants supported each recognized theme.

Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 identify the 35 coded words and phrases that were sorted from interviews with the 12 participants by research question. Six of the participants were first- and second-year teachers and six of the participants were mentor teachers. The three tables show the number of occurrences of each coded word or phrase. The researcher established seven themes, which emerged from the 35 coded words and phrases.

Table 2

Record of Coded Information: Research Question 1

Coded words/phrases	Record of occurrence	Themes/subthemes
Meet/Meetings	119	
Talk/Chat	68	
Collaboration/Collaborate	52	
Common Plan Time	49	Collaboration
Professional Learning Community (PLC)	30	
Team	22	
Formal/Informal	18	
Teacher	150	
Students/Kids	136	
Help/Helping	94	
Relationship(s)	11	Relationships
Connected	11	
Personal	7	
Comfortable	4	

Table 3

Record of Coded Information: Research Question 2

Coded words/phrases	Record of occurrence	Themes/subthemes
Data	64	
Learning	58	
Mastery	19	Intentional Practices: Data
Common Formative Assessment (CFA)	15	
Intentional	5	
Exams	5	
Time	126	
Questions	39	Reflection Time
Growth	5	
Reflection	4	
Feedback	15	Feedback

Table 4

Record of Coded Information: Research Question 3

Coded words/phrases	Record of occurrence	Themes/subthemes
Support	19	
Check-in	6	
Confidence	5	Support and Encouragement
Connected	4	
Encouragement	4	
Positive	4	
Leadership	9	
Culture	3	Strong Building Leadership
Trust	3	
Strong	2	

Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4 list each of the 35 coded words and phrases and outline how the researcher arranged them into comparable categories. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended identifying five to seven themes based on coded transcribed data for a basic narrative qualitative study. Content and thematic analyses of data were achieved by making connections to dive deeper into the themes presented by the respondents. The researcher identified 35 coded words and phrases from the 12 participant interviews. The 35 coded words and phrases were used to describe the content of the data and were then grouped to identify patterns into a single theme. The

first theme of collaboration was mentioned 358 times by participants and was made up of seven coded words and phrases of (a) meet/meetings, (b) talk/chat, (c) collaboration/collaborate, (d) common plan time, (e) professional learning community, (f) team, and (g) formal/informal. The second theme of relationships was mentioned 413 times and was made up of seven coded words and phrases of (a) teachers, (b) students/kids, (c) help, (d) relationships, (e) connected, (f) personal, and (g) comfortable. The third theme of intentional practices around data was mentioned by participants 166 times and was made up of six coded words and phrases of (a) data, (b) learning, (c) mastery, (d) common formative assessment, (e) intentional, and (f) exam. The fourth theme of reflection time was made up of four coded words and phrases of (a) time, (b) questions, (c) growth, and (d) reflection. The fifth theme of feedback was mentioned 15 times by participants and was coded directly from the word feedback. The sixth theme of support and encouragement was mentioned by participants 42 times and was made up of six coded words and phrases of (a) support, (b) check-in, (c) confidence, (d) connected, (e) encouragement, and (f) positive. The seventh and last recognized theme was strong building leadership, which was mentioned by participants 17 times and was made up of four coded words and phrases of (a) leadership, (b) culture, (c) trust, and (d) strong. Patterns were also identified when four or more participants supported the same theme.

Analysis of Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, "What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" The researcher

maintained a notebook during each interview to annotate thoughts, speculations, and intuitions around learning communities, leadership, and resources for Research Question 1. The researcher examined daily schedule information and collaboration requirements in mentoring handbooks to confirm accuracy of interview data. All three schools maintained a formal written checklist of required components for their mentoring program. The researcher also confirmed all three schools maintained a professional learning community program, which provided training for collaborative teaming expectations. Interview Questions B1-B5 (Appendix B) were related to Research Question 1. After analysis of the transcribed text from Research Question 1, the researcher identified codes within the transcribed data and organized them into two major themes based on respondents' answers: (a) collaboration and (b) relationships. Coding of the collaboration theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following seven phrases:

- meet/meetings,
- talk/chat,
- collaboration/collaborate,
- common plan time,
- professional learning community,
- team, and
- formal and informal.

Coding of the relationship theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following seven phrases:

- teachers,

- students/kids,
- helping,
- relationships,
- connected,
- personal, and
- comfortable.

Table 5 identifies responses around Research Question 1, which were then coded into the themes of collaboration and relationships as being part of participants' new teacher mentoring programs. Research Question 1 focused on understanding new teacher mentoring programs in reference to professional learning communities, leadership, and resources. The researcher interviewed all participants separately to allow for unbiased responses by mentor and mentee teachers.

Table 5

Common Themes Identified in Research Question 1

Theme	Number of respondents identifying theme	Percentage
Collaboration	12/12	100%
Relationships	11/12	92%

Table 5 identifies the number of respondents, based on coded transcribed data, who acknowledged collaboration and relationships as part of their new teacher mentoring program. All 12 mentee and mentor teachers, which was 100% of participants, identified collaboration as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Eleven out of the

12 participants, which was 92% of participants, stated relationships comprised a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Discussions around Research Question 1 were closely aligned with all but one participant including both collaboration and relationships as a key component to the success of their highly effective school and new teacher mentoring program.

Research Question 1 focused on Learning Forward's (n.d.) context in regard to professional learning communities, leadership, and resources for new teacher mentoring programs. The researcher identified two overarching themes from Research Question 1: (a) collaboration with 358 mentions by participants and (b) relationships with 413 mentions by participants. Participants revealed school leaders should be intentional by specifically setting collaboration time aside for teachers to meet and plan. After reviewing master schedules, all three schools had structured their teachers schedules to reflect common plan time by grades levels or content area. The researcher examined school schedules as part of the interview process to confirm interview data. Mentor teacher A1 stated,

> Time is invaluable. I think that some of that also is the structural commitment [by our administrator] to having teachers have the same planning period… I can't even quantify how helpful it was for me when I was a first-year teacher to have that same planning time [as my mentor].

Mentor Teacher C1 added,

> We're given a lot of time to collaborate so that shows us that it is meaningful and it is valued. I think allowing time for that when time is of the essence is important… They're [administration is] making it a priority…

Collaboration was the most common theme, mentioned 358 times with 12 out of 12 or 100%, of participants identifying it as a key component of their new teacher mentoring program. Mentee Participant C3 stated, "I collaborate all the time with my team… It's super valuable." C3 estimated the amount of formal and informal collaboration time to be approximately "five hours per week… We spend a lot of time together. I feel bad for her." Participant C1 stated, "There's a lot of opportunities to collaborate, both formally and informally, so I feel like that is at the heart of all the great things we do is the collaboration and there's lot of opportunities to do so." Mentor Teacher B1 reiterated the importance of common planning time as a key component to the success of a new teacher to collaborate and norm lessons,

> It's very heavily promoted. We remember a few years ago we were told we were going to have grade level meetings once a week and we were like, ""What? Why?"" But it's been a blessing honestly. So yes, it's very heavily promoted by our administrator. She does a great job of explaining the necessity of it and so now we see the importance behind it.

Mentee Teacher A4 had the opposite experience, where the formal mentor did not have the same plan time. Therefore, collaboration and relationship building were difficult. A4 explained,

> There're unofficial mentors that you end up picking… that ended up becoming my mentor, you know, almost a little bit more than my actual official mentor… I would just use my plan time in (his room) so it's like very convenient to be able to ask him questions, whereas you know my mentors in both my first and second year didn't have the same plan as me. So, it was a little bit harder.

Mentor Teacher C1 explained the benefits she received from being a mentor on a collaborative team,

> Our team is so collaborative. I feel so lucky to have such powerful and knowledgeable educators to collaborate with every single day… I learn every single day and a lot of it is what I learn from my mentee, who is in her second year…. I'm just constantly learning so much…

The researcher strove to gather more information around Research Question 1 regarding learning communities, leadership, and resources by asking participants, "What was the most helpful resource your district has provided you?" Table 6 reflects responses from participants, which allowed the researcher to dig deeper into Research Question 1 regarding what teachers appreciated and valued in respect to supplied teacher resources. Participants identified with a Number 1 or a Number 2 were mentor teachers and participants identified as a Number 3 or 4 were first- or second-year teachers. Table 6 reflects each respondent's answer.

Table 6

Question: What was the Most Helpful Resource Your District Has Provided?

Participant	Respondent answers
A1	Time to work with mentee
A2	Common plan time
A3	Mentoring program: Teach for America
A4	Youth Entrepreneur Program donations and support
B1	My team for collaboration and support
B2	Professional Learning Community work
B3	My coworkers
B4	My mentor
C1	Time and flexibility
C2	Curriculum guides
C3	My teacher team
C4	Mentoring handbook and checklist

Table 6 reflects responses from the 12 participants to answer the question, "What was the most helpful resource your district has provided you?" The researcher asked the question of participants to gather more information around Research Question 1 regarding learning communities, leadership, and resources. Six of the 12 participants responded their mentoring program or collaborative team of teachers as the most important resource. Three of the 12 participants identified time to work with their

collaborative team as the most important. The response to this question reflected 9 out of 12 participants, or 75%, identified time with their team or mentor teacher as the most important resource a school can provide to mentor and mentee teachers. Participant B1 viewed her team as a resource because, "We work together so well and we collaborate on everything… we lean on each other so much that honestly, they are my best resource."

Relationships was the second most common theme, which was mentioned 413 times by participants related to Research Question 1, with 11 out of the 12 participants, or 92%, acknowledging it as an important part of new teacher mentoring. The researcher acknowledges there were more coded words and phrases mentioned in relationships at 413 versus collaboration with 358 mentions but relationships was not specifically mentioned as part of new teacher mentoring by all 12 participants. Mentor Teacher B1 reflected it is not only about the relationships built with coworkers but also about the relationships built with students. When asked what they enjoyed most about teaching, B1 responded, "I just love being with these kids and helping them and forming relationships with these kids every year." Mentor Teacher A3 also agreed, "I really enjoy working with the students and building the rapport. Giving them a class to come to that they can just decompress."

Participant B3 stated the most helpful resource provided by the district was their coworkers. B3 stated, "I asked them anything and everything. Any question I have, I turn to them first." Mentee Participant B4 stated, "And she (my mentor) didn't make me feel like I was alone." Building trust within the mentor relationship was identified as an important component by 4 of the 12 participants. Mentor Teacher A2 stated,

> Every day, we sit and chat. Lots of times we're not chatting about school, but other things that really has a way of enhancing the personal relationships. So, that you know all the stuff about building trust… We were able to fix things in tremendous detail, like day-to-day stuff, when we get down in to the nitty gritty… and deep dive in and talk about stuff that seems trivial, but those trivial bits and pieces is where you make or break it… I think that's been one of the best things about it so far.

Mentor Participant C2 agreed it is about the relationship through conversations and reflection on a daily basis: "We meet twice weekly but for different things… We talk every day, you know, two to three minutes up to 10 minutes, whatever she needs." Mentee Teacher C3 explained she asks a lot of questions to her mentor, who was always willing to explain and support her. Without time for the mentor/mentee relationship to form, Mentor Teacher B1 reflected she would not have been able to read her mentee's facial expressions and know when there was a problem and how to support her. Sometimes new teachers do not know what to ask or how to fix it; that is where the mentor steps in.

Eleven of the 12 participants expressed relationships as a key component of their new teacher mentoring program, with 413 mentions. Relationships among teachers were identified as being important factors, with 150 mentions, as well as building relationships with students, which had 136 mentions. Participants also stated providing time for mentors and mentees to build trust within their relationship was an important part of the success of new teacher mentoring programs.

Research Question 1 asked, "What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" After analysis of the transcribed text from Research Question 1, the researcher identified codes within the transcribed data and organized them into two major themes based on respondents' answers: (a) collaboration with 358 mentions and (b) relationships with 413 mentions. All 12 mentee and mentor teachers, which was 100% of participants, identified collaboration as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Eleven out of the 12 participants, which was 92% of participants, stated relationships was also a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Intentional collaboration time was described by five participants, which revealed school leaders should be intentional by specifically setting collaboration time aside for teachers to meet and plan. The researcher asked participants to describe the most helpful resource their district had provided for them to dig deeper into Research Question 1 regarding learning communities, leadership, and resources. Nine out of 12 participants, or 75%, identified time with their team or mentor teacher as the most important resource a school can provide to mentor and mentee teachers. Relationships was the second most common theme identified by participants in relationship to Research Question 1, with 11 out of the 12 participants, or 92% with 413 mentions, acknowledging it as an important part of new teacher mentoring.

Analysis of Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, "What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year

teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" The researcher maintained a notebook during each interview to annotate thoughts, speculations, and intuitions around data and learning designs. Each school provided information about observation requirements for the researcher to review for accuracy of interview data. The researcher confirmed Schools B and C provided their teachers with specials at the same time for grade levels to meet, collaborate, and build relationships. School A provided most of their teachers with common plan time for relationship building when it was possible. Common plan time allowed teachers to make connections and form relationships within their professional learning community program. Interview Questions C1-C4 (Appendix B) were related to Research Question 2. After analysis of the transcribed text from Research Question 2, the researcher identified codes within the transcribed data into three major themes based on respondents' answers: (a) intentional practices focused on data, (b) reflection time, and (c) feedback. Coding of intentional practices focused on data was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following six phrases:

- data,
- learning,
- mastery,
- common formative assessments,
- intentional, and
- exams.

Coding of the reflection time theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following four phrases:

- time,
- questions,
- growth, and
- reflection.

Coding of the feedback theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the phrase of feedback. The value of feedback was presented by both mentor and mentee teachers. Mentee Teacher C3 stated, "I want her [my mentor] to give me that feedback."

Table 7 identifies responses around Research Question 2, which were then coded into the themes of: (a) intentional practices focused on data, with 166 mentions; (b) reflection time, with 174 mentions; and (c) feedback, with 15 mentions. Research Question 2 focused on understanding new teacher mentoring programs in reference to data and learning designs. Participants focused discussions around how data were shared and communicated within their schools the strategies used to promote student and teacher growth. Learning designs discussed by participants included effective practices and structures used to facilitate professional learning and the engagement process for teachers and students.

Table 7

Common Themes/Patterns Identified in Research Question 2

Theme	Number of respondents identifying theme	Percentage
Intentional Practices: Data	8/12	67%
Reflection Time	7/12	58%
Feedback	8/12	67%

Table 7 identifies, based on coded transcribed data, the number of respondents who acknowledged intentional professional learning practices using data, reflection time, and feedback as parts of their new teacher mentoring program. Eight of the mentee and mentor teachers, which was 67% of participants, identified both setting aside intentional time for data and feedback as components of their new teacher mentoring program. Seven out of the 12 participants, which was 58% of participants, stated reflection time was also a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Discussions around Research Question 2 were closely aligned with participants stating the importance of having intentional conversations on data to reflect and provide or receive feedback from their peers.

Research Question 2 focused on Learning Forward's (n.d.) professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for new teacher mentoring programs. The researcher identified three overarching themes: (a) intentional practices around data, with 166 mentions by participants; (b) reflection time, with 174 mentions by participants; and (c) feedback, with 15 mentions, which respondents shared from their experiences.

Although feedback only had 15 mentions, 8 of the 12 participants identified feedback as part of their new teacher mentoring program so the researcher included it as a theme around Research Question 2. Three participants expressed the value of mentees participating in observations as an integral part of utilizing data and learning designs as key components of professional learning. Mentee Teacher B4 described the process of peer coaching by observing her mentor teach and then her mentor watching her teach the exact same lesson to build lesson depth and capacity. Mentor Teacher A2 detailed his experience as a mentor teacher after the district began requiring observations and the value of reflection in instructional practices through the new teacher mentoring program,

> I started telling everybody who would listen, including experienced teachers at my school, that they've got to do it [observations]… my mind was blown by watching other teachers and I've been doing this for a lot of years… there's no substitute for watching someone else. You see things that you just cannot see and learn things you can't learn any other way.

Participants identified intentionally setting aside time to look at student data as a common theme from Research Question 2 by 8 out of the 12 interviewees. New Teacher C3 affirmed the value of looking at data as it, "helps you make informed decisions" and is "one of the most important tools in my classroom." Participant B4 defined the worth of looking at data as making sure, "we're not wasting any kids time," by focusing on specific skills students are lacking and knowing where they are to drive instruction. Mentor Teacher B1 also believed data will sometimes show when a new teacher is struggling: "We go over the data and we talk about what strategies we need and what are

the misconceptions so that way we can figure out what's going on and then of course that helps the new teacher." Mentor Teacher B2 agreed by stating,

> [Mentors] have to be very intentional. I think you have to ask very specific questions because so many times our new teachers don't know they're struggling or they don't know they aren't prepared or they don't know they don't know something because they don't know any different. You have to be intentional with your questioning and ask them.

The second theme identified from Research Question 2 was reflection time, which was recognized by 7 out of the 12 participants, or 78%, with 174 mentions. Mentee Teacher B3 reflected on instructional methods with her mentor teacher by looking at data and evaluating student learning. B3 stated, "It really does help you grow as an educator because if you just teach the same way, the only way you've ever taught, you could be missing an entire group of kids in your class." Mentor Teacher C1 described not only reflecting on student growth as being important but also the why behind instructional practices,

> I love having a mentee because it helps you rethink why you do what you do. As teachers, we get in a rut and do the same things without really reflecting on the why. So, every time I have a student teacher and they say, ""Why do you do that?"" or ""What's the purpose behind that?"" It makes me rethink the why and make sure it's purposeful. So, I think that keeps you relevant and it keeps you aware.

The third theme identified from Research Question 2 was feedback, which was recognized by 8 of the 12 participants and 15 mentions. Although feedback only had 15

mentions, 67% of participants identified feedback as part of their new teacher mentoring program so the researcher included it as a theme around Research Question 2. Mentee Teacher C4 revealed,

> I think getting all the feedback from other people and from my mentor teacher is really a boost of confidence because sometimes I don't really know if I'm doing this right, or I just am unsure of myself. So, hearing the positive feedback, or even the constructive criticism like, ""This didn't go very well, try this."" That's really helpful and it makes me feel better about what I'm doing.

Mentee Teacher A3 stated, "Having positive feedback is a reminder of what I am doing well, which brings me confidence… [feedback] has been beneficial to encourage me in my 'glows' and 'grows.'"

Research Question 2 asked, "What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" Eight out of 12 participants identified both setting aside intentional time for data, with 166 mentions, and feedback, with 15 mentions, as components of their new teacher mentoring program. Seven out of the 12 participants stated reflection time, with 174 mentions, was also a component of their new teacher mentoring program, with three participants expressing the value of mentees participating in observations as an integral part of utilizing data and learning designs as key components of professional learning.

Analysis of Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, "What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" The researcher reviewed new teacher mentoring handbooks and contacted the outside new teacher training programs for Schools A and B. School A contracted with TFA and School B contracted with TIPSS for new teacher training and mentoring components. School C had their own district created new teacher training program. All three programs confirmed coaching, professional learning, and observation requirements. Interview Questions D1-D8 (Appendix B) were related to Research Question 3. After analysis of the transcribed text from Research Question 3, the researcher identified codes within the transcribed data into two major themes based on respondents' answers: (a) support and encouragement and (b) strong building leadership. Coding of the support and encouragement theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following six phrases:

- support,
- check-in,
- confidence,
- connected,
- encouragement, and
- positive.

Coding of the strong building leadership theme was based on mentor and mentee teachers describing their mentoring experience using the following four phrases:

- leadership,
- culture,
- trust, and
- strong.

Table 8 identifies responses around Research Question 3, which were then coded into the themes (a) support and encouragement and (b) strong building leadership. Research Question 3 focused on understanding new teacher mentoring programs in reference to professional learning implementation and outcomes. Participants discussed the processes needed for the implementation of professional learning and related outcomes as they addressed the importance of teachers putting their knowledge into practice. Participants focused discussions around individual experiences in regard to self-confidence, trust, connectedness, and feelings on the culture within the building.

Table 8

Common Themes/Patterns Identified in Research Question 3

Theme	Number of respondents identifying theme	Percentage
Support and Encouragement	7/12	58%
Strong Building Leadership	6/12	50%

Table 8 identifies, based on coded transcribed data, the number of respondents who acknowledged support and encouragement and strong building leadership as part of

their new teacher mentoring program. Patterns by participants were identified when four or more teachers supported the same theme. Seven mentee and mentor teachers, which was 58% of participants, identified support and encouragement as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Six out of the 12 participants, which was 50% of participants, stated strong building leadership was a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Discussions by participants around Research Question 3 included the value of support and encouragement by coworkers and building-level administrators for higher outcomes.

Research Question 3 focused on Learning Forward's (n.d.) content in regard to implementation and outcomes for new teacher mentoring programs. The researcher identified two overarching themes for Research Question 3: (a) support and encouragement, with 42 mentions by participants; and (b) strong building leadership with 17 mentions by participants, which were shared from their experiences. Four of the 12 participants identified time as a struggle in regard to implementation and outcomes for both mentors and mentees. When asked what the greatest struggle as a teacher has been, B2 responded,

> I would say just time, which that's everyone's challenge. I think just being able to just teach versus all of the extra things that we have to do, but a lot of those extra things that we do are the reason that we are Blue Ribbon. [It's] the reason we are Gold Star and high-performing. So, it's kind of a double-edged sword and it is kind of necessary.

The most common theme identified from Research Question 3 was support and encouragement, which was recognized by 7 of the 12 participants, or 58%, with 42

mentions. Mentee Teacher A3 received direct support and mastery learning instruction not only from her mentor but also from her building principal. Mentor Teacher A2 praised his building principal for being a strong leader and stated, "[My principal] supports me and as a teacher that's all you need." Mentor Teacher C2 reflected on the ways she supported her mentee teacher by, "I just want to check in with her, to see if she needs anything." Mentor Teacher B2 stated,

> I feel like it's so important for them [new teachers] to have a positive experience early and I feel like mentoring is one of the ways that I can help provide that and help them kind of set the foundation for their educational career.

A2 credited the amount of solid support his building principal demonstrated to teachers as the top reason for his positive job satisfaction. Mentor Teacher A1 stated,

> It's really important for our new teachers to have the confidence to be trying things and developing their management style to know the administration is going to back them up… I think to help new teachers be successful he (administrator) is very trusting and gives them a lot of autonomy to be genuine… he supports both the mentor and the mentee…

The second theme identified from Research Question 3 revealed strong building leadership, with 17 mentions as a key component to the success of new teacher mentoring programs, and was recognized by 6 out of the 12 participants, or 50%. Mentor Teacher B2 also gave credit to her principal as the reason behind the success of their school and new teacher mentoring program,

> I don't feel like we were performing at our potential. We had a lot of really great teachers but there wasn't a lot of cohesiveness. So, we really started doing the

> work and I think that stems from our leadership. She saw something that needed to happen and then she put the plan in place and kind of moved us forward. She was also very specific… we really worked on getting our culture right as a building.

Participant A1 added the importance of relationships and trust as being an important component of building leaders for new teachers to grow and thrive. Mentee Teacher C3 stated, "I feel really comfortable with my building administration… we have a really great team and I've felt supported."

Research Question 3 asked, "What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" Seven of the 12 mentee and mentor teachers identified support and encouragement, with 42 mentions as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Six out of the 12 participants stated strong building leadership, with 17 mentions was a component of their new teacher mentoring program.

Analysis of Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, "What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" All three participating schools had taken different approaches when training and supporting their mentor teachers. However, each had provided a structured program with outlined requirements and expectations. The researcher maintained a notebook during each interview to annotate thoughts, speculations, and intuitions around the type of specialized training

received by mentor teachers. Each school provided the researcher with new teacher mentoring handbook information and training requirements for the researcher to review for accuracy of interview data. Mentoring handbooks and professional learning information confirmed required training for mentor teachers. All three schools required training for mentors at the beginning of the school year. Interview Questions E1 and E2 (Appendix B) were related to Research Question 3.

Table 9 identifies responses around Research Question 4. Research Question 4 focused on understanding new teacher mentoring programs in reference to the level of support and training mentor teachers received. Participants focused discussions around coaching and new teacher mentoring program expectations as well as the time allotted for mentor training.

Table 9

Common Themes/Patterns Identified in Research Question 4

Theme	Number of schools identifying theme	Percentage
Specialized Mentor Training	3/3	100%

Table 9 identifies the number of respondents who acknowledged specialized mentor training as part of their new teacher mentoring program. All three schools, which was 100% of participants, identified specific training for mentors as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. Discussions by participants around Research Question 4 included the value of intentional training and support for mentor teachers in order to provide new teachers with effective practices.

Research Question 4 focused on the level of training mentor teachers received to provide support and guidance for mentees. All three high-performing schools reported specific training was provided for their mentor teachers. Schools A and B utilized an outside service for specialized training on coaching and modeling. School C provided its own mentor training by hosting professional learning before the start of school each year. Mentor Teacher C1 explained,

> I do think there should be additional training for mentors because it might not be a natural thing for everyone to do. Just because you have experience, or are a highly qualified teacher, doesn't mean that you can then mentor another teacher effectively.

Mentor Teacher B2 stated,

> I think it's really important to adopt some kind of program. Leaving mentor teachers to their own planning and doing what you think is best is not always the best approach. It doesn't mean that we're incapable and it doesn't mean that we're not highly effective educators and can't lead. I think having some kind of leading and guiding [program] are two different things. So, I think that this program has helped me be more of a guide versus just leading. It's important to give mentors and mentees structure.

Mentor teachers were reported to have been chosen by content area, physical location, and experience. Participant B1 shared her principal chose mentors who would be a positive influence on the mentee. Location of the mentor to the mentee was also an important factor for collaboration and support. C2 reflected on her experience as a mentee and now as a mentor: "I just remember how incredibly helpful and important it

was for me to have that person to look to when I had questions… I had a great one (mentor)… so I'm trying to be as good as she was."

Research Question 4 asked, "What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" All three schools identified specific training for mentors as a component of their new teacher mentoring program. According to the Missouri Revisor of Statutes (2020), veteran teachers in the state of Missouri are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of professional development each year. However, respondents stated training did not always apply to coaching and supporting methods specifically designed for mentor teachers.

Additional Insights

The researcher also gained additional information unrelated to the four research questions through open-ended questioning techniques. All 12 teachers reported they planned to stay in education for at least the next 5 years. When mentor and mentee teachers were asked to rate their current job satisfaction on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being *very unhappy* and 10 being *very happy*, mentor and mentee teachers reported an average satisfaction rate of 8.3. Four teachers reported the most enjoyable part of teaching was watching the "light bulb" moment of student learning. When asked what they enjoyed most about teaching, Mentee Teacher C3 stated,

> I love the kids the most and the relationship with my students. [They] just bring me joy every day. I really think that's key to being a first-year teacher. You hear the statistics about teachers who quit after the first year and it is not an easy job.

There're challenges but I think if you love teaching and you love the students, then you'll continue [in education].

Additional information gleaned from participants included acknowledgement of the struggles related to teacher retention and the value of student learning. The joys of teaching for participants included the relationships built with students and watching students learn. Student learning was a highlight and motivator for both mentor and mentee teachers alike.

Summary

Chapter Four included the findings of the study and an analysis of the data including tables noting the significance of the study. Triangulated sources of data were used to provide validly and reliability by examining evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews. Information from each of the three schools' new teacher mentoring handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, collaboration, and evaluation tools were analyzed for accuracy of interview data. The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and intuitions throughout the interview process. Coding procedures included the researcher reading through all transcribed data by annotating and highlighting sections of transcribed text to identify coded words and phrases. As similarities emerged, common categories were sorted to collate data into groups and then into identified codes. Coded words and phrases were then collated into groups and identifying themes. Themes were used to describe the content of the data and were then grouped to identify patterns. Connections were made using the coded data by identifying related themes in the data. Triangulated sources of data were also used to provide validly and reliability of the data for themes by examining

evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews to reduce bias. The researcher conducted data analysis and coded transcripts by defining related themes using Learning Forward (n.d.) standards of content, process, and context for continuous professional learning. Patterns were identified when four or more participants supported the same theme. Seven themes were identified by the researcher as Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended identifying five to seven themes for a basic narrative qualitative study. The researcher identified seven key themes of new teacher mentoring programs according to the experiences of 12 teachers from highly effective schools. The seven themes were (a) collaboration, (b) relationships, (c) intentional practices around data, (d) reflection time, (e) feedback, (f) support and encouragement, and (g) strong building leadership. Collaboration was the most common theme with 358 mentions, with all 12 or 100%, of participants identifying it as a key component of their new teacher mentoring program. Relationships was the second most common theme identified by participants with 11 out of the 12 participants, or 75% with 413 mentions, acknowledging it as an important part of new teacher mentoring. Chapter Four ended with a summary of key findings in the conclusion. Chapter Five contains a brief summary of the problem along with a discussion of the limitations of the study. The researcher included triangulation methods of data and a summary of the research methods used during the study. An interpretation of the implications of the findings that relate back to the research questions and problem statement were also included. Implications for practice are discussed along with recommendations for further research, followed by a summary of the chapter. A key list of references is presented along with appendices of related documents.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this basic narrative qualitative study was to explore the experiences of six first- and second-year teachers and six mentors regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs from three highly effective schools in the state of Missouri through personal interviews and related documents. The three highly effective schools were U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School Award winners.

The theoretical framework for this study was centered on the framework for teaching, which is grounded on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2010, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). There is a common set of strategies in high-performing school systems when developing, supporting, and sustaining the learning and development of teachers and school leaders (Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Effective school districts attribute their success to the way new teachers were trained and supported (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). Schools should become continuous learning organizations that encourage teachers to work together to pursue growth opportunities that help develop their skills around student engagement strategies and learning (Danielson, 2019).

Chapter Five contains a brief summary of the problem along with a discussion of the limitations of the study. The researcher includes triangulation methods of data and a summary of the research methods used during the study. An interpretation of the

implications of the findings that relate back to the research questions and problem statement are also included. Implications for practice are discussed along with recommendations for further research, followed by a summary of the chapter. A key list of references is presented along with appendices of related documents.

Research Questions

The central qualitative question driving the research was this:

What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

The related subquestions for this study were the following:

Research Subquestion 1: What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 2: What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 3: What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Research Subquestion 4: What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?

Limitations

The researcher's intent was to provide clear and usable data for new teacher programs and every attempt was made to eliminate effects of external variables through delimiting the study. However, it should be recognized limitations existed. Educational research is a difficult field of study and thus, limitations are inherent. This qualitative study noted the following limitations, which included any variable that was outside the control of the researcher.

1. Teachers may not have responded to the interview questions honestly or may have answered questions based on what they believed the researcher was trying to confirm.
2. Teachers may not have been able to adequately describe their feelings and opinions of their learning experiences.
3. The study generalized all new teacher mentoring programs in the state based on a limited number of interviews.
4. Specific pairing of each mentee to their mentor was out of the researcher's control.
5. Additional limitations included the inconsistencies in the quality of new teachers' mentoring programs from school districts across the state of Missouri and their mentoring experiences.

6. The researcher strove to reduce bias and subjectivity due to being the only coder and analyzer of the data.

Summary of Methods

The researcher selected three Missouri schools that were U. S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School Award winners within the last 3 years. Administrators from the three selected schools were contacted by phone and email to gain permission to conduct the study and provided names of two mentor teachers and two first- or second-year teachers to interview on their personal experiences regarding the district's new teacher mentoring program. The researcher conducted a pilot study of two mentor teachers and two first- and second-year teachers to vet interview questions for validity and reliably before formal interviews began. The researcher contacted the six mentor teachers and six first- and second-year teachers by email to gain informed consent (Appendix A). Interviews were conducted using Zoom, a video conferencing application, and transcribed using Otter, an audio transcribing application.

Coding procedures included the researcher reading through all transcribed data and taking notes to familiarize and get an overview of the content. The researcher annotated and highlighted sections of transcribed text by repeatedly searching for similarities between pieces of data. As similarities emerged, common categories were sorted to collate data into groups and then into identified codes (Caulfield, 2019). The researcher sorted transcribed text by hand first and then analyzed data using the Otter software program to sort through each piece of data to identify similarities and differences to clearly organize each coded phrase from the data. The researcher identified 35 coded words and phrases from the 12 participant interviews. The 35 coded

words and phrases were used to describe the content of the data and were then grouped to identify patterns into a single theme. Seven themes were identified from the 35 coded words and phrases. Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommended identifying five to seven themes based on coded transcribed data for a basic narrative qualitative study. Content and thematic analyses of data were achieved to dive deeper into the themes presented by the respondents.

Once the seven themes were established, the researcher went back and examined transcribed text by individual participants for connections around coded themes. The 12 participants' interview data were analyzed around each research question in relationship to identified themes. The researcher then identified how many participants supported each recognized theme. Connections were made using the coded data by identifying related themes in the data. Patterns were identified when four or more participants supported the same theme. The researcher identified seven common themes from the 12 participants in the three highly effective schools. Data analysis and coding were conducted by defining related themes using Learning Forward (n.d.) standards of content, process, and context for continuous professional learning. Themes were evaluated by looking through several different lenses based on the theoretical framework of a basic narrative qualitative study, which included mentoring programs and professional learning.

Triangulated sources of data were used to build a comprehensive justification and provide validly and reliability of the data for the seven themes by examining evidence from multiple sources outside of the interviews such as evaluating the three schools' handbooks, professional learning opportunities, daily schedules, and evaluation tools

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher maintained a notebook with notes of thoughts, speculations, and intuitions throughout the interview process. All three schools were also asked to participate in member checking by reviewing transcripts for accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and providing copies of their collaboration and observation requirements to validate teacher experiences. New teacher mentoring handbooks from the three participating schools were also reviewed for accuracy of interview data.

Summary of Findings

Based on interviews from six mentor teachers and six first- and second-year teachers from high-performing schools, the researcher was able to draw meaningful conclusions from data relevant to each research question. Interviews from the 12 participants revealed seven common themes regarding new teacher mentoring programs. High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). This study established school districts must be purposeful and intentional when providing new teachers time for collaboration, relationships, instructional practices around data, support and encouragement, feedback, and reflection time, along with strong building leadership.

Research Question 1. Research Question 1 asked, "What was the professional learning context in regard to learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" The researcher identified two overarching themes from Research Question 1: (a) collaboration, with 358 mentions by participants; and (b) relationships, with 413 mentions by participants. Participants revealed school leaders should be intentional in

their professional learning context by specifically setting collaboration time aside for teachers to meet and plan. From Research Question 1, the researcher concluded successful high-performing school districts provide opportunities for collaboration and time for teachers to develop relationships.

New teachers develop a sense of competence and confidence in their teaching capabilities through support and collaboration with their peers (Geeraerts et al., 2015). In fact, a direct correlation has been found between professional development/collaboration and a teacher's confidence in their abilities, which leads to a sense of enjoyment in teaching (Donohoo, 2017). All 12 participants revealed collaboration as an important part of the professional learning context within their new teacher mentoring program and is considered a normal operating procedure in their school. The three highly effective schools all emphasized collaboration as the way they do business. The effectiveness of collaboration was evident with 358 mentions by participants. Districts reap significant investments in their teachers when allotting time for collaboration and professional learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Therefore, school leaders must support collaboration time and the value it has on creating effective learning communities and high-quality teachers (Donohoo & Katz, 2017; Learning Forward, n.d.). Teachers must be surrounded with a positive culture of support, solid leadership, and intentional collaboration through professional learning opportunities (Doennig, 2019; New Teacher Center, 2016a).

Relationships was the second most identified component of the professional learning context within new teacher mentoring programs by participants, with 413 mentions and 11 out of 12 teachers recognizing it as an important component. Effective mentoring takes time and mentors must be committed to developing a relationship with

new teachers (Hopkins, 2018). New teachers report mentoring programs must include a high rate of trust in the relationship between the new teacher and the mentor in order to function effectively (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Therefore, when pairing mentors and mentees, school districts should take the human element into consideration by allowing time to become acquainted and to build a relationship (Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016).

The researcher asked the 12 participants to answer the question, "What was the most helpful resource your district has provided you?" The response to this question revealed 9 out of 12 participants, or 75%, identified time with their team or mentor teacher as the most important resource in regard to professional learning context a school can provide to mentor and mentee teachers. The overwhelming response from participants highlights the effectiveness and value of collaboration and relationships within a highly successful school. A strong connection can be made between teacher success and a positive mentor/mentee relationship (Sparks et al., 2017). Effective mentors do not need to have all the answers but must strive to develop a trusting relationship by providing new teachers with problem-solving skills and various resources, which takes time and commitment (Hopkins, 2018).

Research Question 2. Research Question 2 asked, "What was the professional learning process in regard to data and learning designs for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" The researcher identified three overarching themes: (a) intentional practices around data, with 166 mentions by participants; (b) reflection time, with 174 mentions by participants; and (c)

feedback, with 15 mentions, which respondents shared from their professional learning processes. Many new teacher programs go through the motions of supporting new teachers by providing checklists of required items but highly effective schools implement professional learning into their new teacher training, which includes having intentional conversations about student data, giving time for reflecting on teaching practices, and providing positive and meaningful feedback (Learning Forward, n.d.).

High-performing school systems develop effective collaborative professional learning processes for new teachers through incremental improvements using student data as the driving force (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2016). The three highly effective schools participating in the study all used common formative assessments (School B and School C) or mastery exams (School A) to drive instruction. Teachers designed unit tests collaboratively and reviewed student data after the exams were given. Many schools collaborate on aligning and providing common formative assessments. However, most schools miss the vital importance of reviewing the data after students have taken the assessment to help drive instruction. High-performing schools learn to have constructive conversations around data to grow their staff into highly effective teachers. Teachers who use assessment data to understand student progress significantly enhance knowledge and skill development by using the data to plan, revise, and evaluate instructional activities and strategies (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Schools B and C stated building data into their instruction was not an easy process. It was time consuming and can be met with resistance by staff members. School leaders must recognize the importance of a process for using data to make decisions, which leads not only to student growth but teacher growth as well. New teachers must be able to

monitor student learning by providing meaningful feedback and understand the difference between surface and deep student learning outcomes (Hattie, 2012).

Effective teachers use the process of reflection as they consider their practice. Reflection is an art, which mentor teachers should model for mentee teachers (Bransford et al., 2004). Reflection through observations provides an opportunity for new teachers to observe the practices of mentor teachers and then reflect on their own instructional methods by comparing the two approaches. Jenni Donohoo (2017) identified mentoring as a coaching cycle that included co-planning, co-teaching, co-analyzing, and co-reflection time. Mentoring reduces isolation by providing support and offers new teachers deeper insights into student learning, which increases collective efficacy (Donohoo, 2017). New teachers should be trained on how to be effective through reflective activities that include mentoring, working collaboratively with coworkers, and providing opportunities for meaningful mentor observations (Pedota, 2015; Zembytska, 2016).

Mentors should provide an appropriate and timely constructive feedback process to the mentee to promote change in educator practice and increase student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Participants were outspoken to state they strive for positive and effective feedback to grow and mature as educators. Providing teachers with effective feedback using standards and data-based evidence, guided instructional practices, and a solid structure ensures continuous instructional growth (Learning Forward, n.d.; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Support should also be given to new teachers throughout the coaching cycle, which includes feedback and modeling (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). John Hattie (2012) defined quality expert

teachers as being able to organize and teach content effectively, create positive learning environments, monitor student learning by providing meaningful feedback, believe all students can reach success standards, and understand the difference between surface and deep student learning outcomes.

Research Question 3. Research Question 3 asked, "What was the professional learning content in regard to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program that first- and second-year teachers and mentors experienced in a school that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" Professional learning content included implementation and outcomes and is considered to be the most critical part of school improvement as it addresses the importance of teachers putting their learning into practice (Lewis, 2018). Therefore, teachers must be surrounded with a positive culture of support, solid leadership, and intentional collaboration through effective professional learning content opportunities (Doennig, 2019; New Teacher Center, 2016a). The researcher identified two overarching themes for Research Question 3: (a) support and encouragement, with 42 mentions by participants; and (b) strong building leadership, with 17 mentions by participants, which were shared from their professional learning content experiences. Implementation of research-based strategies is vital to fill the gap in learning using standards when analyzing the data through developing specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely goals for areas of weakness (Reeves, 2009). The major challenge of teacher professional learning content is to weed through all the learning opportunities that will not only positively impact student outcomes but that will also grow and increase teacher outcomes (Hattie, 2012; Svendsen, 2020). Implementation of professional learning content in an appropriate and

timely manner by providing constructive feedback and reflection leads to changes in educator practice and increases in student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Mentoring empowers new teachers by allowing them to feel supported using professional learning content (Carr et al., 2017; Monroe, 2017).

The researcher identified from participants the importance of support and encouragement from their peers and building-level administration when implementing professional learning content. Professional learning content can be difficult to implement and the support new teachers received was directly tied to their satisfaction rate. The lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which negatively affect student achievement and cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). New teachers need encouragement through social persuasion to overcome challenges through collaboration and support (Donohoo, 2017). A study of mentor programs in Alabama found new teachers attributed their positive attitude toward education as a career directly to the time, emotional support, and encouragement they received from their mentor teacher (Sparks et al., 2017).

Participants in this study revealed each of the participating schools had strong building leadership, which leads to solid professional learning content. The key to long-term successful schools was directly related to the way new teachers entering the profession were trained and supported (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Irby et al., 2020; Leuchtmann, 2019; O'Quinn, 2018; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). Therefore, principals must step up as learning leaders in their school buildings. Participants revealed the importance of having strong solid leadership to create a culture of support and implement effective professional learning practices. In

order for schools to promote effective professional learning, leadership must create structures to encourage changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Effective leaders are facilitators and identify professional learning as a key strategy to developing quality teachers to improve student learning (Learning Forward, n.d.). Participants revealed the importance of building leaders having a focused direction with high expectations for students and staff. School leaders must advocate for professional learning by modeling the importance of being a lifelong learner (Learning Forward, n.d.).

Research Question 4. Research Question 4 asked, "What were the experiences of mentor teachers regarding their level of training to support new teachers in schools that met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program?" Research Question 4 focused on the level of training mentor teachers received to provide support and guidance for mentees. All three high-performing schools reported specific training was provided for their mentor teachers.

According to the Missouri Revisor of Statutes (2020), mentor teachers in the state of Missouri are required to complete a minimum of 15 hours of professional development each year. However, many schools do not provide training specifically geared toward mentor teachers and their unique role within the new teacher mentoring program (Sowell, 2017). Highly effective mentors should have training on leadership, coaching, instructional skills and delivery, interpersonal skills, classroom management, and student engagement, and must be able to model these characteristics in their own instruction (Leuchtmann, 2019). Nine out of the 12 participants identified time with their team or mentor teacher as the most important resource a school can provide, which speaks to the

value of professional learning gained within a mentor/mentee relationship. School districts are not assigning new teachers to effective and appropriately trained mentors and they are not allocating the necessary funds for beginning teacher training (Sowell, 2017). Administrators must understand the value of appropriate training for mentor teachers by providing the time and funds necessary to achieve high-quality professional learning. Not all training is equal and schools must allocate the appropriate stability for mentors as they make a difference in the lifelong careers of new teachers.

The four research questions aimed to answer the central qualitative question driving the study, "What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?" The researcher identified seven themes from new teacher mentoring experiences of the six new teachers and six mentor teachers of (a) collaboration, (b) relationships, (c) intentional practices around data, (d) reflection time, (e) feedback, (f) support and encouragement, and (g) strong building leadership. Participants revealed schools must be intentional in their new teacher mentoring programs in order to develop high-quality teachers and must provide the time necessary to build relationships for collaboration, support, and encouragement around continuous professional learning opportunities.

Discussion

The researcher interviewed six mentor teachers and six first- and second-year teachers from three high-performing schools to draw meaningful conclusions and to examine emergent patterns relevant to professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. Interviews from the 12 participants revealed seven common themes regarding new teacher mentoring programs: (a) collaboration, (b) relationships, (c) intentional

practices around data, (d) reflection time, (e) feedback, (f) support and encouragement, and (g) strong building leadership. This study established school districts must be purposeful and intentional when providing effective professional learning for new teachers. High-performing school systems train and develop teachers and instruction systematically (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The theoretical framework for this study was centered on the framework for teaching, which is grounded on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2010, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018). The complexity of teaching involves continuous professional learning for teachers to remain up-to-date on effective teaching strategies and to develop an understanding of how people learn (Danielson, 2007, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). Participants confirmed this research by identifying the importance of providing the time necessary to build relationships for collaboration, support, and encouragement around continuous professional learning opportunities. Developing quality teachers takes time and support, with each developmental phase building upon another, which requires effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Wong & Wong, 2018).

High-performing school leaders operate on the belief all teachers can learn and improve their performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). They invest in the profession of teaching and learning (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). High-performing academic leaders are also strategic in their approach to developing effective teachers (Wong & Wong, 2018). Effective school leaders attribute

their school success to the way new teachers were trained and supported (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Wong & Wong, 2018). Schools should become continuous learning organizations that encourage teachers to work together to pursue growth opportunities that help develop their skills around student engagement strategies and learning (Danielson, 2019).

Retaining effective and quality teachers has become a top priority for school districts in the last several years as the cost of replacing and training teachers has become a drain on school funds (Zembytska, 2016). Almost one fourth of educators leave the profession within the first 3 years of their career and report a lack of effective professional learning and administrative support as the chief cause of their dissatisfaction (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Zembytska, 2016). All 12 teachers from the three highly effective schools in this study reported they planned to stay in education for at least the next 5 years. When mentor and mentee teachers were asked to rate their current job satisfaction on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being *very unhappy* and 10 being *very happy*, mentor and mentee teachers reported an average satisfaction rate of 8.3. The researcher identified from participants the importance of support and encouragement from their peers and building-level administration when implementing professional learning content. Professional learning content can be difficult to implement and the support new teachers received was directly tied to their satisfaction rate. The lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which negatively affect student achievement and cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016).

According to the New Teacher Center (2016a), effective teachers are surrounded with a positive culture of support through continuous professional learning opportunities,

collaboration, trust, and instructional development (Learning Forward, n.d.; Mathipa & Matlabe, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2018). The way new teachers entering the profession were trained and supported plays a critical role in the long-term success of effective school districts (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Dudick, 2016; Irby et al., 2020; Leuchtmann, 2019; O'Quinn, 2018; Pedota, 2015; Perry, 2016; Zembytska, 2016; Zhukova, 2018). Participants in this study confirmed the presented research by affirming the value of collaboration, relationships, feedback, support, and encouragement.

The study assumed participants provided accurate and honest feedback to the interview questions, to the best of their ability. The limitations of the study included participants possibly not answering questions honestly or answering questions by trying to appease the researcher. It could have also been difficult for some teachers to adequately describe their feelings by putting them into words. Another limitation of the study included only having 12 participants and the inconsistencies of new teacher mentoring programs across the state of Missouri. The researcher endeavored to reduce bias by using an outside transcription service and being the only coder and analyzer of the data. The study was also limited to the three schools in the state of Missouri that were willing to participate. The researcher chose the participating three schools based on specific Blue Ribbon School Award criteria to be identified as a high-performing school and also a recognized formal mentoring program.

This study deepened the base of research by conducting a systematic search of effective professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. Participants confirmed and added to the base of literature presented in Chapter Two. School leaders must recognize and plan for effective professional learning for new teachers by

intentionally setting aside the time and resources needed for new teacher mentoring programs. Professional learning is an ongoing practice and starts with creating context by establishing an environment that thrives when learning occurs (Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.). Findings in this study are applicable to broader populations or other settings and conditions related to the effectiveness of continuous professional learning.

Educational Implications

The educational implications of this research are specific to the research questions that guided the study. This study aimed to explore the gap in research regarding new teacher mentoring experiences and related professional learning in Missouri school districts. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs established the importance of maintaining a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012). This study established school district leaders must be purposeful and intentional in their mentoring programs when providing new teachers time for collaboration, relationships, instructional practices around data, support and encouragement, feedback, and reflection time, along with establishing strong building leadership.

Collaboration and relationships were the most common themes identified by participants in highly effective schools and were repeated 771 times by participants. Collaboration is an effective way to develop strong connections and productive relationships within the mentor/mentee team. New teachers develop a sense of competence and confidence in their teaching capabilities through support and collaboration with their peers (Geeraerts et al., 2015). In fact, a direct correlation has

been found between professional development/collaboration and a teacher's confidence in their abilities, which leads to a sense of enjoyment in teaching (Donohoo, 2017). School leaders must develop and retain quality teachers by providing effective professional learning for all teachers, which starts with recruiting quality beginning teachers and then focuses on maintaining a solid foundation through teacher preparation programs and new teacher induction programs. It is imperative school systems put the necessary structures in place for teacher learning and development to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Nine out of the 12 participants identified time with their team or mentor teacher as the most important resource a school can provide, which speaks to the value of professional learning that is gained within a mentor/mentee relationship. School leaders must assign new teachers to effective and appropriately trained mentors and allocate the necessary funds for beginning teacher training. School systems must also put the necessary structures in place for learning to thrive (Dweck, 2016; Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

High-performing school leaders learn to have constructive conversations around data to grow their staff into highly effective teachers. Teachers who use assessment data to understand student progress significantly enhance knowledge and skill development by using the data to plan, revise, and evaluate instructional activities and strategies (Goldman & Pellegrino, 2015). Providing teachers with effective feedback using standards and data-based evidence, guided instructional practices, and a solid structure ensures continuous instructional growth (Learning Forward, n.d.; New Teacher Center, 2016a). Support from expert mentor teachers should also be given to new teachers throughout the coaching cycle, which includes feedback and modeling (Darling-

Hammond et al., 2017; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). John Hattie (2012) defined quality expert teachers as being able to organize and teach content effectively, create positive learning environments, monitor student learning by providing meaningful feedback, believe all students can reach success standards, and understand the difference between surface and deep student learning outcomes

The support participating new teachers received in this study was directly tied to their satisfaction rate. The lack of support for new teachers has led to higher teacher attrition rates, which negatively affect student achievement and cost school districts each year (Sowell, 2017; Zembytska, 2016). New teachers need encouragement through social persuasion to overcome challenges through collaboration and support (Donohoo, 2017).

Participants revealed the importance of having strong solid leadership to create a culture of support and implement effective practices. In order for schools to promote effective professional learning, leadership must create structures to encourage changes in an individual's knowledge or behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). School leaders must advocate for professional learning by modeling the importance of being a lifelong learner (Learning Forward, n.d.). School leaders must also recognize the importance of having highly trained and effective mentors for new teachers to model and emulate. Highly effective mentors should have training on leadership, coaching, instructional skills and delivery, interpersonal skills, classroom management, and student engagement, and must be able to model these characteristics in their own instruction (Leuchtmann, 2019).

It is essential for school leaders to provide the funding necessary to support continuous professional learning for their teachers. Developing quality teachers takes time and support, with each developmental phase building upon another, which requires

effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Wong & Wong, 2018). Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study should aid school leaders in the support and development of highly qualified teachers.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher limited this study to 12 participants from three highly effective Missouri schools. The researcher chose the three schools based on highly effective Blue Ribbon School Award winner criteria. Further research should be conducted to widen the interview pool and increase participation with more teachers from other states around the country.

The researcher also recommends further studies be conducted specifically to isolate high schools from elementary schools as teacher needs tend to be different at the upper grade levels. Based on results of this study, collaboration time is a major factor in new teacher mentoring programs. Collaboration time can sometimes be easier at the elementary level due to grade levels teaching the same content. Middle and high school teachers struggle to find collaboration time when content areas are limited. Schedules can be difficult to align and mentors do not always have the same plan time as mentee teachers.

Further research would also be valuable around building principals and their role as mentors and learning leaders in the school building. The leader's role in the building has been identified as an important component around mentoring programs. Continued research to retain and train new teachers using mentoring program structures and the role leadership has in meeting teachers' needs to produce more highly effective educators is needed.

Universities are continuing to offer alternative paths to teacher certification. It would be interesting to study new teachers' needs based on certification routes. Many programs do not require traditional student teaching requirements. Do teachers who complete alternative routes to certification have different professional learning needs within their mentoring programs than teachers who completed traditional teacher certification?

Lastly, the researcher suggests more long-term studies follow this research. New teacher training methods and the long-term impacts they have on student learning would be a beneficial follow-up. Sowell (2017) reported effective mentoring has the ability to completely transform and advance new teachers into lifelong learners. High-performing school systems encourage teachers to be lifelong learners who show growth in their instructional performance (Danielson, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Educational systems that effectively support new teachers are able to retain teachers, which leads to improved student academic achievement (Sowell, 2017).

Summary

The central qualitative question driving the study was, "What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?" The theoretical framework for this study was centered on the framework for teaching, which is grounded on the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality (Bandura, 1977; Danielson, 2007, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 1998, 2010, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Donohoo, 2017; Hattie, 2012; Wong & Wong, 2018).

This study aimed to fill the gap in research regarding new teacher mentoring experiences and related professional learning in Missouri school districts. Twelve teachers participated in the study from three highly effective Missouri school districts to explore their experiences related to new teacher mentoring. Exploring experiences from six first- and second-year teachers and six mentors regarding mentoring programs guided the researcher in discovering professional learning growth demonstrated by new teachers in their first 2 years. This study established school districts must be purposeful and intentional in their mentoring programs when providing new teachers time for collaboration, relationships, instructional practices around data, support and encouragement, feedback, and reflection time, along with establishing strong building leadership. New teacher mentoring programs are more than a checklist to follow. School districts must develop strong systems of support within their new teacher training programs in order to be effective (Carr et al., 2017). Creating a system of change with policies to affect teaching included ensuring early career teachers have high-quality induction and mentoring programs (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Zhukova, 2018).

The literature revealed without intentional guided support, learning to teach well is extremely difficult for new teachers (Galamay-Cachola et al., 2018). Effective teachers recognize a school's main purpose is to improve student learning and the greatest effect on student learning and achievement is the quality of the teacher (Wong & Wong, 2018). Therefore, training quality teachers through effective profession learning opportunities is vital to transform schools into high-quality learning systems (Danielson, 2019). Effective professional learning included meaningful collaboration with other educators, which leads to stronger teacher efficacy and a system of collective

responsibility and support (Donohoo, 2017; Easton, 2015; Learning Forward, n.d.; Svendsen, 2020).

Studies around the country (Britt-Stevens, 2014; Callahan, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Dudick, 2016; Perry, 2016) have shown new teacher mentoring programs have a positive effect on developing quality teachers when implemented appropriately. Based on research and numerous reports by several national education agencies (Zembytska, 2016), of all the governmental programs and incentives used to retain effective teachers in American public schools since the 1980s, new teacher mentoring has proven to be the most highly efficient and cost effective (Zembytska, 2016). The greatest gains in student learning are attributed to teachers who are more experienced, highly trained, and who stay together within their school team (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Student learning should always be the driving force behind teacher growth and development.

REFERENCES

American Institutes for Research. (2016). *It's 2016: Do you know where the teachers are?* Retrieved from https://www.air.org/resource/it-s-2016-do-you-know-where-teachers-are

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-215. Retrieved from https://psycnet.apa.org/ doi:10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Belanger, B. M. (2018). *First-year teachers perceptions of the mentoring component of the new teacher induction program* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/4464/

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2004). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Britt-Stevens, N. (2014). *Effects of mentoring programs on new teachers' retention in selected rural schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database. (UMI No. 3616793)

Callahan, J. J. (2016). Encouraging retention of new teachers through mentoring strategies. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 83*(1), 6-11.

Canaslan-Akyar, B. (2020). Investigating the mentoring of collaborative teachers and academic supervisors in pre-service early childhood education teachers' teaching experience. *Kastamonu Education Journal, 28*(2), 869–880. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.702931

Carr, M. L., Holmes, W., & Flynn, K. (2017). Using mentoring, coaching, and self-mentoring to support public school educators. *The Clearing House, 90*(4), 116-124. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1316624

Caulfield, J. (2019). *How to do thematic analysis.* Retrieved from https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/thematic-analysis/

Christensen, S. S., Davies, R. S., Harris, S. P., Hanks, J., & Bowles, B. (2019). Teacher recruitment: Factors that predict high school students' willingness to become teachers. *Education Sciences*, *9*(4), 282-300. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci9040282

Cochran-Smith, M., Keefe, E. S., Carney, M. C., Sánchez, J. G., Olivo, M., & Smith, R. J. (2020). Teacher preparation at new graduate schools of education: Studying a controversial innovation. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *47*(2), 8–37.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Danielson, C. (2007). *Enhancing professional practice: A framework for teaching* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development* website: http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/106034/chapters/The-Framework-for-Teaching@-An-Overview.aspx

Danielson, C. (2013). *The framework for teaching evaluation instrument*. Retrieved from The Danielson Group website: http://www.loccsd.ca/~div15/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2013-framework-for-teaching-evaluation-instrument.pdf

Danielson, C. (2019). The framework for teaching clusters: Six clusters to support teachers growth and student learning. *The Danielson Group*. Retrieved from

https://lfp.learningforward.org/handouts/St.%20Louis2019/9584/SixClustersforTeacherGrowthandStudentLearning-Learning%20Forward%20Presentation.pdf

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998). Strengthening the teaching profession: Teacher learning that supports student learning. *Educational Leadership, 55*(5), 6-11.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). Recruiting and retaining teachers: Turning around the race to the bottom in high-need schools. *Journal of Curriculum and Instruction, 4*(1), 16-32. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/43785368_Recruiting_and_Retaining_Teachers_Turning_Around_the_Race_to_the_Bottom_in_High-Need_Schools

Darling-Hammond, L. (2013). *Developing and sustaining a high-quality teaching force*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. Retrieved from https://edpolicy.stanford.edu

Darling-Hammond, L., Burns, D., Campbell, C., Goodwin, A. L., Hammerness, K., Ling-Low, E. E., . . . Zeichner, K. (2017). *Empowered educators: How high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

DeCesare, D., McClelland, A., & Randel, B. (2017). *Impacts of the Retired Mentors for New Teachers Program* (REL 2017-225). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central.

DeCesare, D., Workman, S., & McClelland, A. (2016). *How do school districts mentor new teachers?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional

Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Central. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=4497

Di Carlo, M. (2015). Update on teacher turnover in the U.S. Retrieved from Albert Shanker Institute website: http://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/update-teacher-turnover-us

Doennig, M. B. (2019). *The difference in district leader self-efficacy between single-frame and multiframe leadership of the superintendent* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://libguides.sbuniv.edu/c.php?g=154859&p=7210327

Donohoo, J. (2017). *Collective efficacy: How educators' beliefs impact student learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Donohoo, J., & Katz, S. (2017). When teachers believe, students achieve: Collaborative inquiry builds teacher efficacy for better student outcomes. *Learning Professional*, *38*(6), 20–21.

Donohoo, J., & Katz, S. (2019). What drives collective efficacy? *Educational Leadership*, *76*(6), 24-29. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/jul19/vol76/num09/What-Drives-Collective-Efficacy%C2%A2.aspx

Dudick, J. L. (2016). *Effects new teacher mentoring has on instructional practices* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 10147099)

Dweck, C. S. (2016). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.

Easton, L. B. (2015). *Powerful designs for professional learning* (3rd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Galamay-Cachola, S., Aduca, M. C., & Calauagan, F. C. (2018). Mentoring experiences, issues, and concerns in the student-teaching program: Towards a proposed mentoring program in teacher education. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, *6*(3), 7-24.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2010). *Applying educational research* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Geeraerts, K., Tynjälä, P., Heikkinen, H. L. T., Markkanen, I., Pennanen, M., & Gijbels, D. (2015). Peer-group mentoring as a tool for teacher development. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(3), 358–377. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2014.983068

Gjddapah, J. L. (2016). Learning to facilitate new teacher development. *Teacher Education and Practice*, *29*(2), 373.

Goldman, S. R., & Pellegrino, J. W. (2015). Research on learning and instruction: Implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment. *Education, 2*(1), 33-41. doi:10.1177/2372732215601866

Hanover Research. (2016, March). *District strategies to promote teacher effectiveness*. Retrieved from http://www.esc-cc.org/Downloads/D%20-%20(Hanover)%20District%20Strategies%20to%20Promote%20Teacher%20Effectiveness.pdf

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2016). *Mindframes and maximizers: Third annual visible learning conference.* Retrieved from http://www.sagepublications.com/images/eblast/CorwinPress/PDF/AVL-program-2016.pdf

Hopkins, J. (2018). How the CEC/CEC-PD Mentoring program helps students and new teachers. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 51*(1), 72–73. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059918793083

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, *38*(3), 499–534. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312038003499

Ingersoll, R., May, H., & Collins, G. (2019, April 8). Recruitment, employment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *27*(37), 1-42.

Irby, J. B., Boswell, J. N., Searby, L. J., Kochan, F., Garza, R., & Abdelrahman, N. (Eds.). (2020). *The Wiley international handbook of mentoring.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., Roberts-Hull, K., & Hunter, A. (2016). *Beyond PD: Teacher professional learning in high performing systems.* Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy. Retrieved from http://ncee.org/cieb

Kutsyuruba, B. (2016). *The role of the school administrator in effective teacher induction and mentoring programs*. Santa Cruz, CA: New Teacher Center.

Learning Forward. (n.d.). *Standards for professional learning.* Retrieved from https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning/

Leuchtmann, A. M. (2019). *New teacher induction: Perspectives from participants of a new teacher mentoring program* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/24638/Leuchtmann_dissertation_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Lewis, M. E. (2018). *Comparing professional learning practices of Missouri's four and five day schools* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://libguides.sbuniv.edu/c.php?g=154859&p=5898709

Lojdová, K. (2020). Role comparison of a student teacher and cooperating teacher in classroom management: On the scene and behind the scenes. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies/Sodobna Pedagogika*, *71*(1), 174–191.

Lowder, G. (2017). *Cultivating efficacious teachers: A case study of the impact of socialization on self-efficacy belief development* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://libguides.sbuniv.edu/c.php?g=154859&p=5203579

Mark, K. (2017). Understanding mentoring practices in a professional development school partnership. *School-University Partnerships*, *10*(2), 13-16.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mathipa, E. R., & Matlabe, S. M. (2016). Mentoring: A key to the professional development of the teacher. *Journal of the International Society for Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 36-47.

McCollum, I. P. (2014). *Beginning teachers' perceptions of a teacher mentoring program* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations

Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2019). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2013). *Teacher standards.* Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/TeacherStandards.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017a). *Mentoring program standards.* Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/files/mentoring-standardspdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2017b). *Recruitment and retention of teachers in Missouri public schools: A report to the Missouri general assembly.* Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Approved2019RecruitmentandRetentionReport.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2018). *Recruitment and retention of teachers in Missouri public schools: A report to the Missouri general assembly*. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality/recruitment-retention

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2019). *Missouri comprehensive data system*. Retrieved from https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Home.aspx

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2020a). *Missouri educator quality.* Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/educator-quality/certification

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2020b). *Beginning teacher assistance program*. Retrieved from https://dese.mo.gov/adult-learningrehab-services/adult-education-literacy/professional-development/pre-certification

Missouri Revisor of Statutes. (2020). Retrieved from https://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneSection.aspx?section=168.021

Monroe, G. E. (2017). *A study on the teacher turnover rate in a rural school district in Southeastern North Carolina* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 10760208)

Montgomery, M. S., & Akerson, A. (2019). Facilitating collaboration through a co-teaching field experience. *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research, 21*(1), 1-21. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1206822

Mosoge, M. J., Challens, B. H., & Xaba, M. I. (2018). Perceived collective teacher efficacy in low performing schools. *South African Journal of Education, 38(*2), 1-9. doi:10.15700/saje.v38n2a1153

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (2007). *Policy brief: The high cost of teacher turnover.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED498001

National Council on Teacher Quality. (2020). *2020 Teacher prep review: Program performance in early reading instruction.* Retrieved from

https://www.nctq.org/publications/2020-Teacher-Prep-Review:-Program-Performance-in-Early-Reading-Instruction

New Teacher Center. (2016a). *High quality mentoring and induction practices.* Retrieved from https://newteachercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/high-quality-mentoring_induction-resource.pdf

New Teacher Center. (2016b). *Support from the start: A 50-state review of policies on new educator induction and mentoring.* Retrieved from https://newteachercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016CompleteReportStatePolicies.pdf

O'Doherty, T., & Harford, J. (2018). Teacher recruitment: Reflections from Ireland on the current crisis in teacher supply. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(5), 654–669. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2018.1532994

O'Quinn, K. M. (2018). *Teacher perceptions of initiative fatigue and its impact on teacher efficacy* (Doctoral dissertation). Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, Missouri.

Pedota, P. J. (2015). How can student success support teacher self-efficacy and retention? *Clearing House, 88*(2), 54-61. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2014.998600

Perry, A. N. (2016). *New teachers' perceptions of the effect of mentoring on behavior management* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 10180871)

Reeves, D. B. (2009). *Leading change in your school: How to conquer myths, build commitment, and get results.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2018). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sasser, A. (2018). *Novice teachers' perception of mentoring and teacher retention* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/1709/

Shakman, K., Cook, Riordan, J., K. D., Fournier, R., Sanchez, M. T., & Brett, J. (2012). *An examination of performance-based teacher evaluation systems in five states.* (REL 2012- No. 129). Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED529800.pdf

Shanks, R., Tonna, M. A., Krøjgaard, F., Paaske, K. A., Robson, D., & Bjerkholt, E. (2020, April). A comparative study of mentoring for new teachers. *Professional Development in Education*, 1-15. doi: 10.1080/19415257.2020.1744684

Shuls, J. V. (2019). There is not a teacher retention crisis in Missouri. Retrieved from Show-Me Institute website: https://showmeinstitute.org/blog/educational-freedom-miscellaneous/there-not-teacher-retention-crisis-missouri

Silver, R. E., Kogut, G., & Huynh, T. C. D. (2019). Learning "new" instructional strategies: Pedagogical innovation, teacher professional development, understanding and concerns. *Journal of Teacher Education, 70*(5), 552-566.

Simons, M., Baeten, M., & Vanhees, C. (2018). Team teaching during field experiences in teacher education: Investigating student teachers' experiences with parallel and sequential teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 71(*1), 24-40.

Soulen, R. R. (2020). The continuum of care: A model for collaboration with new teachers. *Knowledge Quest, 48*(4), 36-42.

Sowell, M. (2017). Effective practices for mentoring beginning middle school teachers: Mentor's perspectives. *Clearing House, 90*(4), 129–134. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2017.1321905

Sparks, J., Tsemenhu, R., Green, R., Truby, W., Brockmeier, L. L., & Noble, K. D. (2017). Investigating new teacher mentoring practices. *National Teacher Education Journal, 10*(1), 59–65.

Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and coming shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Svendsen, B. (2020). Inquiries into teacher professional development - What matters? *Education*, *140*(3), 111–130.

Teach for America. (2020). *Training and support.* Retrieved from https://www.teachforamerica.org/faqs/life-as-a-corps-member#training--support

Tennison, R. L. (2015). *A qualitative study of the factors supporting the implementation and sustainability of a deeply embedded cognitive coaching school culture* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://libguides.sbuniv.edu/c.php?g=154859&p=2892077

U.S. Department of Education. (2019). *National Blue Ribbon Schools Program*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html

Vaughan, N., Clampitt, K., & Park, N. (2016). To teach is to learn twice: The power of a blended peer mentoring approach. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, *4*(2), 64-80. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.20343/teachlearninqu.4.2.7

Wiens, P. D., Chou, A., Vallett, D., & Beck, J. S. (2019). New teacher mentoring and teacher retention: Examining the Peer Assistance and Review Program, *30*(2), 103-110.

Wong, H., & Wong, R. (2018). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher* (5th ed.). Mountain View, CA: Harry K. Wong.

Young, K. (2020). Innovation in initial teacher education through a school-university partnership. *Journal of Curriculum and Teaching*, *9*(1), 15-29. doi:10.5430/jct.v9n1p15

Zembytska, M. (2016). Mentoring as the core element of new teacher induction in the USA: Policies and practices. *Comparative Professional Pedagogy*, *6*(2), 67-73. doi:10.1515/rpp-2016-0021

Zhukova, O. (2018). Novice teachers' concerns, early professional experiences and development: Implications for theory and practice. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education, 9*(1), 100-114. doi: 10.2478/dcse-2018-0008

APPENDICES

Appendix A

New Teacher and Mentor Teacher Informed Consent Letter

Congratulations on your Blue Ribbon Award!

My name is Traci Mitchell and I am the Director of Learning at the Cassville R-IV School District. I am currently a doctoral candidate with Southwest Baptist University and I am conducting research to explore the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding new teacher mentoring programs and professional learning.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study as you can provide valuable insight and knowledge of your school's mentoring program. Your school has been selected to participate in this study by having met the criteria as high-performing and a recognized formal mentoring program. Your school administrator was contacted by phone and/or e-mail to obtain permission to conduct the study and provided your name as being recognized as a highly qualified educator or new teacher in relationship to leadership, experience, and training. If you elect to participate, please note the following:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may choose to withdraw at any time.
- There is no penalty for not participating or choosing not to answer all questions. All responses are anonymous.
- No information identifying you individually or your school will be reported. Responses will be compiled and reported anonymously.

This project has been reviewed by the Southwest Baptist University Research and Review Board for research and research-related activities involving human subjects, (417) 326-1659. The committee believes the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights.

Please respond to this e-mail if you consent to participate. For questions about your participation or to receive a copy of the results of the study, please contact me by phone at 417-846-6620 or by e-mail at tmitchell@cassville.k12.mo.us. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Traci Mitchell
Cassville R-IV School District
Doctoral Candidate, Southwest Baptist University

Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this basic narrative qualitative study exploring teacher experiences regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri. Please note the following:

- Your participation is completely voluntary.
- You may choose to withdraw at any time.
- There is no penalty for not participating or choosing not to answer all questions. All responses are anonymous.
- No information identifying you individually or your school will be reported. Responses will be compiled and reported anonymously.

In order to participate in the interview, informed consent is required. If you agree to allow me to use your interview responses for research purposes, please sign below.

_____

Signature of Participant

_____

Signature of Researcher

Appendix B

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

If you are ready, we will begin. Please don't hesitate to stop me if you need clarification on a question or you need me to provide you with more information during the interview.

A. We will start with general questions about you as a teacher.
    1. How many years have you taught?
    2. What do you enjoy most about teaching and what are your biggest challenges?
B. The first set of questions will be based on the context of professional learning through learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program in your school (RQ1):
    1. Describe the types of collaboration in which you have engaged in your school.
    2. On average, how much time do mentors and new teachers spend together collaborating per week?
    3. New Teacher Question: In times of doubt or when you lacked confidence in a situation, where did you turn? What did you do?

       Mentor Question: How did you help support your new teacher to be successful in the classroom, especially in times of difficulty or frustration?

       Describe the types of collaboration and/or coaching practices you and your mentor/new teacher engaged in to prepare for difficult circumstances, if any.
    4. Describe the type of leadership exhibited in your school in relation to learning communities.

5. What was the most helpful resource your school has provided for you?

C. The second set of questions will be based on the process of professional learning specific to data and learning designs for the mentoring program in your school (RQ2).
    1. Describe the types of data used to make decisions in your school and in your instructional practices.
    2. Explain if being a mentor or a mentee has changed your teaching practices.
    3. Describe how the new teacher mentoring program is structured in your school and if you are held accountable to complete specific mentoring tasks.
    4. Does your new teacher mentoring program require observations and how are they structured?

D. The third set of questions will be based on the content of professional learning specific to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program in your school (RQ3).
    1. Describe a situation where data were connected to professional learning in your school or classroom.
    2. What brings you the most satisfaction and motivates you as a teacher?
    3. Earlier, you shared some challenges you have experienced in education; can you give more details on specific trials or frustrations?
    4. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being very unhappy and 10 being very happy, what is your current job satisfaction rate as a teacher?
    5. Provide the top two reasons why you gave the rating satisfaction level in Question 4.

6. Explain if you plan on staying in the education field. Why or why not?
7. In what ways is your mentee experience connected to your feeling confident and/or positive about your job?
8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

E. The last set of questions will be based on the professional learning experiences provided to the mentor teacher regarding the level of training to support new teachers (RQ3).

Mentor Teacher Questions:

1. How are mentor teachers selected in your school?
2. Describe the structure and type of professional learning you have received as a mentor in your school.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in your school's New Teacher Mentoring Program?

Thank you for your time and valuable reflections.

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Instructions

Interview data will be audio recorded for digital transcription upon completion of the interview. The interview should not exceed 30 minutes in length. Questions should be asked as provided in the interview protocol. Follow-up questions may be asked to clarify participant responses.

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. My name is Traci Mitchell and I am the Director of Learning at the Cassville R-IV School District. I am currently a doctoral candidate with Southwest Baptist University and I am conducting research to explore the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors from three highly effective Missouri schools regarding professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs. Your school has been selected to participate in this study by receiving the National Blue Ribbon Award as a high-performing school within the last 3 years and a recognized formal mentoring program. Today, I am going to ask you a series of questions related to your personal experiences with your school's new teacher mentoring program.

Informed Consent

Participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may back out of the study at any time. A consent form has been made available for you to respond by emailing back your consent if you would like to continue. Your name will not be used in the study and your information will be kept strictly confidential. The entire transcript can be provided for your review. If you see any errors or find any part of your responses that

need to be changed, please let me know. The interview transcriptions will not be published but will be used to identify emergent themes related to the research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative qualitative study was to explore perceptions of professional learning and new teacher mentoring programs to develop and increase teacher quality. Exploring teacher experiences regarding effective mentoring programs highlights the vital importance of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality. I'd like to know your personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences related to your school's new teacher mentoring program. My overall goal is centered on exploring the vital importance of establishing a culture of continuous professional learning to develop and increase teacher quality. Do you have any questions at this time about the study or the informed consent process?

Guiding Research Questions: What are the experiences of first- and second-year teachers and mentors regarding new teacher mentoring programs in the state of Missouri?

- Professional learning context specific to learning communities, leadership, and resources
- Professional learning process specific to data and learning designs
- Professional learning content specific to implementation and outcomes
- Professional learning for mentors to support new teachers

Interview Questions

If you are ready, we will begin. Please don't hesitate to stop me if you need clarification on a question or you need me to provide you with more information during the interview.

A. We will start with general questions about you as a teacher.
    1. How many years have you taught?
    2. What do you enjoy most about teaching and what are your biggest challenges?
B. The first set of questions will be based on the context of professional learning through learning communities, leadership, and resources for the mentoring program in your school (RQ1):
    1. Describe the types of collaboration in which you have engaged in your school.
    2. On average, how much time do mentors and new teachers spend together collaborating per week?
    3. New Teacher Question: In times of doubt or when you lacked confidence in a situation, where did you turn? What did you do?

       Mentor Question: How did you help support your new teacher to be successful in the classroom, especially in times of difficulty or frustration?

       Describe the types of collaboration and/or coaching practices you and your mentor/new teacher engaged in to prepare for difficult circumstances, if any.
    4. Describe the type of leadership exhibited in your school in relation to learning communities.
    5. What was the most helpful resource your school has provided for you?
C. The second set of questions will be based on the process of professional learning specific to data and learning designs for the mentoring program in your school (RQ2).
    1. Describe the types of data used to make decisions in your school and in your instructional practices.

2. Explain if being a mentor or a mentee has changed your teaching practices.
3. Describe how the new teacher mentoring program is structured in your school and if you are held accountable to complete specific mentoring tasks.
4. Does your new teacher mentoring program require observations and how are they structured?

D. The third set of questions will be based on the content of professional learning specific to implementation and outcomes for the mentoring program in your school (RQ3).
   1. Describe a situation where data were connected to professional learning in your school or classroom.
   2. What brings you the most satisfaction and motivates you as a teacher?
   3. Earlier, you shared some challenges you have experienced in education; can you give more details on specific trials or frustrations?
   4. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being very unhappy and 10 being very happy, what is your current job satisfaction rate as a teacher?
   5. Provide the top two reasons why you gave the rating satisfaction level in question number 4.
   6. Explain if you plan on staying in the education field. Why or why not?
   7. In what ways is your mentee experience connected to your feeling confident and/or positive about your job?
   8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

E. The last set of questions will be based on the professional learning experiences provided to the mentor teacher regarding the level of training to support new teachers (RQ3).

   Mentor Teacher Questions:

   1. How are mentor teachers selected in your school?
   2. Describe the structure and type of professional learning you have received as a mentor in your school.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience in your school's New Teacher Mentoring Program?

Thank you for your time and valuable reflections.