NEW TEACHER INDUCTION IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF TEACHERS IN THEIR

SECOND AND THIRD YEAR IN THE CLASSROOM

by

Loretta Ann Carter

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions

and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching

during new teacher induction. Social media is described as blogging, discussion boards,

Facebook, Google Hangouts, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, or YouTube

videos. The theories guiding this study were Knowles' adult learning theory and Bandura's

social cognitive learning theory as they relate to how adults learn and are motivated by following

the examples of role models. Transcendental phenomenology was selected as the research

method to consider the experiences of teachers returning for their second or third year of

teaching and attempt to discover what their induction encounter was like. This study considered

if social media has become a formal or informal part of induction programs. The central

research question that guided the study asked, What role does social media play in the new

teacher induction experience? Ten teachers provided input through three data collection methods

that included online participant journals, semi-structured interviews, and focus group

discussions. Five themes were developed during data analysis including social media usage,

communication between new teachers and mentors, reasons teacher quit, teacher induction

experiences, and what support is needed. These themes confirmed that social media plays an

informal yet important role in the new teacher induction experience.   All participants connected

with social media resources daily for assistance with lesson planning, classroom management,

advice for interactive and engaging activities, and for questions and emotional support.

     Keywords: teacher induction, social media, teacher attrition

Copyright Page

Dedication

This paper is dedicated first and foremost to God. He led me in the right direction and always held me up even when I turned my back and doubted him. To my late husband, Anthony Carter, one of the finest men I have ever known. Even while he struggled with his health, he was always encouraging me to complete this great effort. His love and support are what kept me going. I know his spirit helped push me forward many times when I wanted to stop. To my family, words cannot explain how much your support and encouragement have helped me throughout this journey. You were my lifeline keeping me going during some of the most challenging times of my life. I have been so richly blessed by your love and commitment.

Acknowledgments

I must acknowledge the amazing teachers who helped me as I learned to be a better student and a stronger educator. I modeled your behaviors and that is a big reason why this research is so special to me. Dr. Collins, you were insightful, kind, and one of the best communicators with whom I have had the pleasure of working. I don't think I could have completed this work without your help, encouragement, and prayers. Thank you seems entirely too small compared with the efforts and support you provided. A special thank you to Dr. Clark for being such a supportive team member. Thank you to Dr. Spaulding for being so encouraging and supportive and for guiding me to Dr. Collins. Thank you to Dr. Todd for understanding what I was trying to create with this research and helping me to find a clear voice.

I would like to thank the Texas Independent School (TISD; pseudonym) administration team that worked with me as I got approval to complete my study in your district. I would like to recognize the 10 teachers from the district for graciously agreeing to be a part of this study. You have my greatest appreciation for opening up and sharing some very heartwarming and challenging stories and for being open and honest during the interviews, emails, phone calls, and focus groups. Your input, experiences, and ideas are so inspiring and the only reason this study can be shared with others. Thank you for all the children you help each and every day, and the other educators you inspire, now and in the future.

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List of Abbreviations

Assistant Principal (AP)

Early Career Teachers (ECT)

English as a foreign language (EFL)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

New Teacher Support Program (NTSP)

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Professional Development (PD)

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Texas Independent School District (TISD)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. This chapter looks at the historical, social, and theoretical background of new teacher induction programs. In this chapter the problem, purpose, significance of this research, and the research questions are introduced along with the relationship between the researcher and the topics to be explored. This chapter concludes with a list of terms relevant to this study and a summary.

Background

In the United States, for more than 40 years there has been very high attrition for new teachers within their first year. New teachers face a difficult transition upon leaving their university training and stepping into a role where they are expected to be the leader in the classroom (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Costs of this exodus nationally are projected as billions of dollars a year (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez, 2012). Many teachers feel such a great sense of frustration, isolation, and dissatisfaction that they leave the field of teaching within their first few years in the classroom (Farrell, 2016). Mentoring of new teachers by experienced educators is an important part of a successful induction program (Washburn-Moses, 2010). Research is now looking at the results of ineffective induction (Kearney, 2016). Nearly half of new teachers leave the classroom within the first five years, so teacher induction plans are clearly not as effective as they were intended to be (Perry & Hayes, 2011). Teachers feel extremely vulnerable, unprepared, and alone when they start teaching. They start out with an idea in their mind of what

teaching will be like but are unprepared for the solitary nature of teaching (Cherubini, Kitchen, Goldblatt, & Smith, 2011).

Historical Context

The loss of new teachers has played a role in the teacher shortage for many years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). When beginning teachers enter a new work environment, they encounter issues from a variety of areas. School politics are generally a behind-the-scenes issue that pre-service teachers do not always see until they finish their training and take the lead role in the classroom (Newberry & Allsop, 2017). New educators deal with peer pressure and trying to fit into what can often be a socially challenging environment. This type of negative experience in which a first-year educator may not feel supported by leadership, mentors, or associates creates a professional complexity that can grow exponentially in the mind of a new teacher (Den Brok, Wubbels, & Van Tartwijk, 2017). In addition to pressures from school politics, teachers are also faced with the implications of educational policies. Mandates on education place additional pressure on experienced educators and novices alike (Heineke, 2018). All educators are required to deal with new mandates, certifications, and evaluations. Newer teachers who are not properly trained and do not receive enough support sometimes feel these daily struggles make it difficult to stay in the classroom (Verma, 2017). The frustration is felt by the teachers who are left behind to pick up the pieces as well (Glazer, 2018).

One possible solution was to use a new teacher induction program that included a mentoring component to help lower new teacher attrition rates (Lejonberg, Elstad, Sandvik, Solhaug, & Christophersen, 2018). A mentoring component is common with many induction programs, but not all programs have mentors, and the training for mentors is not consistent (Lafferty, 2018). In the 1980s the majority of mentoring that occurred was informal (Wunsch,

1993). When the attrition level for new teachers in the 1990s began a sharp increase in numbers far outweighing that of other fields of employment, mentoring was seen as a way to increase the retention of newcomers to education (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Wunsch (1993) posited that for a mentoring program to be effective at providing novice educators with the developmental growth needed to decrease attrition, it must possess a structured and formal curriculum. Howe (2006) completed a study that examined the mentoring and induction of new teachers and how they evolved from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Howe cited studies that showed the programs being developed in the United States in the early 1980s were less than 10 but increased to more than 30 by the end of the decade before declining due to budget tightening by the year 2000.

Research has shown that adding a mentoring component does not always solve problems as it was intended (Dishena & Mokoena, 2016). In some cases, the assigned mentors may not be trained properly to be a mentor. If mentors in a school are limited and teachers are paired with a mentor who does not have the skills to help them, this could be another source of stress for both educators. If mentors were effective and supportive, they could provide a strong example of how to be an excellent educator and leader (Gilles, Wang, Fish, & Stegall, 2018). If new teachers could reach out to motivated and effective mentors outside of their school district, perhaps they would find a connection with a teacher more suited to help them grow into their educator role. As new communication methods continue to emerge, and social media is readily available to more people than ever before, this may be a solution for finding the right mentor for each new teacher (Friedman, 2006).

Social Context

In a review of empirical research, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) examined the topic of new teacher induction and the mentor component. During their research process, they examined

more than 500 papers of varying types covering the topics from different perspectives. However, the current empirical research did not investigate what role, if any, social media played in the mentoring of new teachers during their induction year. This apparent gap in the literature formed the basis for this research study.

Teachers who are technologically strong will have an unquestionable head start when working with students in their own classroom but also when they work on improving their professional development (Tomczyk et al., 2017). Social media is a dynamic medium and new technology makes it easy to stay in touch with people around the world and around the corner. Vivakaran and Neelamalar (2018) found that half of the teachers they surveyed used YouTube as their most popular source for aids in the classroom and for their own personal education. There may be an opportunity to help new teachers reach out to both their peers and experienced teachers during their first year in the classroom via this technological advancement. Anthony, Haigh, and Kane's (2011) study revealed that most teachers who rated their induction experience very favorably were involved in positive mentoring relationships with other educators. When a mentor is an ally, this can help to offset the isolation and manipulation felt by teachers (O'Donnell, 2018).

The topic of e-mentoring was found in various research, but none of the studies were specific to e-mentoring of new teachers. Williams, Sunderman, and Kim (2012) studied the success of e-mentoring using an online class, but the focus was on graduate students. In this case the mentors and students both experienced a positive and beneficial outcome. Removing some gender bias may also be a possibility on social media platforms that do not involve a face-to-face connection but depend on a pseudonym and a gender-neutral avatar (Rockwell, Leck, & Elliott, 2013). This was also examined by Veletsianos, Kimmons, Larsen, Dousay, and Lowenthal

(2018), who concluded that when an animated character was used in place of a male or female presenter in a video, there were no gender specific comments posted online. This lack of bias may be an additional benefit for e-mentoring. While e-mentoring and social media for students and experienced teachers has been a research topic, I had not located any studies involving mentoring through social media for first year teachers.

Theoretical Context

The two theories used to develop this study were adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) and Bandura's (1985) social cognitive theory. When working with teacher education topics, the first concept to explore was how adults learn most effectively. By using adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) to frame how educational information should be presented, the materials can be communicated in a way that will make teachers motivated to acquire and absorb the material. The second theory steering this research was Bandura's (1985) social cognitive theory. Bandura theorized that having a role model to demonstrate and explain what to do and to provide a clear example of how positive outcomes occur is important when learning new skills. If positive mentoring examples can be developed using virtual methods, Bandura's theory can be effectively used with a wide variety of social media platforms.

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Situation to Self

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My motivation for this research was to help make the journey for new educators one that will last more than a couple of years. Having been an educator for many years, I knew how difficult the first year of teaching could be. As a researcher I wanted to help others understand the experiences and viewpoint of the new teacher. When placed in my first educational role, I made many common mistakes and I did not have the luxury of a mentor to turn to or ask questions. The feeling of being overwhelmed and in a difficult situation was a daily occurrence.

There were times when I questioned if I had made the correct decision to leave my previous job and become an educator.

When placed in the role of mentor to new teachers, I recognized the educator's need for accessing best practice recommendations of experienced teachers. When I worked as a regional education director in Texas, I was asked to create an intensive induction program for new teachers. The induction program had a feedback and communication component that consisted of e-mails and conference calls. Using e-mail was quick, less intrusive, and required less coordination than a conference call but it lacked a social connection. I could not hear the tone of voice used by the new teachers and communicating humor or frustration was difficult. The thought of using social media as a communication method in 2010 was not considered a professional option in education. However, since that time, attitudes about social media and its acceptance have changed significantly.

Social media has continued to emerge and play a prominent role in daily life. As it has grown in popularity, many people have become very comfortable using various forms of social media. The variety of platforms available has expanded and helped with social media's popularity (Ranginwala & Towbin, 2018). It was a logical progression to use social media to help ease the new teacher transition into the classroom. One of the greatest benefits of social media is that one can access people around the corner or around the globe any time of day. That kind of access to a mentor could be the difference between a new teacher feeling frustrated or reaching out to a fellow educator for advice.

The philosophical assumption for this research was ontological. Creswell (2013) explained that the focus of this type of research is based upon the lived perspectives and beliefs of the participants in a study. My ontological assumption is that each teacher will feel more

comfortable being guided through the difficulties that arise during a stressful transition into teaching. Each person will have to deal with daily challenges along the way. When there is someone to reach out to for help, the obstacle is easier to overcome. This research explored each teacher's reality and experiences from their first year in the classroom.

My epistemological assumptions are that genuine knowledge obtained during research is meaningful and trustworthy. Established qualitative methods were used to obtain accurate and reliable data for this research. Social constructivism was the paradigm that guided this research. The traditions, customs, and thoughts the educators have established through interactions with others within the school setting form a knowledge foundation. This blends a social aspect and a cultural component, forming the development of the learning environment (Bozkurt, 2017). Braun and Clarke (2013) described the constructivist epistemology as one that adjusts to the changes made to our realities based upon the facts of the world around us. They change and are formed and reformed by our interactions. These interactions were examined and compiled during this research.

Problem Statement

Previous research examined the duration, information, and values of a quality induction program (Saglam & Alan, 2018). There has been extensive research covering the high attrition rates for teachers in their first five years in the classroom (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Farrell, 2016; Glazer, 2018; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Perry & Hayes, 2011; Torenbeek & Peters, 2017; Verma, 2017; Weldon, 2018). Social media has been used as the topic of numerous research studies (Albert, 2015; Arshad & Akram, 2018; Bharucha, 2018; Chugh & Ruhi, 2018; Cooke, 2017; Hanson & Yoon, 2018; Neier & Zayer, 2015). The focus for most of the studies available is concerning student usage of social media at various levels of their education, providing

learning resources to students by means of social media, or continuing education for experienced teachers via social media platforms. However, even with the plethora of studies examining social media in educational settings, the use of social media by new teachers during induction has not been explored, leaving a gap in the literature. The problem this study investigated was to see if social media can be used to provide mentoring to first-year teachers that, if successful, may help them stay in the classroom.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. Social media is defined as blogging, discussion boards, Facebook, Google Hangouts, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, or YouTube videos. The theories guiding this study were the adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) and Bandura's (1985) social cognitive theory. Knowles' (1990) adult learning theory breaks down intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors to better understand how to teach adults. This can be used to help new teachers learn the skills they need to be successful. The social cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1985) relates to how adults learn and are motivated by following the examples of role models. The social media interaction explored during this study will share how new teachers responded to the experiences and advice provided by virtual role models.

Significance of the Study

The theoretical significance of this study may add to the body of knowledge in the areas of adult learning theory and social cognitive theory. Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) introduced the different motivations needed to engage adults. Andragogy explains the principles that set the stage for the adult learner to acquire new information (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson,

2011). Focusing only on the topics to be taught will not help the adult learner. Andragogy involves concentrating on learners and what will best motivate them to retain the information (Mansfield & Stacy, 2017). The delivery of a lesson should be grounded in andragogy for it to be effective (Rismiyanto, Saleh, & Mujiyanto, 2018). Building on assumptions of andragogy creates a framework that allows the educator to present new information in a way that adults can associate connections between conceptual learning and performance (McCauley, Hammer, & Hinojosa, 2017).

Using the social cognitive theory, Bandura (1985) explained that having a role model to demonstrate and discuss what to do is important when learning new skills. This theory describes why having a mentor who demonstrates how a new teacher can be successful is a beneficial part of an induction program (Zembytska, 2016). The importance of selecting a positive role model must also be addressed. If someone is not happy in their mentor role, they could just as easily be demonstrating negative behavior (Wrye & Pruitt, 2017). This study may provide additional support for Bandura's theory by showing that the social cognitive theory is relevant to new teachers in a virtual environment as well as a classroom environment.

The empirical significance of the study may help to identify new methods of support for first year teachers through social media. The exploration of the use of social media during teacher induction may help to fill the gap in current literature and serve as a starting point for future research as more developments continue in both teacher induction and social media applications. On the simplest level, social media support could be the encouragement to keep teachers from leaving their jobs in the first few years (Hanson & Yoon, 2018). When new teachers stay on the job, the benefits would be reaped by students who maintain continuity in their classroom (Blake, 2017). The rest of the educational team also benefit from the improved

retention as well as the teachers who stay in the profession for which they trained (Cross &

Thomas, 2017).

The practical significance of this study is that it may provide additional help for educators

as they are facing many difficult situations. New teachers often experience many challenges

their first year, and having a mentor who will help them overcome their struggles by sharing

previous teaching predicaments may help novice teachers (Daly & Milton, 2017). If

inexperienced teachers receive guidance and positive reinforcement from their mentors, the new

teachers can connect their skills discussed in a beneficial way (Kandemir & Akbas-Perkmen,

2017). A role model could also show a recorded video that demonstrates the exact way to do

something in the classroom environment (Ünsal, 2018). In an informal learning environment,

new teachers could comfortably use their personal electronic devices, like a phone or a tablet, to

ask a question or draw on previously discussed topics in real time (Viberg & Grönlund, 2017).

Research Questions

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the

perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year

of teaching during new teacher induction. The theoretical framework used to create the research

questions were guided by adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) and social cognitive theory

(Bandura, 1985). Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) explains how teachers learn to be

educators. By applying this learning theory with today's developing technology, adult educators

may benefit from and develop new learning opportunities (Yarbrough, 2018). Social cognitive

theory (Bandura, 1985) focuses on learning from modeled behavior as well as how personal and

environmental factors affect individuals.

Central Research Question: What role does social media play in the new teacher induction experience?

Many studies have explored the use of social media in education. These studies mainly focused on working with students (Cooke, 2017), teaching in higher education (Karim & Gide, 2017), or creating educational materials (Prasojo et al., 2017). For most of the research, social media contact was viewed as an additional source of information and feedback (De León, Peña, & Whitacre, 2010), rather than a primary communication tool. This research seeks to understand what role social medial can play during the first year in the classroom.

Sub-Question 1: What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play during the new teacher induction experience?

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) explains that having a mentor or role model can provide a positive effect on learning new skills. Social cognitive theory helps explain the transition from behaviors that are observed to how this information will be absorbed and reused by the learner (Connolly, 2017). Williams and Kim (2011) examined a group of graduate students in an online program who worked with an e-mentor. Of the 53 students who were paired with mentors, 100% completed the course and all the e-mentors who started the project returned for a second year of mentoring. This was a win-win proposal where the educators and the students all achieved great success. In this instance, virtual mentoring was successful with graduate students.

Sub-Question 2: How do second and third year teachers describe their use of social media during their new teacher induction year?

Some school districts have recognized the need for continuing assistance after formal induction has been completed. By setting up a virtual repository for advice, tools, discussion

boards, continuing education and e-mentoring, teachers will still have electronic resources available (Kahraman & Kuzu, 2016). New advances in technology and communication are happening so quickly that educational resources cannot keep up with the transition (Borba, Chiari, & de Almeida, 2018). Williams et al. (2012) explained that by utilizing these advancements such as "e-mail, video-conferencing, voice mail, and other electronic means, e-mentoring can be used as an innovative tool where shared knowledge can be transferred in a synchronous and asynchronous format" (p. 235).

Sub-Question 3: When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher?

The first year in the classroom can be a very difficult experience for new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Hartung and Harvey (2015) created a new teacher induction program using Goggle Hangout as a virtual meeting space where teachers were able to freely share ideas and get help with issues they encountered. During the induction curriculum development phase, the research identified networking as an essential component for teachers to share concerns and support. Having a mentor to guide teachers through the difficult first years in the classroom can easily be the one factor to keep a new teacher in the classroom (Perry & Hayes, 2011). While technology makes new ways of learning in a virtual environment possible, the lessons should be rooted in the concepts of adult learning theory (Yarbrough, 2018).

Many school districts do not have resources to provide mentors who can help new teachers whenever they have questions or need support. By using social media and the variety of communication modes available, there is a world of opportunity to provide the support needed to guide new teachers through the difficulties of the first year in the classroom and beyond. Their excitement and enthusiasm for education and working with their students will bring a fresh

perspective and new opportunities for learning (Gee & Gonsier-Gerdin, 2018). When teachers

have the learning resources, they are more likely to stay in the classroom (Baker-Gardner, 2016).

The students they teach will have continuity and better outcomes in the classroom (Wong &

Luft, 2015). School administration does not have to bear the burden of teacher turnover and the

expense of hiring and training new educators (Dunn & Downey, 2018).

Definitions

Terms pertinent to this research study are defined below:

1. *Social Media* – Any digital medium allowing its users to interact, communicate, and

   utilize information. Many of these focus on building a user profile and creating

   connections and linking with friends and associates. Different sites focus on various

   types of sharing to include pictures, videos, and stories. Some sites protect a user's

   identity and others can be shared with anyone (Veletsianos, Kimmons, Shaw, Pasquini, &

   Woodward, 2017).

2. *Teacher Induction* – A training program created to assist new teachers with making the

   transition from being a student to a teacher in the classroom. A review of induction

   programs from the last 15 years shows a shifting of focus from poorly-funded curricula

   and agendas that resembled a small training class to more mandated programs that are

   tied to organized, official, school-based programs offering teacher-centered mentoring

   and training (Simmie, Paor, Liston, & O'Shea, 2017).

Summary

The problem this study investigated was to see if social media could be used to provide

mentoring to first-year teachers that may help them stay in the classroom. There are numerous

studies that examine attrition for beginning teachers (Dunn & Downey, 2018; Glazer, 2018;

Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Torenbeek & Peters, 2017; Weldon, 2018). What constitutes an effective induction program has been studied (Alhamad, 2018; Hartung & Harvey, 2015; Kearney, 2016; Kozikoğlu, 2018; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). While there have been many studies that explore the use of social media in education (Arshad & Akram, 2018; Albert, 2015; Bharucha, 2018; Cooke, 2017; Sutherland & Ho, 2017; Szeto, Cheng, & Hong, 2016), using social media as part of an induction program has not been examined. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter gives more insight into the theoretical framework that was used to develop this study. In addition, there is a thorough look at the current literature on the topics of new teacher induction, teacher attrition, teacher mentoring, and the use of social media in education. The synthesis of this research presents a clear view of the gap that exists exploring the use of mentoring during new teacher induction using social media. This transcendental phenomenological study has been designed to understand the use of social media for new teachers during their first year in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was created using adult learning theory developed by Knowles (1990) and social cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1985). Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) was selected because it highlights the rationale behind why adults are inspired to learn. The adult learning theory is based upon six assumptions that explain how each person's individual needs play an important role in his or her motivation to learn (Beard, 2017). The second theory used in the formation of this research was social cognitive theory that Bandura (1985) helped develop. The social cognitive theory is grounded in the causational influences formed during interaction between people, their behavior, and the external pressures they feel from their cultural and community relationships.

Adult Learning Theory

Knowles (1990) explained through the adult learning theory why adults learn the way they do. The concept of andragogy versus pedagogy explains how adults learn differently than children. Knowles (1990) was one of the first to bring the idea of adult learners needing a

different style of teaching than children to the educational world. His concepts for teaching

adults was called andragogy. Years later other educators have expanded and updated this theory.

The topic of a learning need is discussed in the update (Knowles et al., 2011). An adult learner

will realize a missing area of knowledge that is required to be successful and will work to take

the necessary steps to gain access to the data needed (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 124). This

personal evaluation will motivate an adult learner to obtain the information to improve their

knowledge. Having a basic understanding of what it takes to keep adult learners motivated to be

successful and see the value of the information being supplied is an important foundation to

building any successful educational program for adults. When looking at the fundamentals of

adult learning theory, Knowles (1990) explained that "andragogy presents the core principles of

adult learning that in turn enable those designing and conducting adult learning to build more

effective learning processes for adults" (p. 2). This theory can be applied to helping mentors

guide new teachers who are seeking the best ways to teach children.

The andragogy model is based upon assumptions that developed and expanded over the

years as the adult learning theory developed (Knowles et al., 2011). The assumptions explain

why adults will be motivated to learn and how they will use personal life experiences as a lens to

view the new knowledge they are gaining. Knowles (1990) believed that when adults are

intrinsically motivated and they see the personal value of the information they are learning, they

will be more motivated to absorb and retain the knowledge. This may be the same for new

teachers who see the value of an induction program and the knowledge that can be gained by

working with a seasoned educator (Meizlish, Wright, Howard, & Kaplan, 2018). When an adults

believe they are ready to learn something, they will make the learning a priority. For the purpose

of this study, new teachers will understand the benefits of what they can learn from their mentor.

These new teachers will also use their years of pre-service training as a foundation to build and update their educator skills. Another assumption in the andragogical model is grounded in orientation to learning. Adults focus on what will help them tackle issues in their life. McCauley et al. (2017) agreed that "the learners' self-concept, the role of experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, motivation, and the need to know" (p. 312) all should be considered when developing any type of adult learning program. No matter if the issues are social or professional, if whatever they need to learn can help to manage a problem or perform a needed skill, they will be motivated to learn. These assumptions combine to form the basis of adult learning theory.

Adult students start their coursework leaning heavily on their instructor (Arghode, Brieger, & McLean, 2017). As adult students becomes comfortable and see learning improvement, they develop a more independent approach to learning. Abela (2009) agreed that andragogy explained how adults learn, but he also believed that there were other factors that were necessary for adults to be engaged in the learning process. While andragogy cited intrinsic motivation, it is also important to provide extrinsic motivation. Carter, Solberg, and Solberg (2017) found they could motivate their faculty to learn an online training by using incentives to help others. Their faculty was inspired to help other faculty at remote facilities without face-to-face access. This extrinsic motivation was the only way to bypass the reluctance to break away from a face-to-face teaching environment.

Taylor and Kroth (2009) explained how adult learning theory evolved and developed. They described how the concept that adults learned differently than children started in Europe in 1833 when an educator expounded upon Plato's philosophy that teaching young adults was different than children. Thorndike (1913) and Lindeman (1926) worked on the idea until the

middle 1900s. In 1968 the term andragogy was coupled with the theory by Knowles. Taylor and Kroth (2009) explained the first assumption of andragogy is that adults need to feel as though they are in control of their own life. They must also believe that they will be able to put whatever they learn into practice to solve current problems. Another assumption is that adults will be more enthusiastic about learning when they are intrinsically motivated. The last assumption theorized about adult learners was that they needed to know the why behind the what. Yelich Biniecki and Conceição (2016) used the assumptions of adult learning theory to create a visual learning experience. They found it was a positive way to engage adult learners in formal and informal learning environments by involving them in critical analysis and development of knowledge. Yarbrough (2018) agreed that the only way to achieve a superior online learning environment was to build it using the concepts explained in the adult learning theory.

Knowles et al. (2011) published an updated version of the adult learner that expanded on the foundation Knowles had built. The newest chapters address some of the future ideas in adult learning theory including the "theory of effective computer-based instruction for adults" (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 301). This theory is examined exclusively from the perspective of adult learning. This type of continued development and growth, building upon solid educational foundation, is comparable to the idea of using social media and remote online communication between experienced educators and new teachers during their induction training. Arghode et al. (2017) believed that "if educators design online activities, blogs and discussion forums while taking into consideration how learners can relate well with the concepts, for example, by incorporating relevant examples, an improved learning state can be achieved" (p. 602). By continuing to develop more interactive learning experiences for adult learners, the online

environment may provide a better quality educational encounter that can be delivered with more flexibility, variety, and convenience.

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) is the second theory used in the theoretical framework. This theory explains that people learn better when they observe others. After observing the behavior, cause, and results, people will model the same behavior. The theory has been broken down in different ways including how individuals use this type of learning to advance and develop themselves (Soponaru, Dîrtu, Ciuhodaru, & Iorga, 2016). It should also be noted that just as people can model positive behavior to gain benefits, negative behaviors may also be exhibited (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

Bandura (2018) explained that personal, behavioral, and environmental forces worked together: "Because personal influences play an influential role in the casual mix, people have a hand in shaping events and the courses their lives take" (p. 130). While in the past, modelling may have been one person imitating another, today it is recognized more for intellectual and behavioral changes made based upon what was witnessed (Connolly, 2017). People can ultimately use the guidance they receive in positive or negative ways. This places a more important burden on someone demonstrating the right way to manage, lead, and be successful in a new classroom environment. Exploring the use of an online component during new teacher induction may also discover if a mentor or role model can demonstrate observed behavior in a virtual environment using social media. Williams (2017) explained that when placed in new situations, students will more quickly adapt and feel confidence when they observe their peers as they navigate through the new circumstances: "Social learning theory is an effective way to engage all learners and help them to adapt to the learning environment" (p. 263). In some school

districts there may not be a mentor available to new teachers or there could be an induction

program that does not include a mentoring component. It is also possible that the mentors may

feel as though they are already overloaded with work and do not have the time to dedicate to be a

role model or mentor (Flores, 2017).

If no role model or mentor is available in person, perhaps a virtual mentor could fill the

void. Research by Wade, Bohac, and Platt (2013) supports that technology is readily available

"to provide e-learning, videoconferencing, virtual observations, and immediate feedback on

instructional delivery, or classroom management strategies to beginning and in-service teachers

in multiple environments" (p. 29). One study identified new courses being delivered online to

help train new teacher mentors (Fransson, 2016). Fransson (2016) found several mentors who

took part in the training but were concerned about the course because they were technologically

challenged. During interviews at the completion of the class, these new teacher mentors

commented how quickly they adapted to the online environment and felt more confident after

using videoconferencing applications. This type of positive outcome for the mentors who were

skeptical about working with technology is a promising result. If training programs like this can

be delivered to potential mentors who have a passion to help guide new educators during their

induction period, perhaps using the concepts of social cognitive theory can help virtually educate

new teachers.

Frerichs, Fenton, and Wingert (2018) explained the importance of providing an

educational online resource in a social learning environment. Their study concluded that the

website "Click2science" (Frerichs et al., 2018, p. 120) provided an excellent blend of online

learning resources for the professional development of teachers. When mentors and rookie

educators can view classroom scenarios and discuss how each situation could be handled in their

own school, new teachers gain valuable insights. Deeming and Johnson (2009) explained that when behavior is observed and learned by peers, the resulting effect can be very significant. When peers have success, they are modeling the way, and others will emulate them in the hope that they will achieve the same positive victory. Kurt (2016) used social cognitive theory to help guide and define his own theory on teacher leadership. Environmental and personal factors along with behavior were taken from Bandura (1985), and the concept of reciprocal causation is used to explain the effect the school environment has on teachers. While Kurt (2016) connected social cognitive theory to how organizational environments created at school effect how teachers feel about their work experiences, it also explains how this affects their behavior. This is another example of how social cognitive theory can be used to explain changes in attitudes and behaviors of teachers.

Related Literature

The current literature available was broken down into groups based upon the areas of focus during the research. The first area presented in the literature review is the topic of teacher induction. If teacher induction is executed successfully, novice educators feel more confident in their new environment (Howe, 2006). The second area in the literature review focuses on teacher attrition. The focus for attrition in recent years has centered upon reducing the numbers of new teachers who leave the field of education in the first five years and what can be done to improve retention of these novice teachers (Weldon, 2018). Teacher mentoring is the next area covered in the literature review. If a mentoring component is included as part of new teacher training, they may have the strong role model needed to be successful (Gilles et al., 2018). The final topic examined in the literature review is social media and its role in education.

Teacher Induction

The importance of teacher induction is not a new topic, but it appears to be one that has not been explored fully. The first year in the classroom is often challenging for new teachers as they enter a new learning environment that will test everything they have been taught (Harju & Niemi, 2018). New teacher induction is often the subject of research that seeks to find causes of teacher attrition and help increase retention. While finding a school district with an induction program for their new teachers is not unusual, "less than 1% of teachers actually receive what is considered a comprehensive induction" (Martin, Buelow, & Hoffman, 2015, p. 4). Some researchers believed the way to achieve an effective new teacher training program was to combine components like mentoring, professional development, and social collaboration with peers while focusing on leadership development (Polizzi et al., 2018). When multiple combined points of view are merged, the new teacher has an opportunity to gain numerous perspectives in a more positive educational focused community. In this type of environment, Polizzi el al. (2018) found that the new teachers increased their self-efficacy and felt more supported. While researching data from all 50 states concerning new teacher induction practices, Goldrick (2016) explained that 20% of all teachers in classrooms across the United States have three years' experience or less. This highlights the need for more standardized programs that help new teachers develop their skills as educators and members of the school community.

When students graduate from college and go out into the classroom to teach for the first time, they may not possess the necessary expertise and abilities needed to teach effectively. Alhamad (2018) completed a study exploring the need for new teacher induction for educators teaching English as foreign language (EFL) in another country. The mixed methods study found that the participants who were new to teaching did not have the skills necessary to manage the

classroom and all the proficiencies a seasoned teacher possessed. Alhamad recommended that novice educators should attend induction training as well as mentoring with an experienced teacher. Correll (2017) examined an approach to induction that involved the terminology of agency. Agency was defined as the "ability to make choices about and take an active role in deriving a course of action and adjusting a course as needed to reflect one's identity, competencies, knowledge and skills, mindsets, and values" (p. 54). This didn't just include the classroom but also the school, the district, and the educational system. Autonomy and ownership were keys to this successful induction program.

Participants in new teacher induction programs had a greater sense of job satisfaction. This was based upon a broad examination of 15 studies complied by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) on the effects of new teacher induction. The students of those teachers also showed an improvement in achievement test scores. The benefits of induction programs were also explained by Sadiq, Ramzan, and Akhtar (2017), who concluded the induction program was necessary for the new teacher to understand several areas like school culture, school organization, and especially classroom management skills. When principals were interviewed and asked about the readiness of new teachers to work in the classroom, Flores (2017) found that the majority of principals indicated that the teachers did not receive adequate training in several areas including classroom management and working with technology in the classroom. They were unprepared to step out of school as a student and into the role of teacher to complete daily assignments or work with students' parents. Dealing with the emerging issue of bullying in the classroom and conflict resolution made new teachers extremely uncomfortable (Harju & Niemi, 2018). This unpreparedness and the resulting frustrations for principals, teachers, and students could be reduced when these areas are included in an induction program. Induction programs

can focus on areas that have been identified as weaknesses for new teachers including administrative classroom duties and classroom management (Feng, Hodges, Waxman, & Joshi, 2019).

In an attempt to give new faculty a stronger foundation in the classroom, North Carolina created a new teacher support program (NTSP). The program was created by the faculty at the University of North Carolina. NTSP is a specific type of induction program aimed at helping new teachers in schools with the lowest student performance (Bastian & Marks, 2017). Morris (2015) explained that no matter what the induction may look like, it should include lesson planning, classroom and time management, an overview of pedagogy, student evaluation skills, and a professional assessment of one's own skills. The more in-depth and diverse the components of the induction program, the higher the retention of teachers (Wong & Luft, 2015). The students that new teachers are working with are more diverse and the need to adjust teaching style based upon student-centered learning is a serious demand in the classroom (Harju & Niemi, 2018).

Piot, Kelchtermans, and Ballet (2010) explained the experiences of new teachers in an induction program in multiethnic schools. Their research focused on the different induction experience for non-minority teachers who taught minority students. The Belgium induction study found that new teachers placed in schools with a very diverse blending of cultures and ethnicities had a great deal of difficulty adjusting to their first year in the classroom, and it created great stress for the new educators. Van Overschelde, Saunders, and Ash (2017) highlighted the realities of daily life in the classroom that inexperienced teachers are not always expecting. They explained that the shift from the mindset of a student, learning to be a teacher, to the realities and responsibilities of leading the class daily can be distressing. Every day in the

classroom is a new and unique challenge, but it is more challenging if one is already overwhelmed. These same types of struggles were seen in another study where new teachers were asked to select one word that could explain their feelings during the induction period and 33% used the word "torture" (Kozikoğlu, 2018, p, 18) to describe their induction process.

While induction programs are extremely valuable, the teachers they are working with need specialized skills to reach across different educational specialties (Washburn-Moses, 2010). One group that must tackle unique problems daily is teachers in special education. An important part of the induction program is partnering with a teacher who is experienced in what one is doing every day. Without a strong program to get them started correctly, doubts and fears of making mistakes become a part of daily life (Papi, 2018). This type of gap in training often results in negative feelings at work and higher attrition (Ahsan & Sharma, 2018). Similar research on the importance of a mentoring program was completed by Stanulis and Ames (2009). The induction program needs to be responsive to the needs of the new teacher. If the teacher is not comfortable and prepared in the classroom, the students will not get the attention they need. Van Overschelde et al. (2017) explained that new teachers who are unhappy transitioning into the classroom are more likely to leave the profession than those who develop their skills and a feeling of self-efficacy. This loss of new teachers leads to an added increase in teacher attrition.

Teacher Attrition

The teacher shortage problem has reached far beyond the United States. High attrition rates have reached epidemic proportions across the globe. Smith and Ulvik (2017) reported that 40% of Norwegian teachers had left the profession within the first year and a half. In England, Sims and Allen (2018) explained the teacher shortage has continued to grow and the highest attrition rates are seen among teachers in their first few years on the job. In an international

study, teachers who felt little job satisfaction and a lack of cooperation with co-workers led to a

40% attrition rate for the study participants (Whipp & Salin, 2018). When looking at teacher

attrition from a global perspective, Gallant and Riley (2014) found the same similarities between

Europe, North America, Australia, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. Their research

confirmed that the attrition rates were between 40 to 50% for teachers within their first five

years. Some countries will not release information on the number of teachers who leave but the

estimates cited by Arnup and Bowles (2016) agreed with the 40 to 50% range. Weldon (2018)

did an extensive report explaining that without official release of information from the

government of Australia, the only accurate attrition information would have to be used from

other nations or study estimates. These numerous studies confirm that this is a world-wide

situation that has not shown signs of improvement.

In the United States the teacher shortage caused by the high attrition rates is exacerbated

by unsuccessful efforts to bring experienced teachers to rural areas. Mathews, Rodgers, and

Youngs (2017) suggested that attrition could be improved with "sustained, structured support

consisting of larger networks" (p. 33) to help rural programs successfully attract and keep

teachers. The problems for finding and keeping new teachers is not exclusive to rural settings.

Teachers are particularly at risk for high attrition in inner city schools as well. Perry and Hayes

(2011) realized when teachers had to deal with minority issues on top of new teacher induction

challenges, they were at even higher risk for leaving. Induction for minority teachers was the

key to making the transition easier. Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) looked at the rates of attrition

for minority teachers and found it was higher that of their peers. They also found statistics that

showed that extra resources and induction supports could increase retention. Several programs

were developed in communities to support and cultivate minority graduates to stay locally and

enter teacher training courses, but almost half of these programs failed in the first 10 years (Gist, Bianco, & Lynn, 2019). Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) found high attrition rates where schools had higher student enrollment and significantly higher attrition rates for schools with lower income and minority students. Some of this may relate to a teacher's self-efficacy and lack of job satisfaction due to the added stress (Carmel & Badash, 2018).

The high attrition numbers continue to intensify as newly qualified teachers are replaced by other newly qualified teachers who often have even less experience. In the United States, the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) add additional stressors (Brownell, Bishop, & Sindelar, 2018). The Brownell et al. study cited mentoring as a key component of teacher induction as one way to help prepare new teachers to achieve the standards for the profession as well as having a positive impact on high teacher attrition. Gist et al. (2019) believed that attrition would continue to be a problem due to limited new teacher recruitment. They cited a report that found only 4% of students taking a college preparatory examination in high school in 2015 were interested in a teaching career. The lack of potential educators attending college could lead to a shortage of newly qualified teachers. While some believe that the high attrition numbers were due to retirements, Cancio et al. (2018) cited that 90% of California vacant teacher positions were available because teachers had left their jobs and the teaching profession entirely. Cancio et al. also explained that almost 60% of the teachers who left education did so because they were unhappy with the profession of teaching. This extreme level of dissatisfaction explains the high attrition rates being cited in numerous studies.

Different studies have been completed to find specifics for the high attrition rates. Anhorn (2008) quoted some first-year teachers, explaining they felt "overwhelmed, hectic, isolated, beaten down, unsupported, scared, humiliated, afraid, stressed, and drowning" (p. 15).

She also examined working conditions and circumstances contributing to those feelings. Some of the difficult tasks new teachers dealt with included the following:

> Classroom management and discipline, working with mainstreamed students, determining appropriate expectations for students, dealing with stress, handling angry parents, keeping up with paperwork, handling student conflicts, understanding pacing of lessons, utilizing varying teaching methods, dealing with students of varying abilities and feeling inadequate as a teacher are other areas of concern of first-year teachers. (p. 16)

These issues lead to the 42% attrition rate included in the study. Buchanan (2012) found similar results from a study in Australia that included feelings of isolation, being asked to teach classes they were not trained to teach, poor working conditions, large workload, and low salary. The teachers believed they were never adequately prepared to switch from being a student of education to being an educator of students. In a Canadian study, Le Maistre and Pare (2010) explained the pressure to adapt to any classroom environment takes its toll on new teachers. Being thrown into a situation they are not always ready for makes it difficult to fit comfortably in the classroom. "No other profession takes newly certified graduates, places them in the same situation as seasoned veterans, and gives them no organized support" (Le Maistre & Pare, 2010, p. 560).

One group that seems to feel the pain of teacher turnover is the special education department. When new special education teachers were asked why they thought other special education teachers would leave their jobs, the main reasons sounded like the same complaints other teachers have made and included huge workload, little or no support from peers or administration, and lack of training (Hagaman & Casey, 2018). The only unique complaint was the high maintenance workload that accompanied working with children with disabilities. In an

international study conducted by Papi (2018), 80% of new special education teachers complained about limited information explaining what the special needs of their students were. More than half of them also felt unprepared to tackle the classroom confrontations with students. Cancio et al. (2018) cited that special education teachers were unsatisfied with their jobs in addition to feeling over worked and under supported.

It appears this high attrition has developed into a normal expectation in the field. Lanas (2017) concluded a study on teacher turnover saying, "Attrition, here, presents itself not as an 'event', or 'turn' in the career path, but rather as an *ever-present possibility* which some beginning teachers *negotiate* with" (p. 75). This is particularly true during teacher induction. The shock of transitioning from being a highly regarded student to becoming a teacher is very well described in the study by Shayshon and Popper-Giveon (2017): "While students aspire to lead and influence the educational system, graduates mostly attempt to survive professionally, experiencing isolation and a need to adjust to their work environment" (p. 534). Horvath, Goodell, and Kosteas (2018) discussed the problem of high teacher attrition in their study conclusions explaining "these findings have implications for key stakeholders in teacher education including accrediting bodies, policy makers, and teacher educators alike" (p. 64).

The higher attrition rate seen in more recent studies is having a widespread impact on school staffing (Brownell et al., 2018). There are almost 20 states that are recruiting their own batch of new teachers from local high school students to backfill the growing shortage of teachers. There are large lists of reasons why teachers are leaving including the physical toll that the job stress has on new teachers (Gallant & Riley, 2017): "My health started really deteriorating, dramatically, sleep, weight gain. I was in trouble, deep, deep trouble" (p. 906). New teachers must deal with the issues they are exposed to in the classroom, but they also must

find a way to deal with their feelings of strife, worry, and disappointment. They feel they were

abandoned by the experienced educators who should have been helping to pave the way for the

next group of teachers (Rodrigues, de Pietri, Sanchez, & Kuchah, 2018). One way to help bond

the new and experienced teachers is with a mentoring program. In one teacher training program,

the learning experience was more effective when new teachers were interacting with their

coworkers and colleagues to acquire the new skills (Quinn & Kim, 2017). With high teacher

attrition being such a large global problem, perhaps retention of these novice educators can be

improved with more teacher mentoring.

Teacher Mentoring

Many people use the word coaching and the word mentoring synonymously. Mackie

(2018) explained that the process of coaching can improve the function of a team or a specific

ability for an individual. The process of mentoring suggests a highly skilled coworker

"supporting, challenging, and facilitating the learning of another" (Mackie, 2018, p. 623). While

a coaching will play a role in the mentoring process, when new teachers are faced with minimal

time to complete their daily tasks, they may become resistant to being coached (Jacobs,

Boardman, Potvin, & Wang, 2018). Many mentoring programs focus on retention or helping

with socialization, but they do not assist new teachers with the professional development skills

that will help add some balance to the growing list of tasks to be completed each day (Gardiner

& Weisling, 2018). A positive mentoring partnership is one that focuses on building personal

and professional development skills, helping the mentees to achieve their agreed upon goals

(Grace & Raghavendra, 2018).

Based upon extensive research that discusses the importance of providing a well-trained

and qualified mentor, Australia mandated that mentors be provided to new teachers during

induction (Schuck, Aubusson, Buchanan, Varadharajan, & Burke, 2018). Early career teachers (ECT) in Australia took part in a Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Almost 30% of the ECTs expressed difficulties managing their workload between preparing for classes and working at attaining their teacher accreditation. One of the frustrated ECTs commented, "I could work 24 hours a day and not get enough done for work" (Schuck et al., 2018, p. 216). Martin et al. (2015) believed there were two kinds of mentoring that new teachers needed. One mentor focus would be on meeting the needs that occurred on a regular basis like helping with paperwork completion, school supplies, and accomplishing daily tasks from an administrative perspective. The other mentor skills that would be needed would involve assistance with professional development and pedagogy.

When training programs are updated and improved upon, there is no guarantee that the changes will be implemented properly or that they will have the desired effects. Gjedia and Gardinier (2018) looked at the mentoring component that Albania mandated in 2011. When the law went into effect, there was a lack of quality mentors to help new teachers. Beutel et al. (2017) explained that mentoring would not be beneficial to new teachers if there wasn't a proper training venue available to educate potential mentors. The first formal school for mentors became accredited in Australia in 2014. In the United States there are no established guidelines that explain how mentoring will be done or what training a potential mentor should receive (Gardiner & Weisling, 2018). Each state makes its own determination for what type of induction new teachers will receive as well as if they will receive any type of mentoring. Goldrick (2016) found that "more than 30 states provide or require initial mentor training, but only 18 also require ongoing professional development for mentors" (p. 5). This lack of mentor training for most of the country puts the concept of quality mentoring on a questionable foundation.

Schleicher's (2015) findings from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) TALIS surveys emphasized that new teacher training needed to provide a varied teaching environment that involved working with other teachers and working in different school settings. A lengthier period of time would allow for a richer training experience that would improve the new teacher's self-confidence. "It is clear from TALIS data that teachers benefit from even minimal amounts of collaboration with colleagues" (Schleicher, 2015, p. 10). Working with mentors in the classroom, teacher observations and team-teaching opportunities all promoted new teacher growth. Many teachers believed that any form of mentoring and communication was positive (Heikkinen, Wilkinson, Aspfors, & Bristol, 2018). They also found the importance of distinguishing the role of the mentor from the role of the critic. This distinction was a finding in other studies on mentoring of teachers (Langdon & Ward, 2015).

When new teachers enter their first school, many of them do not know the difference between an induction program or mentoring and believe they are the same thing (Moss, 2010). Howe (2006) explained that teacher induction programs are designed to transition a novice educator into a professional teacher. He also concluded that a program should be comprised of various components "including acculturation through preservice, in-service, formal, informal and nonformal teacher education" (Howe, 2006, p. 295). Therefore, a mentoring element can be a part of an induction program, but an induction program should be made up of various elements to ensure a well-rounded educational experience for new teachers. While conducting a meta-synthesis of 37 papers on the topic of mentoring in education, Castanheira (2016) defined the mentoring process as one where a seasoned individual would provide a novice with guidance and support covering a variety of topics specific to the needs of their particular specialty. These

insights should be germane to personal and professional growth as well as educational

advancement.

Mentoring programs for novice teachers have been around for more than 40 years (Beek,

Zuiker, & Zwart, 2019). Without proper guidance on mentoring techniques, untrained mentors

may only encourage new teachers to follow their mentor's personal style and not necessarily the

best educational teaching method. Ambrosetti (2014) cautioned that not every good teacher

would have the skills to be a good mentor. Mentoring is not a skill most people inherit. Kupila,

Ukkonen-Mikkola, and Rantala (2017) found that after training and education, new mentors

realized that with some focus they could provide very meaningful assistance to new teachers.

When a mentor training curriculum is being developed, it is critical that elements about the

program are shared with the participants and they feel comfortable letting their mentor know

what their priority is as well (Rowe-Johnson, 2018). The key part of training for the mentors

was to understand the need for new teachers to feel comfortable communicating with them

(Barrera, Braley, & Slate, 2010; Rideout & Windle, 2010). Teachers were not the only ones who

were looked upon as mentors. Support staff at school could also play a role in the mentoring

process (Hudson, 2012).

Another area of mentoring that should be mentioned is peer to peer. Peer-to-peer

mentoring has been a well-researched topic. Altayli and Dagli (2018) completed research that

looked at the importance of adapting the first training received by pre-service educators. They

found that peer-to-peer mentoring was the most comfortable resource that students of teaching

utilized during their educational process. They had no difficulties asking questions of their peers

or sharing difficulties encountered during student teaching. This development of a strong peer-

to-peer network can be a powerful resource to help new teachers deal with the many challenges

of their first few years on the job. Sibiya, Ngxongo, and Beepat (2018) cautioned that peer

mentoring would be more effective if there were structured systems in place to ensure a

consistent experience for the participants.

A different version of mentoring similar to peer to peer is called near-peer mentoring.

Near-peer mentoring is when the mentor has at least one year of experience or more than the

protégé (Akinla, Hagan, & Atiomo, 2018). This research involved higher education students and

was a beneficial tool to improve the attrition rates of students while helping them find their way

comfortably in a new social environment. Another higher education mentoring program

involved students studying for a doctorate in education (EdD). Lowery, Geesa, and McConnell

(2018) explained the importance of setting specific mentoring guidelines to produce academic

benefits to students as well as social benefits. The researchers also found over 50 different

definitions for the term mentoring during their literature review. This further highlights the need

for a well-defined mentoring curriculum where all parties involved in the process understand the

guidelines, rules, and goals of the program. Even though these studies focused specifically on

higher education students, it still may be a possible tool to be used with new teachers in their first

two years of transition.

Sometimes the mentoring can come from a group and not a one-on-one situation.

Recchia and Puig (2019) were part of a university-based program that helped to develop new

educators. They asked their new teachers what type of educational program they believed would

be most beneficial to them after they went out into the field. The new teachers asked for a

community support group made up of peers with a widespread area of expertise. They wanted

diversity and the ability to swap tips and techniques that would be helpful in the classroom on a

daily basis. The university group developed a community of support using teachers from

numerous educational environments. They met each month in a facilitated meeting and helped participants cultivate new skills to improve their daily classroom life and address workplace weaknesses and strengths with the group. This peer-based networking can serve many purposes and produce multiple benefits. One positive side of the peer-based mentoring is the lack of a power struggle. The participants do not feel as though they are being judged or that there will be repercussions that will show up in work-based performance evaluations (Brinia & Psoni, 2018). The collaborative relationship that the peers develop also helps to foster a sense of community, self-efficacy, and academic excellence.

Another type of support group is called a professional development community. Pellegrino, Kastner, Reese, and Russell (2018) participated in a professional development community and provided documentation to explain the benefits of this combination of peer mentoring and community support. The group participants explained how the sense of support, cooperation, and camaraderie helped the four teachers stay on the job and work through whatever obstacles they encountered. One group member added about her work with the community for 34 months, "I think this group provided an anchor for most of us during some turbulent transitions" (Pellegrino et al., 2018, p. 146). Damjanovic and Blank (2018) called their group a professional learning community. Their findings demonstrated how teachers could break away from the feelings of educational isolation and share experiences that help foster a sense of collaboration with a team. The process takes time to build trust, but the forum allows for a safe space to grow and share as an educator.

Kensington-Miller (2017) examined a community of practice that focused on working out issues as a group and meeting with peer mentors. "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their

knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4). The peer mentors developed a strong working relationship based upon specific assignments they completed and then presented their findings during group meetings (Kensington-Miller, 2017). They found that by having an assignment to focus their efforts on, the teams of peer mentors quickly focused on the tasks they had and did not get distracted by their new working collaboration. This community of practice was designed to help teachers working at a university to acclimate themselves to the unique and demanding environment at that level of education. The biggest complaint from new educators was about the pressure to fit into their specific department, create engaging lessons, all while continuing to produce publishable research.

Moskowitz and Stephens (1997) explained that "mentoring is a main feature in all fairly well-developed or formal teacher induction programs, and a highly regarded practice" (p. 22). They cite the mentoring component as an important part of the induction program for educators from countries around the world including Australia, Canada, China, Republic of Korea, and the United States. Sometimes the mentoring role is not always formal when a teacher starts at a school that does not have a mentoring or induction program. There have been several cases where an informal mentoring relationship developed over time and was very helpful (Piot et al., 2010). When the new teachers realized that their mentors followed up and assisted them whenever they were asked, they were reassured and relaxed when difficulties presented themselves. Abad and Pineda (2018) concluded in their study that the mentors benefited by improving their knowledge and strengthening their identity as a teacher. This same benefit for mentors was also found by Holland (2018) where a mentoring community was developed. The mentors would share tips, demonstrations, and explanations for how they helped new teachers to

overcome different obstacles or learn beneficial skills. In the end, the mentors believed they grew in their abilities to mentor and teach.

As the importance of the mentoring component became the focus of more studies, new thoughts emerged on the effectiveness of a mentor in the same field as the teachers they were mentoring. This was what Luft (2009) studied with 114 science teachers during their induction period. They focused the induction mentoring so all the mentors were science teachers working in close proximity as well. The new teachers felt they received benefits from working with an experienced teacher who was physically close during the induction period. While that study may show a positive outcome, every school does not have the resources to conduct the same type of mentoring. As schools globally focus to keep up with teaching science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), how these subjects will be taught and what training the teacher needs is creating more struggles in the classroom (Pollard, Hains-Wesson, & Young, 2018). In Thailand, teachers were placed in an environment where there was no access to STEM trained mentors or STEM-focused induction materials. New teachers felt very aware of the lack of resources to help them adjust to their new positions (Srikoom, Hanuscin, & Faikhamta, 2017).

When there is a shortage of qualified teachers in a specific field of education, it goes without saying that there will also be a shortage of qualified mentors (Nowikowski, 2017). For the teachers who are in the field and qualified to be a mentor, they are bombarded and overwhelmed by the day-to-day teacher requirements and do not believe they have the time to dedicate to being a mentor (Griffith & Dasgupta, 2018). Uğraş and Genç (2018) found the STEM mentors listed problems with "lack of time, lack of resources, lack of professional development, lack of knowledge on STEM disciplines, lack of parental participation and teachers' reluctance to collaborate" (p. 732). Jones, Dana, Laframenta, Adams and Arnold

(2016) reported in their study about a shortage of STEM teachers at schools in the state of Florida. In response to the shortage of training available, the University of Florida created an induction program that STEM teachers could access online. New STEM teachers want to get help from mentors who know and understand STEM coursework. They want mentoring in lesson planning, classroom management, student engagement and teaching strategies (Nowikowski, 2017). If a lack of qualified mentors exists either at the school level or in the school district, a virtual mentor who is well trained and enthusiastic about mentoring a new teacher might be a perfect fit.

Another area of mentoring research has emerged over the last several years. Manning and Hobson (2017) explained that judgementoring was when the teacher being mentored felt the mentor they were working with was more judgmental in their evaluation than developmental. This precautionary word was created to point out some of the issues that can arise when mentoring is not completed properly. Hobson (2016) explained that judgementoring could become an issue, but there were certain ways to avoid that type of mentoring. One method was to ensure that the mentors were not direct supervisors of the teacher or not in a power role where they would provide any type of evaluation. Clutterbuck, Kochan, Lunsford, Dominguez, and Haddock-Millar (2017) devoted a chapter of their handbook of mentoring to cover the difficulties faced by new teachers when their experiences with mentors become toxic and discourage them from wanting to participate. One contributor to the book described their experiences as disheartened and being made to feel like a worthless piece of trash. This is not what mentoring of new teachers was set up to accomplish. Another way to avoid any possible judgementoring was to involve mentors from outside of the school district where the teachers worked. McIntyre and Hobson (2016) focused their research on "external mentors" (p. 136) who

were subject matter experts in the area the new teacher worked and held no responsibility in evaluating the professional performance of the educator.

When placed in a new environment, teachers want to have a guide who will not just talk them through what is happening but one who will show them how to do it. New teachers want to observe excellence in the classroom (Sadiq et al., 2017). In the Sadiq et al. (2017) study, they specifically wanted to work with a mentor to gain experience with "system requirements, pedagogical knowledge, modeling and feedback procedure" (p. 132). The mentor role is as important to the mentor as it is the mentee (Bressman, Winter, & Efron, 2018). If they are trained properly, all experienced teachers can receive the benefits of professional growth by helping mentor and advise new teaching staff. Research has shown that at times, mentors may face pressure from school administrators who want to make certain their goals for new teachers are a top priority. Some mentors feel intimidated and pressured to ensure an administrator's goals are met (Gardiner & Weisling, 2018). As the literature has demonstrated, not all schools can provide new teacher induction training, and all induction programs may not contain a mentor component. One possible solution to providing a mentor to each new teacher may be by using social media to access talented, experienced, companionate, quality educators.

The best-case scenario for providing a positive environment in which new teachers can learn would be one that utilizes all the areas that have been discussed so far. The closest the research has come to this was looking at a community of practice group discussed earlier in this chapter. This type of community of practice may be beneficial to first year teachers to supplement their induction education. Providing a collegial environment where mentoring can take place in a social and educational setting should supply new educators a sense of inclusion (Kensington-Miller, 2017). Schuck et al. (2018) found that some early career teachers had

difficulties working with senior colleagues. The politics of the classroom and the teacher's

lounge were very uncomfortable for the newer staff. Some teachers reported feeling bullied by

both senior staff and students (Mannix-McNamara, Fitzpatrick, MacCurtain, & O'Brien, 2018).

Kensington-Miller (2017) also warned that when new and experienced teachers were stressed

and struggling, the mentoring relationship could become pessimistic and even dysfunctional.

The mentoring relationship must be cultivated carefully. With such a vast amount of research to

support the positive impact that mentoring can have on novice educators (Chizhik, Chizhik,

Close, & Gallego, 2018; Gardiner & Weisling, 2018; Mackie, 2018; Martin et al. 2015; Moss,

2010; Schuck et al., 2018), the next step may be to develop a virtual resource of mentors that can

be accessed by new teachers in an easier manner.

Social Media

There has been a great deal of literature available about social media and education but

the majority of research focuses on other areas of education. Using an online support group to

ease the stress of student teaching was the closest to use of social media found in any current

research. The participants in the study were student teachers who were still completing their

education, but they were encouraged to post their experiences, ideas, and frustration online and

share with other students (De León et al., 2010). Their study concluded that this type of

communication and sharing was very beneficial to the support group as well as the participants.

When they interviewed the participants, they said they felt "a deep need to discuss and reflect on

the events that occur during student teaching" (De León et al., 2010, p. 363). The need to share

and support one another is a common theme online. Cherubini et al. (2011) examined another

group of students in an online study community who worked to support each other in a virtual

environment and participated in a research study. These researchers asked what the sense of

community was like for students communicating online and found the ongoing communication between the novice teacher and the mentor was enriched when they shared experiences and advice outside of the classroom environment. This type of research could relate to new teachers working in online communities to communicate during their induction year. Although social media was never specifically mentioned in this research as a way to exchange their experiences, it has been found to be useful in other studies.

Social media from the perspective of a student in a middle or high school environment would be a more normal medium for education (Albert, 2015). With more than 75% of students using Facebook and Twitter, "social media also can be used for educational purposes and facilitate learning experiences that may be cumbersome, time-consuming, or not possible in a traditional brick-and-mortar setting" (Albert, 2015, p. 31). Neier and Zayer (2015) found that students enjoyed the opportunity to use social media for educational purposes because they were excited by the ability to work interactively. Expressing ideas through conversations online helped students feel closer to their classmates and their teacher. Access to research through numerous fields of study has taken a huge step forward thanks to the creation in 2004 of Google Scholar. Martín-Martín, Orduna-Malea, Thelwall, and Delgado López-Cózar (2018) examined the enormous amount of data available for research in one location that can highlight citation information. They determined that Google Scholar, despite being relatively new, was capable of providing a significant supply of information covering huge amounts of data while outperforming other educational databases that were thought to be far superior.

Students in university settings have participated in numerous studies to see the benefits of working with groups using social media. The acceptance and ease of use of social media were the driving forces behind the studies. Chugh and Ruhi (2018) explained that "social media can

be utilized to deliver teaching material, educational information, updates and facilitate communication and collaboration" (p. 606). A study conducted at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine explored the use of social media using a Twitter page for healthcare education and communication for medical students (Galiatsatos, Porto-Carreiro, Hayashi, Zakaria, & Christmas, 2016). The resident physicians worked long irregular hours and did not always have the flexibility to break away and attend structured classes with their hospital workload. The results were overwhelmingly popular and "after our Twitter page was launched, post surveys showed it was the most popular source for medical education" (Galiatsatos et al., 2016, p. 3). Given the number of hours of preparation time new teachers put in for each class, a flexible educational delivery system sounds like an appropriate fit. O'Brien and Freund (2018) found that "while Twitter is useful for short, frequent and instant communication, it is not appropriate for detailed discussion and reflection" (p. 13). They created a blog that students could use to upload papers and found that social media was a good complement to face-to-face communication by the student and the teacher.

College level students are ready, willing, and able to adopt social media platforms for use in school (Chawinga, 2017). The response to the use of this new technology was tremendous. Teachers seem to be the only lag in this equation. Old styles of teaching are really focused on the sending of information in one direction. When social media is involved and there is an open channel to share ideas and comments, new and old methodology can form a blended program that will prove more effective. Peruta and Shields (2017) posited that when it comes to communication with college level students who are considered "digital natives" (p. 132), the easiest way is through social media platforms. When Cooke (2017) interviewed undergraduate students who had worked with social media as a delivery system for coursework, they believed

the educational environment was improved by the use of social media. Students also felt the addition of social medial use should be complementary to the classroom experience. Similar findings occurred at universities in Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Arshad & Akram, 2018). Social media was quickly accepted as an educational platform and allowed for a broader range of collaboration between students and educators.

The research performed with higher education students and social media have not only shown that young adults are extremely open to utilizing it in the classroom but that "students today learn in a totally different way than the earlier generations did" (Bharucha, 2018, p. 208). The broad reach students in India gain with their technology is having a positive impact on the ability to elevate their socioeconomic status.

Another area of research has been social media use by teachers. Bergviken Rensfeldt, Hillman, and Selwyn (2018) found that social media was currently being used in Australia as assignments and supplementary lessons through Facebook and Twitter. The newest aspect has been teacher use of social media for continuing education. Forbes (2017) experienced both ends of the social media swing as new teachers and student teachers are over excited to jump into social media use with students. They found that the teachers either do not have the technical expertise to pull it off, or go too far, and find themselves in trouble. Some of the attitudes of the teachers that Forbes encountered were a nightmare of possible identity theft or unprofessional information disclosure making some want no part of anything digital. This same type of attitude is shared by administrators. As school administrators attempted to maintain an online presence, they also needed to uphold professional and educational characteristics (Cho & Jimerson, 2017). Maintaining the line in a peer-to-peer environment would require significantly less stress and scrutiny.

When special needs teachers working in an environment that did not include an experienced teacher needed assistance with their students with disabilities, they explored the issues they were dealing with through online Internet searches (Papi, 2018). The new teachers also searched for activities, games, blogs, and videos to help make their work in the classroom more productive. More teachers are actively searching online to look for resources not just for the classroom but for professional development. Rosell-Aguilar (2018) found that a large group of educators was creating their own international learning community via their mobile devices using Twitter. Teachers are taking the lead using the hashtag "edutwitter" (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018, p. 3) to reach out and share ideas and opportunities for mobile learning.

Marin Diaz, Vazquez Martinez, and McMullin (2014) pointed out the negative and positive aspects of the growth of global Internet development. All students do not have Internet access. In areas of poverty, there will likely be a shortage of connectivity availability due to the cost of electronic devices. Those who do have access to the Internet may face a "lack of knowledge of linguistic codes generated by some tools" (p. 96). Understanding the proper use of emojis while texting is one example. Teachers may have to address their learning curve to keep up with the current trends. With the increase in personal use of electronics, the teachers in the field are more tech savvy, but the use of new classroom technology should be built into continued teacher education.

The idea of a virtual mentor has been mentioned more often in recent studies. Bressman et al. (2018) concluded in their study that new mentoring models be designed that "utilize video and other emerging technologies to facilitate mentor-mentee pairings if face-to-face time is not feasible" (p. 169). They also discussed using other technology to allow for virtual observations, advising, and team building. Online support has been used in the past with pre-service teachers

(Strycker, 2012). Student teachers have been the focus of social media studies in several cases; they usually focus on the use technology to teach in the classroom. I-Chun (2012) did research about an educational community online; however, the study did not focus specifically on new teacher needs. Anthony et al. (2011) also focused on learning communities, but they did not focus on new teachers. While these studies discuss online support, they cover student teachers, students, and experienced teachers. There was no study located that tested the use of social media and new communication technology to be more effective in mentoring new teachers.

In the first chapter of their qualitative research book, Caliandro and Gandini (2017) discussed the massive amount of data that are being accessed to explain how quickly the digital environment changes. Their source was from Domo (2014) and explained that there were over 100,000 tweets sent through Twitter every minute. The updated numbers four years later were nearly 500,000 tweets sent through Twitter in a minute in 2018 (Domo, 2018). They also cited that over 2,000,000 snaps were sent through Snapchat each minute. The numbers are staggering, but they demonstrate the exponential growth that has occurred in the popularity of social media in the last four years. The expected growth in the next 10 years will most likely continue if the past is any indication.

Summary

Chapter Two presented a theoretical framework that included concepts from adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) as the foundation for this dissertation. One of the basic principles of adult learning is that adults want to understand why they need to know what they are going to be taught. New teachers need the information or knowledge they will receive during induction. They understand that what they will learn will help make them a more effective educator. The perceived benefit that will be

brought to them by learning what is going to be taught is understood. This theory is important to help understand how a new teacher induction program should be put together and how it will be presented to the teacher who will be participating. If new teachers do not see a benefit to learning, they will not find the motivation to actively participate in the training program. The second theory used in the theoretical framework is social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985). This explains how people model their behavior based on observation of others. This is pertinent because one of the key components of an effective induction program is working with a mentor. The mentor will be a well-qualified and experienced educator who is capable of not just sharing information but of being a superior role model.

This chapter also contained an exploration of related literature and outlined prior works on teacher induction, teacher attrition, teacher mentoring, and social media use. There has been extensive research covering new teacher induction programs. There were also numerous studies covering the mentoring component of the teacher induction program. Mentoring has also been explored when being delivered in a peer-to-peer environment. However, there was no empirical research that studied the perceptions of new teachers regarding the use of social networking during the induction period. There was some research concerning online communities of learning but that was focused upon students, experienced teachers, and online continuing education opportunities.

In a recent study by Choi, Cristol, and Gimbert (2018) the ability of teachers to be digital citizens was evaluated. Their conclusions included the following:

> The findings advocate that teacher educators, researchers, and policy makers need to understand how to engage teachers as responsible, informed, and engaged digital citizens in a globalized and networked society, by accounting for teachers' personal backgrounds,

Internet use, and self-efficacy towards successfully completing Internet-based activities.

(p. 154)

As student teachers continue to experience more web-based education before starting their careers in the classroom, they should efficiently and effectively make the transition to teaching and utilizing digital communication methods inside and outside of school.

With the exponential growth of digital and social media use (Domo, 2018), creating an online space where all new teachers would have access to a well-trained, high quality mentor should be a reality and not a virtual daydream. By advancing adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) onto a social media platform, new teachers can get the support they need to stay in the classroom. The ripple effect of new teachers staying in the classroom will have a positive effect on students, student assessments, school staff, school administration, school districts, and the communities they serve. There is a significant gap in the research, and this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study will fill that gap and allow future researchers to continue exploring the phenomenon.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. This chapter presents the design, research questions, participants, setting, and the procedures for the study. The researcher's role and how data were collected are also included. A breakdown of data analysis methodology following the seven steps outlined by Moustakas (1994) is contained in this chapter. Finally, trustworthiness aspects and ethical considerations are provided.

Design

This qualitative transcendental phenomenological design was selected to explore the rich textural details of the teacher induction experience. The perspective was from the new teacher who is returning for the second or third year. The study focused specifically on those teachers who used social media to communicate with other teachers during their new teacher induction year. The teachers communicated with peers or seasoned instructors using multiple social media platforms. The virtual peer or mentor relationship was a key aspect of this study.

A qualitative paradigm was selected for this research because it examined patterns as they developed during the study and allowed for shifting of the focus as new ideas were cultivated and matured throughout the process (Maxwell, 2013). When conducting qualitative research, the words of the participants are the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The perspective, thoughts, and feelings of the participants are the focus of the researcher (Morse, 2012).

Phenomenology is the study of the common experiences of a group of people (Creswell, 2013). Whatever the shared experience may be, a phenomenological approach attempts to

explain the happening or the event from the group's perspective. Moustakas (1994) explained that phenomenology seeks to provide the total viewpoint of whatever is being examined through specific detailed descriptions that bring the experience to life.

Moustakas (1994) explained the conceptual framework of transcendental phenomenology through the concepts of intentionality and intuition. For earlier philosophers, intentionality meant different things based upon their fields of study. Schwandt (2007) said, "Intentionality stresses the fundamental interaction of mind and world, subject and object" (p. 156). While some of what we are aware of may not be real, we are still experiencing the world around us and the things happening in it. The science of transcendental phenomenology is designed to explain the phenomenon being studied to create an awareness of the thoughts and spirits of those living through the experience. Transcendental phenomenology also requires the researcher to follow a process known as *epoche*. *Epoche* allows removal of the researcher's personal assumptions, deductions, presumptions, conclusions, and personal beliefs. Moustakas (1994) explained the difficulties researchers would face attempting to "set aside" (p. 88) their assumptions to achieve *epoche.* To ensure the *epoche* process was followed, any biases or preconceived beliefs that I encounter were recorded in my researcher's reflexive journal (see Appendix L). This reflexive journal contains notes of the encounter and its detailed descriptions of my thoughts and feelings as I completed the research.

This study of new teacher induction in the age of social media attempted to understand the experiences and perceptions of teachers who completed their first year of teaching while using social media to communicate with other teachers and are returning to the classroom for their second or third year. The study focused on their use of various types of social media to connect with other teachers and whether this connection helped improve their first-year transition

into the classroom. Transcendental phenomenology allowed a detailed exploration of the

thoughts, feelings, and incidents the new teachers encountered during their first year. This

meticulous understanding of the events allows the reader to get a sense of the journey a new

teacher undergoes. Transcendental phenomenology allowed me to capture the real-life essence

of the occurrence.

<div align="center">**Research Questions**</div>

The following questions were designed for this study:

Central Research Question: What role does social media play in the new teacher

induction experience?

Sub-Question 1: What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play

during the new teacher induction experience?

Sub-Question 2: How do second- or third-year teachers describe their use of social media

during their new teacher induction year?

Sub-Question 3: When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the

characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher?

<div align="center">**Setting**</div>

The setting for this research study was the Texas Independent School District (TISD;

pseudonym). This setting was selected because of the diverse demographic population of

students and teachers. The information regarding the demographics for the district is taken from

the 2018 website for the school district. The TISD is run by a superintendent who also serves as

the chief executive officer of the district. There is also a school board of education that consists

of trustees who are elected in each of the local districts within the area. The TISD contains over

100 schools including elementary, middle, and high schools. By selecting this large district,

there was a greater opportunity to attain a diverse group of participants. At the time of my study, there were over 5,000 full-time teachers and over 75,000 students enrolled. Over 50% of students were Hispanic, more than 20% African-American, and less than 15% White/Anglo. More than 75% of the students were economically disadvantaged; the Texas Education Agency (TEA) defines this as the percentage of students who qualify for government assistance, or to receive free or reduced priced meals.

The TISD had a new teacher induction program that was designed to acclimate teachers quickly to the district. Teacher expectations were explained along with the mentoring, coaching, and classroom observation program information. The components of the induction program included an orientation period before the start of classes that incorporated training for classroom management and familiarization to both the TISD and the school where the educator was assigned. The new teachers were required to attend additional professional development during their first several years.

The new teacher induction plan included a mentoring component that contained individual and group mentoring. The mentor was required to meet TISD qualifications and training before being accepted for the position. The induction plan gave specific instructions for the type of standard guidance that should be given and included the expectations of the new teacher. Weekly meetings and teacher observations were also required by the plan. Checklists, teacher observation forms, and a mentor and teacher agreement explaining the communication, professional development, and confidentiality that is expected during the induction period were part of the plan. A thorough explanation of the teacher observation process was included so the new teacher could be prepared for what was required.

Participants

Creswell (2013) recommended a size of 10 for phenomenology studies. Ten teachers completed all required steps to have their data included in this study. The sample size of 10 teachers was enough to ensure thematic saturation. A purposeful criterion sampling of teachers returning for their second or third year in the classroom was used. A purposeful sampling strategy was performed to ensure the potential pool of candidates met the inclusion criteria for the study (Maxwell, 2013). A homogenous sampling was necessary to select individuals who had been through an induction program as well as participated in social media during induction. The definition of what is included in an induction program varies widely from school to school so teachers who participated in a school's defined version of induction will meet the qualification for participation in an induction program. Participants can teach at any level from pre-kindergarten to 12th grade and teach any subject as well. I attempted to include the most diverse mixture of ethnicity and gender possible.

Teachers who had completed their first year in the classroom and were in their second or third year of teaching were emailed a recruitment letter (Appendix B) and a demographics survey (Appendix C) to determine if they met the criteria of the study and wanted to participate. The demographics survey asked for the possible participant's name and other information such as gender, age, ethnic origin, marital status, and education level. This kind of information was used to select a diverse group of participants. In addition, the survey was designed to identify teachers who utilized social media during their induction period and reached out to other peers or mentors. The first three questions on the demographics survey focused upon the use of social media and their interaction with other teachers and their mentor. If the teacher answered any of the social media questions affirmatively, they met the criteria for inclusion in the research study.

This demographics survey was kept short so potential participants were more likely to respond. Rao and Pennington (2013) found that the sooner a survey is returned, the more likely the participant will commit to and engage in the study. I wanted the teachers to feel interested by the topic but not put off by the level of work required to participate in the study. The demographics of the 10 participants selected for the study can be seen in Table 1. If a teacher returned the demographics survey and answered any of the social media questions negatively, they were not included in the research study and were sent a rejection email (Appendix E). If they responded that social media was used during induction, an acceptance email was sent to them (Appendix D) along with a consent form (Appendix F).

Table 1

Description of Participants

Color Name	Age Range	Ethnicity	Gender	Marital Status	Education Level
Ms. Violet	31–40	African American/Caucasian	Female	Married	Bachelor's Degree
Ms. Purple	21–30	African American	Female	Single	Bachelor's Degree
Ms. Magenta	21–30	Hispanic	Female	Single	Master's Degree
Mr. Jade	31–40	Caucasian	Male	Married	Master's Degree
Mr. Red	21–30	Hispanic	Male	Single	Master's Degree
Ms. Orange	21–30	Caucasian	Female	Single	Bachelor's Degree
Mr. Green	31–40	Caucasian	Male	Married	Master's Degree
Ms. Black	21–30	Caucasian	Female	Married	Bachelor's Degree
Ms. Amber	21–30	Asian/Caucasian	Female	Single	Master's Degree
Ms. Teal	31–40	Caucasian	Female	Married	Master's Degree

Procedures

Before any data collection began, I secured approval for the study from Liberty's Institutional Review Board (IRB; Appendix A). Immediately after receiving IRB approval, I conducted a pilot study. Williams and Kim (2011) explained the importance of pilot studies for

testing the recruitment of participants. Kaur, Figueiredo, Bouchard, Moriello, and Mayo (2017)

addressed the importance of evaluating the methodology of one's data collection tools. The

questions used during participant journal stimuli, focus groups, and individual interviews were

evaluated during the pilot study. Maxwell (2013) explained that if questions are not asked in

exactly the correct way, one may get data, but it will probably not be the type of rich information

necessary for a qualitative study. Maxwell suggested the various techniques selected to collect

research data should be examined prior to use to ensure they will deliver the appropriate

effective information to answer the research questions in the study. I worked with three teachers

who met my sample criteria but were not part of the TISD. I was able to assess my data

collection tools and the specific logistics of setting up accounts, passwords, and questions in the

online journal. The results of the pilot study allowed me to ensure I was addressing the research

questions as well as correcting and helping with practicing my interviewing skills (Blatch-Jones,

Pek, Kirkpatrick, & Ashton-Key, 2018).

After completing the pilot study, I did an official request to the legal department of the

school district to obtain the email addresses of all teachers who were returning for their second or

third year of teaching. It took a month to get the list of teachers' emails who met the

demographic criteria, which pushed the timeframe for the email requests into the middle of

summer vacation for my potential participants. There were over 1,000 emails sent out in just

over a two-week period. The emails contained a recruitment letter (see Appendix B) and a

demographics survey (Appendix C) to these second-year teachers requesting the assistance of

those who would like to participate in the research. The emails were not as effective as I had

hoped; I ended up with six participants who agreed to be in the study. I started a second and

third round of email campaigns that also were not yielding much success. With the guidance of

my dissertation chair, I requested and received approval from the IRB to add in teachers who

were beyond their second year in the classroom. I started getting more responses to my last

round of emails that were targeted to teachers in their second or third year in the classroom. If

the teacher agreed to participate, they were directed to return their completed demographics

survey via email. When I had received the demographics surveys and determined which

participants would be taking part in the study, they were sent an electronic version of the consent

form (Appendix F) via email along with instructions to sign the form and return it to me

electronically. After more than 4,000 total emails, and extending one of the demographic

criteria, I received 15 completed demographic surveys and consent forms from teachers to be a

part of the study. Once I had received all the participants' signed consent forms, I began

collecting data. Only two weeks into the study, five teachers had dropped out for various

reasons. Keeping the remaining 10 participants was a vital part of completing this research.

The first data collection method was an online participant journal completed by each

contributor. The instructions asked them to fill in as much information as they would like to

share, and there were general headings located in the journal as a guide. The second data

collection method was semi-structured interviews. This format was selected because it gave the

interviewer more opportunities to uncover feelings and experiences that the participant might not

have shared during a structured interview (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). The

third data collection method was a focus group. The setting for the focus group was a private

meeting room that I rented from the public library where the participants felt at ease and

comfortable.

The Researcher's Role

As the researcher documenting the many aspects of the study, I assumed the role of a human instrument. Moustakas (1994) explained that as a human instrument, I brought my experiences and beliefs to this study. They had an impact on all aspects of how I set up this research and explored this phenomenon. In my role as the "human instrument," I was the interviewer in every instance in the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explained that the data the researcher collects are considered an instrument and the researcher as a human instrument funnels the data through their lived experiences and perspectives. My past experiences and knowledge allowed me to become familiar with the participants and to build some rapport with them. To reduce bias, I explained my past position as regional education director so each teacher understood that I did not have any direct input in decisions being made by their school district. Since my past position as a regional education director was with a hospital organization and I have no affiliation with any school district in the state of Texas, there was no perceived pressure on the educators working with this study. I continued to observe and describe information the way Moustakas (1994) explained was necessary for transcendental phenomenology: "The challenge of the Epoche is to be transparent to ourselves, to allow whatever is before us in consciousness to disclose itself so that we may see with new eyes in a naïve and completely open manner" (p. 86). The more exposure to the new data, the less likely the researcher is to cling to his or her own personal biases. A researcher reflexive journal (Appendix L) was created to document my thoughts while going through all phases of this research.

Data Collection

Data were gathered by three collection methods. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) commented that "the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth

understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 5). By gathering information in a variety of ways, the researcher can ensure different perspectives are accurately described. Acquisition of input through multiple tools allowed me to enhance the credibility of the research results (Maxwell, 2013).

Prior to submitting my IRB application, I completed an expert review of my data collection tools to ensure the face and content validity of the questions for the demographics survey, the stimulus for the participant journal, and the questions for the individual interview and focus group. Two experts in the field reviewed the questions that I created and the data collection procedures described here. Both reviewers had completed their doctoral degrees in education and had over 50 years of education experience between them. Changes that were suggested and completed provided additional clarity for questions used during data collection and a better flow of information.

Participant Journals

When the 10 teachers who were selected as participants in this study returned their signed Consent Forms, they were sent instructions via email that provided them with all the information necessary to utilize their participant journal first entry (Appendix G). The email contained a unique user identification and password. The journal site contained tutorials on how to use the site and complete postings. The journal was started at least three weeks before the individual interviews were scheduled to allow time for reflective entries. The journal had unlimited space for any stories the participant could recall from their induction year. There were also prompts inside the journal to help focus on stories that were pertinent to their experiences during their teacher induction year. During Week 2, an additional set of questions was added called the participant journal second entry (Appendix H). During Week 3, a final set of questions was sent

called the participant journal third entry (Appendix I). The prompts helped the participants with

critical reflection of their first year (Blevins, Moore, & Torti, 2017). I entered the data obtained

from the journals into an excel spreadsheet. One of the participants had a difficult time working

with the journaling site. I emailed the three sets of questions that they would have received in

the online journal to them, and they returned their replies to me via email.

Semi-structured Interviews

The second method of data collection was a semi-structured interview. According to

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2010) the goal of a phenomenology study is to "find the meaning,

structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon" (p. 345). The semi-structured

interview provided an inside perspective from teachers who had completed their first year in the

classroom and returned for another year. All interviews except one were completed via cell

phone using either Facetime or Google Duo so there was a face-to-face connection created with

the participants and the researcher. One participant was only able to complete the interview via

cell phone audio due to a technical issue with cell phone data. All interviews were recorded by a

digital audio recorder as well as a backup recording on my iPad. The questions on the semi-

structured interview related to either teacher induction, mentors of teachers, or social media

usage. They were designed to provide detail of the participant's experiences. Moustakas (1994)

explained that the semi-structured interview allows an opportunity for an interactive discussion

that would make it easier for the interviewer to establish a rapport with the participant. When an

important area of the discussion was reached, a focused dialogue about the experience occurred

in a natural way. Being able to follow the flow of each individual discussion allowed me to

obtain the information needed to acquire the essence of the lived experience while continuing to

develop a friendly connection with the participants. Since each participant had a unique

experience during his or her induction year, the ability to go deeper into the specifics during the interview process allowed me to get a clearer understanding from the lived perspective. The semi-structured interview questions were as follows:

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions (Appendix J)

1. Describe briefly your first thoughts as you began your new teacher induction program.

2. How would you describe your first meeting with your mentor?

3. What were the first few problems your mentor was able to help you with?

4. How often did you and your mentor communicate? (Including, in-person, phone, email)

5. When and how do you use social media?

6. When and how did you first start communicating about your teaching via social media?

7. How often do you use social media sites to discuss education?

8. What was your most uncomfortable situation during the first few months that you can remember?

9. Many teachers have considered leaving the profession during their first year. Please describe why you think this happens?

10. What do you think could be done to help keep teachers beyond their first year?

11. How would you say the new teacher induction program helped you through the first year?

12. What would you say was the best lesson you learned during the new teacher induction program?

13. What sort of training sessions were you provided with to help you improve your skills in the classroom during your first year?

14. What was your least favorite part of the new teacher induction program?

15. What part of the new teacher induction program did you enjoy the most?

16. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've

given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to

know about your experiences with the new teacher induction program?

The first four questions relate to the formal mentoring relationship that was established as

part of the TISD new teacher induction program. Without a mentor to guide the way, many first-

year teachers feel as though they are living through a "fraternity hazing" (Greenberg, McKee, &

Walsh, 2013, p. 4). Historically, when new teachers have been through an induction program

and have had the support and mentoring of another teacher, their attrition rates are lower (Perry

& Hayes, 2011).

Questions 5–7 relate to social media usage and are especially relevant when the new

teacher is trying to navigate through the stressful situations they may encounter in their

beginning year. Abe and Jordan (2013) explained that social media is working its way into the

everyday lives of our society, and it is a logical progression to extend into the classroom and

beyond: "From Skype to Twitter to Facebook, these modes of social media are often used as

tools to keep in touch with friends and family, socialize, and share personal opinions" (p. 16).

Abe and Jordan also explained that educators and administrators would benefit from the use of

social media because of its popularity with students. The tragic school shootings which have

occurred in the last few years have only increased the popularity of social media use. "Recent

extreme events show that Twitter, a micro-blogging service, is emerging as the dominant social

reporting tool to spread information on social crises" (Oh, Agrawal, & Rao, 2013, p. 408).

Questions 8–15 on the semi-structured interview relate to the induction program.

Sindelar, Heretick, Hirsch, Rorrer, and Dawson (2010) covered all aspects of the induction

program from the state and administration perspective: "Induction providers at the district level

must consider not just the duration of their commitment to novice teachers but also the type of mentoring novices require as they develop over the probationary period" (p. 6). Questions 12 and 13 specifically refer to the educational portion of the induction program. Stanulis and Ames (2009) understood it was important for the new teacher to receive the training, but just as important for the students they were working with in the classroom: "It is critical to develop induction support targeted toward helping beginning teachers accelerate their development in order to have an impact on student learning early in their careers" (p. 28). The final question on the individual interview is to identify any additional areas the participants would like to discuss that they feel are relevant to the study. All recorded audio from each interview was transcribed by me. Each audio and transcribed version were then double checked for total accuracy.

Focus Group Interviews

The third data collection method was a focus group. Gathering participants in a group setting allowed the second-year and third-year educators who used social media during their induction year in the classroom to share their real-life stories in rich detail (Gall et al., 2010). Due to the demanding schedules of the teachers at the beginning of a school year, two separate focus groups were completed. This splitting of the 10 participants also allowed for a more comfortable informal meeting which put the educators at ease. The focus group questions were as follows:

Structured Open-ended Focus Group Questions (Appendix K)

1. Please describe your idea of what a great new teacher induction program would contain.

2. What sort of support do you think a new teacher needs before they teach their first class?

3. What type of assistance or training would be most helpful for a new teacher during the first few days in the beginning of the school year?

4. What kind of help would the ideal new teacher mentor provide?

5. What type of support do you think would be most valuable for a first-year teacher at the middle of the school year?

6. What type of support do you think would be most valuable for a new teacher towards the end of their first year at the school?

7. Please describe a time when you didn't feel you had the help you needed to keep teaching.

8. What made you think about reaching out to others for help via social media?

9. Please describe the role of social media during your first year of teaching.

10. How often did you use social media during your first year of teaching?

11. What do you believe is the main reason you returned for another year of teaching?

12. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experiences with the new teacher induction program?

The first seven questions of the focus group were designed to find out what the participants felt an induction program should provide as well as what role a mentor should play. The concentration at the beginning of the focus group should be to get the participants engaged and excited to share their thoughts and feeling (Phoenix et al., 2018). Questions 8–9 were asked to discover the participant's experiences with social media during their induction. Jones, Ramanau, Cross, and Healing (2010) explained that many new teachers grew up with technology and used the term "digital natives" (p. 722) when referring to novice educators. They would be comfortable using social media to communicate with others in their field. The next two questions addressed the high teacher attrition problem and what the teachers believed would

improve retention. The final question was to identify any additional areas the participants

believed should be included in the discussion. Both focus groups were successful in making the

participants feel at ease which afforded an easy flow of conversation. Both focus groups were

audio recorded using a digital audio recorder, the recording function on my iPhone and my iPad.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

Data analysis was completed according to Moustakas' guidelines (1994). He created

seven steps that were used during data analysis. The first step was horizonalization, where lists

of the data that were gathered were placed into an initial grouping. Moustakas (1994) explained

the next steps as reduction and elimination, followed by clustering the various elements of the

occurrence topics. Step four was to make "final identification of the invariant constituents and

themes by application: validation" (Moustakas 1994, p. 121). The fifth step was to use the

authenticated relevant elements of the phenomenon from the prior steps to develop a vivid

textural portrayal of the occurrence using each participant's words. Similarly, the sixth step was

to use the information from step five to create a structural account of the phenomenon from each

participant's perspective. The seventh step outlined by Moustakas was to "construct for each

research participant a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the

experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes" (p. 121). Following these seven

steps allowed me to compile a comprehensive in-depth description of the combined experiences

of the participants. The process was broken down step by step in this section.

Horizonalization

Moustakas (1994) described horizonalization as creating lists of the data that have been

gathered and placing them into an initial grouping. I reviewed the data from all three collection

methods and then the documentation was loaded into NVivo 12 Plus software. NVivo is

a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package that simplifies the coding and identification of repetitive themes and allows the analysis process to be visualized in different ways. The first step that was completed was horizonalization where all research data were coded into lists that are in the open codes and description section (see Appendix N). During the creation of the lists, I continued to work on being open minded to thoughts of the participants and not allow personal biases to influence my work. Any biases or preconceived beliefs were recorded in the researcher's reflexive journal (see Appendix L). Word frequency queries were run against the lists to allow me to easily identify the words used most often by participants during data collection. Open codes were developed based upon different topics covered during data collection. The open codes each represented a horizon. "Each horizon as it comes into our conscious experience is the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinctive character" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). The lists of open codes were broken down by varying themes that presented themselves during the data review. When all the phenomenon-specific data had been placed into thematic lists, I continued to the next step.

Reduction and Elimination

Reduction and elimination were the second step in the analysis process. I accomplished this by testing the data to see if it contained "a moment of the experience that was a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121) the phenomenon. Data were then examined to see if they expressed the concept and description of the event. If they did not, they were eliminated. Any descriptions that were unclear or redundant were also removed. If only part of the essence of the feeling was captured and this did not contribute to the full understanding of the experience, it was not used.

Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

The data lists that made the transition from the reduction and elimination process was broken down into groups. Each group was organized by like themes that related to similar aspects of the experience. Each theme represented a central component of the phenomenon. They all related back to the essence of the experience for the participants.

Validation

When the groups of lists were broken down into themes, they were then validated. The themes and listed items were checked against the complete contents of the participants' transcriptions. If these themes and contents were not clearly and specifically explained during questions and interviews, they were not used. Each cluster or theme that was not significant and related in meaning to the occurrence described during one of the three data collection procedures was eliminated from the list.

Construct of Individual Textural Description and Individual Structural Description

Moustakas' (1994) seven steps for analysis continued by using the information retained after the validation occurred and all remaining items listed were considered relevant to the experienced phenomenon. Specific exact language was extracted from the transcription to confirm the detailed experience. All detailed experiences described should help provide a meticulous recreation that clearly and precisely conveys the lived event in thick, rich, expressive information. This level of detailed extrapolation of acquired information was achieved from the materials gathered from each study participant. The textural description of the phenomenon explains "what" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 78) the event experience was like. The structural description of the phenomenon explains "how" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 79) the event was felt. It refers to the consideration and contemplation of the experience. Specific descriptions of what

and how the phenomenon was experienced for each participant in the study was created during this portion of data analysis.

Construct of Textural-Structural Description

When each individual textural description was completed and each individual structural description had been identified, I merged the two descriptions for each participant. Each theme was authenticated, validated, and labeled to ensure it correctly represented the specific input from the participants. The textural-structural description was synthesized into a descriptive explanation of the experiences of the new teachers during the phenomenon.

Trustworthiness

It is important that any study results are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Lincoln and Guba explained four questions that should be posed to develop trustworthiness. The first two questions examine the environment the study was completed in: (1) Would the results of the study be relevant with different participants or in a different situation? and (2) If the study was replicated with similar participants in corresponding settings, would the results be the same? The third question asks: Could the study be replicated with similar participants and situations while still presenting similar findings? The final question for trustworthiness asks: Is it possible to verify that the results of the study are a product of the input by the participants, or an outcome based upon the prejudices, preconceptions, or the best interest of the researcher? Trustworthiness of this study was achieved by addressing the four areas of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility is one of the ways to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Credibility establishes that this research is dependable and the findings and conclusions are based upon

sound and reasonable empirical research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation occurs when "researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251) for research. Triangulation occurred by utilizing three distinct techniques for gathering of information from the study participants. The three data collection methods for this research were an online journals prepared by each participant, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group discussion. This triangulation also improved the quality of work produced by the research.

Dependability and Confirmability

Creswell (2013) believed that "both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research project" (p. 246). Throughout this doctoral journey I kept a reflexive journal (Appendix L). This journal helped document any biases or preconceived beliefs that occurred during this process and recording them may help other researchers better understand my thoughts. Connelly (2016) believed that having a peer to share ideas with as a sounding board was also a part of dependability. A review of the reflexive journal coupled with this peer examination would increase dependability. The data were also verified via member checking. After the transcription of all the collected data was completed, the information was sent to each participant to confirm the accuracy of the data with the research participants (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). After data collection and member checking, peer review was used to review the dissertation prior to completion. When member checking was included with these other important steps, Connelly (2016) believed credibility and confirmability would be established.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained transferability is related to the empirical nature of the research: "In the classic paradigm all that is necessary to ensure transferability is to know something with high internal validity about sample A, and to know that A is representative of the population to which the generalization is to apply" (p. 297). By following Moustakas' (1994) seven steps for analysis and providing detailed and vivid explanations of the experiences of participants, this study will be transferable to others performing empirical research. Reliability and transferability are key to ensuring that others can follow the detailed information provided and replicate the study (Nowell et al., 2017). An audit trail was created (Appendix M) to provide detailed information covering each aspect of how the research was conducted, how participants were selected, and all information pertaining to the experience of the participants. The experiences of the participants explain how they were able to complete their first year in the classroom and continue into their second or third year of teaching.

<div align="center">**Ethical Considerations**</div>

IRB and TISD school board approval was obtained before any research was attempted. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the results of this study would not reveal any identities of the school district or the teachers who participated to protect the mentor and mentee relationship. Participants were interviewed in an area where their discussions would not easily be overheard. All participants completed informed consent forms explaining the nature of this research and their ability to withdraw at any point in the process. The confidentiality of the participants was also be maintained by keeping all physical information secured within a combination safe located in my home, and all electronic information was password protected. After three years all

written data collected will be shredded. After three years all electronic data and voice recordings will be erased.

Summary

The chapter explained why a qualitative methodology was used for this study and why transcendental phenomenology was selected as the design. Transcendental phenomenology allowed a detailed exploration of the thoughts, feelings, and incidents the new teachers encountered during their first year. The research questions that were used for this study were also explained. Before any research was performed, IRB and TISD approval was obtained. The setting where the research took place was described along with the demographics survey that was used to find a purposeful sample. The three methods of data collection outlined earlier in the chapter included participant online journals, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions. The data explored social media platforms the teachers used and how often they were used. Detailed data analysis was completed using Moustakas' (1994) data analysis method to ensure the data met standards of trustworthiness through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. This gathering and analysis of the participants' experiences allow the reader to get a sense of the journey a first-year teacher undergoes.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of 10 teachers who used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. The 10 teachers who were selected to participate were all members of the same school district. The name of the school district is being represented by the name of the state to afford the highest level of confidentiality. Another layer of confidentiality was also added by having the teachers' names represented by pseudonyms based upon a color they selected during their individual interviews. This chapter presents meticulously selected experiences that each participant provided during one or more data collection methodologies. The shared events were combined to demonstrate the lived experiences of first-year teachers who completed their induction year and returned to the classroom the following year. The data collected during this study were broken down and analyzed using the seven steps modeled by Moustakas (1994). These steps allowed the data to be combined, broken down, and sorted into a full and rich description of the participants' experiences during their first year in the classroom.

Chapter Four restates the research questions that were the foundation for this study. A descriptive accounting of each of the participants in the study is also provided. The outcomes from the various analysis steps completed during the research were broken down using figures and participant descriptions to allow for a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of the educators. The findings and themes that resulted are also presented in this chapter.

The central research question that guided this study asked, What role does social media play in the new teacher induction experience? The sub-questions for this study are listed below:

1. What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play during the new teacher induction experience?

2. How do second- or third-year teachers describe their use of social media during their new teacher induction year?

3. When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher?

Participants

Participants for this study were second- or third-year teachers, with the exception of one fourth-year participant. When the demographics survey was completed, participants designated their use of social media during their first year in the classroom. The participants also confirmed on the survey that they had contact with other educators through various social media platforms. Each participant also verified that he or she had a mentor assigned during his or her new teacher induction year. The 10 study participants were selected to receive demographic surveys because each educator taught in one of the schools within the TISD. All study members completed the consent form prior to the beginning of any research. During my semi-structured interviews with the participants, I asked them each to select a color they would like to be represented by during the writing of this study; these color selections became their pseudonyms. Throughout this chapter, all quotations from the participants are presented verbatim. This includes verbal ticks and grammatical errors in speech and writing to more accurately depict participants' voices.

Ms. Violet

Ms. Violet is an African American/Caucasian female teacher. Her age range is between 31 and 40. She is married and has completed her bachelor's degree. Ms. Violet is the only teacher taking part in this research who is in her fourth year in the classroom. All other

demographics fell within the study guidelines; therefore, Ms. Violet was accepted as a participant. I did not believe that one extra year in the classroom would cause her to forget her experiences during her first year of teaching. Ms. Violet is very passionate about communicating with her students and building a strong bond of trust. During her interview, she explained the significance of this bond:

> The fact is that I built relationships with my students and they still call me today. They have my phone numbers and they can always reach out to me. Their parents reach out to me on social media. They send me notes. And just building relationships is important. If you don't have those relationships, you're not going to be able to connect with them on an academic level either.

This type of a relationship would create a stronger learning environment in the classroom.

One of the programs Ms. Violet recently attended was focused on listening to students before forming an opinion when problems present themselves. Too often teachers can jump to a conclusion where students are concerned and assume the worst. Every student should be given an opportunity to explain his/her side of the story before someone passes judgement. Ms. Violet believed that by letting a child talk and release some of his or her frustrations, she could lower the tension level and the child would feel like he or she had an active role in what was happening. As she explained during the focus group discussion, the training reinforced what she has seen as a positive step at work:

> At the school that I work with right now, they do a lot of circle time where they meet and let the kids talk and kind of get their frustrations out. They share ideas and things like that and so it kind of calms the class down.

What works to keep teachers in control is vital because, "if they're struggling behaviorally wise in their classroom, they're not getting a lot of content taught."

Ms. Purple

Ms. Purple is an African American female teacher. Her age range is between 21 and 30. She is single and has completed her bachelor's degree. Ms. Purple had been a substitute teacher in multiple classrooms at the school the year before she started working with children in a pre-kindergarten class. The classroom was organized into centers that the children rotated through while they were with the teacher. That meant Ms. Purple would be coordinating and teaching four-year-old students centers for technology, reading, writing, construction, math, science, creativity, and ABC center. Ms. Purple turned to social media to find help with these rotations:

> I found great advice about cognitive transitions on Pinterest to use when I am moving
>
> from one subject to another. As a Pre-K teacher I am required to teach Math, Reading,
>
> Writing, Science, and Social Studies. So I have to incorporate transitions to help manage
>
> the classroom and to help my students understand that we are shifting to a different
>
> subject.

Another transition Ms. Purple used was to keep a timer going to allow for clean-up at each center; it gave the children an auditory reminder that it was time to move along to a new learning center. Ms. Purple also credited her mentor with helping her keep organized and the TISD early childhood education page on Facebook for tips and tricks of organizing the centers. She just wanted to be sure the children were learning and happy.

Ms. Magenta

Ms. Magenta is a Hispanic female teacher. Her age range is between 31 and 40. She is single and has completed her master's degree. Ms. Magenta joined a national organization that

helped her gain her teaching credentials. After a year of working with the group, she was excited

to get her teaching certification and her first job. Ms. Magenta started her first teaching position

with bilingual early childhood education students. She was so happy to work with her students

and their families. She was very surprised at how big the workload was and that no matter how

long she spent trying to get prepared for everything, there were not enough hours in the day. Ms.

Magenta offered additional clarification during her interview:

> If I worked 12 hours a day, every day of the week, I would still need more time to get
>
> caught up. It's a massive amount of work and responsibility, but I know that what I am
>
> doing here is making an impact not just on the lives of the students but on their families
>
> as well.

Ms. Magenta was fairly overwhelmed when she started her first year of teaching. She

described one of the first difficulties she encountered at school:

> It was all kind of a blur. Especially being a person that transitioned from a different
>
> career to teaching. I did an alternate entry program so I had zero background in teaching.
>
> So, one of the first things that I remember that came up was about the topic of developing
>
> relationships with my student's parents. I came in feeling that was really important. And
>
> I wanted to get some feedback from other teachers in terms of what had worked, what
>
> didn't work, and different things they tried. I know some teachers have a meeting at the
>
> beginning of the year right after school but that's not convenient for a lot of parents so I
>
> kind of did a mixed match to try to get in touch with as many folks as I could. And try to
>
> see what really worked for the individuals. It's just case by case.

Many of the parents she tried to work with didn't make time to connect and she was frustrated at

an unsuccessful first attempt at communication.

Mr. Jade

Mr. Jade is a Caucasian male teacher. His age range is between 31 and 40. He is married and has completed his master's degree in education. Mr. Jade was excited to finally get his first teaching position; he had wanted to become a teacher since he was a student in high school. When he started his new teacher induction, he was overconfident and very sure he had all the tools he needed to be successful in the classroom. He did not believe that he needed any additional training or a mentor before entering the classroom:

> I was almost like why. I was almost too confident. I had just got my master's degree and I was like, "Why do I need a coach?" We went through a week of training in the summer and then when I got into the classroom I realized, Oh, I needed a coach. It was a very revealing experience. That even though I went through these years of college and got my master's degree, and got certified, there still so much more to learn. And even in my second year I am still learning. That's kind of what my first impression was of it and as time went on I grew a lot more respect for my veteran teachers that I worked with, my new teacher induction coach, and my mentor on the campus.

He started reevaluating most of his assumptions about what teaching was going to be like while trying to keep control in his classroom and realizing, "Oh my gosh, I have 22 crazy six-year-olds who are running around my room and they don't know how to cut with scissors yet."

Mr. Red

Mr. Red is a Hispanic male teacher. His age range is between 21 and 30. He is single and has completed his master's degree. Mr. Red did not go to college to be a teacher; therefore, he went through an organization that allowed him to earn an alternative certification to teach. He was hired to teach in his specialty area and when he came to teach, he found he was being placed

in a different specialty, one he had never taught before. He was excited to have the opportunity

to teach, and he was determined not to let teaching a different subject stop him. Mr. Red

believes that most people outside of education think teachers walk into this type of job and their

day will be as long as the student's day is:

> Because you're working late hours, it's not just "oh I'm gonna work from 8 to 4". It's
>
> you know, you've got your tutoring after school, you have to make the curriculum, the
>
> plans. You gotta grade. You have to fit the grades also into the online platform. And
>
> meanwhile you're trying to teach and then you have to do attendance at the same time.
>
> It's just a bunch of variables involved at the same time. I think burnout is a big one with
>
> stress.

We discussed some of the challenges Mr. Red faced during his first few months. His assigned

school mentor taught in a classroom across the hall and was always there for whatever type of

problems came up:

> The problems that I had were more about discrepancies with students. The school. It
>
> wasn't so much about content as much as feeling worth and discipline with students.
>
> Students would push boundaries and things like that. When the school kind of wants you
>
> to like nudge kids along even though they kind of didn't earn those grades. You feel like
>
> what is your purpose in school. Are you just there as a body and not trying to teach.

Ms. Orange

Ms. Orange is a Caucasian female teacher. Her age range is between 21 and 30. She is

single and has completed her bachelor's degree. Ms. Orange came on board at the same time the

new teacher induction training had begun so her first day of orientation was teacher training. It

was a bit overwhelming and confusing:

I found out I was going to be a teacher the day induction started. So the week before they just threw me into that. So I was like okay I would get to be inducted but the TISD being the TISD, they were all over the place so it wasn't really very helpful.

She started her first year with a class of students and after six or seven months they switched her to a different class in a different grade. Her students had been through four teachers in a couple of years and they were very unhappy. The children were not willing to trust that Ms. Orange would not leave the way the other teachers had. During the focus group, Ms. Orange elaborated, "They were so mad at me. They didn't want me. They hated me." She worked hard to earn her students' trust and moved with them to the next grade. She did not care what difficulties she was dealing with; she would not abandon those children again. When the students saw her come back to class the following year, they were delighted. Ms. Orange was told that "she was their favorite."

Ms. Orange didn't feel very comfortable when she first started in the classroom, and it was the first topic she discussed during her interview:

It's overwhelming. It's a lot of things being shot at you at once. I did not know where to go with it. And I had a lot of information that I didn't know what to do with. If that makes sense. Like they told me what to do but, it didn't make a lot of sense and it wasn't clicking. So, yeah, my first year was very, very tough.

Mr. Green

Mr. Green is a Caucasian male teacher. His age range is between 31 and 40. He is married and has completed his master's degree. When I asked Mr. Green during his individual interview what his first year in the classroom was like, he explained to me that his number one goal was to not let any of his students know it was his first-year teaching. He would be

purposely vague and make statements to lead his students to believe that he was not a new teacher. He explained that he would simply say, "I'm just new to my school." He explained that he had lots of teacher friends who endured great difficulties after the students found out it was their first year. The students put the new teacher through a hazing period where they would try their best to get them to "crack." Mr. Green also shared that he had seen other first-year teachers who struggled and quit.

When I asked Mr. Green what he felt the best advice he had received from a teacher or mentor on social media was, he wrote in his journal:

> The best advice I can remember receiving on social media was incidental. A teacher was talking about another teacher who had not fit in very well at their school, wasn't a good team player, and was causing issues by non-conformity with schoolwide expectations. I knew I didn't want to be the teacher that other teachers gossiped about, so I worked hard on being a team player, conforming to schoolwide expectations, and taking part in school activities like pep rallies, athletic, and music events.

Ms. Black

Ms. Black is a Caucasian female teacher. Her age range is between 21 and 30. She is married and has completed her bachelor's degree. Ms. Black works in a self-contained alternative school where she teaches students who have been removed from other schools within the district for behavioral problems. Students are physically restrained at times and the job is very physically demanding. To obtain her teaching credentials, Ms. Black went through an organization that guides degreed individuals through teacher training and helps them become certified to teach in one of eight states. When she first went to work, she was replacing someone

who quit, and she never got to attend teacher orientation. She explained some of the challenges she faced:

> I walked into my first day having never seen a lesson plan and no idea of what was expected. So I didn't even know what class looked like or how to run it. I knew nothing. It was sink or swim. I figured it out but I was just like UH! So just a sample lesson plan or an example of what a typical day would look like would be helpful.

While I talked with Ms. Black during the interview, she explained some of the physical challenges she faces at school every day. I commented on the large bump and bruise that was visible on her forehead that she had received when one of the students was being restrained. Ms. Black said, "It was all part of what you can expect when working with students at an alternative school."

Ms. Amber

Ms. Amber is an Asian/Caucasian female teacher. Her age range is between 21 and 30. She is single and has completed her master's degree. Ms. Amber had struggled when she was going through her elementary education with attention deficit disorder. When one of her teachers took some extra time to work with her, it made a positive impact on her entire learning experience. That is when Ms. Amber decided she was going to become an educator to help other students with special education needs:

> I experienced the difference that one teacher who really cared can make in the life of their student. It was a powerful time in my life and I wanted to be the person who could do that same thing for other children.

Ms. Amber mentioned the students during her interview and referred to them as "her kids" on several occasions. She works very long hours trying to ensure that her unique students will get

their lessons delivered in a way that will help them learn. She also needed to provide an environment that keeps them feeling safe and secure. In her journal, she explained her thoughts about teaching special needs students:

> Working with students with disabilities is an amazing experience. It can be difficult at times but the rewards of watching a student reach a benchmark that we set far outweighs the efforts it took to get there.   When a non-verbal child communicates for the first time, nothing else matters. I love that I get to make a real difference.

Ms. Amber talked about the time that is required to prepare for her lessons each day. She explained, "If I had kids to care for at home, I wouldn't be able to get everything done." She was the second teacher to share that sentiment with me during the individual interviews. When the interviews were completed, there were four participants who shared with me that they did not know how people with families could devote the number of hours it took to be a teacher.

Ms. Teal

Ms. Teal is a Caucasian female teacher. Her age range is between 31 and 40. She is married and has completed her master's degree. Ms. Teal received her teaching credentials from the same organization that Ms. Black went through. When she was hired to work for the TISD, it was already three months into the school year. Ms. Teal was brought on board as a long-term substitute. To help her acclimate to the new school, they sent her to shadow a teacher for a half-day. The experience she gained was something Ms. Teal explained set a positive tone for the entire year. The class that she was going into had been together since pre-kindergarten and were now in second grade. They had lost three teachers in a row and the students were devastated after their fourth teacher quit three months into the year. Ms. Teal recognized the extra care the

students needed immediately and with the help of her mentor, she felt fortunate that she was the one who got to support them.

When she was asked for an example of how she put advice she received from social media into practice in her classroom, Ms. Teal wrote in her journal:

> From social media I learned about the multiple intelligence tests you can give students to see how they learn best. I gave this assessment to the children and then learned how most of my students learn as well as developed an idea of how best to teach whole group. I also learned how I should appeal to those who learn in a different style but weren't the majority.

Results

This section will examine the results that were obtained after research data were collected using semi-structured interviews, an online journal, and focus group meetings. The data compiled from the participants of this study went through a rigorous process to obtain the results that are described in this section. The responses are broken down by themes that explain the essence of the experiences the educators lived through during their initial year in the classroom. A detailed description of how these themes developed is clarified in the next section.

Theme Development

After finding the specific topics the teachers discussed most during the research, I identified these as open codes. From there I was able to capture the thematic breakdown of their experiences listed in Table 2. The top five themes that emerged were social media usage, communication between new teachers and mentors, reasons teachers quit, teacher induction experiences, and what support is needed. The themes are explained in greater detail using the words of the participants below.

Table 2

Open Codes Leading to Themes

Open-codes	Themes
Sites visited	
Google	
Facebook groups	
Pinterest	
YouTube	
Teacher blogs	
Unique Learning System	
Teachers-Pay-Teachers	
Instagram	Social media usage
Snapchat	
Twitter	
Reddit	
LinkedIn	
Text chains	
Sharing support	
Using social media ideas in the classroom	
Frequency of social media usage	
Virtual mentors	
Informal mentors	Communication between new
Formal mentors	teachers and mentors
Inadequate professional development	
Uncomfortable situations	
Lack of resources	
Lack of guidance	
High level of stress	
Huge workload	Reasons teachers quit
Feeling exhausted	
Being physically harmed	
Feeling thrown into a situation	
Feeling lost	
Feeling isolated	
Worst experience of the year	
Best experience of the year	
Induction program experiences	Teacher induction
Biggest problems	experiences
Best lesson learned	
First area you needed help with	
Virtual mentor support	
Formal mentor support	What support is needed
Teacher support	
Administration support	

Social media. The theme of social media was further coded into four sub-themes, which can be seen in the table below. The most mentioned topic was the different social media sites the teachers used during their first year. Ms. Orange explained, "I felt like using social media was an easier way to communicate with people because I'm horrible at talking to people." The next most discussed topic was finding information on social media that could be used in the classroom. For instance, Ms. Amber said, "I loved that I could always find a site that would help me get ideas for how to adapt lesson plans to fit my students." Whether the social media site provided instructions, ideas, advice, pictures, or lesson plans, it was covered by this category. The next area was related to the teachers sharing their ideas and experiences on social media; however, half of the participants did not share their ideas or lesson plans. When I questioned the teachers about why they did not post their ideas on social media, most of the participants explained that they did not feel comfortable posting things that worked or did not work because they were new teachers. Mr. Red explained in his journal, "I do not feel that I am at a point where I can be giving advice." Each of the sub-themes under Social Media Use are explained in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Social Media Usage Sub-Themes

Sub-Themes	Theme
Sites visited	
Frequency sites were visited	
	Social Media Usage
Using social media content in school	
Sharing support on social media	

Social media sites visited. When I explored which social media sites were visited the most, I found that Facebook and Pinterest were both mentioned 82 times. Later during the focus group discussion, the topic of Pinterest was brought up again by Mr. Green: "Pinterest is a wonderful, beautiful thing, even for men. I also use it for doing things in my backyard and the garage, so men can use it without shame." In her interview, Ms. Amber also discussed online resources: "During my first year, I used teacher blogs and Pinterest quite a bit." Pinterest was one of the preferred sites for the majority of the participants. Ms. Purple explained why Pinterest was her favorite site: "I liked to do new and innovative ideas, I don't like to do what everybody else is using, like something very hands on so the kids will remember when they leave my class."

Google and blogs were the second most used social media sites with 24 mentions each. Several participants used Google as an in-depth search engine. Mr. Green explained that by searching for a topic on Google and putting in the initials for portable document format, he would end up getting results that usually included a file that was already formatted and ready to be downloaded and used. Blogs were a valuable resource for many of the participants, as indicated by Ms. Teal's journal comment: "Veteran teachers posted what did and didn't work well for them on their blogs which helped me anticipate and overcome challenges in my classroom as well as provided new ideas to continue to grow and challenge my students." Instagram and the site Teachers-Pay-Teachers were the next two most commonly used social media sites with 16 occurrences each. Ms. Orange explained during her journal entry why she believed it was important to reach out on social media every day: "I feel that to be a good teacher you should always be learning, growing and reaching out and grasping new ideas."

Mr. Red visited a variety of sites and found that when he subscribed to some sites, he would receive several suggestions about others. This helped to expand the types of ideas he would get access to. In his journal, he explained one of his favorite sites:

> I enjoyed the Reddit site because I was able to search up keywords and find helpful threads to the topics I was looking for. Just as well, I was able to read about other teachers' experiences and able to compare it to my own, whether it was positive or negative. When I am having a stressful day, I can always go on and read inspiring threads that people posted about how they felt that they made an impact. It helped get me through some tougher times last year.

Frequency sites were visited. The first commonality that was found among the participants was that every teacher used social media, in one form or another, every day. All the participants were asked about how often they used social media during their individual interviews. Ms. Orange explained that every time she picked her phone up, she was looking on social media. Ms. Magenta concurred and added that she would be on her social media looking for things to use in her classroom from 30 to 60 minutes every day. Ms. Amber described her social media usage as a daily scavenger hunt. She was always looking for things to do with her class and she would utilize multiple social media sites daily to find specific things for her special education students. Mr. Red explained when he would go to the social media platform he used, he would find a teacher blog, and when he subscribed to it, multiple suggestions popped into his feed. He found he enjoyed reading what each teacher's experiences were like.

Using social media content in school. The second attribute that all the participants shared was using various social media sites to find content for their lesson plans. Regardless of which site the teachers visited, the number one reason was to develop a stronger, more superior

lesson plan. Ms. Purple agreed and added that every single lesson that she planned had something she incorporated from social media. Ms. Magenta was able to incorporate the ideas she found into her lessons but even if she could not make it work, it would still generate ideas that she was able to use during her lesson.

Ms. Amber had some children in her class who were extremely sensitive to loud noises. She was very excited when she found special education content online that she could use. She explained:

> If there was a way to see what everyone was doing for specific things that would be a timesaver because in special ed we have to adjust so many things to make sure each kid is getting what they need and the way that they need to get it. So, if one child is agitated by loud noises and the lesson involves something that is going to be noisy, there was usually something explaining what another teacher did to adapt this for this type of student who can't tolerate this or that, and it would be very helpful.

Ms. Black relied on the Facebook community she joined that shared stories and ideas to accompany the lessons that were part of the learning program used at her behavioral school. The Facebook site had special education lessons, and the teachers who had to make accommodations for their students would post what the student needed and what the teacher did to adjust the lesson to suit their needs. Ms. Black loved that the site made it so easy to follow and she was able to easily incorporate the site content into her lesson plans regardless of the abilities of her students.

Sharing support on social media. The participants all found themselves looking for ideas to use in the classroom as well as seeing what other teachers were experiencing. Some teachers enjoyed getting to share their thoughts and ideas while others did not feel they should

share what events were occurring each day. Ms. Violet created her own blog to share what was happening in her classroom with others. She enjoyed reading what others posted and she invited her students' parents to read the blog so they would have a better idea what their children were doing at school. Mr. Green felt a greater sense of community by participating in the social media discussion areas. He saw other new teachers who were dealing with similar struggles, and he liked knowing he was not alone. During his interview, he explained, "I saw things that they were asking questions about, or questions that I had, or even questions I didn't know I had, but then I had them after I read them."

There were mixed emotions about sharing information on social media by teachers. Several teachers did not feel that they were experienced enough to share information. When Ms. Orange was elaborating during her interview on why she had never shared her own social media postings, she almost appeared defensive as she said, "Not that I don't want to, but I still feel like I'm at that new teacher stage where I don't have a lot and I don't want to put it out there yet." Ms. Amber never felt comfortable sharing anything in her first year, but explained, "I feel that now I may be able to put some things up that I have learned that could help newer teachers." One participant also explained that the chaos that happened in the classroom was something she did not want to share with anyone. She also believed that teachers who posted videos of classroom situations would select only positive behaviors. Ms. Magenta explained, "I don't know if I would put myself out there with the craziness that happens sometimes and I don't know that I would want videos of me handling that craziness out there either." Mr. Jade explained that there have been so many other instances where people share inappropriate things that it makes it more difficult for everyone else to feel comfortable putting themselves and their thoughts out on social media. He made the following analogy during his interview:

There are people who make bad decisions on social media but that shouldn't overtake the

good too. My analogy is it's like a vaccine. Sometimes it makes people sick. But the

overall protection it provides is what's most beneficial. So we can't just look at what a

few people do. We need to look at the overall good and what it's doing.

Ms. Violet, on the other hand, was very comfortable with posting information and experiences

on her own teacher blog for others to follow: "I shared anything I thought was relevant to our

demographic of kids, or any classroom management techniques that could help others." She also

encouraged the parents of her students to follow her blog so they would be aware of what was

being covered in the classroom. To provide an overview of how each participant used social

media and the sites they visited, I created Table 4 below.

Table 4

Teachers' Use of Social Media

Participant	Visited daily	Used for lesson planning	Read other teacher's stories	Shared their own stories	Sites visited
Ms. Violet	X	X	X	X	FB,G,I,P,Y
Ms. Purple	X	X	X		FB,S,I,P,Y,TPT
Ms. Magenta	X	X	X	X	T,FB,TB,S,L,P,Y,TPT
Mr. Jade	X	X	X	X	FB,I,Y
Mr. Red	X	X	X		FB,DB,I,R,TB,Y
Ms. Orange	X	X	X		FB,I,P,S,Y,TPT
Mr. Green	X	X	X	X	FB,TB,L,I,P,Y
Ms. Black	X	X	X	X	FB,P,TPT
Ms. Amber	X	X	X		FB,T,I,P,Y,TPT
Ms. Teal	X	X	X		FB,TB,S,P,Y

Social Media Site Abbreviation Key: Discussion Board – DB, Facebook – FB, Google – G, Instagram – I, LinkedIn – L, Pinterest – P, Reddit – R, Snapchat – S, Teacher blogs – TB, Teacher text chains – TTC, Teachers-pay-teachers – TPT, Twitter – T, YouTube – Y.

Mentor communication. The next theme that emerged during analysis addressed communication between new teachers and their mentors. This communication was broken down into several sub-themes (see Table 5) based upon whether the mentor was officially assigned, a teacher who developed a mentoring relationship, or a virtual mentor who passed along ideas and advice via various forms of social media. While the TISD had established guidelines to provide a mentor to each new teacher, this was not always what happened.

Table 5

Mentor Communication Sub-Themes

Sub-themes	Theme
Virtual mentor	
Formal mentor	Mentor Communication
Informal mentor	

Virtual mentor. The highest number of references in the data was to mentors that new teachers worked with virtually, through social media sites or teacher text chains. While there was no specific title assigned to the exchanges, the teachers received the same type of advice and support they would have received from a formal mentoring relationship. Because Ms. Orange started teaching after the school year had already started, she was not assigned a mentor at her school. The division mentor who came to see her only seemed to discuss negative things. When Ms. Orange asked her how to improve something, she was told that she would have to figure that out on her own but she needed to find a way to fix it. She reached out via social media to teachers who had mentored her while she was in college. During the focus group discussion, Ms. Orange explained that more people are joining in on forums and discussing issues, ideas, and

offering helpful tips that make their experiences easier: "We're getting better at doing this online thing." She enjoyed seeing each site had many different ideas or points of view. It served as a wake-up call for her that not everyone thought the way she did or learned the way she did. By using social media to reach out to other educators, she was able to see where people come from and what helped them most. In the focus group she explained, "To be a good teacher you should always be learning and growing, and in order to do that you should be reaching out and grasping new ideas constantly."

There is such a large variety of social media sites available that teachers can find help with almost anything. A couple of the participants in the focus group explained that on occasion it was easier looking something up online and getting advice there, because they did not want to feel like they were constantly asking someone at school for help. Ms. Amber felt more at ease going to look at a website and searching for a topic than asking other teachers. She felt like she always needed help in the beginning, and each time she had to ask a teacher at school, she felt like she did not know what she was doing. This year, one of the new teachers asked her about something she struggled with last year, and she felt a great deal of happiness helping.

Ms. Black, who works with special education students, has a program her school uses called "Unique Learning System." By using this software she has access to a Facebook page reserved for teachers who use the system. The site allows her to communicate with other teachers who are teaching the same subjects at the same time. The teachers have a vast network across the country and many sites have used the learning system and their lesson plans for years. This means that Ms. Black and the other teachers can share all their ideas including what to do specifically for each lesson. While all the children they work with are different, Ms. Black explained the advantages:

I'm interacting with other teachers. There's a teacher in Detroit who is doing the same lesson I am doing. All the kids are different, so your level may be completely different than hers. But you can most of the time look up on a lesson and see what the teacher in Ohio did for this child. Then you know next time. Hey, what are you doing for him on the month of October. And a lot of these teachers have been using the software longer than the TISD. So I can say, hey, do you remember the summer plan? Well, the lessons repeat every year. So they can go and pull their files and say "oh just do X, Y, and Z." Which works for the most part. Like I said, our school is mostly behavioral and not academic.

This type of lesson guidance has been a great help for Ms. Black. She explained that there are enough challenges that present themselves with students each day, and having to figure out what to do in the classroom too would make it so much harder. During the focus group, as she listened as the other teachers explained their experiences, she was surprised to hear how many struggles they dealt with.

Ms. Purple explained that the TISD had set up a Facebook page for their pre-kindergarten teachers. There were places to share activities and ideas, and the administrators would also share inspirational quotes to encourage the teachers. Ms. Purple was told about the Facebook page as part of her new teacher induction training. Several of the other teachers had also mentioned using the TISD Facebook page for the district educators. When I asked Ms. Purple about why she used social media to help with her lessons, she explained that she liked to do new and innovative things in her class and she did not like to do what everybody else was doing. She wanted to always be able to do something different: "Like something very hands on so the kids will remember when they leave my class, so I used Pinterest a lot."

When working with teachers online or just getting ideas off of teacher blogs, the camaraderie and shared experience were a significant factor in making the participants feel like they were looking for answers in the right place. The majority of participants commented during the focus group discussions that they felt better when they realized they were not alone in their struggles. Ms. Teal explained how whenever she interacts with the teachers online, she understands that they have been through the same battles that she has. When Mr. Green visited teacher blogs, he felt he could identify with what they were talking about. He explained that it did not matter if it was in a website posting or a teacher text chain, it was immensely helpful to bounce things off of different teachers to see what worked or did not work for them.

   Formal mentor. When a formal mentor was assigned to a teacher, they could be working at the same school or it could be someone from the district who had several new teachers with whom they worked. There were also formal mentors who were assigned from the organization that trained and certified the teacher. The results and effectiveness of the formal mentoring with this group of teachers were as diverse as the participants themselves. Ms. Violet did not have a formal mentor assigned to her; however, she explained that "a mentoring relationship developed" with another teacher. Ms. Magenta was assigned a mentor by the school district who visited her classroom for five minutes and never contacted her again, so she developed mentoring relationships with the teachers who taught the same types of students she did. Ms. Black had her assistant principal (AP) as her mentor. She explained in her demographics survey, "My assigned mentor was my AP so we talked as much as I wanted, but my real mentor was a girl I just became friends with while teaching."

   When I asked Ms. Purple about meeting her formal mentor, she explained there were so many things going on in the beginning that she felt as though everything was a blur. She had

seen the mentor before when she had been a substitute teacher there. They just needed time to get to know one another and develop a working relationship. Ms. Purple explained how her mentor made her feel at ease:

> She was very open and very helpful. She just told me that if I needed anything or if I had any questions that I can come to her and that she doesn't mind. That was very helpful and calming to know that she was there to help me.

This open and trusting relationship made all the difference in how Ms. Purple adapted to her new classroom environment.

Mr. Jade was assigned a formal mentor, but he was concerned they were there more to watch than to provide assistance. This mistrust took some time to get past. After several weeks of developing a solid and trusting working foundation, the mentoring relationship became a positive experience. Mr. Green echoed the same sentiment of mistrust for his district-provided mentor during both his interview and the focus group. He explained that he felt uneasy from the minute the mentor stepped into his room, and he only saw the mentor a couple of times: "We did not hit it off in any kind of a way personally, to where I felt like I could trust them as a person. And so I didn't get anything out of that part." However, he did seek out the help of other teachers whom he respected after watching the way they taught their students.

Several teachers who participated in this study received alternative teacher certification through various organizations which allowed them to become teachers in Texas. These groups also provided mentors who visited monthly or quarterly to help the first-year teachers acclimate to the school and ensure they were working well in the classroom. Mr. Red was an example of all three parts working together perfectly. Mr. Red was provided a mentor by the school he started work at and was also assigned a district mentor. Having received alternative certification,

he was also provided a mentor from his certifying organization. On his demographic survey,

Mr. Red explained that he would work with his school mentor daily and his district mentor and

alternative program mentor in-person each month. He had a very positive experience with all

three of his mentors. Having his alternative certification mentor provide feedback via telephone

and email made contacting that mentor easier, too. When I asked him what types of things they

worked with him on, he explained:

> Making sure that you have something going, something concrete, you're hitting time
>
> marks, you know you're hitting your first thought within the first 10 minutes. You're
>
> going through the lesson plan on pace. You're not slowing down. They were looking for
>
> are you dragging the material. Is the student body handling the material appropriately?
>
> Are you ensuring ways for the students to be successful? Are they using a notebook?
>
> What are the ways you're incorporating the lesson? How are you making it engaging?
>
> Those are the things they were looking for but as a new person if I didn't have the mentor
>
> I had, I definitely believe they would have been more crucial to the process. I had a great
>
> mentor over at my school who pretty much guided me. He shared lessons, gave me
>
> worksheets and handouts and pretty much said, "Hey, this is what we're doing today." If
>
> I had any questions, he was there as a guide.

He also believed that his mentor helped him by sending transcripts of all the things they worked

on and discussed together so he would easily remember the content they covered during their

meetings.

Ms. Teal had a formal mentor from the organization that certified her as a teacher, and

she explained that the mentor they provided was excellent. She would visit Ms. Teal once a

month and sit in on her class. They would go over any notes and comments on the phone after

school was over, and Ms. Teal would receive an email spelling out everything they covered during the call. Ms. Teal started working with the TISD as a long-term substitute teacher three months into the school year. She was called in to replace a teacher who had quit a few months after school started. Ms. Teal had a positive experience with her informal mentor. One of the other teachers who taught the same grade that she did guided her through the problems and questions whenever she needed help. Between connecting almost every day at school with her informal mentor and the monthly visits from her formal mentor, Ms. Teal believed she had a wonderful mentoring experience.

>   *Informal mentor.* Informal mentors are teachers who may be located at the school but were not assigned to be an official mentor. An informal mentoring relationship will develop between teachers who may teach the same grade level or the same subjects. It sometimes happens out of necessity or just one teacher wanting to help another make it through the day. Mr. Green felt uncomfortable with his formal mentor so he sought out teachers and asked questions and borrowed some of the things that he saw worked for them. He trusted the people that he sought out personally. He would go through the school and see not only who was successful as a teacher but also whom he could get along with. Trust was extremely important to him. Mr. Green believed those were the most valuable relationships he experienced his first year.

>   Having never seen her formal mentor after their first visit, Ms. Magenta had to find a strong informal mentor. She was fortunate to teach the same class as two other teachers. They worked well together and taught her many valuable lessons. In her opinion, self-care was one of the most valuable lessons they taught her: If teachers burn out by trying to work 20 hours a day, they cannot help their students. During our individual interview she discussed how they let her

know that she needed to stop and take a lunch break. They also encouraged her to get out of the

classroom and do something for herself and to go home at a reasonable hour so that she would

not be so tired that she could not help anyone. Ms. Magenta shared similar sentiments expressed

by most of the participants: "There are not enough hours in the day to get everything done." Ms.

Violet also developed a mentoring relationship with one of the teachers in her school. She

explained that sometimes a new teacher just needs some assistance, and it can be as simple as

someone saying, "Hey, my door is always open if you feel like you're struggling with

something." If a teacher is stuck or frustrated, that could be a lifeline.

Why teachers quit. The third theme to emerge based upon the number of comments by

participants was why they felt teachers quit. During the focus groups and the individual

interviews, participants were asked why they thought teachers left the profession. Their

responses were broken down into three categories (see Table 7). The categories included

problems with teacher professional development, a lack of resources, and general answers

participants gave to the question of why teacher quit. The participants believed all may play a

role in why teachers leave in the first year.

Table 6

Why Teachers Quit Sub-Themes

Sub-Themes	Theme
Teacher professional development	
Lack of resources	Why Teachers Quit
Why teachers quit	

Teacher professional development. The largest response covered for why teachers quit

fell under the topic of teacher professional development (PD). There were very lengthy

discussions about PD during both focus groups. The topics ranged from specific areas where the

teachers had received training to being able to decide for themselves what topics they wanted to

see presented in a training. The TISD provides a week of teacher training at the beginning of

every school year. They select topics, provide the trainings, and deliver them in PowerPoint

presentations and with handouts during the week-long training event. The participants had a

great deal of criticism about the training. Mr. Jade explained to the group how he received a

training for several hours about how to use clip charts; he thought it was a great training until he

got to his school and they explained to him that they did not use clip charts. He was a little upset

that he had valuable time used for a training that served no purpose to him when there were other

things he could have learned. He believed his time during the training event would have been

improved if he had been able to network and establish some connections with other new and

experienced teachers. If the training topics did not pertain to a skill that all the teachers were

going to use, they should not have presented it at a group training. Other teachers at the focus

group agreed.

One expression that was used several times during the focus groups was one that I had

mentioned during the individual interviews. I explained to the teachers how I did not know what

I did not know until I learned it while going to school. Ms. Magenta brought this idea up again

as part of the discussion about letting teachers have a say in what they get for PD training. She

explained:

> I think part of the problem is that, like we said before, you don't know what you don't
>
> know. When you're just starting, you might not know what you need. So, if you had

asked me before I started, what do you need. You pick from these trainings. What do

you think is more beneficial? I think it was Mr. Jade that said he was trained in X, Y, and

Z, and when he got to his school, he had to throw all that out. So, I think maybe instead

of having it be a full week of training before you start, have a couple of days of training

instead and then sprinkle in a couple of half day trainings where you are paid and you're

grouped together. After you're already in there and you're looking at the areas where

you're struggling, you have a better idea of how your school works and those areas where

you need to strengthen certain skills or whatever.

Ms. Magenta's idea was very exciting to the group and each teacher commented that they

believed it was a much better way to help support the first-year teacher. Mr. Green agreed with

her and followed up by adding that he too had to throw out things that he was taught at the

training that were not used at his school similar to what Mr. Jade had mentioned. He was also

not happy that they wasted a great opportunity for training. He explained, "There were a whole

lot of things that I wish I would have learned during those first few weeks." He agreed with Ms.

Magenta and explained that he really did not know what he needed until after he got into the

classroom.

Mr. Red added that when he attended the new teacher training, he was surprised at how

they were teaching the courses. If he was being evaluated in his classroom as a new teacher, he

would have a mentor come into his room and observe; they would look to see that he was

ensuring the students were absorbing the material appropriately and that he was making the

lesson engaging. If this was the case for him, he wondered why they were training the new

teachers in a way that was not engaging and with a format they were not absorbing; it didn't

make any sense to him. Ms. Violet received multiple positive responses from the other focus

group participants when she explained that she was not going to retain information that was

presented at the new teacher training. She suggested instead:

> Send me to something that I can actually have hands-on showing me what I need to do.
>
> Don't give me these PowerPoints and then pass out these packets that I'm never going to
>
> read. That's a useless waste of paper that we need later when the copier's not working.

Ms. Violet did not think the PD PowerPoint training would work for training teachers to do

anything. Mr. Jade agreed and was frustrated that he was taught multiple times that a teacher

should not teach by going through information on a PowerPoint presentation, yet when the

teachers attend a training at the district PD, this is how they are being taught: "There such a

disconnect between what is expected from us and what we're shown."

Mr. Green echoed the same irritation as the rest of the group. The time wasted during the

training was a missed opportunity. He believed he could have read a PowerPoint presentation on

his own and got more out of it than having it read to him in a group setting. He explained to the

group:

> I think there was a complete disconnect in the methods that they used to training us and
>
> the methods they want us to use with our students. We're also students. Students to be
>
> teachers. And with all the research in education it just feels like a big disconnect in the
>
> way they approach teaching us how to be teachers and the way they expected us to teach.
>
> And they would occasionally do an activity but overall, the growth mindset and different
>
> things. It definitely needed to be a much more comfortable, welcoming, inclusive, we're
>
> on your team kind of a feeling for the training than there was.

Mr. Green also felt that if the teacher orientation was set up more like a professional conference,

the environment would be more conducive to learning. He explained that as educational

professionals, knowing how to deliver a positive, productive, learning experience should be something second nature to the school district. Ms. Amber reiterated the same thoughts as the group about learning from a PowerPoint presentation. She said that whether the presentation was given in person or with a handout, it would be something that would most likely just make her eyes glaze over: "I could never follow something like that unless someone was talking to me specifically and asking me questions about it. If we were doing scenarios or something like that with the teacher around us or something interactive, then I might absorb the materials." She explained that she might look like she was paying attention, but her mind would be a million miles away thinking about the work she had to get done before her next class.

Lack of resources. Some of the teachers had stories about not having the necessary resources in the classroom. For Mr. Red, he arrived as a long-term substitute teacher, and he did not get any help or lesson plans. They handed him a USB drive and explained that the teacher who used to teach the class before him has used it. Mr. Red had to walk in and teach students about baby development. He found everything he needed to teach the class on his own, and he did it all by looking online. It was an "uncomfortable, weird, and difficult task to try and find what I needed for this class." Towards the end of the focus group after several people explained that by then they had seen other teachers quit, Mr. Red said, "It's the stress. . . . We just listed off, I don't know how many things and that doesn't even begin to get to the practical idea of teaching, we're not even covering the number of kids who are being disrespectful to you."

Ms. Purple tackled the topic of lack of resources as the first discussion point during her semi-structured interview. Since this topic was important to her, we were able to spend extra time discussing what she felt about starting out in the classroom. We started the conversation by

my questioning what she believed a teacher needed to be successful. Her response was as follows:

> Because a lot of the times we [new teachers] come into the education system and we only know what we were taught. Because each district is different. So I don't know what this district needs compared to this district. And also the right materials, because sometimes all the materials are not there, and so we're having to buy everything for ourselves, and we're a first year teacher, and sometimes we don't get paid until the next month so we're then scraping up what we do have to provide for our students.

She did not want any of her students to not have what they needed on any given day, but there were days when everyone did not have supplies for a lesson. Ms. Purple felt that should not have happened.

One resource the teachers never believed they had enough of was time. Ms. Black mentioned during the focus group that she had so much paperwork to complete and she never got a planning period or a lunch break: "It just added an extra strain on your day when you had to stay longer to do the paperwork or take it home." Ms. Orange talked about how difficult it was trying to keep up with her paperwork when so much was expected out of her. She said she would bring home paperwork every day, and it seemed to her that each day she was bringing home more work than the day before. She joked about not knowing how to carry it back and forth every day because there was so much to carry.

Ms. Teal felt pressure to try and hit all the points for these teaching styles and still get her whole lesson completed. There was no time added to her schedule for re-teaching concepts the students didn't grasp the first time or forgot and needed a refresher on the topic. When I asked

Ms. Teal if she had any thoughts on why she believed that new teachers left the profession, she explained:

> We're being almost pushed really to teach in a more data-driven environment. Push, push, push, numbers, numbers, numbers, and you really don't see any more of the love and the passion and the caring and that communal quality any more. It's all data and numbers and businesslike. That's not what teachers want. That's not what they signed up for.

Why teachers quit. During the focus group, we discussed that a few of the teachers in each meeting were brought into the classroom in the middle of the year to replace people who quit a few months into the school year. I asked the participants if they felt this was connected to the high percentage of teachers who quit the profession in the first few years. It was a moment where the participants seemed to make a connection between the statistics we had talked about and people they knew and worked with every day. When I asked Mr. Green about his first-year experience, he discussed that he would never admit to his class that this was his first year in the classroom because he had seen other teachers go through some very difficult times because the students pushed them to see what they could get away with. Their goal was to try to get the new teacher to break: "I saw a lot of people struggle that first year and quit." Through my research I found a great deal of data to support Mr. Green's theory; Mac Kenzie and Stanzione (2010), for instance, created a name for these students: limit testers.

Ms. Amber believed that some teachers get frustrated because they do not feel as though their voice is being heard. While completing her online journal posting, she explained her biggest frustration during her first year:

I had a student who didn't really belong in the special ed group that I was teaching and I talked with so many people about try to get him moved out into a different program. He was disruptive and would fight with the other kids and every day I spent more and more time trying to keep him in line instead of teaching the class. I was so upset with my admin that nothing got done until right before the end of the year.

Ms. Violet had a difficult time as well trying to get clarity for planning her lessons. The lack of help made her feel as though she was not being supported:

With my first year teaching I kind of got thrown into the classroom at the half year point. I knew how to do the behavior management. It was not an issue for me. It was knowing how they planned. And no one ever told me how to plan it so I just submitted something that I was shown at another school. And they were like, oh, that's not how you do it. So they threw it back at me and I was like, well what do I do then?

Four participants were brought in to replace teachers who left in their first year. Ms. Amber, Ms. Orange, Ms. Black, and Ms. Teal had to gain the trust of students who did not believe they would stay with their class. Ms. Black explained how difficult it was where she worked because it was a behavioral school and the students were physically aggressive at times. Her struggles were not only learning how to deal with her class and her students, but also how to incorporate her coworker's students after her coworker quit. She seemed to understand why everything was so difficult while addressing the issues we discussed during the focus group:

We've been through three teachers next door and last year for the entire year I was the only teacher for both classrooms because nobody wanted the job. And I'm like, what in the world is going on, but now this all makes sense to me.

I asked the teachers in Ms. Black's focus group if they felt the numbers of teachers quitting during the first few years might be higher based upon the stories they shared during the meeting, and they believed the numbers could be worse.

Ms. Orange added to what Ms. Black had said during the focus group. She explained that her administration removed her from one class she was teaching to put her in a different class, teaching a different grade, because the other teacher quit. She described:

> I did the same thing, because they pulled me from third to first in February. They were like we're switching you and these kids in the first grade had already had four teachers. So when they got me in February, they were so mad at me. They didn't want me. They hated me. But now I moved to the next grade with them and now I'm their favorite teacher. So you can see how they needed consistency but that first year was bad. And they kept putting first year teachers in there and it killed them every time so they just quit every time.

Another issue discussed during interviews was aggressive students and teacher safety. Three participants discussed having been hit by students. Ms. Violet discussed what happened on her worst day in the classroom with an aggressive special education student:

> I was not real sure of how to deal with him and his defiance. He would constantly hit other kids, refuse to complete work even if modified and offered computer time per the counselor's advice. He became angry when asked to do anything he didn't want to do like wake up. He would punch and kick and spit on me. I was pregnant at the time and would have to radio for support.

One of Ms. Amber's special education students was also aggressive at times:

One of the students was frustrated about not participating after getting in trouble. I was

afraid he was going to hurt one of the other children. I tried to separate him from the

other child and he hit me in the nose with his elbow. I didn't even realize it at the time,

but he broke my nose. I didn't want to tell anyone. I felt ashamed and that it would seem

like I couldn't control what was happening in my classroom. I tried to talk with the

mother of the child and I just think she didn't want to deal with getting help for him.

I followed up with a question and asked if she had thought about quitting after such a difficult

experience; she replied, "I didn't think about quitting at all and it made me glad I was there to

protect my other student."

The focus group discussed what they believed might be one possible solution to

preventing so many teachers leaving after a few months. They expressed that putting in a new

teacher into the classroom when the situations were so difficult was obviously not going to work.

One participant suggested that a shadowing teacher who could model the best behavior in

challenging scenarios might be a solution. While some teachers were surprised that the

statistical data suggested such a large percentage of teachers quit the profession during the first

few years, after discussions during the focus group, some expressed the numbers might be higher

than the data proposed.

Support needed. Support for new teachers was the next theme that developed from the

participant data. This theme can be broken down into four categories of support that were

discussed during interviews and focus group meetings (see Table 7). Teacher support was

mentioned most often followed closely by administration support. These topics were the most

important for the participants. Also covered by this theme was support provided to new teachers

by their mentors. This included mentors the teachers worked with virtually, those that were

developed informally at school, and mentors who were assigned through the school, district, or certifying organization.

Table 7

Teacher's Support Sub-Themes

Sub-Themes	Themes
Teacher support	
Administration support	Teacher's Support
Virtual mentor and assigned mentor support	

Teacher's support. One of the questions that all the participants were asked during the semi-structured interviews was what they thought new teachers needed to stay in the classroom beyond their first year. The first interview that I completed was with Ms. Magenta. She explained how very nerve wracking it was the first week that she was teaching a classroom full of students. She would have loved to have had someone there to guide her through that time. She made a point of explaining that she did not need anyone to hold her hand, but having someone there like a guide would have helped with her anxiety.

I wish that I would have had somebody that would have been like "Hey, Ms. Magenta, this is what I'm doing my first week, these are the lessons I'm using, these are the books I'm using as opposed to write up your lessons and figure it out. Even if it would have been the first two or three weeks of school. As you know, sometimes with the first five or the first 15 or whatever, it looks a little bit different, but I just wish I would have had something. Even videos of this is a teacher doing her morning meeting and this is what it's supposed to look like. That would have been super helpful. Sometimes I just think

about it and across the school, and across the district, and across the state, so many of us are working on the same stuff and there's not enough information sharing, like we're all reinventing the wheel. I think that just adds stress and pressure.

Ms. Magenta suggested that the TISD could create a database of videos of teachers presenting different lessons, and it could be a searchable site so teachers could find what they needed. She hoped to see something that included a breakdown of each of the units the teachers had to teach and examples of essential questions, demonstrations for learning, and even some ideas for hands-on exercises to check the students for retention of the information, "similar to how charter school classes are scripted, but you could cut and paste and modify what fits for your class because one size doesn't fit all."

Ms. Magenta received her certification through an outside organization and while she was getting her teaching credentials, she was able to network with others doing the same thing. This allowed her to attend summer training and meetings with 150 other teachers in Texas. She explained how she connected with her group on Facebook and one person would recommend something and then another and before you knew it, you had so many connections. There was almost always a resource, and it was a big help. Mr. Jade (2019) explained that he really didn't like to use Facebook that much, but he knew that if he needed any help, he could always find what he needed through his Facebook groups.

When it came to needed support from one's mentor, Mr. Red explained that all the issues new teachers face seemed to pile up into an impassable obstacle. In addition, he had to tackle depression midway through the year. He felt as though he was not serving any purpose as a teacher and was being paid to be a babysitter instead; the students he was working with were not making any efforts to learn, and he felt like he was spending his days keeping them in line:

"Because why am I even here if these kids aren't going to try to get it?" He explained that if his mentor had not been there to get him back on track, he might have left in his first year as well.

As we talked about the importance of first-year teachers getting the support they needed, several of the participants shared that as second- and third-year teachers, they were mentoring the first-year teachers who came on board that year. Such was the case for Ms. Black. She explained that all the other teachers in her section quit the previous year, and she ended up combining three classes with her class. When the administration brought in another first-year teacher after the others quit, she described her own mentoring role:

> Well I had another first-year teacher last year, this past year and last year and we figured it out together. And now we have a whole slew of first-year teachers and I'm teaching them. Here's how you survive at this school.

She was helping to guide the new teachers and keep them in the classroom. Ms. Amber also felt that being a role model and taking the lead for the newer teachers was extremely important:

> My first year was tough and I did think about quitting. Especially when I would have a rough day or I would just be so tired. I feel like I have experienced so many things in just the first couple of years that I know exactly what the new teachers feel like.

She also explained that she wished that she had an opportunity to sit in with a class before she started teaching. Since she was replacing a teacher who was no longer there, she did not get any time to shadow a veteran educator. "I would have felt more relaxed and prepared if I could've spent even a day in one of the other special education classes with an experienced teacher."

During the focus group discussions, several participants added that they would have benefited from a day or two of shadowing a seasoned teacher before their first day. Only one participant (Ms. Teal) was given time to sit in on a class while another teacher ran the class. She

believed that the experience led to many successes for her during her first year. Teacher support

to help build the confidence level of a new educator was a great success for Ms. Teal.

Administrative support. The participants mentioned the importance of being supported

by their school administration. It was at the top of each person's list of what a teacher needed to

be successful during the first year. It was clear that each participant had a different experience

with administrative support. Ms. Purple felt she was well supported by her administration who

created a Facebook page for early childhood educators: "They posted activities for class and

they'll put quotes there to encourage us." Ms. Teal agreed about being supported and

commented:

> The leadership team up here has been amazing. They're just beautiful. Last year they
>
> were very understanding. They knew this was my first year and let me know they were
>
> going to help me along the way with whatever I needed. There was never any kind of
>
> punitive, well why did you do this and why didn't you do that. I think if teachers stay or
>
> leave it is all about how they were supported by the leadership. It should always be
>
> looked at through the lens of leadership.

Ms. Teal was encouraged and enthusiastic about the leadership at her school.

One of the participants who had a different experience with support by his administration

was Mr. Red. He was frustrated by the lack of support from administration when it came to

setting policies. The teachers at his school had to decide what their policy would be on cell

phones in class. This led to a confusing scenario where one teacher would allow cell phones in

the classroom while another banned cellphones, leaving the students caught in the middle. Mr.

Red believed that the schoolwide policies needed consistency and that the teacher should not be

responsible for making a policy. He explained:

You're confusing kids and then say well those are the rules in the other classrooms. They

just need to have schoolwide policies and communication efforts. Same thing with dress

codes. Some people don't mind spaghetti dresses or spaghetti string dresses or whatnot

but some teachers think it's not appropriate for us at the high school level. When you ask

an AP and their response is 'Well, what do you think of it?' You're in the position to be

telling us what you're supposed to be enforcing. We shouldn't be enforcing the

schoolwide rules, that's the AP's role. But, when they leave the responsibility to the

teacher, it becomes more like: Great… I'm not getting the support I want. Why should I

have to be the teacher and the administrator?

As Mr. Red continued with the interview, he once again suggested that when the teacher has to

do the job of the administrator, new teachers leave the profession.

Mr. Jade also dealt with some negative experiences with administration. When he was a

first-year teacher he felt like the administrators caught a quick glimpse of his teaching during a

walk-through and that would be all that was used for his teacher's evaluation. He continued,

I also feel like admin kind of puts teachers against each other. It was me and another

first-year teacher at my school and we got compared to each other a lot. Mr. Jade is

doing this and the other first-year teacher is doing that. And it almost ended up being a

competition instead of a cohesive team. And we were on the same team.

When the educators felt as though they were in a competition, there was a complete lack of

sharing of ideas and information.

Ms. Magenta had a similar experience where she was compared with a first-year teacher

when she started, too. Mr. Jade and Ms. Magenta were the only ones who were hired back the

following year. She explained how unfair it was because the other teacher was right out of

college, and Ms. Magenta had workforce experience before training to be a teacher. The comparison of one to the other was really upsetting to her. She pointed out, "We don't do that to our students, or at least we're not supposed to."

Ms. Amber was not happy with administration because she felt like the administrators kept throwing new teachers into a bad situation that the team knew needed an experienced educator to be successful. She believed that if administration were going to put a first-year teacher into a difficult class where others had left before them, the leadership team should have planned to provide more support in that case:

> If there had been a guide, lesson plans, or something that just showed what the class should look like and how you should schedule things, and some different types of activities it would be a lifesaver. You really don't want to mess up or not do something you were supposed to or even worse, do something you shouldn't have, but you don't know until you do it.

She was very worried about messing things up and putting the children in a worse position than when she got to them.

There were several things the participants discussed on the topic of support from administration. Ms. Violet explained one of the things that she listed as her best lesson learned from the administrators during new teacher induction program:

> Speak up if you're having a problem. If your struggling and you don't speak up you're going to still be struggling in your second year doing the same things you struggled with in your previous year thinking you're going to get better results.

Virtual mentor and mentor support. These two support levels were combined due to the lower number of times they were discussed. When talking about support in general, all the

participants agreed during the two focus groups that getting through the first year was not something anyone could do alone. For some it was as simple as having someone to help calm their nerves on the first few days of class. Ms. Amber felt supported when she would go online to sites that were designed to bring together special education teachers:

> I mostly read ideas from other teachers on topics that I could use in my classroom. I was glad to see that I wasn't the only person who had problems trying to keep control in the classroom. Seeing online what people used and said about positive and negative things they tried was the best. I knew I could go to the special education forum and someone would reply and give me ideas and support.

Ms. Black explained when she was on the interactive discussion area for her Facebook group she saw "teachers that are even more distraught than I am." She was realistic with her expectations regarding what her students were capable of and that was a gamechanger for her. Seeing other teachers hurting also hit a nerve for Ms. Black as well. Having access to the teacher forum was an important two way exchange: "It's just creating a community-like support system, for me to say what do I do about this, why is this this way, and sometimes, I don't want to do this either."

For participants who felt they had so much to learn from the teachers who had more experience, interacting with veteran educators was a great source of comfort. In her journal, Ms. Teal explained that she felt she could offset her lack of experience by reading what the veteran educators would share: "Veteran teachers posted what did and didn't work well for them on their blogs which helped me anticipate and overcome challenges in my classroom as well as provided new ideas to continue to grow and challenge my students."

For other participants it was about being able to plan a full day where their students would get an interactive educational experience they would learn from and retain the information presented. Ms. Black also found support from her peers. She worked closely with another first-year teacher. The variety of support strategies that were mentioned throughout the meetings with this group of participants was genuinely diverse. Their passion for education and for helping their students stood out during all phases of this research study.

Induction experience. The final theme that emerged during this research surrounded the new teacher's induction experiences. Between the semi-structured interviews, the online journal, and the focus group meetings, the participants shared over 100 stories of their triumphs and challenges they encountered during their induction. During the interviews and the journals, I asked the participants to think of their best and their worst experiences to capture the wide range of unexpected, impromptu, and surprising events that made up their first year. The categories covered in this theme included what the participants' first thoughts of the induction program were as well as the first problems they needed help with. I also included whether the educators believed the support of the induction program helped them get through their first year in the classroom. The most intense and powerful responses by the participants stemmed from incidents that occurred on their worst day during their induction. These questions received the most responses, and each teacher usually provided several examples of different events.

On some occasions, first-year teachers struggle to find a balance between what they learned in school about being a teacher and what they are being asked to do when they get to the classroom. While speaking with Ms. Orange, I asked her what she felt her worst experience during the induction program was. She explained why she had such a difficult first year in school:

I had a bad administrator. That was the one thing that they never teach you. What you

can and can't do. She got fired afterward. That had hovered over my whole year. She

kept telling me things to do these things that I knew weren't legal. And so that was

terrible. It was so rough. It was a constant battle between legal and I can't do that.

Ms. Orange did not let this bad experience take away her love of teaching, however. In my

follow-up question, I asked her what her biggest takeaway was from the induction year, and she

explained that to get through the first year, a new teacher needs to be ready for anything that

might come along, "whether that's being open to new social media or teaching topics, whatever

comes your way."

Throughout the research for this study, participants described multiple difficulties they

encountered as new teachers. Learning to manage all the things that a teacher has to get

completed is a topic that many participants brought up during the interview and focus group

sessions. Ms. Amber said that dealing with the workload was part of a lesson learned for her:

You can't kill yourself by working 14 hours a day. You have to pack it up and go home

and relax and get away from the classroom. Even when I did go home, I brought work

home with me. It felt like all weekend, I was doing all the things I didn't have time to

finish during the week and then it would start all over again on Monday. There were

times I couldn't even sleep because I kept thinking about everything I had to finish. If

you don't stop, you will run yourself into the ground and then you can't help anyone.

Ms. Teal had to deal with an issue that would break the heart of any teacher: One of her

students was being bullied and no one knew how out of control it had become for him; the

student wrote a note that said he was going to end his life during recess. She was distressed to

think that a child who had not even had his ninth birthday yet would think about ending his life. After intervening and getting her student some help, her uncomfortable internal dialogue began:

> But it was that whole second-guessing piece of it all. Did I do something wrong? Should I have caught something earlier? And I did talk to my mentor teacher about it and she told me that you get them for so many hours a day. And you just do the absolute best that you can. I just felt awful that I should have figured this out. Did I miss a sign or an opportunity to help them? It was so scary and awful. And I don't know if being a mother has something to do with it too. Once you're a mother, you see the answers in a lot of these kid's eyes, and you know that these thoughts are in their heads at such a young age. It was just heartbreaking.

This topic is one that all teachers hope that students do not have to face. I followed up this discussion by asking if Ms. Teal had received any training specifically about how to respond if a child brings up suicide or bullying at school. She had never received any training about student suicide, but bullying was addressed. "From what I've seen for kids, it's petty little things that get blown out of proportion."

Another topic that teachers never want to face was something that Ms. Magenta explained in her online journal:

> One of the worst days was the day I found out one of my students (a 4-year-old) had been sexually abused. This student had an unstable home environment and many behavior issues. Finding this out just reminded me of the ugliness of humanity and how try as we might, we cannot always protect our kids.

For half the study participants, parent-to-teacher interactions seem to be part of the worst experiences. For Mr. Jade, this happened when he called a meeting with the parents of a child

who had behavioral problems to review the documentation to get some additional assistance: "When I tried to get the family involved, the parents cursed at me and told me to mind my own [expletive] business." Ms. Amber had a similar encounter; the parents blamed her for all the problems the student was dealing with. When she was meeting with the parents of one the students to discuss their learning disabilities and the behavioral problems the student was dealing with, the parents were not happy: "They basically said I wasn't capable of helping their child. It was mean and hurtful." Ms. Magenta was open and honest with one of her student's parents explaining her desire to advocate for her students. The parent made numerous excuses why the child would misbehave and act out in the classroom. During a face-to-face classroom meeting the parents tried to blame the problems the student was having on Ms. Magenta being a novice teacher. The parent "even tried to use it against me, saying that I had college level unrealistic expectations for her 4-year-old child."

For several participants the way the new teacher induction program helped them the most was by encouraging them to develop relationships with other teachers. Mr. Green expressed that "the relationships I built, the questions I could ask, and seeing what other people did was helpful for me." Mr. Jade agreed that what helped him the most was "the connections that I made with my induction coach, mentors, and other first-year teachers." There were several participants who did not feel they were helped specifically by the induction program; Ms. Amber, for example, stated: "Most of the advice that I ended up using in the classroom came from the advice I received from my Facebook group." In addition, the teachers who were brought into the school district in the middle of the year and never participated in the formal training did not feel as though they received any benefits from the induction program.

Not all teachers believed that their induction year involved a great deal of struggles. Ms. Purple was extremely positive about her first year as a teacher. When I asked about her induction experiences, she discussed all the pleasant experiences she could remember:

It was very informative for a first year teacher. I'm pre-k so we went through our own program itself. And they showed us how the curriculum works. And so they taught us how to use the pre-k guidelines and then the curriculum that pre-k itself uses. And they did modeling and hands on activities to help us teach 4 year old's.

Ms. Purple felt very strongly that the training team did an excellent job modeling and demonstrating what she needed to help teach her students.

During the research for this study, I found many cases where teachers expressed the need for a guide or mentor to help them maneuver through the obstacles that arise in the first year. One participant had a great deal of success and three mentors to help him achieve it. Mr. Red's school mentor, district mentor, and certifying organization mentor all worked to ensure that he had all the tools he needed to be successful:

My school placed me under a mentor who was a teacher with the most experience. His classroom was stationed across from mine so I got to see him on the daily. When I had my planning periods, I would go over and sit in his classroom and watch him teach and observe his teaching habits rolled over and so on. Then they enrolled me in a district mentor program where they had me shadowed by someone from the district who understood teaching principles. He would watch me teach and then he would talk to me through my email about things that went right and what went wrong and then we would have face-to-face meetings. I did alternative certification and they sent a mentor once

every month and that person would come in watch me teach. We would have phone calls and emails back and forth talking about it.

He felt very comfortable stepping into his role as teacher with all of his mentors there to offer assistance when and if he needed it. Ms. Black was not a part of the initial training but also felt that her formal mentor and fellow teachers made her time in the induction program work. She explained:

I mean, they were always positive, all the ones I've had were always positive and my mentor was actually the one who did my Texas teacher's test and I scored perfect. So I think that for me it was just the fact that she was giving me advice, and then when I followed it, it actually came to fruition, that I didn't have any negative feedback at all.

While Ms. Black may not have always agreed with the decisions of the administration at her school, she did believe she was given all the support she needed to be successful.

Some teachers become very worried in the first few months in the classroom about missteps and the impact they could make on a new career. Such was the case for Ms. Amber:

Everything seemed so difficult. I remember always feeling like I didn't know what I was doing. Every day came with new surprises and they were big and you needed to deal with them right then and there. I didn't know what to do and I'd try to find someone to help with it but it didn't always happen. I did have many days where I dreaded coming into work. I was trying to imagine what was going to go wrong next. It seemed like it was one thing after another.

In the beginning she was extremely unsure and worried she was going to fail her class; however, the students were her motivating reason to get past her first year.

Ms. Teal also described her first impressions as being very nervous. She seemed extremely unsure what her experience was going to be like:

I agree that it can be overwhelming but I have had a very different experience here. The leadership team up here has been amazing. They're just Beautiful. Last year they were very understanding. "This is your first year, and this is kind of what we're looking at, and we're going to help you along the way. There was never any kind of punitive, well why did you do this and why didn't you do that. It was never there so I can understand why someone would say that but I've just had a very different experience. I think if teachers stay or leave it is all about how they were supported by the leadership. It should always be looked at through the lens of leadership.

The team at Ms. Teal's school made a positive impact during a stressful time. The stress level for the first-year teacher was also a big topic during the focus group.

Not all induction programs are designed the same, and the needs of new teachers will tend to vary. Several participants in this study were very unhappy with what was presented for PD at the induction training and throughout the year. When I asked Ms. Magenta what part of the induction program she enjoyed the most she replied, "Honestly, I can't think of a thing." She was not a fan of the new teacher training the district put together:

The district induction plan we had to attend had a lot of professional development that honestly seem to be a waste of time, and a lot of times the training sessions aren't relevant, or they turn a topic that could have been done in maybe an hour or two into a whole day session and it gets really repetitive. At least last year one of the things that were frustrating to me was the messages that kids don't really learn by you lecturing them, right, and you need to give them experiences and to engage them, but we're being

talked to and they're not showing us how to do it. They are telling us that it needs to be done and it's important, but not showing us how to do it. They're not giving us an example which would be a lot more beneficial so that's definitely one of my gripes.

She was upset that the message they were giving the teachers at training was delivered the same way they were telling the educators not to teach, because it was not effective. Ms. Magenta was very clear that her formal and informal mentors who taught the same class that she did were the strongest and most effective part of her success during her induction year.

When looking back over the course of a challenging year with many first-time experiences, sometimes a teacher can focus on bad things that happen. When I asked the participants to describe what happened on their best day during the first year, there were many stories shared. While he admitted that it is difficult to teach at the high-school level, Mr. Red felt very proud of his students as they completed their education:

Even though I felt like towards the second semester that a lot of things that I did was lost, just the few amount of kids that showed gratitude whether it was a letter, a card, or a thank you note. It really makes a world of difference. It's gratifying when you realize that some kids actually take advantage of the classroom environment. They're working hard. They appreciate you. That's the biggest takeaway that I had. It's one of those things that keeps me going every day. Knowing that there being those few kids that actually appreciate what I do.

Thirty of his students walked the stage at graduation, and he knew the efforts it took them to get there.

When Mr. Jade received advice from his mentor, he put all the suggestions to work and planned an engaging and interactive day. His mentor was sitting in on his classroom, and things worked out perfectly:

> I was doing a lesson on story elements, character, setting, and plot. I had implemented some changes in my classroom that were suggested by the new induction specialist and my administrators. I was also teaching the students how to create a specific foldable when you wanted to display information. The students were very engaged and well behaved for this particular lesson. The new induction specialist talked with the principal about how well I was doing.

Mr. Jade was congratulated for incorporating his mentor's feedback and being open to suggestions. After seeing such a positive outcome and gaining praise from both his mentor and his principal, he was encouraged and excited to see what a difference his training was having on his teaching.

When I asked Ms. Teal to recall what her best experience was during her first year, she relayed this story in her journal:

> In my first year, my best day in the classroom was when I was teaching a history lesson on Alexander Graham Bell, and there was a reference to a prior lesson that happened to come up. The students remembered and their hands shot up in the air to tell me about the connection from the prior lesson. It was exciting for both me and the students! I was excited that the prior lesson stuck with them and they saw the connection, and they were excited to recognize and call out the connection. That day stuck with me, and helped me realize that what I am doing truly does make a difference. Their behavior that day was wonderful, and they left my classroom that day happy, cheerful, and I was as well.

Many of the first-year teachers did not feel comfortable when they first got into the classroom. Ms. Amber explained, "When you are just put in a class on your own it's scary because you really don't know what's going to happen." Even simple tasks can seem difficult. Mr. Green was not certain he was even taking attendance correctly; he explained in his journal that he would ask himself several times during the first few weeks, "Where am I supposed to be and what am I supposed to be doing?" Several participants also struggled with classroom management issues. Mr. Jade explained it best: "The first problem was classroom management, because no textbook is ever going to prepare you to deal with a classroom full of 6 year old's." Three participants also mentioned needing help with parent teacher conferences. As Ms. Amber explained, "It can be extremely difficult when parents have on blinders and do not want to recognize their child has a learning disability."

The new teachers discussed many problems they faced that they were not expecting. This led to other issues that took Ms. Teal by surprise:

> I guess more the feeling of uncertainty. Not really knowing. You're being told you're doing everything right. Like everything looks good. You're doing a good job. But on the other hand, there's still a little bit of doubt. Like, am I? Or are you just telling me that cause it's my first year but really, I'm going to be held to this expectation next year.
>
> Kind of, I guess, second guessing yourself would be the right words.

Ms. Amber and Ms. Orange also commented about feeling a lack of confidence during the first few months of teaching.

Research Question Responses

The purpose of this research study was to understand what role social media plays in the new teacher induction experience. The research questions developed from that purpose include a

central research question and three sub-questions that all feed into the comprehensive breakdown of the study. These questions will be answered using the data gathered from the participants during online journaling, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The collected data have been organized into themes and these themes will substantiate the lived description of each participant's first-year journey during new teacher induction.

Central research question. The central research question for this study asked, "What role does social media play in the new teacher induction experience?" Social media usage during new teacher induction was important to the participants. Each participant used social media daily for a variety of support reasons. For instance, Ms. Magenta commented:

> I would say that I am on social media probably every day. Probably 30 to 60 min. Most of the time it's just like passively scrolling unless I have a specific question like oh, I need an idea for how to do guided reading or how does somebody do their word wall.

Ms. Purple agreed about using social media daily: "I used Pinterest basically every single time I lesson planned and every lesson plan I created had at least one Pinterest idea on it." Mr. Jade used Facebook and explained in his journal, "I am also friends with teachers and we speak to each other or interact with each other posts daily." Another participant, Ms. Amber, explained in her journal why she used social media each day:

> I went to the different social media sites to find help with lesson plans and classroom management. We are also evaluated on getting all your lessons completed on time and it is so hard to get everything done. I really needed to figure out how to get the kids who were so behind in reading to get caught up and it seemed impossible.

The teachers explained their different needs and what they used social media for the most, but each participant had a unique perspective. Mr. Green explained that while he may not have liked

each aspect of social media, he still used them. "I'm actually not a fan of Facebook, but it is ubiquitous, so I like that I can get a hold of pretty much everybody I know on it." He did explain what he enjoyed the most:

> YouTube has so many resources ready to show in the classroom. It made my life a lot easier! And now in my second year I'm also teaching Algebra I, and YouTube is such a help in explaining concepts in under four minutes in a way a teacher could never do, due to the editing process applied before publishing the videos.

The participants noted frequently that whatever they needed, they could find on social media.

The three sub-questions listed below were all designed to help address the central research question.

Sub-question one. The first sub-question of this study asked, "What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play during the new teacher induction experience?" This question was designed to uncover the importance the role of a mentor has on a new teacher's first-year experience.

When viewing the data collected from the 10 participants, it is clear the role of the mentor was important. The communication between the participants and their mentors—whether formal, informal, or virtual—played a significant role especially at the beginning of the first year. The participants had formal mentors who were assigned to them in most cases. The support that Mr. Red received during his daily communication with his mentor was vital. He explained that he felt frustrated at times and more like a babysitter than a teacher, but his mentor stepped in when he was upset: "So he helped me and roped me back in when I felt lost. He was very much more of an emotional support than a teaching reference." The emotional support role

was also met using social media contacts. I asked Mr. Red if it make him feel better looking on social media to see if there were other people struggling in their first year, and he replied:

> Yes. Because it didn't make me feel so much like I was alone. Because everyone at my school currently feels like or it looks like they all know exactly what they're doing and how to handle everything. So it was good to get some input from strangers online.

For Mr. Red the virtual and formal mentors played a significant role in providing content for use in the classroom as well as emotional support when he felt frustrated, stressed, or isolated.

When formal mentors were not effective and participants needed guidance, they often sought out a virtual mentor or they developed a mentoring association with other teachers at their school. In response to a journal prompt asking about virtual mentors, Mr. Green wrote:

> I would reach out to other teachers every day. Most of these teachers were ones at my school, but there were several I had met at trainings or through others means. I found that the district trainings did a good job at preparing me for the paperwork I would be required to submit, but they fared poorly at equipping me for what would happen in the classroom. Each day I would have dozens of questions, and I would reach out to the teachers I knew to help with them. Most of my interactions were digital—an email, a text, a message on Facebook messenger.

Virtual communication was used to help with day-to-day issues. The participants who were not comfortable communicating with their formal mentor needed to find a trusted colleague who would offer constructive criticism and not judge the actions of the new teacher. Mr. Green's mentor was a strong and successful role model who provided positive reinforcement and support. Trust was a key mentor role for Mr. Jade as well, who took a while to warm up to his mentor and

did not trust that she was there to help him. He felt as though she was looking for ways to trip him up:

> I still had that mindset of, oh, you're going to come into my classroom once a week and look at me and make sure I'm doing this or that. I'm like, is this just the district's way of checking in on me? But then I realized that the things that I messed up on or the things that I could improve on, she wasn't running back to the district or running to my administrators and saying he's doing this or that. I mean she did talk with them and she did give them almost always positive feedback.

After working together, they developed a strong trusting relationship that he still values today. Mr. Jade was fortunate that his mentor was able to demonstrate and communicate that she was genuinely interested in seeing him succeed. When we talked about what he believed could be done to improve communication between new teachers and formal mentors he explained his thoughts:

> Not only match them up based on grade level and things like that, but we give our kids learning style tests to see what their learning style is and how they learn best. We give them the Myers Briggs and all that stuff. So I think we should also pair people up who have similar communication styles. That way . . . because I was very distrusting of my new mentor from the district coming into my classroom. I felt like I was being watched as opposed to being helped at first. But once I learned how she acted and we started having conversations with each other, I had a great relationship with her that grew into a very cohesive bond between two people who were trying to do the best thing for their kids.

The communication between Mr. Jade and his formal mentor, while uncomfortable at first, was an important part of his successful first year.

When I asked Mr. Green about communication with virtual mentors, he explained they started as online communications but became a part of the real world:

I was in several different Facebook groups. Those were real helpful to listen. I just like to listen, watch, and read, but I would post occasionally. But just to see what other people were discussing. The issues they were going through. I would just read them. I would still identify with what they were going through. And then for me what was really, really, really helpful was having text groups of different teachers. And we would just talk about things going on. Some at my school and some throughout the district and to occasionally set up a socializing event that would happen after hours at an undisclosed location for we'll say iced tea. But to be in those kind of communication circles was real helpful.

In addition to her formal mentor, Ms. Teal also developed an informal mentoring relationship with another teacher who taught the same grade that she did:

It was really nice especially in the first year so I felt confident in what I was teaching and I did a ton of talking to the other teachers like, does this sound good, does this sound right and they were like yes. That sounds great.

The informal mentor was comfortable sharing her time and her knowledge, and she took Ms. Teal under her wing and gave her everything she needed to be successful. Ms. Teal's mentors excelled at communicating at school. She also reached out on a daily basis to her virtual contacts through Facebook, Instagram, and teacher blogs. I asked Ms. Teal about the communication and support she received from multiple sources and what kind of a difference this made for her:

I wasn't going to let my students down and on top of that, I did have a great group of

teachers around me and an amazing administration staff around me who kept me going.

Who gave me the support and confidence I needed. Yeah, sure you're doing great. You

can do this.

Ms. Magenta had similar help from teachers who taught the same courses, and she also used her

virtual contacts like mentors to help find content to use in the classroom and to help with

questions. This was extremely important because Ms. Magenta taught dual language pre-

kindergarten. Ms. Magenta explained that she worked with two teachers who taught the same

classes that she did and each one had a different approach to how they did things based upon

their experience:

I could come to them and ask them a question any time and just say that I noticed this kid

is having difficulty with this, how would you handle this. Then I would have two

opinions from two different people that are both good teachers in their own ways and

they would help me navigate it.

In a similar situation, Ms. Black had her AP as her formal mentor. She trusted her AP

and the advice she was given, but she felt that she could not go to her for every little thing

because she was so busy with daily issues at school; therefore, Ms. Black developed an informal

mentoring relationship with another teacher at her school. With the use of a software program at

her school, Ms. Black also had access to a Facebook group where teachers could share thoughts

and ideas with others teaching the same types of students. This allowed Ms. Black to experience

the assistance of virtual mentors. Ms. Orange explained that it was sometimes easier to look for

the answers that someone has already provided online:

> And I would always go to my comfort zone and I felt like social media was comforting
>
> because people have already put it out there. You don't have to ask for it. It's already
>
> there. So instead of asking one person 20 million questions. I would go to Pinterest or
>
> Facebook and realize, Oh, okay they've done this already and it worked out for them. I
>
> can try it and if I don't, I can try somebody else's. Then you don't feel like you are
>
> bothering someone.

Being able to reach out to someone almost any time of the day was also a plus when it came to

communicating with a virtual mentor.

Sub-question two. The second sub-question of this study asked, "How do second- or

third-year teachers describe their use of social media during their new teacher induction year?"

This sub-question narrows down the scope of the study to concentrate on the social media

experiences the participants shared during their first-year in the classroom. This question is also

reinforced by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985). As the online experience has grown to

play a significant role in people's lives, it makes sense that Bandura would reexamine social

cognitive theory to view the possibility of modeling behavior from an online resource. Bandura

(2018) explained that as the Internet and technological advances continue to expand, people will

no longer be confined to modeling in a small physical social setting:

> A major advantage of social modeling lies in its tremendous reach, speed, and instructive
>
> power. Unlike learning by doing, influential models can transmit via mass media new
>
> ways of thinking and behaving to people worldwide. People now manage the major share
>
> of transactions in their everyday lives through the Internet by drawing on the vast
>
> information readily available in the cyberworld. (Bandura, 2018, p. 134)

This use of social media interaction to provide new teachers examples of what to do and what to avoid when working in education can open a wider range of experiences and information than ever before.

One common answer that was given by each participant in this study was they used social media every day. When looking at each of the categories of sites they visited and what sorts of things they were looking for, there was also a limitless number of options. Teachers found different sites would provide them a wide range of resources from classroom content on Pinterest, advice for working with difficult students on Facebook, humorous memes on Instagram, situational guidance on teacher blogs, videos to keep students engaged through YouTube, and interactive discussion boards that allowed teachers to vent their frustrations.

Participants were always looking for ideas to bring creativity, interactive learning, and fun to their lesson plans. Ms. Orange was placed in a classroom where she was responsible for dual language classes. She was unsure how they were run or how they were supposed to be taught:

> In dual language, I did not know this was a thing, I have to teach reading and writing and math in 2 hours. Then they go and do it all in Spanish. And I was like, hold on, I've never learned this. So I would have loved just to see it. Because as I said, I can do all these things and I can teach you a lesson, but just to see how it would work on a schedule doesn't help me. For you to show me, I would get it. I went online and reached out to another school district and found out how they taught it. I instantly put it into my room and can get through the three lessons in two hours. I can do it and all that was, was just reaching out but I had to reach out. So this year, I've got it now. But last year, it pretty much took the whole year for me to figure it out.

Ms. Amber was also looking for help with her lesson when she went online to a special education chat group:

> I was having an evaluation in class and I was very nervous about what to do for the activity. I put out to the chat room and one of the teachers told me what she did. It involved cups of water with food coloring in it and explaining how the color would go from one cup to the other from a paper towel. The directions to do the activity were great and it was perfect. I couldn't wait to go online and post what happened and thank the teacher who helped me. (Amber, Focus Group, 2019)

Sub-question three. The third sub-question of this study asked, "When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher?" The first step to viewing the adult learner's perspective is to understand the assumptions that were put forth with the andragogical model developed as part of adult learning theory (Knowles et al., 2011). The six assumptions start with an adult learners "need to know why they need to learn something" and their "self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions" (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 63). The third assumption incorporates the lived experiences of each adult and the broad base of knowledge they bring with them. The fourth assumption is based upon the readiness of the adult to learn the information being taught. The fifth assumption is an "orientation to learning" (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 66). This basically is the motivation to learn something that will help solve a problem or task the adult is currently needing to complete. The sixth assumption of andragogy covers motivation. Knowles et al. (2011) explained that adults have external and internal motivations that drive them to learn different things.

When considering these six assumptions, what would a virtual mentor be like for a first-year teacher? The first task of a virtual role model working with adults "is to help the learners become aware of the need to know" (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 63). The virtual role model must understand how to explain the value of the information that will be shared with the new teacher to ensure he or she will understand how it can help. By selecting a virtual role model and working with him or her as opposed to a formal mentor, the teacher has input regarding whom they are modeling their behavior after. Ms. Amber could see the value in following the advice of a veteran teacher who was teaching special education children similar to hers. The experienced teacher helped her understand how a lesson could be adapted for a specific disability: "To see something work and know I could do just what they said, would be good." This self-direction assists with the second assumption. It allows adult learners to select whatever medium or learning style best suits them. Mr. Jade liked to focus on humor to get himself through difficult situations. He would look for memes that made fun of different things that happened at school:

> There'd be memes people were posting and I'd be like, oh, I can identify with that, and so
> it was professionally helpful, but also almost mental health helpful as well, because you
> don't feel so alone and you can identify with these funny situations.

The adult learners in this case were all new teachers who had limited amounts of student teaching experience. While some of the participants had more practice time in the classroom, most did not possess a wealth of knowledge about what to do when different situations occurred. Even if the learners' experiences did not play a significant factor for the adult learner in this instance, there was certainly a readiness to learn the skills the participants needed to be successful. They were highly engaged and willing to seek out the knowledge from online sources to find the specific skills they needed for the new positions in which they found

themselves. For Ms. Magenta, it helped to be able to search for specific occurrences and watch a video of a teacher dealing with that type of issue. She visited her Facebook groups, YouTube, and Instagram to see what other teachers were doing, "so you could kind of peek into other people's classrooms." While the things they showed were normally only when things went well, she enjoyed seeing the situations play out.

The fifth assumption for the adult learner was orientation to learning. "Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that learning will help them perform tasks or deal with problems that they confront in their life situations" (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 66). Some of the participants felt very unprepared to be in the classroom each day. Mr. Green recounted:

> The first day I'm looking at these 30 students. They're looking at me. I had a plan but how on earth are we going to go about this. I just wanted to be successful. And they're just looking at me like, alright, what are we going to do. Trying to survive that first day was really hard. I just felt lost.

When confronted with his difficult first day, Mr. Green was looking for any help that would make him feel more comfortable than he did facing his new students. Many participants used the same terminology when discussing their first time in front of their own classrooms. For instance, Ms. Violet said, "With my first year teaching, I kind of got thrown into the classroom at the half year point." Ms. Black relayed a similar experience: "I just started out with no clue so that's how that went." It was a difficult first experience for most of the participants.

The final assumption of the andragogical model is that adult learners will be open to internal and external motivation. While the incentive of a better teaching position or a higher salary may be the external motivator for some adult learners to apply themselves, Knowles et al. (2011) found that internal inspiration such as trying to be an excellent educator and providing a

positive learning experience for one's students was the most compelling inducement. One participant explained why, unlike the teachers before her, she was not going to quit:

> I think that wanting to prove to them that I was going to be there to help them was more important than the frustrations that made me want to leave. I knew I couldn't hurt these kids like the last couple of teachers did. They had made no progress and didn't even want to try when I walked in the door. It took a lot of trust building and relationship development to get past the walls they put up to keep from getting hurt again.

There were other participants who spoke of similar experiences, such as Ms. Black: "They're like my kids. I have one that's really difficult but overall it seems like even their parents don't want them at times. And so for me it's like I am their ability to function." Ms. Orange and Ms. Teal also explained that their students felt abandoned when their previous teachers quit; they both stayed to keep from abandoning their students again. After seeing how losing teachers in the past had such a significant impact on their pupils, none of the participants felt they could put the students through that experience again.

At multiple points during the data collection process I asked the participants what they believed they needed to keep first-year teachers motivated and supported. I also asked what they wanted to have in an online support site for new teachers. Their replies included the following: ideas to help the teachers should be free for them to access, it should be an anonymous safe place to make postings, a site that one could easily share links to other online resources, simple to search for content by topic keyword, grade level, or learning objective. Several participants agreed the site should be like an open forum for teachers to share advice, vent, and even offer support as mentors. Ms. Purple had a very encouraging approach:

I would either create a private group page dedicated to encouraging and advising first-year teachers to provide a place to vent and release the stress and pressure you feel as a first-year teacher. It's always wonderful when you can receive advice or vent with people who are first-year teacher's. It's nice to gain unique and diverse perspectives from every which way. This will truly let educators know that being a teacher is bigger than what you think and in the end can be very rewarding.

Another participant suggested that if this type of a site were created, it should be monitored to reach out to help teachers who were really struggling and needed help. This prompted another teacher in the group to suggest that their school counselors might have a place in the process to offer support with various emotional issues as well.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. This chapter portrayed the findings from the genuine, lived experiences of 10 teachers who survived their first year of teaching and beyond. All the participants were employed by the TISD. The data presented in this chapter were credible and trustworthy because there was a triangulation of collection methodologies (Creswell, 2013). The three data collection methods included online journals completed on Monkkee.com, a semi-structured interview completed by Facetime or Google Duo, and focus group discussions. To accommodate the busy schedules of the educators, all participants took part in one of two separate focus group discussions that were held in a private meeting room at the public library.

Five themes emerged from the data analysis and were explained and supported by documented data from the study participants. The analysis produced five themes which

highlighted how teachers depicted their social media usage during their first year. The second theme covered communication between new teachers and their mentors. The third and fourth themes explained through the teachers' experiences why they believed teachers quit during their first few years and the support they felt new teachers needed to stay in the classroom. The final theme portrayed the lived experiences, from best to worst, of the novice educators as they progressed through their new teacher induction year.

The final part of this chapter examined the research questions that were used to guide this study. The central research question and three sub-questions were all restated and answered using the words and experiences provided by the 10 study participants. Their lived events described in this chapter allow anyone who has not been a first-year teacher to get a glimpse into what the induction year experience was like for these educators. It was extremely important to express their views and opinions based upon their journey.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. This final chapter examines the findings that were presented in the previous chapter. It also explains how the themes relate to the research questions and the empirical and theoretical framework of this study. The theoretical, empirical, and practical implications of this research are also explored in Chapter Five. Delimitations, limitations, and recommendations for future research complete the chapter.

Ten educators who teach for the TISD agreed to participate in this study. They completed a journal using Monkkee.com, took part in a semi-structured, individual interview via Facetime or Google Duo, and participated in a focus group with the other participants. Each participant also reviewed their accumulated information from all three data collection methods and completed member checking. The 10 participants all teach at different schools within the district. The grade levels they teach range from pre-kindergarten to high school.

Summary of Findings

The primary themes that emerged during the research were a breakdown of the participants' descriptions of their usage of social media. Through their journals, interviews, and focus group meetings, the participants described in great detail which sites they frequented the most. They explained the importance of finding excellent ideas and resources they could put into their lesson plans and use for school. The participants enjoyed interacting with the supportive community of educators and knowing the online resource was available any time of day or night. They shared their stories about working with formal, informal, and virtual mentors. The

participants revealed their personal experiences sharing time with teachers from their schools who did not make it past their first year. Several of the participants were replacements or long-term substitutes for teachers who quit just a few months into the school year. This led to the next theme of what support the participants believed new teachers needed to make it past their first year.

The final theme covered the variety of experiences the participants shared from their induction year. The central research question for this study asked, What role does social media play in the new teacher induction experience? This was addressed by the first theme. First-year teachers leaned heavily on social media. Even if they had a formal or an informal mentor, the participants still used information from virtual mentors to help them get through the first year. Participants explained the wide variety of sites they visited. The one thing each participant had in common was they all used social media every day they were in the classroom. Several participants explained that each time they used their phone, they were looking online for something to use in their class or something to help with an issue that came up in class. The three sub-questions listed below all provide more insight into the role social media played for these participants during their new teacher induction experience.

The first sub-question for this study asked, What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play during the new teacher induction experience? The second theme that developed during analysis helped to answer this question. The theme examined the communication that occurred between mentors and the participants. This was also broken down into categories by virtual, formal, and informal mentor communication. An interesting development from the data revealed there was more usage of assistance and guidance from virtual advisors fulfilling a mentoring role than from formal mentors. Not all participants

received or utilized the assistance of their formal mentor. Some formal mentors were more effective than others. Several participants disclosed a feeling of distrust of the motives of their formal mentor. Mr. Jade pointed out that, in the same way new teachers need to make an effort to develop a positive and trusting relationship with their students, formal mentors need to make the same effort to develop a positive, trusting relationship with the new teachers they are assigned to help. The data also revealed that informal mentors were utilized half as much as virtual resources. The participants leaned on all of their mentor resources significantly more during the first year than their second year.

The second sub-question for this study asked, How do second- or third-year teachers describe their use of social media during their new teacher induction year? The participants explained in great detail the many sites they visited during their first year in the classroom. There were many stories shared about discussion groups with other teachers on Facebook. These provided a base of support from asking questions dealing with situations in the classroom and teaching questions in general. There were many stories that the participants read to see if other teachers were encountering the same types of problems they were. Ms. Orange explained that if other teachers were miserable about the same thing she was, then it felt like she was not dealing with it alone. Not feeling alone in the struggle was important to the majority of participants.

Some of the participants enjoyed sharing their experiences in different chat rooms or blogs and others were just lurkers who felt more comfortable taking in what others had written. Ms. Purple explained that since she was a first-year teacher, she really did not want to put out on a site what she was doing because she did not believe she had enough experience. Mr. Red revealed that what made him feel comfortable with posting on the teacher forums was being able to remain anonymous. If he had to put his name out online, he would feel self-conscious asking

what some people might call a stupid question: "I was able to ask questions and read about similar problems that I was having, especially as a new teacher, without feeling that I would be judged for asking simple questions." Other participants agreed that remaining anonymous was an important factor when it came to sharing their experiences. There can be consequences in the real world based upon what gets put online. There were two participants who shared specific stories in their online journaling where information shared in a private online forum was divulged to upper level administration causing people to lose their jobs. Both agreed that everyone needed to be cautious when they post anything online.

The second main focus of the teacher's online usage was seeking out interactive educational tools to use to help their students learn. Pinterest was a common resource that most participants used. Ms. Purple called herself a "Pinterestaholic," and Ms. Violet called herself the resource queen. Several teachers also explained that any time they picked up their phones, they were checking for resources for the classroom or lesson plans. No matter where the search took the teacher, from Reddit, Google, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Teachers-Pay-Teachers, educator blogs, teacher text chains, or to Facebook, participants wanted to ensure their students had a positive learning experience. For Mr. Green, teaching high school students meant keeping the presentation as interactive as possible. He could use a search filter to find a video on YouTube that would be under four minutes, which ensured that the content got right to the point and the students did not lose interest.

The final sub-question for this study asked, When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher? Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) was used to examine how teachers should understand the importance of the educational information provided to them.

This will motivate them to engage themselves in what is presented, and they will be motivated, oriented, and ready so the materials can be communicated in a way that enables teachers to grasp and understand the material. The first few months in the classroom were an extremely stressful times for all participants. As adult learners themselves, they understood how important it was to learn as much as possible and be ready for any situation as quickly as possible.

When the participants discussed during the focus groups what type of assistance new teachers would get the most benefit from, the majority of the teachers explained that they would have felt more comfortable with a mentor or guide in the classroom at the beginning of the year. While the formal mentor support was very helpful, it was not always present for each participant. There were trust issues for other participants. Sometimes one mentor was shared among several people; in other cases, participants only saw their mentors once or twice a month. This left new teachers feeling vulnerable and stressed during the first few months. Mr. Jade talked to his official mentor every couple of weeks, but his online network of teachers were there for him every day: "We would speak to each other or interact with posts daily." Half the participants explained they reached out to online resources through chats, texts, and Facebook group postings multiple times a day.

The question of what resources and assistance new teachers needed was posed to the participants in various ways through each of the data-gathering techniques. Mr. Green suggested that the first induction training session "needed to be a much more comfortable, welcoming, inclusive, we're on your team kind of a feeling for the training than there was." When I asked the participants what they thought about the teacher groups they worked with online, inclusion and nonjudgmental environments were what they enjoyed the most. They mentioned feeling like the virtual environment was a safe space where they could share their ideas, concerns, doubts,

and fears without being berated, pounced on, or made to feel foolish. Another key element that was mentioned was a place to laugh and joke about things people did and said but not in a mean-spirited way. One participant called it like therapy. The focus group participants agreed with the importance of connecting with others in similar situations.

Discussion

This discussion section is designed to examine the findings of this study and how they correlate to the empirical and theoretical literature that was part of the information reviewed in Chapter Two. When examining the extensive literature available on the topic of new teacher induction, teacher attrition, and social media usage, I was unable to find anything that explored social media usage during new teacher induction. With this in mind, this current research study may help to fill the gap in the literature regarding social media use during new teacher induction. I believe that there must be more assistance provided to the teacher specifically in the first few months in the classroom. The participants in this study expressed fear, stress, exhaustion, and feeling like they were alone on an island. If a virtual online component can be added to an induction program, providing access to advice, resources, and a place to anonymously share stories, successes, and challenges, this could help new teachers feel more like they are part of a caring community.

Empirical Discussions

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. That meant examining the issues that first-year teachers encountered. There were numerous research studies that explored the elevated attrition rates for novice educators (Altayli & Dagli, 2018; Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Farrell, 2016; Geiger

& Pivovarova, 2018; Glazer, 2018; Hagaman & Casey, 2018; Harju & Niemi, 2018; Horvath et al., 2018; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kensington-Miller, 2017; Lanas, 2017; Torenbeek & Peters, 2017; Weldon, 2018). However, none of the research I examined used social media as part of an induction program for first-year teachers. While this study targeted teachers who were beyond their first year in the classroom, these 10 participants were all still teaching. They were also able to discuss the teachers who came before them who did not make it past their first year. Half of the participants were brought in to replace teachers who quit before they completed their first year.

Social media was a topic that was explored from multiple perspectives in recent literature. There was a great deal of research that covered working with students in primary schools, college level education, and targeting future teachers while they were student teaching in school (Albert, 2015; Arshad & Akram, 2018; Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017; Hartung & Harvey, 2015; Karim & Gide, 2017; Marin Diaz et al., 2014; O'Brien & Freund, 2018; Peruta & Shields, 2017; Sutherland & Ho, 2017). The newest research covered communities of practice (Damjanovic & Blank, 2018; Holland, 2018; Kensington-Miller, 2017; Pellegrino et al., 2018; Rosell-Aguilar, 2018), but they did not target first-year teachers during an induction training program. Several of the participants in this study attended the new teacher orientation training and were told about a Facebook page that had already been established as a resource for the TISD. This was for the use of all teachers and not targeted for first-year teachers, although this resource could be adapted for new teachers to use. They could be given access to this as a group during the first induction meeting. This could possibly be used to help bring the group of new educators together to develop that sense of community that was discussed numerous times in interviews and focus groups during this study.

The development of induction programs has been an important research topic in recent years given the dismal numbers of teacher retention (Alhamad, 2018; Baker-Gardner, 2016; Bastian & Marks, 2017; Bressman et al., 2018; Correll, 2017; Dishena & Mokoena, 2016; Flores, 2017; Kozikoğlu, 2018; Lafferty, 2018; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Saglam & Alan, 2018). While induction programs are not mandatory, many school districts have been using them to help retain new teachers. Since there have been no standards created for what makes a quality induction program, what is being used may not provide enough support for a first-year teacher. The participants in this study had very different induction experiences—from Ms. Purple's very positive induction experiences to Ms. Orange, who struggled with ethical problems from her administrator as well as her discouraging assigned mentor. There seem to be many factors to the induction experience that affect the outcomes for each of the educators. This research may help to demonstrate that no matter how good an induction program may be, the results do not always align with the goals.

A key component of many induction programs has been assigning of a mentor. Mentors working with new teachers have shown success during previous studies (Bressman et al., 2018; Gilles et al., 2018; Heikkinen et al., 2018; Hobson, 2016; Holland, 2018; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). While the majority of the participants had mentors assigned to them during their induction period, the mentors were not all effective. Some research explains the importance of training the mentors to properly handle a variety of situations (Stanulis & Ames, 2009; Williams & Kim, 2011; Zembytska, 2016). Several of the teachers had formal mentors who were excellent role models for their assigned teachers, such as the mentors for Ms. Teal and Mr. Red. Ms. Amber and Ms. Black communicated with their mentors, but it was more of a weekly or bi-weekly discussion. The relationships that developed with the social media community were

accessed daily. There was almost always a resource available online, and that meant the participants did not have to "bother" their formal mentors. The virtual mentor relationships that developed for the participants highlight a new area of research that has not been studied in the past.

Theoretical Discussions

The theoretical framework for this study was created using adult learning theory developed by Knowles (1990) and social cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1985). Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) was the most appropriate theory to explain why adults focus on learning what is important to them. Of the six assumptions that help make up the theory, understanding why learning is necessary and being motivated to learn something new are valuable keys to adult learning. Knowles (1990) theorized that when adults are intrinsically motivated, and they see the personal value of the information they are learning, they will be more motivated to absorb and retain the knowledge. The participants in this study were all motivated to succeed as educators. They were also motivated by the caring feelings they developed for their students. They reached out to multiple social media sites and virtual resources every day. While some teachers enter the classroom and find it too overwhelming and quit, this group of educators found a way to stay and be successful.

Another aspect of the adult learning theory explained that there will be a shift in learning as teachers become more self-confident and become more comfortable in their new environment. Adult students start their coursework leaning heavily on their instructor (Arghode et al., 2017). The participants in this study wanted much more guidance in the beginning of their time in the classroom. Several even discussed during the focus group that they would have liked to have had a teacher with them for the first couple of weeks. The little questions seemed to mount up

and made the teachers feel as though they were always asking for help. Several felt as though their many questions were a bother to the teachers with whom they were working. Ms. Orange explained that she would rather look for the answer online, knowing that someone had answered this same question before: "If it's already there online, why should I bother someone asking them the question again?"

The prior research also explained that as adult students become comfortable and see learning improvement, they develop a more independent approach to learning (Arghode et al., 2017). During focus group discussions with the participants, several of them explained they were now in a position where they were looking out for the new teachers who has started this year. Mr. Green described how he would pop in during a class to let the teacher know he was right across the hall if the teacher needed anything; he mostly wanted the students in the class to know they could not get away with anything. After experiencing a difficult first year, the participants wanted to help the next group by sharing some of the help they had received.

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) was the second theory used as part of the theoretical framework. This theory highlighted how individuals will learn best when they watch how others do things. After viewing the actions and outcomes of successfully modeled behavior, people will try to model the same behavior. The first teaching assignment for Ms. Teal was when she was brought in mid-year to replace a teacher who quit. Since she was not able to get any type of induction training, her administrator brought her to another school for part of a day to observe how a very successful educator taught. She was able to sit in the back of the room and observe for half a day: "I took away so many things that ended up being wildly successful in my room. I know it was only a half-day but it made so much difference and lasted the entire year." The other participants in the focus group commented that they wished they had been able to do

the same thing before they started. When I asked what the participants believed should be included in a new teacher induction program, the group agreed that sitting in on a class taught by a successful teacher should be part of any program. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) explained that a role model or mentor can help educate others by demonstrating proper behavior, techniques, and positive examples. Since social cognitive theory was first conceived (Bandura, 1985), there have been many changes to daily life. The major shift includes the significant impact the Internet and social media have brought into nearly every facet of modern life. With these changes came an update to the idea that modeled behavior could be done virtually. In 2006, Bandura discovered that television was playing a role in modeling behavior where before it was assumed that an influence in behavior would have required an in-person presence. The next update came in 2018 with Bandura's acknowledgment that virtual resources were also capable of guiding, motivating, and impacting behavior:

> Revolutionary advances in communication technologies vastly expands the opportunity to exercise both individual and collective agency. People nowadays spend most of their waking hours in the symbolic environment of the cyberworld. This enables them to transcend the confines of their physical and social environment. A major advantage of social modeling lies in its tremendous reach, speed, and instructive power. (Bandura, 2018, p. 134)

This update to Bandura's theory demonstrated there is an advantage to virtual access to information, advice, and behavior modeling.

The participants in this study all used social media during their first year in the classroom. They relied on the various postings, advice, and interactions for many things. For some participants, it was a vital resource for what to do and how to do it. They found ideas for

lesson plans and hands-on activities for their students that could help make a connection to retain the information. For other participants, this was a place to decompress by sharing laughter. Some participants wanted to know that others were dealing with the same challenges as well. The camaraderie helped them feel like they were all working together to get through the journey. They were able to use these interactions to model the behavior of virtual educators. Strong, accomplished, positive, and successful teachers became vital resources in a demanding time. The resources were always available and were used by the participants daily.

While prior research has explored the role of mentors during induction, the mentors were always located in the school or in the school district. This research adds a new aspect to the mentoring role, one that can be utilized by programs already in process as well as a possible option for a school district that does not have local mentors available. This research allows social media, which has been examined from many aspects in education but not as an option for mentoring of new teachers, to grow into a useful tool for new teachers. This may also support the educators as they struggle with high attrition through the first five years in the classroom.

Implications

This section elaborates on the implications from the findings of the research. The theoretical implications will examine what the findings of the study may be for the two theories used as the foundation for this research. The empirical implications will assess the observed behaviors of the participants and how the findings may relate to other research. The practical implications of this study may play a role in how new teachers are supported beyond this school district.

Theoretical

Adult learning theory (Knowles, 1990) was a primary way to explain why the participants in this study made learning what they needed to know to be successful in the classroom their priority. The teachers were motivated not only to be good educators but also by the students they taught. Several participants referred to the students as if they were their children and felt a great sense of responsibility to provide them with the best possible educational experience. This was apparent when they discussed in the focus groups how lost the students felt when they had multiple teachers quit after only a few months. The participants felt the distrust and hopelessness of their pupils and believed it was their obligation to fix what was wrong.

The second theory that provided the framework for this research was social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985). This theory explored how people can view the behavior of others around them and model that behavior. This provides a solid base of learning that is strongly reinforced when the learner observes the results of the actions that were performed. In this research, the participants were very specific in their group discussions when they expressed the need to view how a great teacher taught during an average day in the classroom. Only Ms. Teal had the opportunity to do this prior to entering her own classroom, and she believed that the half-day she spent observing from a teacher's table in the back of the room was "huge" and helped set her up for success for the whole year.

Another aspect to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1985) is that it has been expanded to keep pace with increased technological capabilities. Bandura (2018) updated his theory in 2006 to include modeling behavior to others using television instead of being in the presence of the person doing whatever action was being demonstrated. Television had advanced in technology and was an ever-present source of information. The next update to the theory occurred 12 years

later when Bandura (2018) explained that the ubiquitous virtual role model is the new normal: "With the meteoric growth of social media, people promulgate their views and ideas unbridled by gatekeepers to large audiences in efforts to rally support for their social and political causes" (p. 134). This social media access has allowed virtual role models to emerge on multiple digital platforms from blogs, texts chains, Facebook educator groups, YouTube videos, and Reddit educator groups. These groups can be local, state-wide, cross-country, or international. The access to ideas and advice is more diverse than ever before. As the update to social cognitive theory applies to the modernized, ever changing world, it is the responsibility of educators and administrators to remain committed to improving education for students and for teachers.

Empirical

The empirical implications of this study have the potential to be a much needed boost for future teachers who have not completed their education. In prior research, social media usage was explored for students at every level of education, from elementary school to college level. There were social media studies that examined how much Twitter and Facebook access principals should have, and the best way for university level professors to interact with their students online. There were social media studies regarding access to homework and taking classes online, but nothing covered new teacher induction support.

The empirical implications of this study should shine a light on the level of support new teachers feel they need from their mentors. The participants were clear that they wanted more assistance in the first few months; they also noted how important it was for them to see modeled behavior. If a half-day teacher observation before going into a classroom environment can make a significant difference in a new teacher's attitude and self-confidence, it seems like a simple concession to make before the next group of educators start teaching. In her journal, Ms. Teal

explained how the online community of educators has stepped up and helped these participants in a variety of ways:

> As a new teacher, I like feeling the support that these sites gave me from experienced teachers. Veteran teachers posted what did and didn't work well for them on their blogs which helped me anticipate and overcome challenges in my classroom as well as provided new ideas to continue to grow and challenge my students. Pinterest offered ideas and suggestions on how to teach a particular concept in my room.

For some of the participants who felt more comfortable in their second or third year in the classroom, they are now contributing more to the online community and helping to mentor some of the new teachers around them. They are happy to find ways to give back some of the help they received when they started.

The participants discussed all the resources they had access to as well as some of their favorites. One of the questions from the online journal site asked, If you could create an online group where first-year teachers could reach out for help, advice, and a safe place to vent frustration, what would it look like? The participants had a variety of answers in their journals. One participant felt it should look like a Facebook site where teachers can get ideas for different problems but also get out when they are having issues to see if someone has been through it and can give some examples of how they handled it. While several of them believed a format similar to a private Facebook group was a good idea, seven participants believed the most important aspect of the site would be anonymity for the users. Ms. Violet wrote that no one needs to be judged for what they are already struggling with, and teachers need to be lifted up and not beaten up. The participants wanted to find a safe place to ask questions, share advice, blow off steam, and connect with others who had walked a mile in their shoes.

Practical

This research allows administration, teachers, and members of the community outside of education to get an idea of what the first year in the classroom is like for this group of participants. The literature presented in Chapter Two demonstrates the high attrition and difficulties teachers experience during their first few years in education (Carmel & Badash, 2018; Dunn & Downey, 2018; Gallant & Riley, 2017). The focus group discussions that occurred with the participants not only reinforced the numbers of teachers who have left the field of education but also allowed the reader to understand the effect this has on the students they leave behind.

The literature in Chapter Two demonstrated the wide variety of social media research that has been performed (Bharucha, 2018; Chawinga, 2017; Choi et al., 2018; Cooke, 2017). The gap in the literature for using social media as a part of a new teacher induction program exists. As technology changes, updates, and creates new opportunities, it has also updated older theories including social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2018), which now acknowledges that role models can be accessed through one of the many cyber platforms. Providing new teachers a virtual tool with remarkably vast resources may be one of the best hopes for the future of education.

Delimitations and Limitations

The delimitations for the study included only allowing participants into the research who used social media during their first year as a teacher. Participants were selected for this study if they responded to question number two on the demographic survey asking them if they used social media during their first year. The potential pool of teachers whose names and email addresses were supplied to me by the TISD was based upon each teacher's start date with the district. All educators on this list were sent emails requesting participants for a study. If

teachers were beyond their second year in the classroom, they were excluded from the study.

These parameters were established with the IRB prior to requesting any participants. Without

widening the pool of possible participants, there would not have been enough potential teachers

willing to complete the study. Therefore, the IRB was contacted again and asked to change the

participant pool to add third-year teachers. One additional teacher was selected to participate

who had four years at the TISD, but there would not have been 10 participants if this educator

was not included.

The main limitation for this study included that all participants were selected from one

school district, in a specific state, and in one part of the country. It educators from across the

country had been used, the results would be more transferable to a wider pool of educators.

Another potential limitation of the study was the number of participants. With a larger number

of teachers, there would have been a broader range of demographics. The decision to work with

the specific school district that was selected was because of its size, location, and geographical

access. A broader population pool of candidates would have the potential to yield different

results.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the

perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year

of teaching during new teacher induction. There is a gap in the literature that should include

adding a social media component to new teacher induction programs. The participants in this

study were from one very large school district in one state. Additional research should be done

that would include school districts across the country to examine whether these districts would

find similar or different results.

In addition to replication of this study on a larger geographic scale, supplementary studies should be conducted to determine what variety and combination of virtual resources might create the most positive social media learning environment for new teachers. As this future research is documented and published, recommendations may be explored that can have positive impacts on teacher retention and student outcomes. In an ideal world, new educators would not have to start in the middle of the school year as replacement teachers, but if they did, a quality induction program should ensure the new teacher does not miss the valuable induction training and an effective mentor.

The final recommendation for future research comes from the dedicated group of educators who made this study possible. Ms. Magenta proposed that an assessment of some kind be given to both mentors and new teachers to put people together who will work well as a team. She also suggested that if the mentors are working with a group of teachers, they are grouped by the grade level or classes they teach so the groups could work together as a support system for one another. As Mr. Jade pointed out, since the students are given learning style evaluations, it makes sense that mentors and mentees with similar learning styles would work better together.

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

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of teachers who have used social media to facilitate their first year of teaching during new teacher induction. While there has been an abundance of research into using social media in education, new teacher induction programs using social media have never been the focus of research. This study examined whether social media could be used to provide mentoring to first-year teachers to help support them and keep them in the classroom. Ten

teachers from the TISD agreed to participate in this research. They provided thick, rich descriptions of some of the many experiences that made up their first year as teachers.

The theoretical implications confirmed that the updates made to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2018) were necessary steps to keep pace with the societal changes that have been brought about by ubiquitous social media usage. The participants used examples from virtual advisors every day. The empirical implications confirmed this support brought great comfort and a sense of community to those sharing and reading ideas and information within the social groups. The practical implications offered a positive potential for the future of new teacher training and education that may help reduce the attrition rates for the field of education. As new resources and tools develop, it is the responsibility of educators to properly utilize them to benefit students of teaching and teachers of students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Dear Loretta Carter,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases are attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

> 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.

Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project. Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Dear [Teacher]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Education Doctoral degree (Ed.D.). The purpose of my research is to determine what role social media can play in the new teacher induction experience. Can social media communication with other teachers during the first year in the classroom fill a virtual mentor role? I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are in your second or third year as a teacher, participated in new teacher induction during your first year in the classroom, communicated with a mentor or other teachers through social media during your induction period, and are willing to participate, you will be asked to be part of a focus group, complete an individual interview, and make entries in an online journal. It should take approximately three to five hours for you to complete all the procedures listed. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but you will be assigned a pseudonym so that all your information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me by emailing me within the next week. I have attached a demographics survey with this email. Please return the completed demographics survey within a week of receiving it. I will contact you within a week to let you know if you have been chosen to participate in the research. Those who are chosen will also receive a consent form. The consent document contains additional information about my research, please review the information and sign the consent document and return it to me electronically and by mail. The information to start the online journal will be provided to you via an email along with a timeframe when the interview and focus group will be held.

If you choose to fully participate by completing all tasks associated with this study, you will be entered in a raffle to receive one of two $50 Amazon gift cards.

Sincerely,

Loretta Carter
Liberty University Doctoral Student
███████████████

Appendix C: Demographic Survey

1. What social media sites do you use? Check all that apply:

Twitter☐   Facebook☐   Blogs☐   Discussion Boards☐   Google Hangouts☐

Instagram☐   LinkedIn☐   Pinterest☐   Snapchat ☐   YouTube☐

Please write in any additional sites used: _____

_____

2. Have you had interactions with other teacher mentors on social media during your first

year of teaching? If yes, please explain. _____

_____

3. Did you have a mentor during new teacher induction? (If no, please skip to question 7)

Yes☐   No☐

4. How did you communicate with your mentor during new teacher induction? Check all

that apply:

In-person☐   Written☐   Phone☐   Email☐   Social Media Sites☐

5. Were you assigned a mentor when you started teaching or did a mentoring relationship

develop with another teacher? _____

6. How often did you contact each other? _____

7. What is your gender? _____

8. What is your age? 20 – 25 ☐ 26 – 30 ☐ 31 – 35 ☐ 36 – 40 ☐   41 – 45 ☐   46 – 50 ☐

9. What is your ethnicity? _____

10. What is your marital status? _____

11. What is the highest level of education completed? _____

Appendix D: Acceptance Email

[Date]

TISD Teacher
[Email Address]

Dear [Teacher]:

You have been selected to be a participant in the research study. If you previously signed a consent form, please disregard that one. I had to change the parameters of the study to include third year teachers as well as second year teachers.

I am attaching a copy of the new consent form in an editable word document so you can put your name on the document and send it back to me without having to print or scan it. I have included a text version of the consent form at the bottom of this email in case that is easier. Please place an X at the bottom of the form to show you agree to the participation requirements and put your name on the signature line along with the date. When I have received your completed consent form, we will then move forward with the online journal and schedule the individual interview along with the focus group. Please let me know if you have any questions at all. Again, thank you so much for taking part in my doctoral research.

With sincere thanks,

Loretta Carter
Liberty University Doctoral Student

Appendix E: Rejection Email

[Date]

TISD Teacher
[Email Address]

Dear [Teacher]:

I would like to thank you for offering your assistance with my graduate research project. I received a large number of responses from teachers offering to help with my research. I currently have the maximum number of participants for the project and I will not need your assistance. I appreciate your taking time to complete my survey and response to my inquiry. Your support of my education efforts is encouraging and greatly appreciated.

With sincere thanks,

Loretta Carter
Liberty University Doctoral Student
████████████████

Appendix F: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM
New Teacher Induction in the Age of Social Media: A Phenomenological Study of Teachers in
their Second and Third Year in the Classroom
Loretta Carter
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study to examine what role social media can play in the new teacher induction experience. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a second-year or third-year teacher, teaching in the grades K-12, participated in new teacher induction during your first year in the classroom, and communicated with a mentor or other teachers through social media during your induction period. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Loretta Carter, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to examine what role social media plays in the new teacher induction experience.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study and are selected to participate, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Make entries in an online participant journal. These entries will reflect your memories, feelings, experiences, and thoughts from your first year in the classroom. The time estimated for this task will vary based upon your activity on the journaling site. The site can be accessed any time and only requires internet access. This should be no more than 2 hours during the course of the study.
2. Participate in an individual interview. This is a semi-structured interview that should not take more than an hour. This interview will be recorded by audio and video. This can be scheduled at your convenience and be completed in person or via SKYPE.
3. Participate in a focus group meeting with study participants. The location of the meeting will be in a classroom or conference room where the discussions will not be overheard by others. This meeting should last less than 2 hours. The focus group meeting will be recorded by audio and video.
4. Participate in member checking. This will require you to review a transcript of your individual interview and your part in the focus group to ensure accuracy of the information. This should not take more than 15 minutes.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. However, you may benefit from the collaborative conversation with other novice teachers during the focus group meeting.

Benefits to society: The information gained from this research may help examine the impact that a virtual mentoring program can provide to new teachers.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, if all tasks associated with this study are completed, participants will be entered into a raffle to win one of two $50 Amazon gift cards.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Loretta Carter. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Gail Collins, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix G: Participant Journal First Entry

This online journal is for you to use as you complete your participant journal. The online journaling site is Monkkee, located online at https://www.monkkee.com/en/. The journaling account will be created using the email address that you provide to me. This account will have a specific password that is selected for you. There is unlimited space for you to enter stories from your induction year. There will also be some prompts to help you focus on particular stories that are pertinent to the dissertation topic. Each of the prompts will be contained in a separate journal posting. At the conclusion of this research, I will send you an email letting you know when I have finished accessing your journal input. You will still have access to this site and may then change the password and continue to use the account or delete it.

During the time you are completing your journal, I will be sending you different prompts to give you some ideas to help recall events that have occurred during your induction. The prompts for the first week include:

What social media sites did you use the most?

What did you like most about the various sites?

How often did you reach out specifically to other teachers?

Appendix H: Participant Journal Second Entry

I hope that you have been adding to your participant journal on a regular basis. I wanted to provide you with some additional questions for you to add to your journal. I would like you to answer as completely as possible and provide as much detail as you can.

The prompts for the second week include:

What types of advice did you find on social media (Classroom Management, Parent Teacher Conferences, Lesson Planning, Time Management, etc.)?

What types of advice did you share with others on social media?

Post an example of how you put an idea from social media into practice in your classroom.

If you could create an online group where first year teachers could reach out for help, advice, and a safe place to vent frustration, what would it look like?

Appendix I: Participant Journal Third Entry

I hope that you have enjoyed documenting your experiences during this research. Here are some final questions for you to think about as you are updating your journal and documenting your time completing your first year in the classroom. Your honest and candid contributions are an important part of this research.

The prompts for the third week include:

Please describe what happened on your best day in the classroom during new teacher induction?

Please describe what happened on your worst day in the classroom during new teacher induction?

What was the best advice you received from a teacher/mentor through social media?

Appendix J: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Describe briefly your first thoughts when you started the new teacher induction program.

2. How would you describe your first meeting with your mentor?

3. What were the first few problems your mentor was able to help you with?

4. How often did you and your mentor communicate?

5. When and how do you use social media?

6. When and how did you first start communicating about your teaching via social media?

7. How often do you use social media sites to discuss education?

8. What was your most uncomfortable situation during the first few months that you can remember?

9. Many teachers have considered leaving the profession during their first year. Please describe why you think this happens?

10. What do you think could be done to help keep teachers beyond their first year?

11. How would you say the new teacher induction program helped you through the first year?

12. What would you say was the best lesson you learned during the new teacher induction program?

13. What sort of training sessions were you provided to help you improve your skills in the classroom during your first year?

14. What was your least favorite part of the new teacher induction program?

15. What part of the new teacher induction program did you enjoy the most?

16. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experiences with the new teacher induction program?

Appendix K: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. Please describe your idea of what a great new teacher induction program would contain.

2. What sort of support do you think a new teacher needs before they teach their first class?

3. What type of assistance or training would be most helpful for a new teacher during the first few days in the beginning of the school year?

4. What kind of help would the ideal new teacher mentor provide?

5. What type of support do you think would be most valuable for a first-year teacher at the middle of the school year?

6. What type of support do you think would be most valuable for a new teacher towards the end of their first year at the school?

7. Please describe a time when you didn't feel you had the help you needed to keep teaching.

8. What made you think about reaching out to others for help via social media?

9. How often did you use social media during your first year of teaching?

10. Please describe the role of social media during your first year of teaching.

11. What do you believe is the main reason you returned for another year of teaching?

12. We've covered a lot of ground in our conversation, and I so appreciate the time you've given to this. One final question… What else do you think would be important for me to know about your experiences with the new teacher induction program?

Appendix L: Researcher Reflexive Journal

11/20/2018	I have been looking at prior research and all my notes from school to put together the best possible research questions to allow me to acquire quality input from the teachers who participate in this study.
12/5/2018	I discussed prior research that was performed with a member of the local school board to get an idea of how research participation has been received in the past. There is a positive history and good outcomes that may help with finding research participants.
1/23/2019	I found research that discusses a concept called Judgementoring. I immediately understood the concept. I have worked with teachers that felt they were picked on during an evaluation instead of having the evaluation be a positive experience. Evaluations should be about giving positive tips and techniques to help the teacher get stronger and not just about pointing out what they are doing wrong.
4/27/2019	I was working on my IRB application updates and was thinking about what the best demographic mix will be for the study and the pilot study.
4/30/2019	Received IRB approval for my study.
5/3/2019	Put out multiple requests for participants for my pilot study.
5/8/2019	Secured a partner to complete a mutual peer review when we are ready.
5/9/2019	Put out new requests for participants for my pilot study through my church and family and friends on Facebook. This finally allowed me to find three teachers who met the requirements for my study.
5/20/2019	All three teachers were unable to participate after numerous requests due to the commitments for completion of school year work.
5/23/2019	I was able to find three new teachers who were able to participate in the pilot study. After confirming the demographics of the group, I set up the online accounts for the three teachers with Monkkee and successfully tested the online site. We got together for individual interviews first, then we did the focus group.
6/12/2019	I requested the email addresses of second year teachers from the school district after completing the pilot study.
6/20/2109	Heard back from the school district that there was an official public information request form that needed to be completed on their website. I completed the request today.
7/8/2019	Received an official letter that stated that funds needed to be sent to process the request. I sent the funds out by express certified mail.
7/16/2019	I received the email address list from the school district.
7/18/2019	I started my email recruitment.
8/1/2019	After sending out more than a thousand emails, I have 6 people who have agreed to be a part of the study. I am excited that I got 6 participants but I am

	also concerned that I am looking for a very specific group of teachers. They may be more difficult to find that I thought when I started searching. I am drafting my second request for participants. I am making this email shorter to get the attention of my target teacher quicker.
8/2/2019	Several teachers responded to my email request wanting to know how I received their email addresses. A few were hostile replies. One teacher was angry that she was not able to do her research in the school district when trying to complete her doctorate. I sent the process instructions to her to explain the steps I followed to get permission to work with the school district teachers. The hostile replies were very surprising to me. I created a basic reply to send out to explain to any teacher who asked that this was a legitimate study and was authorized by the school district. I am sure teachers are used to a great deal of unsolicited spam emails just like everyone else.
8/7/2019	I sent out over 800 second requests to teachers from the target emails. The shorter more informal request seemed to get many more replies than the first email did. I believe that was from a combination of the time being closer to the start of the school year and there were no attachments added to the second email. Many of the teachers who responded were also experienced teachers that were hired into the school district after working in the field.
8/8/2019	I never imagined this was going to be so difficult. I looked back through my sent folder and realized that I had sent out over 4000 requests to participate in the study in various formats to try to get teachers in my target demographics to take part in this research.
8/20/2019	I have received offers to participate from several teachers who are beyond their second year in the classroom. While many have significantly more time as educators, I do not believe they would have used social media to work with other teachers during their new teacher induction. Their current time as a teacher is not as relevant as their experience during their induction year. I have decided to request IRB approval to extend the participant pool to allow third year teachers to be a part of the study as well as second year teachers. After I obtain approval for the new selection criteria, I will go back through emails that I received from teachers who were past their second year in the classroom to let them know that if they are still interested, they can participate in the research.
8/26/2019	The IRB approved my change in protocol request and I am going back to my emails to secure the rest of the participants needed.
9/4/2019	I secured 15 teachers to participate and have all the demographics and consent for research documentation.
9/4/2019	The online journals were set up for the participants.
9/10/2019	Several participants have backed out of the study for one reason or another. I am extremely nervous that I will not have the number of teachers I need based upon how many I have lost. Dr. Collins suggested that I not start this process until I had 15 teachers secured. Thank God she was there to get me to go for 15. I still have the 10 that I need to go forward. I will have to maintain close contact with them to ensure everyone is able to participate in the focus group at the end of the month.

9/14/2019	I needed to schedule two different times for the focus group to allow for all 10 teachers to participate. I am going to secure the location for the focus group.
9/11/2019	I confirmed my flight and other travel reservations to cover the two focus group dates.
9/11/2019	I have rented one of the meeting rooms at the local library for the focus groups. Holding the focus group at a venue that is not connected with the TISD will allow all the participants to feel comfortable that their confidentiality will be maintained during their meeting attendance.
9/18/2019	I have completed the majority of the individual interviews and the semi-structured format was perfect. When a participant brought up a specific subject, I was able to quickly refocus and ask additional questions that were pertinent to their experience. This allowed for a more natural flow to the conversation. It also allowed me to get more insight into the experiences we discussed. The level of detail is much more than I would have received if I could not have moved in the direction each individual interview directed.
9/18/2019	Transcribing the interviews has allowed me to examine what my personal thoughts about the participants experiences were. I have been concentrating on keeping any personal experiences and biases from coloring my perspective with our discussions. I believe the concept of e*poche* is much clearer than ever before. I could see how it would be easy to steer the discussions to what I wanted the participants to discuss but simply understanding the importance of keeping my personal feelings and biases aside has allowed me to gain better insights into the participants' experiences. I believe that several notions about where the study would end up have changed in the past few weeks during the research gathering process.
9/23/2019	While finishing up the last of the transcriptions for the teachers' individual semi-structured interviews, I noticed that each interview was guided by the teacher's focused responses to my early questions. Each interview took on its own feel based upon the experiences of the teacher during their first year. The selection of a semi-structured interview that allowed me to delve deeper into the answers that I received was a vital part of getting to the heart of the experiences of the teachers in the study.
9/26/2019	I completed the first focus group. I brought name tags that displayed the color name selected by each teacher to the meeting so the teachers never addressed each other by their actual names, only by their color names. None of the teachers in this group had met each other in their school careers before the focus group. I was relieved to see that there would be no chance of any previous personal connections getting in the way of an easy discussion today. That was something I had been thinking about as I was working on my own personal biases during this reflexive journal.
9/26/2019	The focus group was audio recorded by a Sony Integrated Circuit Digital recorder. A secondary audio recording was made using my iPhone. A third safety recording was also created using recording software I downloaded onto my personal iPad.
9/28/2019	The remaining participants met today for the final focus group. The location for the focus group was the same meeting room at the same public library as the

	last focus group. The dynamic of the last group was even better than I had hoped and I was eager to see if the second focus group would be the same.
10/17/19	All data has been transcribed and member checked and that analysis can begin.
10/27/19	As I am writing up findings in chapter 4, I am rereading the data collected and ensuring the commentary that I am documenting is the participant's thoughts and words and not what my ideas were before I started. I am seeing their ideas emerge in the writing of this chapter more than ever before. I understand why my ideas needed to be bracketed out of this process.
1/18/20	I am going back through all the member checked documentation to ensure I have used the exact terminology of the participants to appropriately capture their experiences. As I am completing the edits to chapter 4 and 5 I am focusing on the findings to express the phenomenon in the most accurate way.

Appendix M: Audit Trail

4/30/19	Received IRB approval for my study.
5/3/19	Put out multiple requests for participants for my pilot study.
5/23/19	I was able to find three new teachers who were able to participate in the pilot study. After confirming the demographics of the group, I set up the online accounts for the three teachers with Monkkee and successfully tested the online site. We got together for individual interviews first, then we did the focus group.
7/18/19	I started my email recruitment for participants
8/20/19	Contacted Dr. Collins about requesting an update from the IRB to add third-year teachers.
8/26/19	The IRB approved my change in protocol request and I am going back to my emails to secure the rest of the participants needed.
9/4/19	I secured 15 teachers to participate and have all the demographics and consent for research documentation.
9/4/19	The online journals were set up for the participants.
9/10/19	I am down to only 10 teachers. I cannot lose any additional participants.
9/14/19	I needed to schedule two different times for the focus group to allow for all 10 teachers to participate.
9/24/19	I rented a private meeting room at the local library for both focus groups.
9/28/19	Completed both focus groups.
10/4/19	All transcription completed and checked for accuracy. Sent for member check.
10/17/19	All member checking has been completed.
10/17/19	Analysis began using NVivo 12 Plus
11/1/19	Analysis completed
11/22/19	Completed chapter 4 and 5 and submitted to my committee chair for review
1/16/20	Submitted updates to chapters 4 and 5. I am working on updates for the entire paper now.
2/2/20	Completed updates and changes from my chair review.
2/13/20	Submitted completed dissertation for peer review.
2/14/20	Submitted completed dissertation to my dissertation committee member
3/12/20	Successfully defended dissertation

Appendix N: Open Codes and Descriptions

Open Codes and Descriptions

Open Codes	Description
Characteristics of a great online support Group	What would be the best parts of an online support group for first year teachers?
Communication between new teachers and mentors	What role does communication between new teachers and mentors play during the new teacher induction experience?
Formal Mentors	These were mentors who were assigned either by the school, the district, or the certification organization
Informal Mentors	These are teachers who work with the new teacher at their school but were not assigned to the role of mentor.
Virtual Mentor	These are teachers and educators who were contacted via social media using blogs, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and teachers pay teachers
How do they describe their use of social media	How do second- or third-year teachers describe their use of social media during their new teacher induction year?
Frequency of use	How often does the teacher go to these social media sites
Putting Social Media Ideas to work in the classroom	Explain how you used an idea or information from social media and used it in your classroom.
Sharing my support on Social Media	What have you posted on social media?
Which sites were visited	what sites were discussed by the participants of the study
Reasons teachers quit teaching	These are reasons documented by participants for why other teachers have left the profession

Open Codes	Description
Lack of Resources	What do teachers need to be successful in the classroom?
Teacher Professional Development	What sort of PD did participants mention that teachers need to be successful?
Being able to choose what you need	Was the teacher given a choice as to what type of PD they wanted?
Classroom Management	Did the educators feel they had the skills needed to keep control in their classroom?
Lesson Planning	How comfortable teachers felt about their ability to create and execute their lesson plans.
Understanding and teaching TEKS	How well were participants taught about Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)? Do teachers feel comfortable working the required information into their lesson plans?
Variety of training	Is the training offered by the TISD meeting your needs? Is it being provided in a way that you will retain it?
Why teachers quit	The motivating factors that teachers listed as to why they believed other teachers left the profession.
Teacher induction experiences	This code is a combination of positive and negatives examples of what the teacher's experience was like during their first year in the classroom.
Best Day during the first year	What was the best success you experienced during the first year?
Best Lesson Learned During New Teacher Induction	What was the best takeaway from your time in the induction program?
First Problems you needed help with	What issues were the first ones that caused you to reach out for help?

Open Codes	Description
First thoughts of the new teacher induction program	What was the first impression when you started the induction training or if you did not attend training, your first days in the classroom.
How would you say the induction program helped you	Teachers explain what helped them during their first year.
Least favorite part of teacher induction	Teachers explain the part of the induction experience the liked the least.
Worst Day during the first year	Teachers discussed what they remember as their most difficult issue during their first year.
What are the characteristics of a virtual role model	When viewed from an adult learner's perspective, what are the characteristics of a virtual role model that provide a useful support system to a first-year teacher?
What kind of support do they need	What kind of support do they need
Administration	This type of support would come from Assistant Principals and Principals,
Mentor support	This is support provided by an assigned mentor either by the school, district, or certification organization.
Teacher support	This type of support would come from teachers who work at their school but are not formal mentors
Virtual Mentor support	This is support received from the online resources, in blogs, discussion boards, Facebook pages, etc.
Why teachers stay	The motivations that teachers use to justify not quitting when situations become difficult.