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Novice Middle School Teachers' and School Leaders' Perceptions of Motivators and Supports That Enhance Teacher Retention

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MSEd, Walden University, 2008

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Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Motivators and supports can be a crucial part of the growth of a new teacher. However, capturing the most effective motivators and means of supports for novice teachers can be a daunting task as the needs can be ever-changing. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of novice middle school teachers' and school leaders of the supports and motivators needed to enhance teacher retention. Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory was the conceptual framework for the study. Ten novice teachers and 10 school leaders from eight middle schools, serving Grades 6-8, in a school district located in a southern U.S. state participated in the study. The participants took part in online semi-structured interviews about their perceptions of key mentor motivators and supports. Data were coded and compared to derive key themes. The findings showed that novice teachers viewed personal connections, positive mentor teachers, relevant training, and support from school leaders as areas of need. School leaders perceived continuous communication, quality professional development, and a welcoming environment as areas that can have a positive impact on the longevity of novice teachers. Both participant groups expressed a need for communication, connection, and relevant professional development. The results were the basis for a 3-day professional development on providing supports for novice teachers at the middle school level during their second and third years of teaching. Implementation of the project may assist stakeholders in better identifying and responding to novice teachers' needs. Doing so may foster a positive school environment that benefits teachers and students alike and promotes teacher retention.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Teaching in the public education field can be an enduring career for some while for others it can be a short-term position. Although some teacher attrition can be expected, recent increased rates of attrition in the United States are a cause for concern. For example, the Florida Education Association (2020) reported that the state of Florida showed a 10% increase in teaching vacancies of public-school teachers from January 2019 to January 2020. The Florida Education Association also reported that the percentage of teachers who left the field in the first 5 years of teaching had risen to as high as 40%.

The Local Problem

During a 4-month period in the 2019-2020 school year, in one of the top five academically rated school districts in the state of Florida, 63 instructional positions were vacated due to retirement or resignation (Kwasnik, 2020). This number was a marked increase in comparison to the same period during the 2018-2019 school year in which the number was 28. Unfortunately, the numbers have been disconcerting for several years; hence, this is not a new problem. In 2017, a human resources administrator stated that, in addition to the loss of teachers, only a few qualified teachers had been hired for replacement, which has led to schools not being appropriately staffed.

Statistics on the loss of teachers can be concerning to education stakeholders who are looking to create solutions that might help retain talented teachers in the field of education. As Florida schools continue to raise standards for student achievement, it

could become increasingly hard to maintain consistency when teachers continue to leave the field. I spoke with a 2020 middle school level teacher of the year for a local school district in Florida about what factors kept her in her career, specifically what she thought was the determining factor in her surpassing the 5-year mark of teaching. Her response was

> There were some tough early years where I was unsure if I was meant to be a teacher. I just felt like I could not connect with students and the pressure of high stakes testing just seemed like a tremendous task for me. Thankfully, I had a supportive family and a mentor teacher who understood my frustrations and would not let me give up when I wanted to.

> Effective mentoring, therefore, is one of the possible solutions to the problem of

teacher attrition being examined. Hong et al. (2013) reported that mentoring teachers was so important that in 27 states, a mentoring and/or induction program was mandatory for new teachers.

The leaders of this school district have tried to address the teacher attrition rate. They have tried to minimize teacher stress by providing more structured planning for high-stakes testing. Additionally, district leaders have attempted to address the teacher deficit by improving teacher pay. To further help curb the issue of teacher attrition, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, signed House Bill 641 in 2020, which provided funds and mandated that all school districts raise the minimum teacher pay to $47,500 yearly (Florida House of Representatives, 2020).

Regardless of the efforts made by Governor DeSantis, attrition has continued to be a consistent issue. Andrew Spar, president of the Florida Education Association, reported to a news outlet in Orlando that in 2019 Florida had roughly 5,000 teaching positions to fill and that for the 2021 school year that number would likely double to 10,000 positions (Badcock, 2021). As of July 2022, Andrew Spar's prediction was closer to being right than wrong; Florida's 2022-2023 teaching vacancies were at approximately 9,000 (Hollenbeck, 2022). Another strong indicator that work must be done to improve teacher retention comes from Anita Carson, who is a union member with Polk County, which is one of the largest school districts in Florida. On July 30, 2021, with 1 week remaining before schools opened, she reported to a news outlet in Hillsborough County that there were still 150 classrooms that had no teachers and that district leaders had done all that they could to recruit teachers but had not done enough to retain them (Hall, 2021).

These local issues raise questions about current practices that are leading to novice teachers leaving the field. They suggest the positives of being a new teacher have been outnumbered by the negatives and that novice teachers had started to decide that teaching was no longer a desirable career option. A 22-year school administrator in Florida told me that the focus on novice teacher support, especially in Years 1 through 3, has stagnated and that there is just so much to be done and not enough time to get it all done. Another school administrator who is currently in her third year at the middle school level stated that she was unaware if there were any supports in place to motivate or support novice teachers. The current perceptions of the two school leaders further illuminates that additional support is needed for novice teachers.

Scholarly evidence also supports further discussion about motivation and support for novice teachers. Sikma (2019) conducted a qualitative case study on novice teacher support and revealed five areas that novice teachers desired and lacked: emotional, contextual, academic, social, and relational. These areas are vague but do give a reference point to be further evaluated in this study. Communication is a consistent factor in all five areas to achieve teacher satisfaction. In this study, I explored the perceptions of both school leaders and novice teachers of motivators and supports for teacher success and longevity.

Broader Context

The importance of quality teachers to the nurturing and development of learners is well known in the United States. According to Tucker and Strong (2005), effective teachers have an enriching effect on the daily lives of children and have a direct impact on improving student learning. However, what may not be known is that teachers are leaving the field at a high rate. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2014) reported that approximately 500,000 teachers leave the field each year. The report further stated that 40 to 50% of those leaving the field were new teachers with the highest numbers being in schools with low socioeconomic status. In 2015, the National Center for Education Statistics found that 17% of teachers in the United States leave the profession after 5 years. Additionally, Strauss (2017) reported that the annual attrition rate in the United States was approximately 8% between 2009 and 2014, which represented an increase from roughly 5% in the 1990s. More recently, Gretchen Brown (2020) reported that 44% of teachers were leaving the field in the first 5 years. A teacher interviewed for Brown's

article stated that districts are not doing enough to support new teachers which contributes to the early departures. Berry and Shields (2017) reported that teachers have left the field of teaching due to issues such as lacking autonomy, feeling devalued, and experiencing extreme stress from high-stakes testing.

Becoming a teacher can be viewed as the accomplishment of a long-term goal after years of diligence and learning. Although some may assume that a degreed and certified teacher can instantly provide top-level instruction, this is not always the case. As Sowell (2017) stated, "Unlike most beginning professionals, however, society expects teachers to perform immediately, taking control of a classroom and teaching at the same level of experienced teachers" (p. 7). However, the process of molding effective teachers is not instantaneous and, as Nasser-Abu Alhija and Fresko (2016) stated, being an effective teacher is a continuous and life-long process. Based on a 3-year project focused on fostering systems for new teacher induction, Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser (2012) reported that many schools in the United States are ill-prepared to provide adequate support for new teachers. Birkeland and Feiman-Nemser further stated that new teachers often do not receive proper training and are treated as experts rather than novices from the first day in the classroom, which creates and widens a teacher learning gap. This finding supports the urgency of identifying effective motivators and supports for novice teachers.

Possible Reasons for Teachers Leaving the Field

New teachers have a higher probability of leaving the field in their early years; therefore, a review of the reasons is necessary. According to Dassa and Derose (2017),

over the past 5 years 30%-50% of kindergarten to Grade 12 public school teachers in the

United States had left the field within their first 5 years of teaching. Eisenschmidt et al.

(2014) suggested that teachers have become critical of leadership and have developed a

negative view towards school culture. Additionally, Eldar et al. (2003) concluded that, as

pressures from being a new teacher increased, new teachers tended to struggle both in

their professional and emotional arenas. This can be indicated by teacher actions such as

inconsistent classroom management or visibly unstable emotions and feelings of self-

doubt. Social isolation from feeling a lack of belonging and lack of colleague support

were also cited as factors for new teacher stress.

Rationale

As noted, the need to retain teachers in the field is of immediate importance, and

these are issues that persist at both the local and national levels. Mulvahill (2017)

reported that one reason that new teachers left the field is because they felt a lack of

support. Dell'Angelo and Richardson (2019) conducted a survey of recent graduates of a

5-year teacher education program and found that, for the 15% who had already decided to

leave the teaching field, that stress and pressure were key factors. These findings raise the

question of what was missing from a support perspective that could have minimized or

eliminated these issues. Another question is whether it was a support issue, motivation

issue, or a combination of both, that fueled teacher flight. Answers to these questions as

well as a path for improvement are necessary. A study conducted by the California

County Superintendents Educational Association and Hanover Research in 2016 found

that there was a strong correlation between more novice teacher support and increased

teacher retention. This information is valuable and provided a foundation for this qualitative research.

Today, even more new U.S. teachers are going into the field without the experience of a teacher preparation program. The lack of such preparation may be detrimental to their longevity as teachers. The National Center for Education Statistics reported that during the 2015-2016 school year the percentage of teachers certified through an alternative certification program rather than a traditional academic program with student teaching was 18% which was an increase of 3.4% from 4 years earlier. Consider that lack of support and/or motivators may already by leading to novice teachers leaving the field. With research showing that both novice teachers are leaving the field and more teachers are taking the alternative certification route rather than the traditional route, then a correlation could be made that the levels of support and motivators for novice teachers should also increase to match the teacher need.

There is a growing concern amongst those who have researched teacher shortages that the number of teachers leaving the field will only increase in future years. See and Gorard (2020) conducted a data and document analysis of government publications and found that in the United States teacher shortages will continue; they listed higher teacher turnover as a main contributing factor. Information such as this provides a concerning outlook on teaching and strongly validates the need for improved focus on keeping teachers in the field. The purpose of this study was to identify novice teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of motivators and supports needed to retain novice teachers.

Definition of Terms

Hygiene factor: Factors with a job that may not make an employee feel satisfied, but that can lead to dissatisfaction if it is not provided, for example fair pay, respect from other workers, or pleasant working conditions (Islam & Ali, 2013, p. 91).

Motivator factor: Factors with a job that cause motivation leading to good job performance, such as recognition or advancement (Le, 2011, p. 2).

New teacher: A new entrant, typically fresh out of professional training (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000, p. 3).

Novice teacher: A teacher with less than five years teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011, p. 4).

School leader: Person who is responsible for the welfare and operations of the school (IGI Global, 2021, Dictionary section).

Support: The offering of a framework to help teachers be their best (Schwanke, 2018).

Significance of the Study

Some educational experts, such as Harry and Rosemary Wong (2005), contend that the first days of each school year are some of the most impactful because these initial days set the stage for a school year full of learning and positive memories. Wong and Wong stressed that effective teachers spent the first days of school setting class expectations, procedures, and routines. However, in recent years across the United States crucial first days have been increasingly filled by substitute teachers due to a shortage of qualified teachers. Garcia and Weiss (2019) reported that not only is there a large

shortage of credentialed teachers in the United States, but that the outlook was bleak, and that the shortage would not diminish soon.

I undertook this basic qualitative study on motivators for novice teachers and support from the perspective of school leaders at the middle school level to address factors underpinning the teacher shortage. In their report for the Economic Policy Institute, Garcia and Weiss (2019) revealed that the inability to retain teachers threatens student learning, reduces teacher effectiveness, and consumes resources that could be utilized in other areas; these outcomes all lead to an inability to provide equitable education to all. The issue of teacher retention has been both a national and local concern for numerous years. Potemski et al. (2014) stated that finding effective ways to support teachers, especially new teachers, is critical. In conducting this study, I sought to identify positive factors that enhance teacher retention.

This study provides evidence of what middle school novice teachers consider motivators to stay in the teaching field while also providing guidance from school leaders about what supports they viewed as essential for teacher retention. The findings from this study may provide recommendations to leaders of other public middle schools on how to reduce novice teacher attrition. Susan Young (2018), who worked for the Center for Research in Education Policy for the University of Memphis, reported that teachers left the field due to lack of support from both administration and school community and that the effects on teachers have been detrimental to schools.

Research Questions

I sought to answer two research questions (RQs).

RQ #1: What are novice middle school teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of motivators that help retain middle school novice teachers?

RQ #2: What are novice middle school teachers' and school leaders' perceptions about the supports needed to remain in the field of teaching?

Review of the Literature

I focused on the supports and motivators that could lead to better teacher retention in public middle schools. The initiation of a new teacher could have an impact on their outlook on teaching. Consider, Abel et al. (2018) who stated that being a new teacher is complex because this is a time during which beliefs of teaching and the reality of teaching tend to clash. With this focus in mind, I used multiple resources to conduct the literature review. These included online journals, physical publications, and other sources. I used the search engines Google Scholar, Google Search, Education Source, Eric, and Sage. Keywords such as *teacher retention, motivators, novice teachers, supports, school leaders, mentoring,* and *school administration* were used. The literature review represents the finding of the literature search.

Critical topics in education are areas in education that are considered essential and vital for the improvement of education. One such topic in education is the need to retain novice teachers in the field. Bradley-Levine et al. (2016) concluded from a study of novice teachers that the teachers valued establishing relationships with fellow novice teachers and mentors as an essential component. Shepherd and Devers (2017) stated that positive educational communication with fellow teachers and administrators can occur when elements of assistance and assessment are in place. Therefore, in this literature

review I sought to identify the need, effects, and challenges, as well as the motivators and supports for novice teachers to help stay in the field.

Connecting the Framework

Finding the right mix for motivators and supports for novice teachers is instrumental in contributing to their long-term retention in teaching. Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation, which was born from Herzberg's et al.'s (1959) motivation to work theory, served as the study's conceptual framework. I chose Herzberg's motivator hygiene theory because it highlights the importance of motivation and hygiene factors for job satisfaction. The motivators are those directly linked with the job and the hygiene factors are those that are surrounding factors of the job. This distinction fit this qualitative study on novice teachers views on supports and school leaders' perceptions of motivators.

Herzberg is widely known for his work in the field of business management and specifically with job enrichment. For many years, employers have used Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory to improve employee relations. For instance, in 2021 the online education platform, MasterClass presented an article on how Herzberg's theory is used to enhance worker productivity. Another popular employee/employer job resource in the United States called Indeed.com presented an editorial on February 22, 2021, detailing how to implement Herzberg's theory in the workplace (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021). These are examples of how companies are still using Herzberg's theory to foster satisfaction and longevity.

Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory provided a strong foundation for exploring teachers' needs. I used the theory to develop research questions. This allowed for an unpacking of current school leaders' and novice teachers' perceptions to see where the disconnect may be.

Herzberg's motivators could be directed at the employee. In this study, though, I also focused on school leaders and what they perceived as necessary motivators for novice teachers. The findings may help school leaders to assess whether factors such as recognition, responsibility, growth, and advancement are effectively in place for novice teachers as they relate to job satisfaction.

I used Herzberg's hygiene factors, to explore the perceptions of the novice teacher. I asked questions about school policy, support by leadership, relationships, salary, and security to see if the perceptions that novice teachers had of teaching prior to entering the field concurred with the reality of teaching. Again, this was directly aligned with the focus of hygiene factors because the job satisfaction of the novice teacher was explored.

In this basic qualitative study, I focused on the perceptions of both school leaders and novice teachers currently working at the middle school in Grades 6th - 8th. Although the experience of teaching varies among individuals is fluid there should be some consistency in what works to provide job satisfaction. Miles and Lyons (2018) stated that teachers' confidence and esteem can be impacted on the consistency that is provided at their workplace. Herzberg's motivator/hygiene theory offered a framework to clarify what is working and what needs to be improved upon so that teachers can remain in the

field. As noted, the phenomenon of teachers leaving the field is a long-running issue that merits investigation.

I explored perceptions of both school leaders and novice teachers. These perceptions were identified, reviewed, and summarized to provide a determination on the potential for curbing the attrition rate for novice teachers. Thus, Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory served as the framework of this study.

Connection of the Conceptual Framework to the Study

Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory was appropriate for garnering insight as to the motivators and supports for novice teachers as perceived by both themselves and school leaders. Herzberg focused on job satisfaction. This focus aligned with my desire to explore the motivation and supports that lead to satisfaction for novice teachers. I surmised that greater job satisfaction was associated with a greater chance for teaching longevity. Herzberg provided a framework that was applicable to this qualitative study.

Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory formed a strong basis for this qualitative study because the correlation to what motivates or should motivate and lead to novice teacher satisfaction was central to the study's purpose. This correlation led to the development of the research questions, which concerned to be novice teachers' perceptions of supports received and the school leader's perceptions of motivators to enhance teacher worth. I also conducted the literature review with these issues in mind.

Needs of Middle School Novice Teachers

In this section, I describe current research on the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers related to their early career. Teachers new to the field of education or

with limited teaching experience need experienced teachers to ease the stress and provide a source of support. Stolz (2020) stated that due to a teacher shortage, schools have attempted to fast-track new teachers, which has led to lack of knowledge and lack of preparedness for the teaching field. Additionally, Bullough (2005) expressed that new teacher vulnerability is a key factor for increased stress levels. This heightened stress is related to new teachers being overly concerned about others' perceptions that they lacked the knowledge or skills to be an effective teacher.

Further, Kozikoglu (2018) conducted a study on novice teachers views after completing their first year of teaching. The study reported that 74% of the teachers described their first year as one of lacking experience, encountering difficult processes, and finding disappointment. Mecham et al. (2021) completed a study on novice teachers and documented that even when equipped with great teacher education, felt overwhelmed with trying to adapt to all the new challenges of a being a teacher. These three studies highlight that careful examination of novice perceptions is necessary.

New teachers may come to the field with a vision of what teaching should entail but can be surprised and/or even disheartened when the reality of what teaching requires daily is revealed. Ado (2013) stated that teachers new to the field have broad and high expectations about what teaching looks like and that these views intersect with what is occurring in their schools. Clarke and Sheridan (2017) described the teaching field as being complex due to being more dilemma-ridden as opposed to solution based. An example of this is classroom management where new teachers do not always realize the difficulty of creating a classroom conducive for optimal learning amid potential

discipline issues that can occur and alter the intended learning path. In another study, Solomonson et al. (2018) researched novice teachers in Illinois who had decided to leave the field. The study revealed that the novice teachers who left had common stressors such as administration, support for their program, compensation, and balance of life and work. Addressing these barriers is necessary to ensure that novice teachers have the support they need to remain in the teaching profession.

New teachers, regardless of educational background, should have some type of balance in place with respect to motivation and supports because teaching is a cumulative and ever changing as new and different instructional methods come and go. A study conducted by Shirrell (2021) on social interactions by novice teachers in their first 5 years revealed that in Year 1 most teachers reported little to no interaction with their peers. This is the negative trend that educators should be trying to eliminate because the motivation to teach tends to be low if the feeling of isolation is there from the beginning.

Preparation of Novice Teachers

Another factor that plays a part in the novice years of teaching is the college or educational path that is taken by a respective teacher to gain entry into the field. Witherspoon et al. (2020) conducted a mixed methods study on teacher learning and concluded that more emphasis needed to be put on how novice teachers learn rather than the programs that are in place to teach teachers. This conclusion shows the need to identify learning motivators for novice teachers. In recent years, more teachers have come to the teaching field without educational degrees, which has increased the need for building a knowledge base. Ingersoll et al. (2012) reported that 40% of new teachers had

entered the teaching field through nontraditional or alternative routes. The statistic of 40% is a significant percentage of teachers who are not fully prepared to teach upon attaining employment, and even reducing this number in half would leave a sizeable gap to close. The lack of preparation has raised the concern of what school leaders could do to bridge this gap. The importance of high-stakes standardized testing has made it even more urgent to identify novice teacher motivators.

McKay (2016) asserted that even though advances have been made in policies and courses to help new teachers, they are still overwhelmed with all the requirements that are necessary to be an effective teacher. Teaching is much more than what happens in class. It encompasses preparation, families, community, relationship development, laws, and high-stakes testing, among other factors. Identifying strategies for management these diverse elements is necessary to keep novice teachers positive and engaged in this career path.

Mentoring to Help With Novice Teacher Retention

New middle school teacher mentoring programs can have a substantial impact on teachers and set the stage for their teaching career and style. Mentoring practices have varied over the years as has the effectiveness of the programs. Berry and Shields (2017) examined the issue of teaching shortages and retention in the states of California and North Carolina and found that one of the top five reasons for resigning from teaching was lack of a strong mentoring program. Mentoring that has been used in schools includes observations, reflections, and mentor modeling, yet an apparent gap with the effectiveness of programs remains. O'Hara et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study on

mentoring and suggested that for mentoring to work that an examination of the right balance to incorporate best practices should occur. Gonsalves et al. (2021) suggested that teaching is complex that can be learned and developed. Therefore, the preparation and implementation of new teacher mentor programs is essential because their effects on novice teacher perceptions of supports can be substantial.

Furthermore, LoCascio et al. (2016) conducted a mixed-methods study and found that inconsistently implemented programs had more of a negative impact than not having an induction program at all. Nearly 50% of the participants from their study reported that their respective inductions programs had no influence in their decision to continue teaching. In another study, Kolman et al. (2017) concluded that mentor teachers were not adequately prepared for how to properly mentor nor support novice teachers. To improve teacher retention, it is necessary to address these issues.

Conversely, effective middle school mentoring programs have also been shown to increase the possibility of teacher retention. In a study on novice teacher inductions programs, Huling et al. (2012), noted that the majority of teachers involved in a mentoring program found the program to have a positive impact. In the study, 94% of novice teachers involved in the mentor program reported the mentor was very helpful. The results of the study also revealed that investments made into a new teacher program could increase teacher retention. For example, the 5-year retention rate of teachers in the mentor program cohort in 2004-2005 was 80.01% versus the state average of 67.58%. Huling et al.'s findings support that a mentor program could positively enhance the perceptions of teachers and lead to higher retention rates.

Emphasis on Support

One of the most important factors for a novice teacher is support. That support can be either emotional or physical support or both. Support is the assistance that is provided by mentor teachers and administrators as well as materials and professional development (PD). Ewing (2021) conducted an idiographic study on mentoring of novice teachers and revealed that novice teachers needed a smooth transition into the teaching field and that the support that is needed is often missing or insufficient.

Another survey conducted by Fisher and Royster (2016) revealed that teachers who left the field listed lack of administrative support, stress, excess tasks, and high-stakes testing as top reasons. Fisher and Royster's findings are important because they highlight not only the need for administrative support, but also the motivators that are essential for novice teacher enhancement. In a separate study on teacher retention conducted by Cancio et al. (2013) the researchers found that teachers who taught students with emotional behavioral disorders left the field within the first 3 years and listed lack of support as the primary reason.

Communication is key in personal relationships, and this is also true when it comes to novice teachers. Davis and Fantozzi (2016) concluded from their study on mentoring relationships that while novice teachers knew the type of support they wanted; they did not know how to communicate those needs to others. This led to the investigation of communication, as well as the importance of support. Areas that were researched in this study included perceptions of novice teachers and school leaders with

respect to supports and motivators and how their perceptions can be communicated to others.

As the focal point is on motivators and supports for novice teachers, it was essential that the role of school leaders be reviewed. Bland et al. (2014) provided documentation based on the role of administration as it pertained to novice teachers. Their findings showed that school leaders should take the lead with training teachers and that it should be based on more than the development of the novice teacher as factors such as satisfaction, engagement, and self-worth are just as essential. A separate study by Holliday (2021) concluded that school leaders are clearly responsible for the implementation of strategies that help teachers to improve. These studies provide a viewpoint that showed the importance in the role of administration in the planning and preparation for the success and retention for novice teachers.

As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, administrative support and relationships with novice teachers are areas that should be researched. Nesheim et al. (2014) completed a case study on the struggle of novice teachers to meet expectations as well as the lack of administrative support. Their study identified that the school administration must take an active part in mentor program implementation. Along the same lines, Molitor et al. (2014) stated that school leaders in a district were mandated to combine perspectives with novice teachers to find out what has been successful in the early years of teaching. Brown et al. (2020) noted that practices such as PD without a relevant purpose and a mentor program without clear expectations are ineffective for

novice teacher support. The mandate put on school leaders is to work more closely with novice teachers shows the critical need to train and retain teachers.

Administration and Mentoring

The role of administration in the progressive development of novice teachers is important. Rose and Sughrue (2021) conducted a study on novice teachers with alternative certification and noted that effective school leaders must be able to relate with novice teachers' unique set of needs and plan how to support them. One perspective to consider is provided by Kutsyuruba et al. (2014) who looked at administration as the key indicator for new teacher success as administration sets forth and/or approves defined organizational procedures. Furthermore, the call for defined roles and organization showed that new teachers needed clarity and specificity in their teaching environment. This can be beneficial for helping to ease the initial tension for new teachers by providing a clearer understanding of where to go for respective types of supports.

A case study on challenges and stressors for new teachers conducted by Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) revealed that some participants expressed disappointment and lack of appreciation when asking for assistance from their administration. Another study conducted by White and Mason (2006) showed that only 22% of mentee teachers in the study felt that their administration was supportive of them. D'Amato, Andrews and Quinn (2005) conducted a survey with new teachers and showed that 10% of the teachers stated that their assigned mentor teacher never observed them. The survey presented a concern of how easily the development of new teachers can be negatively impacted. School administrations bear the responsibility for staff development and that includes

mentor teachers who may not holding their end of the deal to help new teachers to positively progress.

Trust, Motivation, and Support

There can be challenges when trying to discern factors contributed to supports and motivators for novice teachers that could help to influence a career choice. Reitman and Karge (2019) conducted a study on novice teachers and noted that support from school leaders, and trust with school leaders and mentor teachers is of utmost importance. However, one thing that can help to lessen the impact of challenges is trust. Boies and Fiset (2019) stated in Educational Administration Quarterly that the success of a school leader is reliant on fostering relationships and creating a positive school climate that builds and sustains trust.

Trust is an area that can help to prolong the teaching life of a novice teacher. One way to incorporate trust is to make sure that novice teachers have a voice. Olson et al. (2021) conducted research on new teacher recruitment and found that new teachers want to feel that their input is meaningful to school leaders. Trust can be seen in areas such as colleagues, administration, and even with the respective novice teach in themselves. Bukko et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative case study on trust in schools. The study concluded that when teachers feel safe and have trust in the leadership that self-efficacy tends to increase as does the chances of remaining in the field.

As is evident from the review of literature, the motivators and supports for novice teachers are an essential component for their long-term retention. Consider, Lin et al. (2021) who studied the novice-expert relationship and concluded that interaction of the

relationship may be more important than an expert's knowledge. Further, Dag and Sari (2017) showed that this need was evident after completing a study on novice teacher needs. It was concluded that novice teachers who completed education degrees still showed shortcoming of being an effective teacher. Whether it be instructional, management, emotional, or personal, the need for support is firmly needed. Tran and Dou (2019) completed a survey on school leadership and determined to be effective with assisting novice teachers, school leaders must be able to differentiate the specific needs of each teacher. While it can be hard to delineate between the tremendous amount of information that can be provided, the goal of this study is to categorize and find patterns with the objective of creating clear recommendations for improving perceptions of supports by novice teachers while also providing perceptions from school leaders about motivators.

Implications

The review of literature that was done for this study provided key information as to future implications. A repetitive tone is that there is a disconnect between motivators and supports needed for novice teachers. The information provided in the literature review showed that novice teachers benefit from motivators, but that motivators are sometimes missing which leads to a deficit. As Bullough noted in the literature review, a lack of motivators and supports can also lead to additional stress for novice teachers. Additionally, the literature review revealed that these issues have contributed to novice teachers questioning their career choice and potentially leaving the field of teaching. This study sought out how a better correlation with motivators and supports can lessen or

eliminate stressors for both novice teachers and school leaders who are working to try and provide a stable and positive workplace environment.

Results from this study were used to further the discussions based on important factors for increasing the chances for novice teachers to remain in the field. Responses from participants were categorized and summarized, then presented to local school district personnel to look at any potential amendments. A further implication was an opportunity to create a blueprint for programs directly focused on novice teacher retention. With this blueprint school districts were able to institute and implement policies aimed at addressing identified areas of supports and motivators that have been lacking. More effective and more relevant novice teacher training was implemented. Novice teachers will be included in periodic wellness checks so that their voice can be heard by school leaders. School leaders were able to review and revamp their roles as it pertained to increasing the supports that are given to novice teachers. With these two entities effectively working together, this can lead to lessening the novice teachers that are leaving the teaching field.

Summary

The concern of retaining novice teachers has brought on the review of what has caused this downward trend. Brittian (2018) wrote an article on teacher retention and stated when teachers leave the field that they not only take themselves, but they also take their knowledge, instructional capacity, and fluency with practices which leads to a huge loss in the educational community. That begged the thought of what needs could be missing for novice teachers and what was needed for those who remain in the field.

Along those same lines, insight needed to be provided as to what school leaders felt were applicable motivators that they could provide for novice teacher retention. School leaders have been designated with the responsibility of supporting teachers, so a look into the specific needs of novice teachers was necessary. There needs to be a consistent connection between novice teacher needs for supports and school leaders' motivators provided to enhance teaching for novice teachers.

The study addressed the problem of novice teachers leaving the teaching field and derived what motivations and supports were most beneficial for teachers. Some educational arenas pointed to the importance of providing supports and effective motivators for novice teachers. If this is the case, then focus should be placed on making sure that the supports and motivators are hitting the target for teacher retention; therefore, this study provides evidence from both school leaders and novice teachers as to what is needed to improve teacher longevity. In Section 2, I discuss the methodology, design, and approach for the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

In this study, I examined the perceptions of school leaders regarding the motivators that are needed for novice teachers. Additionally, I explored perceptions of novice teachers pertaining to supports that they receive. This study involved eight middle schools within a school district located in a southern U.S. state. I sought to reveal factors that are key to novice teachers' satisfaction that might have a positive impact on teacher retention. Both school leaders and novice teachers were participants of this basic qualitative study. The information gathered shows the perceptions associated with effective motivators and supports for novice teachers and, hopefully, may clarify strategies that can contribute to teacher retention. The method for information collection was individual, semi structured participant interviews.

Research Design and Approach

The format of this study was a basic qualitative study. I chose a basic qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one it allowed for the examination of multiple perspectives. More specifically, quantitative studies emphasize a numerical and statistical approach to data while qualitative studies allow for a broader method of information collection. McLeod (2019) explained this difference in studies by defining quantitative as the collection and analyzation of numerical data, while qualitative as the collection and analyzation of text, video, photographs, observations, or recordings. This broadness allows the qualitative researcher to break down, code, and present a wider variety of information. Tuncsiper and Mutlu (2020) stated that there is a need for qualitative research in education to understand the true nature and dynamics of learning

environments. Additionally, qualitative research practice should be rooted in principle. Seale (2007) stated that the base principle of what is being researched should shape the validity of the research method chosen. I chose a basic qualitative study because I wanted to explore from the perspectives of novice teachers and their school leaders and gain a deeper understanding of their views than could be provided by numerical data.

The method for information gathering was individual semi structured interviews. By conducting interviews, I was able to probe topics for a better understanding of the study phenomenon. In a review of qualitative information collection methods, Ricci et al. (2019) reported that out of 266 studies, 65% used semi structured interviews as the primary method. Dunn and Moore (2020) spoke to the necessity of establishing and preserving trust in qualitative research. This point aligned with the use of semi structured interviews in this study; these allowed for the authenticity of teachers' responses to be tracked. Due to the broadness of the research, using a quantitative approach would not have been as beneficial because the information to be gathered was not cohesive with tracking and reporting numerical data.

I also considered using a mixed-methods approach, but when reviewing the types of information that I sought, I determined that this approach would not yield appropriate data in line with the study purpose and audience. This was because the information researched was varied and, at times, would be difficult to chart or put into statistical form. According to Gorard (2007) use of a mixed-methods approach requires each distinct method to be successful. I concluded that combining qualitative and quantitative information would be extremely difficult.

Regarding the research design, I considered several other qualitative approaches, such as a case study, ethnography, and grounded theory, but concluded that they did not fit the goal of the study. Starman (2013) stated that a case study is comprehensive research on an individual case. Therefore, a case study would have been a good fit had it been one location, but with the multiple locations and bigger numbers a case study was not the best choice. Ethnography and phenomenology were not a strong consideration as their respective premises did not mesh with the focus of this study. Reeves et al. (2013) reported that ethnography studies social interactions and behaviors that happen within a specific group and setting. Thus, ethnography did not work because it focuses on the studies of cultures and typically in certain settings and this study will take place at multiple locations and does not directly focus on a certain group and setting. Phenomenology focuses on the experiences from a certain event, which was not applicable for this study. Yilmaz and Melekoglu (2022) reinforced this by stating that phenomenology focuses only on small groups and their experiences. The last qualitative study design that was considered was a grounded theory approach. Ju et al. (2020) stated that grounded theory was based on shared beliefs prior the study. Thus, grounded theory involves conceptualizing a theory and that would be counterproductive with this study.

In summary, I conducted research using a basic qualitative study to understand how motivators and supports at the middle school level impacted novice teachers and their retention. A basic qualitative study was chosen as it allowed for in-depth evaluation from the participants and created opportunities to expand on each question as needed. A basic qualitative study allowed for levels of information gathered to be studied, reviewed,

and then presented. This basic qualitative study allowed for clear insight as to the perceptions of school leaders for novice teachers' motivators and novice teachers' perceptions of supports needed to remain in the teaching field. Merriam (2009) documented that basic qualitative research revealed constructs of both reality while intersecting social factors. Individual semi-structured interviews formed the basis for information collection for the basic qualitative study.

Participants

Participants from eight schools were included in the study. There were 10 school leaders and 10 novice teachers from secondary middle schools serving Grades 6-8 in one larger district in a southern U. S. state. School leaders were only school based administrators and novice teachers were those with less than 5 years teaching experience. Access to all potential participants for the study was granted by the district in which the participants are employees. Both school leaders and novice teachers were first informed of the study, via recruitment email and a consent form. These two items covered the basis of the study while explaining that participation was both optional and confidential. After being informed of what the study entailed, each person had the opportunity to take part as potential participant. Potential participants then received a recruitment email which outlined the premise of the study. Upon receiving the email, potential participants needed to confirm their interest by submitting an email indicating that they would be interested in being in the selection pool. Names were then randomly drawn until the number of desired participants was reached.

A total of 20 participants took part in the study. Novice teachers for the study ranged from the first year of teaching through their fifth year of teaching, with seven of the participants being within the first 3 years. Additionally, novice teachers in the study were comprised of seven females and three males with ages ranging from 21 to 50 years old. School leaders for the study were comprised of eight principals and two assistant principals. All of school leaders had at least 5 years as teachers and 3 years of school leadership. Two of the principals have less than 3 years left before retirement while one principal moved into their role the start of the school year. Providing 20 participants spread over eight middle schools created a saturation of information from both the perspectives of school leaders and novice teachers. This allowed for enough generalizations to be made based on the coding method that was used for collection purposes. The researcher and participants relationship were developed due to the commonalities that exist due to all parties currently being in middle school level education. These commonalities helped to create a higher level of conversation during interviews and made the information relevant and meaningful.

The confidentiality, rights, and protections were completely intact. All participants were presented with the informed consent which outlined the study, the understanding of their rights, privacy, and that their participation was voluntary. Confidentiality was upheld as no one outside of the researcher knew of other's specific answers nor were any specific descriptions of participants that could lead to revealing identities utilized.

Data Collection

The individual interviews occurred during the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year. Novice teachers were interviewed first as this allowed for a clear perspective from teachers who are still relatively fresh to the field. They were able to express their perceptions for both supports and motivators, as well as future thoughts on the teaching field. School leaders were then interviewed as they garner the authority of making sure that novice teacher needs are being met and can provide perceptions of the motivators needed by novice teachers.

Participants were interviewed only via Zoom meeting. Due to coronavirus health concerns interviewing in person was not the safest option as the safety of the participants and researcher should not be compromised. Novice teachers were interviewed during their teacher planning time or after school hours only if the teacher preferred to do so while school leaders were interviewed during a scheduled interview time. Understanding that being a novice teacher can be stressful, allowing the choice of when to interview helped to alleviate added stress of being forced to interview at a less than desirable time. Having a predetermined time to interview school leaders helped to limit interruptions that otherwise might have occurred.

All participant identities remained confidential as did all responses to prevent any potential biases. Zoom meetings were recorded, but the name of the participant was not used in any description of the meeting. Each participant was made aware of these protections and confidentiality prior to the beginning of each interview. This was done by having an informed consent form to be reviewed and signed. Additionally, this study was

conducted with eight secondary middle schools where I have no direct link nor am I an administrator, supervisor, or employee.

The data collection instrument used was research created semi-structured interview questions. This process of semi-structured questions allowed for a streamlined approach to questioning while allowing for the teaching professionals to expand responses for depth and clarification as needed. The interview protocol was designed based on perceived fundamental needs for novice teachers as found in the literature review and personal communications with current educational professionals. I used an interview protocol that allowed for probing information and clarification, as necessary. Participants were interviewed about needs, concerns, comfortability, and practices with respect to how they impact teacher longevity. Information gathered from interviews was collected and analyzed through coding to formulate themes and relationships. Information was collected by using both a chart to track similar responses and a separate document for more in depth and specific notes on extended responses so that the information was accurately reported and not misconstrued. In addition, once informant was collected and analyzed, it was verified by conducting member checks with the participant to secure validity.

The questions that were used for the interviews were developed based on the framework by Herzberg, which examined the needs and supports for overall job satisfaction. The interview questions helped to provide an understanding of what could be done to retain novice teachers. Data that was collected will be preserved both by recorded video and researcher note logs. The role of the researcher through this process was to

schedule and conduct the interviews. The researcher also kept track of the data via recording and note logs. Additionally, the researcher analyzed the information through coding and provided the results and summary of findings.

Data Analysis

Through the coding process, information and common threads from participants were categorized for determining connections with school leaders and novice teachers. Inductive coding was the coding method based on interview responses. Groupings for categorical responses include novice teachers, school leaders, and a combination of both for comparative responses. Information collected from both school leaders and novice teachers were analyzed to address essential motivators and supports at the middle school level. Information was summarized and presented to respective participants through PowerPoint presentation. Coding also provided an effective way to capture and streamline information that may seem as broad. All interviews were completed in full, however two interviews were completed in multiple settings at the request of the participant.

During the final stages of data analysis, information was checked for credibility and validity by method of peer debriefing. Two debriefers were used. One was familiar with the middle school education system and has no direct relation to this study. The second debriefer was a college educator who has no background in public school education. Information that presents potential biases or misrepresented was amended or removed depending on the debriefer feedback. This helped to strengthen the study by making sure that no biases or misrepresented information is presented.

Data Analysis Results

The semi-structured interview formation for data collection was the appropriate choice. This allowed for the participants to choose when they wanted to expand on questions on their own while also allowing the researcher to expand on participant responses. This helped to create an open and relaxing environment as some participants would tell stories that help clarify their responses. All interviews were done via Zoom and ranged in length from approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. All participants were able to respond to all the questions, with only small delays every so often due to someone coming into the classroom/office or a phone ringing. Other than that, interviews were completed without disruption. Interviews were recorded so that information could be reviewed for accuracy.

The next step was to create a summary of responses by the two groups of participants. This was done by playing the recording and making notes under each question. This also helped to create a familiarity and flow of responses. Once all documentation was recorded, the process of open coding was initiated and then put into categories for themes to then be created. This ended up taking a lot of time as there was more information than expected. Initial coding results were wide ranging and included codes such as impacting others, passion to teach, burned out, colleague supports, positive mentor, role model, collaboration, challenging, classroom management, learning on the fly, school climate, leader support, disconnect, mental health, motivation, family feel, unsure about teaching, modeling, mentorship, PD, difficult students, ability to adapt, resources, advancement, open-door policy, and trust. Although open coding to

organization of themes took an abundance of time, it was worth the time as it made the data easier to disaggregate and present.

Peer debriefing was used as the method for credibility and validation purposes and was beneficial for this study. As previously stated, the two debriefers are in no way affiliated with the study, and one has a knowledge of middle schools, and the other does not. Having two different perspectives looking at the same information helped to strengthen the study as they both had feedback for the researcher. The debriefers both pointed out the same issues with two areas of the information that was provided. The two same areas that the debriefers identified were immediately removed to prevent any complications. The information that was individually noted was addressed and effectively amended. With respect to discrepant cases, any information that would be considered discrepant were to be noted in the summary of findings. However, there were no discrepant cases noted; therefore, this was a non-issue.

Even though this study presented two research questions, it could be looked at as four essential questions as each question produced answers from novice teachers and school leaders. Therefore, the discussion of results is provided by research question, themes for respective questions are shown as being from middle school novice teachers or school leaders. The themes that were generated from research question one was positive mentor teacher, personal connections, making a difference, continuous communication, welcoming environment, and growth advancement opportunities. The themes that were generated from research question two were support by administration, more relevant training, teacher workload, classroom management, quality PD, and

ESE/ELL students. In the summary of findings, a collective overview of the results and a link to recommendations is provided. It is also important to note that all participants have a first-year teacher mentor program.

Research Question 1

      Positive mentor teacher. Five out of 10 novice teachers in the study reported that their mentor teacher was negative about teaching overall. Participants noted that mentor teachers cited areas such as ineffective administration, being overwhelmed, excessive testing, student behavior, and parents as being negatives to teaching. One novice teacher commented that most of the time when the mentor teacher advised about students it revolved around how bad kids are and how much they don't care and how retirement is close. The novice teacher admitted that this did not help the positive outlook on teaching. Of the five novice teachers who noted this issue, all five stated that it had some impact on their outlook at being a teacher long term.

      Personal connections. All 10 novice teachers expressed that the personal connection with colleagues and the school community was a huge motivator for remaining in the field. Six teachers felt that being a teacher at the right school should feel like being part of a family and that being close with others helps getting through the tough times. The six teachers who spoke about school being a family also indicated that without their colleagues, they do not know that they could have made it through the pandemic.

      Making a difference. Eight novice teachers expressed that making a difference

was a motivator and was one of the key reasons that they got into the field of teaching. When asked how they know that they are making a difference, one of the teachers responded that by the relationships built with their students, by the actions of the school leaders, or by positive communication from parents. Each of the eight teachers who said that making a difference was a main motivator all stated that if they lose this feeling then teaching will most likely not be in their future.

Continuous communication. All 10 school leaders expressed that constant communication with both colleagues and school leaders can be a motivator for novice teachers. They felt that the sense of being an active part of a team that has an important goal educating students would be a motivator. The 10 school leaders also indicated that the novice teachers' voice must be heard as part of the communication process. One school leader that was interviewed stated that when a novice teacher is actively involved in the school communication process that they then feel more valued and not just on the receiving end of communication.

Welcoming environment. Another motivator that school leaders noted was a welcoming environment for novice teachers. When asked about their respective roles in creating this environment, all 10 school leaders expressed the responsibility for doing so. School leaders indicated that ideas such as pre-school gatherings, assigning teacher mentors, and small gifts to kick off the school year as things that they have done in the past.

Growth Advancement Opportunities. Five of the 10 school leaders noted that

growth advancement opportunities must be something that novice teachers can see an option down the line. While career teachers are much needed, it is necessary to make sure that teachers know that potential for advancement is a realistic option. A school leader stated that not only should a novice teacher be informed of potential growth opportunities, but that administration should take the extra step and provide guidance to teachers on how to reach levels of promotion.

Research Question 2

Support by administration. All 10 novice teachers noted support by administration as necessary. When asked what administration support looks like, answers from novice teachers ranged from strong discipline support, administrator-initiated conversation with the teacher that are not tied into observations nor evaluations and being available for teacher needs. One novice teacher stated that their administrator seems to stay in the office and not be easily accessible unless a meeting is set with the administrative assistant.

More relevant training. Six novice teachers felt as if they had not received enough relevant training to be as effective a teacher as they could be. Three novice teachers felt as if the trainings were set by the school district and not appropriate for their school and their concerns. A novice teacher expanded on this by stating that their training was general and for all teachers, but not specified for making them a better teacher. The one area that all six teachers listed as number on the list of supports was classroom management.

Teacher workload. Six novice teachers stated that the workload for teachers is

too much and that the pressure to achieve is too much as well. Four teachers talked about the high number of students in class and the pressure to have them score high on standardized testing. Another teacher talked about how they felt isolated with the pressures of the workload and that the only way that they can keep up is to put in an extra 20 plus hours at home per week.

Classroom Management. All 10 school leaders in the study identified classroom management as a huge issue for novice teacher supports. Additionally, every school leader in the study has lost novice teachers for the very reason of class management. One school leader who was interviewed even told of a story when a teacher was so frustrated with classroom management that they left during their planning period and never came back.

Quality Professional Development. Five school leaders addressed the importance of quality PD. When asked for further definition of "quality" the consensus was that it needed to be something that can have immediate effect and relevant to the school demographics and needs. The key to this was that it needed to be something that novice teachers could sense an immediate impact so that they did not abandon the idea.

ESE/ELL students. Four school leaders mentioned that how to effectively teach Exceptional Student Education (ESE) students and English Speakers of other Languages (ELL) as an issue that novice teachers are often ill prepared to do. Although the four school leaders all indicated that they ESE and ELL Liaisons on campus that novice teachers tend to not understand what the liaisons' role is or think that because they have

protections with respect to learning that it is not their primary concern as they have enough on their plate already.

Summary of Findings

The discussion of results provided a deep insight as to the perceptions of novice teachers and school leaders. Appendix B shows the semi-structured questions that were used to guide the interviews. The summary of findings provides an overall synopsis of what the interviews revealed pertaining to the study. This included items that were both identified in the themes and not identified in themes. Tables 1 and 2, listed below, will show the research questions and themes in a simple to read format.

Table 1

Novice Teachers' Themes by Research Question

Research Question	Theme
RQ1 – Qualitative: What are novice middle school teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of motivators that help retain middle school novice teachers?	Positive mentor teacher Personal connections Making a difference
RQ2 – Qualitative: What are novice middle school teachers' and school leaders' perceptions about the supports needed to remain in the field of teaching?	Support by administration More relevant training Teacher workload

Table 2

School Leaders' Themes by Research Question

Research Question	Theme
RQ1 – Qualitative: What are novice middle school teachers' and school	Continuous communication Welcoming environment

leaders' perceptions of motivators that help retain middle school novice teachers?	Growth advancement opportunities
RQ2 – Qualitative: What are novice middle school teachers' and school leaders' perceptions about the supports needed to remain in the field of teaching?	Classroom management Quality professional development ESE/ELL students

Some of most interesting topics from the interviews came when the question of if novice teachers had thought of leaving this field. Of the 10 novice teachers that were interviewed, four said that they have seriously thought about leaving the field and a fifth has already put in their letter of resignation. It was an unexpected and sad reality to find out that a novice teacher had already called it quits. When asked to expand on why, the teacher said that negative effects of being a teacher took a toll on mental health. The teacher continued to state that there was too much work and not enough support and was tired of going home and crying. This novice teacher does not even a have a job lined up and does not know what the future holds, but just knows that it will not be in teaching. This was a finding that was not expected yet provided a dose of reality about the current state of teaching. Torres (2020) conducted a study on novice teachers leaving the field and concluded that even despite success in the classroom, teaching still left goals unfilled either due to being unrealistic goals for themselves or unknown goals by the school. A conclusion such as this from a study starts to delve into the emotional side of support and may lead to discussion about 50% of the novice teachers in this study have already seriously thought about leaving the field.

A commonality derived from the interviews was that both novice teachers and school leaders highlighted classroom management as a key factor in teacher retention. Another commonality was that both educator groups felt that pertinent PD was needed for novice teachers to help them to become more comfortable with teaching. Additionally, a connection was based on communication. Both educator groups felt that communication needed to be a constant for novice teacher longevity. Lastly, there was one connection that every single participant stated and will be discussed in the recommendation section.

In the review of literature, several themes could be discerned related to the study, which were novice teachers being overwhelmed, feeling a lack of support, and craving positive interactions and mentorship. The summary of findings aligned with these same areas. During the study, it became a repetitive statement amongst novice teachers that support from school leaders tended to fade away with each passing day. Novice teachers involved in this study also reported that the workload was too much and that feeling a lack on connection with colleagues led to a sense of isolation and disappointment. As the review of literature revealed these are, unfortunately, not uncommon feelings amongst novice teachers. Together, the summary of findings from novice teachers and the review of literature highlighted the aspect of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory hygiene factors as those are the ones that cause lead to dissatisfaction.

The summary of findings affirmed that the selection of Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory as the framework of this study was the correct one. Herzberg's focus was on the factors that increase overall job satisfaction and how these factors can be attained.

Further, Herzberg explained that the factors that both increase or decrease satisfaction must be examined and modified for enhancement of job satisfaction. This aligns with the role of the school leader in not only providing the motivators and supports for novice teachers but making sure that they are meaningful and lead to a higher level of motivation.

Novice teachers are the focal point for the increased job satisfaction as this could lead to longevity in the field. In the summary presented, novice teachers expressed the need for connection, support by school leaders, relevant training, workload, and worth as essential components. School leaders listed growth opportunities, PD, communication, and climate as essential areas. When reviewing Herzberg's motivator-hygiene theory, each of the factors reported by the participant groups fit into either Herzberg's motivator or hygiene category and this supported the use of this framework to address motivators and supports for novice teachers.

Summary

In connecting the study with the project and to focus on assisting novice teachers for those important second and third years, the project was to conduct a 3-day PD on implementing a middle school novice teacher gradual release support program for Years 2 and 3.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

I completed a basic qualitative study to explore the perceptions of middle school novice teachers and school leaders regarding motivators and supports. The hope was that the study would help to uncover important information that could be used to increase the number of novice teachers that remain in the field of teaching. The findings support that improving motivators and supports is helpful to teacher retention. However, a larger issue was also revealed, which was that after the first year of teaching, no specific means of supports nor motivators were noted. This was surprising as none of the 20 participants could identify anything after Year 1 that was specifically put in place to address motivators and supports. This finding led me to create PD that focused on a six-step novice teacher support program at the middle school level. The PD specifically address Years 2 and 3 for a novice teacher because the participants indicated that the first 3 years are essential. Therefore, it only makes sense to then offer a novice teacher support PD that addresses more than just Year 1. The information that was collected and analyzed from the study was used as the basis for the creation of this project.

Rationale

As indicated in the introduction of this section, there needs to be a system in place that focuses on providing and improving motivators and supports for novice teachers during the first 3 years of teaching and not only in Year 1. Further, if the first 3 years are the most influential in determining the longevity of novice teachers, as noted by

participants in the study as well as documented in the literature, then educational leaders should focus on providing as much assistance as possible. In their article on teachers leaving the field, Maxouris and Zdanowicz (2022) stated that novice educators leave in the early years of teaching due to a multitude of reasons including concerns about early burnout, lack of respect and support, and the demands of being a classroom teacher. Further, Chaney et al. (2020) completed a survey on novice middle school teachers and stated that the first 3 years of teaching are one of the most difficult transitions a teacher will ever have to make. Statements like these demonstrate that more intricate care must be provided for novice teachers in those early years and not just the first year.

An additional reasoning for the creation of this project came from responses of some of the novice teachers that there had been numerous times where they felt isolated and unsure where to turn as new issues arose after their first year. The teachers in the study stated that they could have spoken to their previous year's mentor teacher, but that the teacher had a different new teacher to help. Further, novice teachers felt either that administration was too busy to care or that they did not want to seem like a teacher who did not have control. It was also indicated that the novice teachers tended to feel as if they would be looked at as being ineffective if they asked for help.

One novice teacher in this study stated that they felt as if most support was provided in Year 1, whereas in Year 2 if felt as if no one really cared, and the teacher almost felt forgotten or less important. This statement aligns with research on the factors that contribute to teachers leaving the field. Hogan and White (2021) conducted a self-study on early teacher burnout and concluded that novice teachers' feelings of looking

inept or incapable led to self-isolation rather than reaching out to colleagues or administration for assistance. The focus of this project was on creating a 3-day PD that addressed issues such as these so that motivators and supports can be put in place so that teachers have increased chances to remain in the field.

Review of the Literature

I conducted a review of the literature in conjunction with the findings from this study and to provide a basis for project development. Areas that were derived from the study and further detailed in the review of literature include novice teacher motivators, novice teacher supports, school leaders' expectations for novice teachers, and motivators provided by school leaders. I found the literature that is reviewed in this section by searching Walden University Library databases and the Google Scholar search engine. The search terms included *professional development, novice teachers, retaining teachers, teacher longevity, novice teacher supports,* and *novice teacher motivators.*

An overarching goal for this project was to increase the career satisfaction for novice teachers. This review of literature will show this goal is one that is necessary. As Chan and Lay (2021) concluded from their quantitative study, teachers will show improved satisfaction once they have developed a belief in themselves as teachers, great teaching motivation, and an enjoyment of teaching.

Novice Teacher Motivators

Novice teachers benefit from motivators that encourage interest and desire for teaching. Li (2020) conducted a study on novice teachers creating their own identity and concluded that first they need the appropriate motivation as base step for developing

independence. While intrinsic motivators are important for novice teachers, this study revealed that extrinsic motivators are needed for enhancing the chances of retaining teachers. Virtanen and Laine (2021) conducted a study on teacher retention and suggested that higher motivators result in higher job satisfaction and teacher efficacy. A popular motivator not just for novice teachers, but in many workplaces is higher pay, so this project stayed away from monetary needs and focused on other motivators that can be more clearly associated with the teaching field.

Praise and recognition were found to be important motivators that were noted in this study. Even though praise and recognition can be similar, they are not the same. Praise in teaching typically is more verbal and does not come with any additional factors. For example, praise during a faculty meeting or on a staff email. Recognition typically is associated with some type of tangible item, such as a gift certificate or certification of appreciation. Mugabi (2020) wrote an article for Classcraft in which it was noted that praise and recognition were two of the top 13 ways in which a principal can motivate a teacher. However, it is key to make sure that while both praise and recognition should be given to novice teachers, the two should not be confused as being the same thing.

Another area for teacher motivators that was found in this study and reinforced in the literature review was possibilities for advancement. Advancement can be more than appointment to school leadership such as principal or assistant principal. Advancement can include designations such as team leader, department head, mentor teacher and liaison, amongst other school-based positions. When it comes to positions such as these, some teachers tend to believe that taking part in PD helps their chances for consideration.

As Tantawy (2020) indicated after completing a qualitative study on PD and teaching careers, all participants felt that experience and knowledge gained from PD puts them in better position for promotion. However, due to the minimal of advancement opportunities compared to a greater number of teachers in education, advancement is still an area of concern for novice teachers. Buckman et al. (2018) examined teacher advancement to administration and acknowledged that advancement opportunities are limited and that some teachers go to independent or charter schools for a chance at advancement.

Novice Teacher Supports

Supports for novice teachers can be essential for teachers to feel comfortable in the field. During this literature review, supports for novice teachers stood out as being a determining factor in teacher retention. Specific supports that were noted included a positive mentor relationship, connection with administration, and guidance for improvement.

Being a teacher for the first time can sometimes be a little intimidating. One way to help to overcome this intimidation can occur by having that person who is there for emotional support, and this is what a strong mentor teacher can provide. Denton and Heiney-Smith (2020) conducted a study on appropriate development of mentor teachers and concluded that due to the unpredictability of being a classroom teacher that mentor teacher relationship must be fostered and preserved.

School administration often plays a vital role in the comfortability that a novice teacher has with teaching. While the role of being a school leader can be fast paced with little downtime, time must be set aside for novice teachers and the supports that they

require. Kutsyuruba et al. (2020) completed a systematic review of early career teachers' development and suggested that they should have a better understanding of the source and type of challenges that early career teachers' face daily. The review completed by Kutsyuruba et al. helps to pinpoint the need school leaders to have a more influential role in supporting novice teachers.

Another consideration to help with the connection of school leaders and novice teachers could be based on the initial workload for novice teachers. Novice teachers often step into a role and immediately take on the same workload as experienced teachers. Mullen et al. (2021) reported on teacher resiliency and noted that moderating a new teacher's workload as they find their way as a classroom manager helps to build the relationship with school leaders as it shows a level of understanding and support for teachers.

School Leaders' Expectations for Novice Teachers

This study helped to uncover school leaders' expectations for novice teachers. This was an area of research where a wealth of information was available for the literature review. Topics such as good classroom management and connecting with students are tones that are presented in this section.

Classroom management potentially is the area that novice teachers struggle the most with implementing. The reason for this could be as simple as understanding that coursework nor student teaching can truly prepare novice teachers for running their own classroom. Therefore, school leaders must determine the line between their expectations for novice teachers and how to proactively prepare novice teachers for what they may see

at the middle school learning level. Simonsen et al. (2020) conducted a study on the effects of teacher PD and determined that it is necessary for school leaders to provide efficient and effective supports. This is the case with classroom management if school leaders are to expect novice teachers to be successful.

With some of the issues facing novice teachers, building rapport with students can, at times, seem like another item stacked on top of an already heavy "to-do" list for them to master. However, the value of a strong teacher and student relationship can go a long way in helping to educate students. Additionally, working at the middle school level where students are going through biological and hormonal changes, the need for good student rapport is huge. Relevant PD could address these issues. Consider, Deng et al. (2021) completed a study on novice teacher preparedness and suggested the need for better and more supportive new teacher induction programs.

Like classroom management, building rapport with students is not something that can be adequately learned through college level coursework, it happens when the teacher steps into their classroom and puts in the effort and gets better with time and practice. Take Delos Reyes and Torio (2021) whose study teacher and learner relationships found that rapport is greater amongst expert teachers and students. A positive side to this need is that building good rapport can lead to a better learning environment. A study on teacher and student rapport by Frisby and Martin (2010) in which the results showed that classroom rapport positively correlated to classroom connections, participation, and learning. Therefore, rapport is a necessary aspect for novice teacher development.

Motivators Provided by School Leaders

The project literature review provided some motivators that school leaders saw as impactful for novice teachers. Information that was found through this review includes empowering novice teachers, school climate, and school leaders being available. As stated earlier in the review of literature, financial motivators are a huge motivating factor, but often is not under the purview of the school-based leaders, but the human resources department so will not be addressed as the focus needs to stay with the motivators that school leaders can control. Turnadi et al. (2021) conducted a study on school leadership and the workplace and suggested that school leaders are primary motivators for the entire staff and should embrace this role. An additional consideration comes from Blaum and Tobin (2019) completed an examination of school leader motivation and expressed the importance of school leaders being motivated so that they can provide a more focused effort in supporting teachers. Studies such as these further show the importance of motivation in school.

Empowerment of novice teachers could sound somewhat like a conundrum when first mentioned. One thought is that novice teachers are freshly learning, while another thought could be that novice teachers need to assert control. This bit of confusion can be cleared up by school leaders providing and explaining what empowerment looks like and how novice teachers can use it to be effective. Wronowski (2018) completed a grounded theory approach study on teacher recruitment and retention and determined that teacher empowerment increases the likelihood they will remain in the field. Another angle for consideration of empowerment could be as simple as helping novice teachers to find their identity as educators. Ghanem (2018) concluded that teacher identification has a positive

influence on teacher confidence. As these studies have highlighted, empowerment of novice teachers can be a strong first step towards teacher retention.

School climate can also be an important part in determining the longevity of novice teachers. Additionally, a positive school climate can also greatly impact the overall feeling of teacher worth and can encourage more positive interactions amongst the staff. The school climate has an impactful effect of novice teachers and as Khun-inkeeree et al. (2021) concluded after their study on climate and job satisfaction, that teacher job satisfaction is linked to a positive school climate. If the school climate is a positive one then the chances for teacher happiness should improve, as well. Consider, Toropova et al. (2021) who conducted research on teacher satisfaction and school conditions, stated that climate and social interactions may be of more importance than material items such as instructional and planning resources. This is, in no way, intended to minimize the importance of instructional and planning resources, however it does show that novice teachers do look for the positive interactions. School leaders hold the responsibility for creating these climates.

On the surface, the idea of school leaders being available for novice teacher needs sounds like it should not be too difficult, but that tends to be easier said than done. Therefore, it is essential that school leaders find a way to provide more availability for novice teachers. One way that this can occur is through modeling. Modeling has been a tool for mentor teachers to help novice teachers, but the idea of school leaders doing this can be beneficial as it shows that the school leader understands the needs of a novice teacher and can help to build a stronger relationship. Psencik (2022) wrote a column for

Learning Professional in which it was stated that when school leaders model learning and expanding knowledge that it rubs off. Additionally, Frahm and Cianca (2021) conducted a qualitative study on leadership behaviors that influence retention of teachers. This study uncovered that school leaders should establish purposeful plans for connecting with novice teachers, being visible on campus, and visiting classrooms for reasons other than observations. Information from studies just as this not only show what administrators can do, but also encourage the type of relationship and rapport with staff that can help to address potential issues together.

This literature review has shown the need to make a strong connection between novice teachers and school leaders about the supports and motivators to enhance job satisfaction and hopefully lead to a higher level of teacher retention. Torkaman et al. (2017) conducted a study on teacher burnout and presented that a lack of satisfaction from motivational needs leads to dissatisfaction and leaving the field. Additionally, Safari (2020) conducted a separate study on job satisfaction and found that concerns over their competence and mental well-being has led to a sense of dissatisfaction of being a teacher. These are the types of studies that show the need for improvement and need to be addressed so that teachers remain in the field. As Wisnu (2019) claimed after conducting a study on teacher retention, job satisfaction has a significant impact on teacher longevity so research for solutions must occur.

Professional Development and Novice Teachers

PD is a constant theme in most educational institutions and can be seen to help teachers to learn better teaching practices. As school leaders oversee the implementation

of practices at the respective school, it can also be considered that novice teacher is expected to accept and implement at PD that is provided. Brown et al. (2020) examined professional learning development for novice teachers. They found that PD that empowers, is responsive to novice teacher needs, and seeks to improving practice rather than addresses what lacks helps to empower novice teachers. This perspective can help to better align school leaders' expectations for novice teachers.

Novice teachers tend to seemingly have a lot of new information coming at them from different directions and it can be overwhelming. For some teachers, PD may be the best way to learn how to appropriately deal with the early years of teaching and all that comes with it. Tolan et al. (2020) conducted a study on the impact of the distress of new teachers and identified that challenges associated with classroom management for novice teachers can be improved with PD. Additionally, Saleem et al. (2021) conducted a study on PD for struggling novice teachers and concluded that novice teachers gained new information and skills from PD. Studies such as these support the idea that novice teachers benefit from PD and can help them to become better and more comfortable teachers.

If teaching turnover continues at a high rate, then the need for effective PD will increase so that novice teachers are provided as many tools as possible to succeed. In a collaborative paper written by O'Riordan et al. (2022) on PD for teachers, it was stated that PD must be persevered and regularly scheduled to be effective. Further, in a phenomenological study completed by Hammonds (2017) it was concluded that PD was listed by 83.3% of the respondents as one of the top support indicators to remain novice

teachers in the field. This type of literature accentuates the need to make sure that PD is appropriate and impactful for novice teachers.

This review of literature has provided an abundance of information on novice teacher motivators and supports. The review of literature also highlighted how PD can be a vital foundational block for teacher longevity. PD is a known entity in schools. However, from this study and review of literature it has been noted that the PD needs to be relevant. Therefore, a PD focused solely on novice teacher motivators and supports was chosen for the project.

Project Description

The project that was created from the results of this study was a 3-day PD on providing a novice teacher supports program at the middle school level, which specifically addresses Years 2 and 3 of teaching. The second and third years were chosen because all participants in this study had a similar Year 1 program in place. The second year of the supports program is more intensive than the third year as to gradually release the novice teacher for more independence at Year 4. Thus, there are four steps during the year two and two steps during Year 3. Additionally, the motivators and supports that are described in the program came directly from the participant information that was coded and themed.

During this study, when participants were asked why there was not a program in place after Year 1, no clear answer could be derived, therefore the need for this project only enhanced. It was almost as if there was an unwritten rule that novice teacher support programs should be implemented for the first year of teaching and that is it. Further,

when follow up questions were provided to both school leaders and novice teachers about if a program should go longer than 1 year, there was a remarkable level of agreement with all participants stating that additional years of programmatic support would encourage a higher level of motivation to continue teaching. The fact that each participant felt that more time for novice teacher support would be beneficial for longevity was a surprising finding and the one that set the backbone for the project.

In the summary of findings and review of literature, both participant groups expressed a need for communication, connection, mentorship, and meaningful training. Thus, this project came together as a means for these areas to be addressed for the purposes of enhancing job satisfaction and performance leading to a better rate of teacher retention. The PD allowed for the three target groups (school leaders, mentor teachers, novice teachers) to come together as one to not only hear each other on their respective views, but to also put together a plan that supports the novice teacher for the impactful first 3 years of teaching. Setting the criteria for the PD was derived from the participant themes, aligning them with review of literature, and comparing to the framework for alignment. As each area was aligned, it then became a point of focus for the PD. The objective for lesson of the PD was that it led to a determination of increased motivators or supports for novice teachers. The conclusion of the PD was an engaging, relevant, and long-lasting program that provides a solid 3 years of novice teacher support that could lead to increased job satisfaction and teacher longevity.

Resources

The initial resource needed for the PD was time. This was a key resource for the PD to be successful, everyone involved needs to be able to provide uninterrupted focus time for the duration of the PD. As the PD was in person, the presenter only needed a computer connected to a projection screen to show the PowerPoint Presentation. The participants were positioned in small learning groups with sizes ranging from 3-5 participants per group. At the center of each learning group table there was 5 small dry erase boards, a pack of dry erase markers, board erasers, construction paper, markers and internet connection so that music and video clips can be streamed for certain times during the PD.

Roles and Responsibilities

This project required roles for four primary groupings, which were the presenter, school leaders, mentor teachers, and novice teachers. Each role and their respective responsibilities will be further explained.

The presenter shouldered the responsibility of making sure the findings from the study are clearly represented and understood by all parties. It was essential that all parties knew that a panel of their related peers provided the information that was being presented and that the presenter merely collected, analyzed, summarized, and thus presented in the meeting. The presenter also made sure that all aspects of the PD and the program are thoroughly explained and understood by everyone involved. These aspects included roles, time, commitment, and expectations.

School leaders, as the figure heads of the respective middle schools, hold the responsibility to ensure that the program implemented and followed through. School leaders also needed to consider what motivators for novice teachers can be effectively provided and the way this will be done. Lastly, school leaders needed to make sure that they commit to their expectations and time during each of the six steps of the program. It is important that this not be looked at as a requirement, but as an opportunity to actively help a novice teacher grow.

Mentor teachers have a significant role in the supports for novice teachers. Through this study, it was noted by multiple novice teachers that support by colleagues and mentor teachers was important in their mental stability and big in determining if they could make it a career or even make it through the school year. So, mentor teachers provide a big supportive role in supporting novice teachers. Therefore, during the PD, mentor teachers were able to reflect on their importance to novice teachers and consider how to continue and improve these supports for additional years.

Novice teachers had a unique role with this project. They must be able to grasp their importance for teaching. Although it may sound simple, based on both study participant comments as well as information provided in the review of literature, not all novice teachers feel so good about themselves. This was key as it allowed novice teachers to be vocal parts of the initial PD meeting and set the tone for the future steps as the project would only be successful when the novice teachers are open about their views. Otherwise, none of the parties involved in the project will truly know of its effectiveness.

Potential Barriers

The primary potential barrier was timing. Being that the school year is slated to begin the second week of August, project presentation and implementation for the beginning of the school year was tight. Another potential barrier is the commitment of the school leaders, novice teachers, and mentor teachers. While the PD was 3 days, to see the program out requires a 2-year commitment by all parties and while the benefit of potentially increasing teacher longevity is extremely important, the commitment might be daunting for some. The only other potential barrier is one that was repeatedly mentioned during the study and that is time, just making sure that time is specifically set aside for the PD to be properly implemented for those upcoming 2 years.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

This project was presented to the respective leaders at the school and district level during Summer 2022. The presentation was precluded by a summary of findings from this study which then led to project proposal that included potential benefits from implementation of the project. Upon receiving approval of the project, I immediately began implementation.

Implementation consisted of an initial overview meeting led by the presenter with school leaders, novice teachers, and mentor teachers. During this meeting, a basic recap of the study was introduced and then focus went towards the project. The commitment expectations and benefits were discussed. Another essential component discussed was about motivators and supports to make sure that the differences and needs for these were

clear for everyone. At the conclusion of this meeting, a summary was provided to all parties to make the process of moving forward a smooth one.

Project Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan for the effectiveness for the PD was assessed both formative and summative means. At various points during the PD, there was predetermined formative learning checks and at the conclusion of the PD there was an overall summative review. Further details are provided in the following two paragraphs.

Using formative checks were a necessary aspect to ensure that the presenter was not proceeding too far ahead without knowing that everyone was on the same page. Small groups of similar educator positions were be used to discuss items presented. For example, when school leaders were presented with considering what type of motivators would be best for novice teachers in Step 3 (Year 2 and Quarter 3 of the school year), school leaders had small group discussion time. At the same time, novice teachers were be presented with the same question and had time to discuss. Then, each group shared out so that a comparison discussion could occur. At the conclusion of the discussion not only was a formative assessment conducted, but the best motivators for Step 3, as agreed on by school leaders and novice teachers was created. There was a related process each of the six steps of the program development.

A summative assessment was used at the conclusion of the PD. This was used both for the overall understanding of the novice teacher supports program and to show that presenter efficiently provided the presentation in a manner that showed the overall importance and necessity for this program. There was a one-page summative evaluation

provided (Appendix A). This consisted of eight presenter created questions that showed proficiency that the PD was completely understood and includes questions to show if the presenter was effective in the delivery of the PD. This was extremely helpful for the presenter to know what was done well and what needs to be worked on for future presentations.

Project Implications

The biggest implication was the completion of the novice teacher supports program. The PD was completed in 3 days; however, the supports program is a 3-year commitment by those who took part in the PD. For novice teachers, this would not only increase their longevity, but should also enrich learning experiences for students at the middle school level. The PD was engaging and provided numerous opportunities for open dialogue between the participants. The open dialogue was the most important part of the PD as it indicated that the plan was being developed by group input rather than just a few leading the way while others just agreed. The group was small as it was late in the summer, and it could only be done strictly on a voluntary basis. Therefore, we had one group of three school leaders, one group of four novice teachers, and one group of four mentor teachers. However, the small group might have contributed to the high level of involvement and was an unintended positive result. For example, there were moments where it was acceptable to go past the allotted activity time, because the discussions were going well and with a smaller group it was easier to manage and make the time up later in the day so that timing was still on target. The evaluations that were submitted at the

conclusion of the PD indicated that participants viewed the support plan was positive and providing a measure of hope for the future.

During one of the novice teachers' interviews, the teacher stated something that was disheartening to hear. The novice teacher said their father had a belief that those who cannot, become teachers. A statement like that needs to change as the teaching field is of immense importance. Thus, the implication of keeping good teachers so that they can become more seasoned and provide a higher level of learning is truly immeasurable. Teachers need to feel needed, supported, and loved. These goals will have been reached when comments like those from the father fall hard on deaf ears.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

Determining the strengths and limitations of the project was harder than I initially thought. The strengths of the project may appear different to me than an observer. Specifying limitations is also challenging. I attempted to eliminate all limitations; however, some still could emerge. Therefore, I addressed them as well.

The strengths that stood out in the project are that it brought common groups together for an extended time, it allowed for both internal and external perceptions to be revealed, and it allowed for a greater understanding of novice teacher needs. Because of time constraints, it is often challenging to assemble school leaders, mentor teachers, and novice teachers for an extended amount of time. This PD provided 3 days of uninterrupted time for these groups to come together to discuss enhancement of the teaching profession. This PD helped to ease the time constraints and allowed for the respective educators to learn together.

Time was the first strength of the project. Another important aspect was communication. As indicated in the project study, the perceptions of both school leaders and novice teachers were extremely influential in determining this PD. Therefore, the opportunity for novice teachers to speak openly about their needs and for school leaders to speak about their abilities or inabilities to provide supports and motivators was essential. This PD also gave a chance for mentor teachers to hear from the school leaders who, at times, lean on mentor teachers to provide supports for novice teachers and to hear from the novice teachers about what is and is not having an impact on them. As part of

the PD, mentor teachers were able to openly discuss and learn about their role in providing supports. This was also a strength because the respective groups understood that everyone needs to be open and to not be seen as a hierarchy, but as different groups with all having the same goals.

The goal of this project was to clarify strategies for improving the longevity of the novice teacher and identify what processes could realistically be implemented or improved to make teaching a positive, meaningful, and long-lasting career choice for them. Therefore, the last and most important strength of this PD is how it could positively impact the teaching field. A better understanding of not only Year 1 of teaching, but Years 2 and 3 could make help educational leaders to develop approaches to reduce teacher attrition. Although novice teaching can last up to 5 years, this study has shown that the first 3 years can set the trajectory for Years 4 and 5. Thus, the greatest strength is a greater understanding of motivators and supports for novice teachers.

With respect to project limitations, the key one to consider is time. Although time is listed as a strength, it could also be a limitation depending on the direction of discussions during PD. I believe that 3 days should be enough time for the PD; however, due to the nature of the discussion topics and the various views to be considered by the different educator groups, time could become an issue. The presenter had to be cognizant of time while outlining the plan while also allowing time for deeper discussions. This is especially important when one of the focuses is on all parties having a voice. The presenter has to keep control and steer the PD, while constructively managing time.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

PD is a common practice in public middle schools to provide learning opportunities for educators; therefore, the selection of PD was consistent with my desire to have a potential impact on teaching practice. However, an alternative approach may also have produced positive results in addressing novice teachers' supports and motivators to remain in the field. That approach would have been to create 5-day summer retreat.

The approach of utilizing retreats is also not a new one to education. However, the main factor that was considered was cost. When considering the cost of meals, travel, lodging, resources, and time away from family it just did not seem like the most conducive manner. In a field where teachers have been considered underpaid, it seems counterproductive to spend what could be thousands of dollars to put together a 5-day retreat when that money could go directly into the pockets of the educators. Perhaps in the future this approach can be realized and could have a deep impact, but for this project, PD was the way to go.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I find it difficult to express the range of emotions that I have experienced in completing this doctoral project study. This process began so long ago and there were countless pitfalls and doubts on if this I could do it. So much frustration, so much doubt, so many highs and so many lows. Regardless, the part that stayed consistent was my path of learning and without my committee instructors, I do not know if I could I have made it. I have learned so many things that I have not only kept for myself, but I have brought

it to my school site. Review of literature is the part that took the most time for me to complete and at times, I felt as if it were overkill. However, I now understand that if on a doctoral level, a point is to be made then the research better support it.

Additionally, the review of literature helped me to be a better school leader. I have found that I am consistently bringing up information in meetings that I have researched and are applicable for our current issue at work. Perhaps the most important aspect that this journey has taught me was to respect anyone who has their doctorate, because that should be an immediate indicator that s/he has put in a tremendous amount of effort and countless hours or research and time. Doctorate degrees are truly not given, they are absolutely earned.

When the project study began, I had no idea that it would result in the PD project that it ended it becoming. However, as the themes started to evolve during data analyzation, the project almost shaped itself. I was able to see that the perceptions of novice teachers' and their supports were not meshing with what school leaders had thought and the same can be said for the motivators. This is not to be said that there were not any areas of agreement, as there was, but not enough to make an impact that could have substantial long term positive results. For the most part, the school leaders and the novice teachers wanted the same thing, but how to see these come to fruition was easier said than done. The main factor in the way was time, but there were other factors such as follow through. The trend seemed to be that the year starts off the right way and then consistently takes a downward trend, but a lack of communication prevented these issues from being addressed, hence the idea of the PD project was born.

The project PD was cohesively developed based on the responses of the participants in the study. The transition from the study to project was a smooth one as the information guided the format. It was not as simple as a plug and play format, because there was still a lot of hard work to be done, but having the information being relevant and easily accessible to translate it into the format creation of the PD felt right. Furthermore, having the voices of the novice teachers who are expressing their needs and the voices of the school leaders' who shoulder the responsibility of providing those needs made for an insightful project.

Overall, the completion of this project study has manifested my professional growth as a research practitioner. In fact, the term research practitioner immediately brings me to the amount of depth that goes into doctoral learning. I now realize that I thought I knew what conducting research was, but I was far off. Prior to this study, I was not doing doctoral research as my research was mostly on the surface but lacked the depth of knowledge and support to provide reliability. This is no longer the case as not only can I conduct doctoral research, but I have also been able to look at research of others and know how to look for validity and credibility. The process of completing this study has taken me to a doctoral level of knowledge and I already have become and will continue to be a more effective leader.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The process of producing ways of motivating and supporting new teachers is hugely beneficial. As provided in the initial reported earlier in the introduction, we are losing teachers at an ever-increasing rate, and we cannot realistically expect that this

trend will magically slow unless something is done to make this happen. Teachers are too valuable and too impactful in the learning environment to assume that teachers will continue to come. Some of the information that was revealed during this study showed that novice teachers felt times of isolation, lack of respect, lack of support and a lack of motivation to teach. That is not the type of working environment that exudes happiness and make the field one that others would want to join. Therefore, the importance of the work done for this doctoral study is that the happiness of being a teacher will be determined. This will happen so that teaching gets back to becoming a profession of love and enjoyment rather than one that is not fostered for perseverance.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This PD project has the potential to have a positive impact on novice teachers for future years and at all school educational levels. This PD was geared for educators at the middle school level so a growth area for future research would be to adapt this for the elementary and high school levels. This would require a deeper look into the respective novice teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of supports and motivators like what was done for this study at the middle school level as those needs could be different.

Another area for future research consideration is the understanding that the novice teachers' motivators and supports could be different in several years than what they are today, so although the PD is applicable today it should be reviewed every few years for purposes of relevancy. This is of extreme importance this found that novice teachers' motivators and supports have changed over the years and there is no indication that this trend will change soon.

The final area for future consideration is perhaps the most important one and that is the application of this PD. This research and the longevity of the novice teachers is too important for this to presented by others in the of just checking a box. This PD must be presented from point of passion and sincerity. All parties involved in the PD must understand that it is not just taking part and completing the program. Rather, completing the PD program should mean that the novice teacher has been provided the motivators and supports necessary to remain in the field and be effective and happy teachers for years to come.

Recommendations for Practice

Both from the review of literature and the interviews conducted for the study there was a wealth of information that was provided and helped to shape the proposed project. There is a need for quality teachers, and many experts agree that something needs to be done to retain them. Rasanen et al. (2022) concluded that teachers are leaving the field at a high rate and that their overall well-being can negatively impacted through the struggles of teaching in the early years. Although some teachers leave the field after 1 year, there can be a multitude of reasons that may not be directly linked to education. In fact, KOC (2018) conducted a phenomenology study on teacher change and concluded that some participants admitted that they became teachers although they did not really want to but did not have many choices. It could be that education just was not a good fit or the person may not have been a good fit for education. It could simply be too much work or not enough money; however, it could also be that the novice teacher did not give enough time for education to work for them.

Through the research put in for this study it seems like Years 2 and 3 were the years that could make or break a novice teacher. Thus, the connection that was mentioned in the summary of findings was that while so much focus was put into Year 1 for a novice teacher, there was nothing noted for Years 2 and 3. All participants for this study acknowledged that novice teacher support primarily ended after Year 1. However, the novice teacher issues continued.

The first recommendation was that school leaders take a more aggressive approach at supporting teachers before they get frustrated. Although it would be easier for a novice to teacher to ask for help, it may not happen, so it will be up to the school leaders to create a culture of support amongst the entire staff.

Another recommendation was that the novice teacher take advantage of a formal line of communication that provides them the outlet to openly connect with colleagues. Being part of the school community and taking part in after school activities or social events with staff can help to open lines for friendship and not just a fellow colleague.

Lastly, all educator groups needed to be willing to engage in impactful and meaningful PD which is conducive for the school community and the novice teachers. This PD needs to be ongoing and changing as teacher needs change.

Conclusion

The importance of finding ways to potentially retain teachers in the teaching field is crucial. In simplest terms, every great person in America has had a teacher so it is essential that teachers are kept in the field. When I think back to some of my best memories of growing up or some of the people who had the biggest impact on my life,

they end up including teachers that I had. When I think about if those same people were not in my life, the outlook of where I could have ended up could have been different. I grew up as child with a very loving mother, but a single mother as my father died when I six years old from lung cancer. We did not have a lot of money and we did not live in the best of neighborhoods. However, my mother provided me love and taught me to keep positive influences near me so that I did not fall prey to the negative things in this world. And often those positive influences took the shape of my teachers. Therefore, when I think of how to best conclude this, it is simple. This doctoral study was about saving lives of those young people who need it such as I did, and that is a great reason to keep teachers in the field as this is what they do.

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Appendix A: The Project

3 Day Professional Development Outline

<u>6-Step Novice Teacher Support Program Professional Development Plan</u>

Day 1 (9:00a.m. until 3:00p.m.)

9:00a.m. – 9:30a.m.	Welcome and Introductions and of course an ice breaker!
9:30a.m. – 10:30a.m.	Overview of Goals for the Professional Development
10:30a.m. – 10:40a.m.	Ten Minute Break
10:40a.m. – 11:45a.m.	How did we get here? Study, Findings, Research, Project
11:45a.m. – 1:00p.m.	Lunch
1:00p.m. – 1:30p.m	Group Activity #1 - Work Session
1:30p.m. – 2:00p.m.	Group Activity #1 – Share Out
2:00p.m. – 2:30p.m.	Group Activity #1 – Open Discussion and Selection of Top Motivators and Supports for Year Two Novice Teachers
2:30p.m. – 3:00p.m.	Group Activity #1 – Open Discussion and Decision of how to provide

Day 2 (9:00a.m. until 3:00p.m.)

9:00a.m. – 9:15a.m.	Donuts and Chat
9:15a.m. – 9:45a.m.	Group Activity #2 – Scenario Skit Creation Time
9:45a.m. – 10:30a.m.	Group Activity #2 – Skit Presentations
10:30a.m. – 11:00a.m.	Group Activity #2 – Open Discussion on Alternative Actions for Skits
11:00a.m. – 11:15a.m.	Group Activity #2 – Support Phrases
11:15a.m. – 11:45a.m.	Group Activity #3 – Role Play
11:45a.m. – 12:00p.m.	Group Activity #3 – Understanding your Colleagues
12:00p.m. – 1:00p.m.	Lunch
1:00p.m. – 2:00p.m	Group Activity #4 – Teaching Clips and Share Out
2:00p.m. – 2:30p.m.	Group Activity #4 – Open Discussion about importance of views
2:30p.m. – 3:00p.m.	Year 2 Recap. Could it work?

Day 3(9:00a.m. until 3:00p.m.)

9:00a.m. – 9:15a.m.	Donuts and Chat
9:15a.m. – 10:30a.m.	Group Activity #5 – Complete the Sentence
10:30a.m. – 10:45a.m.	15 Minute Break
10:45a.m. – 12:00p.m.	Group Activity #6 – Speech, Debate, or Agree…and How?
12:00p.m. – 1:00p.m.	Lunch
1:00p.m. – 1:45p.m	Review and Discuss the Six Steps
1:45p.m. – 2:30p.m.	Discussion on Implementation and Ways to Make it Impactful
2:30p.m. – 3:00p.m.	Professional Development Evaluation

PowerPoint Presentation for Professional Development

Slide 1

Slide 2

Slide 3

Slide 4

Slide 5

Slide 6

Slide 7

Before we begin an important note!

Please remember to use the construction paper at the conclusion of each activity to write down the information that we learn...it will be used again later!

Slide 8

Activity #1
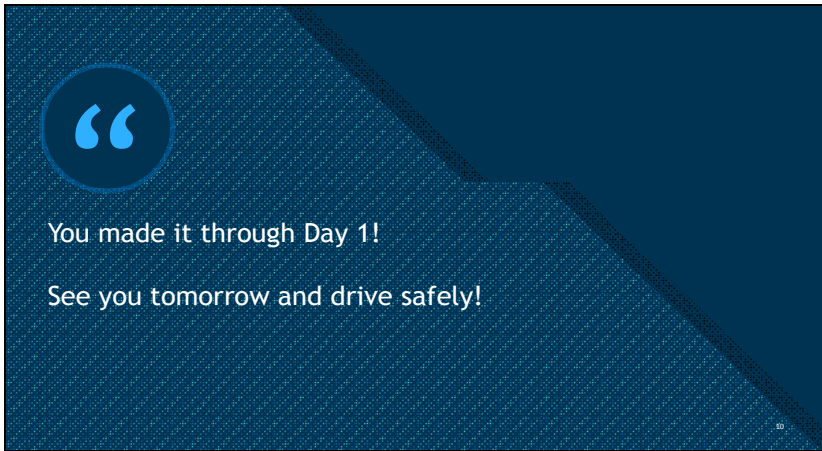
Get into small groups (3-5) with like kind educators, so school leaders, mentor teachers, and novice teachers only!

School Leaders – Decide the three most important motivators and supports that you think a novice teacher starting their second year would want.

Mentor Teachers – Think back and decide the three most important motivators and supports that you would have desired in your second year would want.

Novice Teachers - Decide the three most important motivators and supports that a novice teacher starting their second year would want. Especially good if you are in you second year

Slide 9

Activity #1 Cont'd

Small Group - Share Out Time

Whole Group – Discussion and Selection of:
Top Motivator for Step 1 Novice
Top Support for Step 1 Novice

Whole Group – Discussion and Conclusion on how to best provide

Slide 10
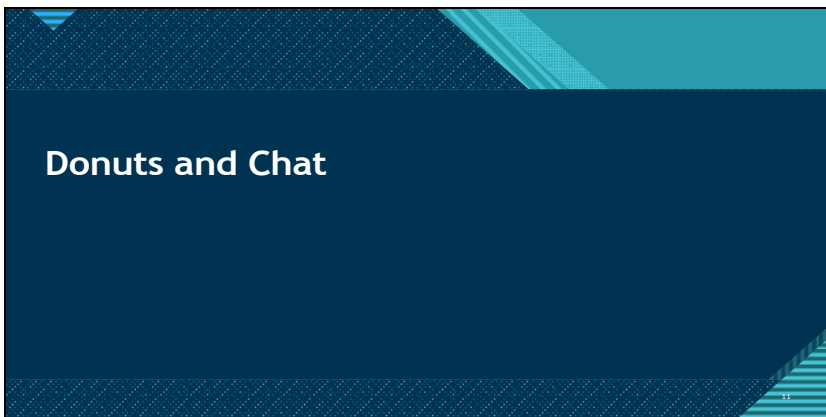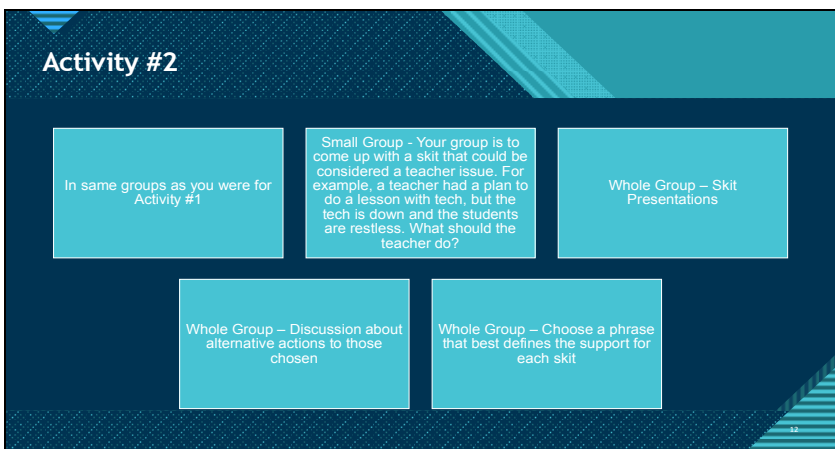
Slide 11

Slide 12

Slide 13

Activity #3

- Switch groups so that there is at least one school leader, one mentor teacher, and one novice teacher in each group.

- Whole Group: Time to role play!
- School leaders are now Novice Teachers
- Novice teachers are now Mentor Teachers
- Mentor teachers are now School Leaders

- Each "novice teacher" will be provided a situation to present to the "mentor teacher" and "school leader" in front of the class. The group must then improv a conversation and then a solution. After each improv, the group can chime on their thoughts. For example, the "novice teacher" accidentally cursed at a student in class.

- Whole Group: Discuss ways to understand colleagues' roles

Slide 14
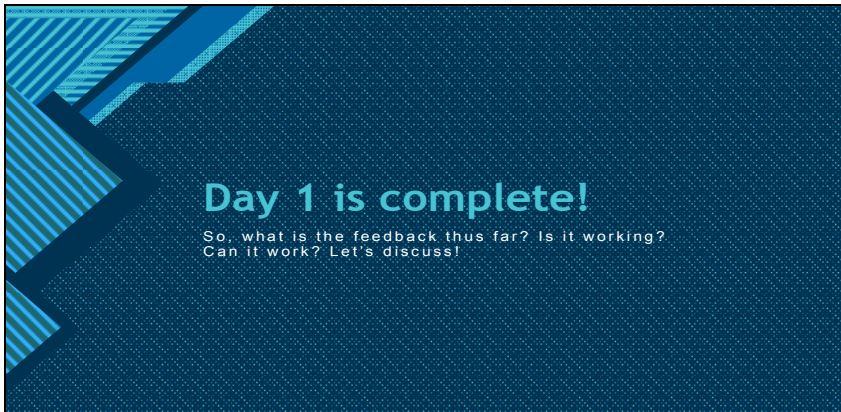
Lunch Time

YUM YUM!

Slide 15

Activity #4
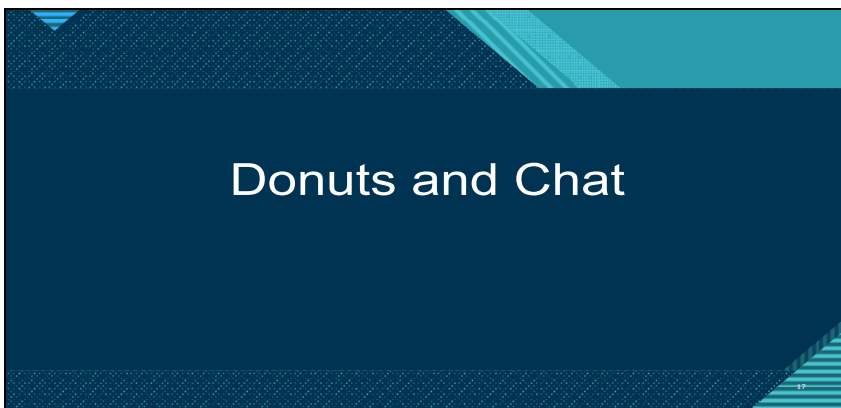
This will be an individual assessment of teaching practices

Whole Group: Several video clips of teaching practices in class will be shown

Individual: During each clip, the respective educators are to take notes on what they see as good or bad practices along with why they felt the way they did

Whole Group: After each clip, educators will talk about what they saw and wrote in an open discussion format

Whole Group: Importance of having different views and how we can learn from each other

Slide 16

Slide 17

Slide 18

Slide 19

Slide 20

Slide 21

Slide 22

Slide 23

Slide 24

Slide 25

How to Make it Stick

Slide 26

Congratulations, YOU have created an educator support program!

Slide 27

Thank you all!

Now, it is time to make high level teacher retention a reality!

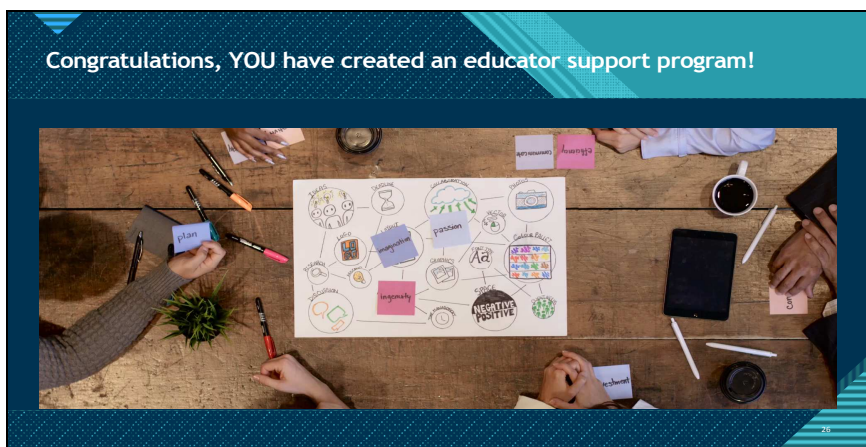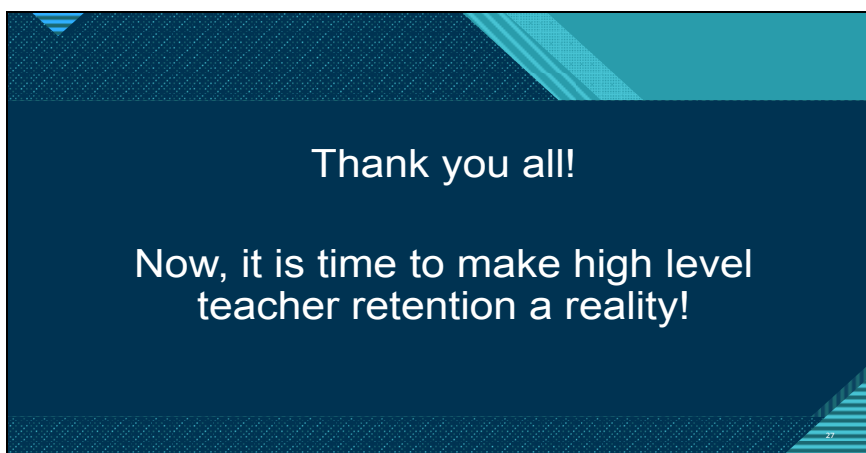**Novice Teacher Supports Professional Development Evaluation**

1. Were the goals of the professional development clearly outlined and met?

   Strongly Agree

   Agree

   Unsure

   Disagree

   Strongly Disagree

2. I have a clearer understanding of the supports necessary for teacher retainment.

   Strongly Agree

   Agree

   Unsure

   Disagree

   Strongly Disagree

3. I have a clearer understanding of the motivators necessary for teacher retainment.

   Strongly Agree

   Agree

   Unsure

   Disagree

   Strongly Disagree

4. I believe the information that I learned is relevant and could help to retain teachers.

   Strongly Agree

   Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

5. The presenter was clear and thorough with directions for all activities and

discussions.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

6. The presenter managed time and transitions efficiently.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

7. The presenter seemed sincere and knowledgeable about the professional

development.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

8. Overall, the professional development was impactful and should promote change.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Unsure

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Appendix B: Individual Questions for Novice Teachers

1. What motivated you to get into the teaching profession?

2. Is your degree in the education field?

3. Overall, what are your expectations while you are in the novice teacher phase?

4. What are your long-term expectations as a teacher?

5. What do you personally feel are the areas that you need assistance with?

6. How often do you meet with school leader(s)?

7. Overall, do you feel that the supports you receive relevant to the needs of today's

   teachers?

       Discuss the areas of supports that you feel have been most impactful.

       If applicable, please discuss the areas of supports that could be improved?

8. Have you considered leaving the teaching field?

       If yes, what has contributed to these thoughts?

       If no, what have been the keys to your commitment?

9. What advice would you have for future teachers as they prepare for their teaching

   career?

Areas to consider:

Classroom management   Instructional Practices

Parent communication   Content Knowledge

Communication with and role of administration

Time management

Technology use in the classroom

Appendix C: Individual Questions for School Administrators

1. How many years were you a teacher? How many years have you been an administrator?

2. What are your expectations for novice teachers?

3. How do you incorporate trust with you and novice teachers?

4. How often do you meet with novice teachers during a given school year?

5. Do you have any type of new teacher program?

   If so, please tell me what it entails?

   If not, why not? What are your thoughts about new teacher programs?

6. What motivators do you think are necessary for novice teachers?

7. Have these motivators changed over the years?

8. How do you assess the impact of these motivators?

9. When you see a novice teacher is struggling, what are your typical steps to assist them?

10. What are consistent issues pertaining to supports and/or motivators for novice teachers?

11. Discuss the ways in which you would like to be more involved with novice teacher development?

12. Discuss any roadblocks or that make it difficult to provide as much support as you would like for novice teachers?

Areas to consider:

Classroom management   Instructional Practices

Communication with teachers   Content Knowledge

School Climate