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TRAINING AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

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TRAINING AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS IN KENTUCKY

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Abstract

This qualitative study surveyed elementary school teachers across the state of Kentucky in regards to these four main concepts: (a) identifying the challenges and needs of FYT, (b) identify and explore the trainings provided to FYT, (c) identify and explore the supports provided to FYT, and (d) identifying what is needed to effectively support FYT. The driving question of the study asked: what are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators? Based on this question, the following hypothesis was created: having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year. Data was categorized based on the codes created by the Principal Investigator and then analyzed to draw conclusions. The four main conclusions drawn were to continue to provide the same trainings and supports identified by participants within the study, focus future training and supports on the challenges specifically identified by the participants of the study, and to bring back a state-structured and mandated comprehensive induction program.

Keywords: teaching, first year teachers, professional development, support

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

The low retention rate of teachers, especially new teachers, is a factor that impacts education at all levels. It is well-documented, common knowledge that a high number of novice teachers leave the profession in their first few years. Several factors contribute to the high teacher turnover including these stressors: transition from preservice to in-service teaching, isolation, unsupportive school cultures, instructional difficulties, and poor teaching assignments (Dali et al., 2012). An ever-increasing workload creates additional stress and challenges for experienced teachers. Placing this amount of work on teachers new to the profession without support is remiss.

The need for support and training for new teachers has been identified by educational leaders and thus most states have induction and support programs (National Council of Teacher Quality, 2017). Are these training and support programs enough? This, large-scale study, took place in the state of Kentucky and fulfills the gaps identified by various studies. Burkman (2012), found that more research was needed to identify induction programs and professional development (PD) that adequately support the novice teacher. Burkman specifically noted that more participants were needed to form a solid basis of data- which this study offers. Dali et al. (2012) identified a need to know the effect that challenges and supports have on first-year teachers (FYT); another need this study fulfills. Finally, research from Andrews and Quinn (2005) stated that further research would be needed to determine the overall impact of mentors on FYT. As this study looked at all supports, including mentoring, it will fill the identified gap.

Conceptual Framework

It is important to note that some studies, when looking at the support for FYT, only look at mentoring as a support system. Mentoring has been identified as one of the most critical needs of a FYT (Fry, 2009). Research done by Andrews and Quinn (2005), found that novice teachers who were assigned mentors had an overall mean total support score that was higher than those without mentors. The study found novice teachers felt more supported with a mentor.

While some studies focus only on mentoring, others note that comprehensive mentoring is the most effective way to develop novice teachers. Comprehensive mentoring includes not only mentoring, but also PD and formal evaluations. Mentoring should not be the only support for novices as this induction can influence an entire career (Wiebke & Bardin, 2009).

Other studies discovered that teachers are more likely to leave the profession if placed with a relatively high number of low-income or low-achieving students (Boyd et al., 2013, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007) or students with discipline problems (Feng, 2010; Kukla-Acevedo 2009). Contrary to these findings, studies have shown that novice teachers are placed in teaching situations characterized by higher proportions of low-income, minority, and low-achieving students (Boyd et al., 2013; Clotfelter et al., 2005; Goldhaber, 2019; Hannan et al., 2015; Kalogrides et al., 2013; Redding & Henry, 2018, 2019; Scafidi et al., 2007, Simon & Johnson, 2015). When these two studies are examined together, it is clear that FYT are being set on the path of non-performance by the teaching assignments in which they are placed or hired into.

Further factors influencing performance include homophily, college qualifications, professional culture and instructional load. In addition to their challenging classroom assignments, novices are placed in teaching assignments lacking homophily, having higher

instructional loads, and working with colleagues that are not as qualified. Other than professional culture, these factors of productivity and retention were lacking when comparing the teaching assignments of novice to seasoned teachers (Bruno et al., 2020). Some FYT specifically noted they abandoned the profession because of poor relationships with their peers and colleagues (Wilhelm et al., 2020).

Not all FYT are unsuccessful and leave the profession. Fry (2009) found that successful novice teachers had the ability to overcome obstacles (i.e., resilient and persistent), successful classroom communities, employed a student-centered approach, and continued their own education as a lifelong learner. These successful FYT want frequent, meaningful feedback as they recognize their reflective practice is critical. In short, Fry (2009) found that personal characteristics and professional experience had the most significant impact on novice teacher retention. As comprehensive induction programs are designed, the qualities and experiences of successful novice teachers should be kept in mind so they can be developed in typically unsuccessful novice teachers.

Statement of the Problem

With approximately 100,00 new teachers hired by school systems each year (Ingersoll et al., 2014), retention of skilled teachers becomes more and more important. According to DeMonte (2013), effective teaching practices can be learned. Studies have found learning can take place through comprehensive support programs which include (a.) mentoring, (b.) instructional coaching, (c.) observation, (d.) feedback, and (E.) PD. In addition to improving their overall practice, these supports give FYT access to both physical resources and the knowledge of their peers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Goldhaber,

2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Comprehensive support programs have been shown to help all FYT, especially if their mentors are trained on best mentoring practices (Kueker, 2005).

The demands of teaching, combined with a shortage of qualified teachers, makes retaining FYT critical (Darling-Hammond 1997, 2000). While 80% of FYT receive some type of support, 75% leave the profession or transfer schools following their first year (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Looking at only those who leave the profession (i.e., not including school transfers), Goldring et al. (2014) found 20% of public-school teachers leave the profession, but of those 20%, FYT leave at a higher rate than seasoned teachers. Teague & Swan (2013) noted that novice teachers are burdened with the same responsibilities as their seasoned colleagues and are expected to produce the same results and high-performance level. Their findings indicated that poor support was a critical factor in FYT retention and that induction programs improved poor retention rates. DeMonte (2013) shows agreement by stating:

> Given what we want and expect our teacher to be able to do—turn out students who are college and career ready—it is critical that we give them the tools and support that will allow them to learn, improve, and do their jobs better even as we hold them accountable for their work. (p.21)

Furthermore, Seok & Berliner (2012) found that assigning a mentor to a novice teacher decreased the chance they would leave the profession in the first year. Villani (2009) cited support programs as an essential, cost-effective strategy to develop novice educators. Thus, all findings point to quality, comprehensive support programs leading to a decrease in novice teachers leaving the profession.

Purpose of the Study

While this large-scale study was multifaceted and complex, it can be condensed into four main concepts: (a) identifying the challenges and needs of FYT, (b) identify and explore the trainings provided to FYT, (c) identify and explore the supports provided to FYT, and (d) identifying what is needed to effectively support FYT.

Research Question:

1. What are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators?

Hypothesis:

1. Having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. While all elementary school principals in Kentucky will be sent the survey and asked to distribute it to their entire teaching staff, some may choose not to participate. This would limit the pool of possible participants. Even if the principal does choose to forward the email on to their teaching staff, the staff may choose not to participate. This would also limit the pool of potential participants.

The study included teachers who agreed to participate voluntarily. It is possible only highly motivated, high-quality teachers replied to the survey. Second, survey research relies on self-reported data, which involves the honesty of the teacher answering the survey questions. The perceptions of what teachers think to be true may contain certain limitations such as distorted

memories, attitudes, or opinions constructed at the time the teacher completed the survey. Biased recollections based upon recent events or current contexts and a misrepresentation of the facts to please the researcher may have also affected the data collected (Rea & Parker, 2012).

The final limiting factor of this study is participant memory. This study asks participants to identify the academic year in which they completed their first-year of teaching and accepts all who have finished their first year of teaching in a traditional K-5 classroom. While more recent FYT may remember all trainings and support they were given, veteran teachers who completed their teaching several years ago may not remember the trainings and supports provided to them. In an attempt to nullify this limitation, the survey provided participants the option to answer "I do not remember" to any questions where they were unsure.

Assumptions

When this study was designed it was assumed that all elementary school principals would have their email addresses available to the public. It was also assumed that any emails sent by researchers would be seen by the principals who would then decide if they would or would not forward it on to their staff.

Design Controls

Overall, there is no true way to control inaccurate responses in the study. One of the caveats of survey-based research is that accurate results rely on participant honesty and memory. As previously stated, researchers attempted to counterbalance this effect when writing the directions of the survey- being sure to include specific directions for participants who could not remember their experience(s).

Definition of Key Terms

In this study the terms novice and first-year teachers were used interchangeably. By definition, FYT are novices, allowing for the varied word choice., Teachers with five or more years of experience are identified using the terms: (a.) veteran, (b.) seasoned, or (c.) experienced. Other critical terms in the study are: training and support. Training in this study refers to more formal training in which an experienced, knowledgeable professional delivers content to a trainee. These trainings can be taken voluntarily, or be required for FYT by school administration. Next, when using the term: supports, the study is referring to other mechanisms used to improve the teaching practices of a novice teacher that are not formal trainings. Supports, as used in the study can refer to, among other things: (a.) mentoring, (b.) instructional coaching, (c.) observation, and (d.) feedback. Finally, the terms resource teacher and mentor/ mentor teacher are used in an exchangeable manner as the literature reviewing the support programs of the past use the term 'resource teacher' for what is now most commonly known as a mentor teacher.

Summary

In summation, this large-scale study sought to identify what trainings and supports were given to elementary school teachers in the state of Kentucky during their first year of teaching in a traditional K-5 classroom. Based on the responses provided, data was analyzed and coded to identify themes. These themes were used to find correlations between specific types of supports and training and the overall impact on the experiences of first year teachers. Finally, suggestions were made regarding the creation of an effective, comprehensive induction program.

The remainder of this study presents a review of the literature about the history of teacher training and supports, typical types of teacher training and supports, and the challenges of a first-

year teacher in Chapter 2. The chapter also includes information on current teacher trainings and supports requirements followed by a description of the research design and methodology for the study in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 includes a report of the data collected through the study including demographic information and survey results. The final chapter includes findings and implications for research and practice.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

Overall, this study exists to identify the challenges and needs of FYT, identify and explore the trainings and supports provided to FYT by schools and districts, and to then determine what FYT need in terms of training and support. With the knowledge of what trainings and supports FYT received and how they perceived their experience as a new teacher, it was possible to draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the given trainings and supports when compared to the overall experience of the FYT. Based on these four concepts and basic understanding of FYT, the following research question was created: what are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators? This chapter will review literature regarding the recent history of teacher training in Kentucky, typical types of FYT teacher training and supports, and the challenges of a first-year teacher.

Recent History of Teacher Training in Kentucky

Revisiting the past is critical when preparing for the future. To learn and grow, what has been done must be analyzed and analyzed to determine its effectiveness. With the knowledge of effectiveness of past attempts, new attempts can be made that are informed by past data. As this study takes place in the state of Kentucky, this section will focus on the training and support programs of only that state. The period in history focused on in this literature review will begin in 1985 and end in the present day. This decision was made based on the data that was collected

during this study. Teachers who experienced their first-year of teaching in 1985 could be teaching for as long as 36 years as of 2021. Most teachers retire long before the 36-year mark. Therefore, as it is unlikely that any participants in this study will have gone through their first year of teaching prior to 1985, that is where this study will begin.

In 1984 the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program (KTIP) was established by the Kentucky General Assembly, becoming effective January 1, 1985. This program gave FYT three main supports, all in the form of human supporters: principals, university faculty (sometimes replaced with a resource teacher), and instructional supervisors. These supporters used their expertise to guide and assess beginning teachers through observation and mentoring. In 1990, the program was strengthened by the Kentucky Education Reform Act. This act established the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to govern teacher certification for the state (Darolia, 2018).

KTIP handbooks dated prior to 2017 are no longer available, but a study on the effectiveness of the program from 1988 is available from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). In this study, Hulick and Malone (1988) noted a few key elements of the original KTIP program: (a) resource teachers were assigned to the interns, but not necessarily at the start of the school year, (b) the resource teacher assigned did not have to work in the same building, (c) not including time spent in the classroom, interns and resource teachers had to spend fifty hours together, (d) observations of the intern were done regularly both formally and informally. and (e) interns created a portfolio showcasing their mastery of teaching. These findings from Hulick and Malone are from the only one recorded in documents evaluating the program since its inception in 1985.

In 1995, another study was published on the program. The study was done because the evaluation instrument was extensively changed. A pilot program, testing this new instrument, took place during the 1994-1995 school year (Adkins et. al, 1995). This instrument change was made so the program would align with the New Teacher Standards. Unlike what is available today, Adkins et. al. (1995) had access to KTIP manuals from years prior including 1985, 1990, 1993, and 1994. Adkins et. al. noted that, "A review of the manuals indicates that the basic structure of the program has remained the same," (page 7). Adkins et. al. also noted that as of 1994 the 50-hour requirement set in 1985 was raised to 70 hours. However, later in the paper, the 50-hour requirement was mentioned again in a way that indicates that it was the requirement in 1994. This makes the number of required hours unclear.

Adkins et. al. also wrote of the changes between the 1993 and 1994 KTIP manual. The 1994 manual consisted of 196 pages while the 1993 manual had only 18. The increase of 178 pages was to allow for significantly more information to be divulged to interns. The interns were not only told *what* they were supposed to do to achieve a recommendation, but *how* to achieve that goal. The overall structure of the program was the same, with a required number of hours spent, a portfolio being created by the student, and observations being completed by resource teachers. Unfortunately, no reliable materials are available describing KTIP from 1996-2014. It may be assumed that the program stayed the same from 1994 to 2014.

Between 2014 and 2018, KTIP, had focused on Kentucky Framework for Teaching. This framework, created by Charlotte Danielson, was adapted for use by the state. During their KTIP year, FYT were asked to collect specific evidence that demonstrated competence of the sections set forth in the framework. This evidence collection was organized around cycles during the internship year. During cycles one and two, the committee (principals, university faculty or a

resource teacher, and instructional supervisor) evaluated the performance of the FYT and gave feedback to address areas selected for professional growth and fortify areas of strength. During cycle three, the FYT was evaluated according to the Danielson framework to determine if the FYT would be recommended for certification. This determination was made based on the rating system built into the framework. The lowest rating is ineffective, followed by is developing, then accomplished, and finally exemplary. If the FYT was rated as developing, or higher, on each component, they would earn a recommendation for certification (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

In 2018, Governor Matt Bevin abolished the EPSB and transferred its responsibilities to the KDE. Within the KDE the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness was created. Because of these changes, the KTIP was not funded for the first time since 1985. Districts in Kentucky were then expected to form an induction program for new hires even though they were deprived of the formal structure of KTIP. (Darolia, 2018).

Typical Training and Supports for FYT

While the words training and support may sound similar, it is critical to note their differences when delving into this study. As noted in the 'Key Terms' section of Chapter One, training in this study refers to relatively formal training in which an experienced, knowledgeable professional delivers content to a trainee. The term support in this study refers to other mechanisms used to improve the teaching practices of a novice teacher that are not formal training. Supports, as used in the study can refer to, among other things: (a.) mentoring, (b.) instructional coaching, (c.) observation, and (d.) feedback. Training and support are critical because they give FYT access to resources and expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2009; DeAngelis,

2013; Goldhaber, 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015), and because supported FYT find more joy and fulfillment in their careers (Newburgh, 2019).

Professional development (PD) is what this study classifies as training. Archibald et. al. found that PD should have the following five components to be effective: (a) aligns with the goals of administration, (b) models strategies and focuses on core content, (c) includes active learning, (d) involves collaboration with colleagues, and (e) continuous feedback is implemented along with follow-up regarding the PD session(s). These components do not guarantee that a PD session will be effective, but they have been shown to improve teaching when implemented to their fullest extent. Brill and McCartney (2008) found that PD is significantly more influential than mentoring programs alone. Again, pointing to the fact that comprehensive programs are needed versus those that just have one kind of support or training system.

Teachers should be at the center of all PD (Burkman, 2012). A study by Bruno et. al. (2020) found that 65% of their participants responded that PD did not meet the needs of their students and 64% of respondents said that PD was not suited to their experience and knowledge level. Proving that the teachers in this case were not at the center of the given PD. Most PD consists of one-time sessions that are wasteful of teacher time and efforts (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Hill, 2009)). Teachers themselves even hold this training with contempt (Hess, 2013). While PD is looked at negatively by teachers, mentoring is often a positive aspect of the FYT experience.

When looking at the training and supports provided to FYT, it is worth noting that mentoring is included in almost every program. Mentoring of FYT can add to their confidence and improve their teaching skills (Kidd et. al., 2015). Comprehensive or not, almost all FYT

induction, even prior to 2000, provides a mentor for the new hire. The many studies that have been done indicate that mentoring is a critical component of a comprehensive induction program (Andrews, 2005; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Bruno et. al., 2020; Center, 2007; Dai et. al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et. al., 2009; DeMonte, 2013; Donaldson & Johnson, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2006, 2001; Fry, 2009, Gless, 2006, 2008; Hobson et. al., 2007; Hudson, 2013; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Johnson, 2003; Kardos, 2004; Kidd et. al., 2015; Kozikoğlu, 2018; Marable & Raimondi, 2007; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005; Rippon & Martin, 2006; Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017; Seok & Berliner, 2012; Stanulis et. al., 2012; Teague & Swan, 2013; Trubowitz & Robins, 2003; Villani, 2009; Wang, 2002; Wexler, 2020; Wiebke & Bardin, 2009). Andrews and Quinn (2005) found that FYT who were assigned a mentor had a higher total mean support score than those without. While Kozikoğlu (2018) discovered that the majority of respondents (72%) described their mentor using metaphors that held a positive connotation. Those that responded with negatively phrased metaphors indicated that their mentors were either oppressive (16%) or ineffective (12%).

Fry (2009) found that teachers who were assigned a mentor during their first year of teaching were more successful than those without. Mentoring programs, when well-structured and supported by authority figures within the school system can be incredibly effective (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Gless, 2006). However, poorly constructed programs have no impact on teacher attrition, self-efficacy, job approval ratings, instructional quality, or the learning of students (Gless, 2008). Mentoring programs are beneficial, but are not being used to their fullest potential and quality needs to be increased (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Kozikoğlu, 2018).

Both mentors and novice teachers require training. Qualities of a successful mentor come from both professional and personal experiences. These experiences must be supplemented and

fortified with training to make a mentor as effective as possible. Mentors should be able to observe lessons of their mentee and then facilitate meaningful discussion that centers around reflection and feedback. Successful mentors demonstrate flexibility, consistency, emotional receptivity, self-awareness, empathy, the ability to listen, leadership skills, overall positive demeanor, and an analytical perspective (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017). Feedback is a critical component of mentoring. Special areas of teaching, require specialized forms of feedback and opportunities. Specifically, special education teachers need the opportunity to practice their skills in authentic situations, have the opportunity to analyze their efforts, and receive timely, meaningful feedback (Brownell et. al., 2019). Mentor training should center around effective practice, prior to training mentors are unaware of the high demands of the position they are entering (i.e., the emotional and interpersonal foundational aspects) (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017).

Positive collaboration and relationships with peers and colleagues are other critical aspects of supporting a FYT. A recent study by Brownell (2021) found that high-leverage teaching practices can be done through independent study by the FYT. However, engaging in a collaborative small group of peers and colleagues would be more beneficial. Wilhelm et. al. (2020) noted that many FYT leave their current work environment or the profession due to strained professional relationships. It is worth pointing out that Quinn and Andrews (2004) found a significant correlation between supportive principals and supportive staff. Meaning that supportive principals have more supportive staff, this increases the support experienced by the FYT and improves their overall experience.

Challenges of First-Year Teachers

Novice teachers experience significant difficulties relative to the rest of their career. This first year of teaching has a significant influence on the entirety of a teachers professional career (Kozikoğlu, 2018). Ergunay and Adiguzel (2019) found that FYT challenges could be categorized into four major themes: (a) preservice teacher education- meaning they are suffering from a lack of practice, insufficient pedagogical knowledge, etc., (b) organizational procedures. These challenges include a FYT lacking structure, negative peers and colleagues, or having views and beliefs conflicting those held by their colleagues, (c) student characteristics. These FYT struggled with students who were not ready for the grade level content and unfamiliarity of students to different methods, and (d) classroom management- this includes managing time and student behaviors.

Kozikoğlu (2018) had participants categorize their first year of teaching through metaphors and four main themes emerged: (a) lack of experience, (b) excitement for the first year, (c) difficult process (workload), and (d) disappointment. While the three identified challenges are different from those provided by Ergunay and Adiguzel's (2019) themes, the challenges described in both studies go hand-in-hand and are commonly known challenges of FYT. It is interesting to note that while Kozikoğlu's (2018) study found a positive theme in addition to three negative themes, the majority of participants (74%) used metaphors with negative connotation to describe their first year.

These previously mentioned studies indicate that FYT endure challenging workloads, negative relationships with their colleagues and peers, a sense of disappointment, a lack of preparedness, etc. All negative things. Note that in Kozikoğlu's (2018) study that while the participants expressed excitement, they also expressed disappointment. Excitement is a feeling that comes prior to an experience, for these participants, disappointment was what followed.

Summary

Official state-mandated induction programs for FYT have gone to the wayside as of 2018 in Kentucky. However, this does not mean that the challenges have abated as well. The same challenges remain, but now districts are responsible to create their own induction programs without the structured support of KTIP. It is critical to know what training and support has been found to be impactful by those who know best, the FYT who have experienced new teacher induction. The tides must shift from disappointment-filled, overwhelming challenges to supported, fulfilled teachers.

Chapter Three

Methodology

First Year Teachers (FYT) face many challenges; high quality, comprehensive, support is needed to retain the number of teachers necessary to serve the student population (DeMonte, 2013). Comprehensive support programs may include (a) mentoring, (b) instructional coaching, (c) observation, (d) feedback, and (e) PD. In addition to improving their overall practice, these supports give FYT access to both physical resources and the insight of their peers and colleagues (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Goldhaber, 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). This study was created to answer the following question: what are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators? This question can be deconstructed into four main components: (a) identify challenges and needs of FYT, (b) identify and explore the trainings provided to FYT, (c) identify and explore the supports provided to FYT, and (d) identify what is needed to effectively support FYT.

KTIP was instrumental in inducting FYT within the state. This study only surveyed teachers who have finished their first-year teaching in a K-5 classroom in KY. Therefore, many respondents will most likely have participated in KTIP. Therefore, the following hypothesis was created: having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year. In Chapter Two, it was noted that the official, state-mandated KTIP program ended in 2018. With this highly-structured support system removed, districts became responsible for their FYT induction programs. While the state is in a time of transition, now is the time to determine what training

and support has been effective. The data found in this study may be used by districts and the state to help them design their induction programs.

Population and Sample

This study took place in the Spring Semester of 2021 in the state of Kentucky; it was reviewed and approved by IRB for protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects. As this study aimed to gather the experiences of former Kentucky FYT, it was important to make the survey available to as many K-5 Kentucky teachers as possible. While there was no way to contact former Kentucky teachers who are either no longer teaching, or have moved to another area, it was determined that the best way to reach as many elementary school teachers as possible in the most efficient manner possible would be to send out the survey link via email to all elementary school principals in Kentucky. A complete copy of this correspondence can be found in Appendix A.

Principal emails were found by reviewing the Kentucky Department of Education's District and School Directory found on the Kentucky Department of Education website. The name of all educational districts within the state were recorded. Each district website was visited and all elementary schools were recorded on that same sheet. Finally, the principal emails were located and recorded. All recorded items were preserved using GoogleSheets. If the principal email was not listed on the site, the school was called to provide the email address. Using this protocol, a total of 724 principal emails were collected. Using a voluntary non-probability sampling method, an email was sent to each of the 724 principals identified through the process described above, inviting them to participate in the survey.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

Data was collected using a researcher-developed instrument. The instrument was a fifteen-item online survey (Appendix B) which utilized both short answer and multiple-choice answer formats. The validity of the instrument was tested by providing the instrument to five teachers from the possible participant pool and asking them to take the survey (their responses would not be used for the final data analysis). Then, I looked at their responses to see if I gathered data that would answer my driving question. Finally, I asked the five subjects to provide their feedback on the survey and made minor revisions in formatting due to their comments.

The first item showed the consent form (Appendix C) where the respondent had to choose if they would or would not consent to the survey. Respondents were then asked if they were a K-5 teacher who had completed their first year of teaching in the state of Kentucky. Once this was affirmed, the participants were led to the third and final section of the survey which contained the remaining thirteen items. Five items collected demographic information (i.e., district, gender, race, etc.) and the remaining eight items collected information pertaining directly to the driving question of the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected was codified and analyzed using a qualitative method. Codifying allowed the data to be grouped, organized, and linked in order to find meaning (Grbich, 2012). Once the responses were coded, the codes were then grouped into the categories using descriptive coding (Miles et al., 2014; Richards and Morse, 2013; Saldana, 2003; Wolcott, 1994). Following the first cycle of coding, the data was then coded again using the focused coding method (Charmaz, 2014).

Questions one and two confirm consent and eligibility for the study and did not need to be coded. Question three asks' participants to write which Kentucky school district they taught in during their first year of teaching. These responses were listed alphabetically and counted. Question five asks about gender with responses counted by category: male, female, prefer not to say, and other. Question six asked participants to identify their race, the responses were counted by the following categories: (a) African American/Black, (b) Caucasian/White, (c) East Asian, (d) Latino/Hispanic, and (e) Prefer not to say. There were other answer choices on the survey, but no participant selected them to be included in the study. Question seven asked participants to choose the grade they taught during their first year of teaching. As this study targeted elementary school teachers, the counted categories were (a) kindergarten, (b) first grade, (c) second grade, (d) third grade, (e) fourth grade, and (f) fifth grade.

Question four asks' participants to type-in the year in which they were a FYT. Since this study revolves around the induction and support systems in Kentucky, the data was coded based on the changes of the induction system and given a brief descriptor of the time period. The categories chosen were: (a) before 1985, before KTIP; (b) 1985-1994, initial KTIP model; (c)1995-2013, modified KTIP program; (d) 2014-2018, Danielson Framework was adopted; and (e) 2019, KTIP was abolished, districts had to create their own program.

Questions eight and ten ask participants to identify any training (question eight) or support (question ten) they received during their first-year of teaching. For both questions, there was a note specifically asking participants to list if they could not remember. Doing so allowed the researcher to delineate between those who had no training/support and those who did not remember their training/support. These responses were coded using the methods above (i.e., following descriptive and then focused coding methodologies). Note that the 'other' category

only applies to question eight and was used to lump together any uncommon responses. Responses coded as ‘other’ were those that had fewer than three occurrences leaving them with less than one percent. Question ten does not have an ‘other’ category because only two responses would have been coded as ‘other’. The following final categories emerged for question eight: do not remember, no trainings received, standards, safety, Special Education (SPED), curriculum, classroom management, new teacher training, technology, testing, student engagement, content areas (these respondents did not list any specific subjects), English & Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and other. The following final categories were used to code question ten: do not remember, KTIP, mentor, no supports were received, guided planning/planning days, county specific induction, observing/shadowing others, and being observed.

Questions nine and eleven used a Likert scale for participants to rate how helpful the trainings they listed in question eight, and the supports they listed in question ten were to them during their first-year. These responses were counted by the choices offered to participants which were very helpful, somewhat helpful, no impact, somewhat of a hindrance, very much a hindrance, and (respectively) I attended no trainings as a first-year teacher/ I was given no support as a first-year teacher. Question thirteen asked participants to rate their experience as a first-year teacher in Kentucky. The responses were counted based on the choices offered to participants which were: excellent, good, fair, poor, and horrible.

Finally, question twelve asked respondents to describe their overall experience as a first-year teacher and to describe what supports helped or hindered their experience. Responses to this question were highly varied and required many edits of the codes (Franklin & Walker, 2003). The responses were first coded into these three categories to describe their connotation: positive, negative, and conflicted. Responses coded as ‘conflicted’ had both positive and negative points

in their response and did not further clarify which points were most prevalent. Then, the responses were coded using inductive analysis. Inductive analysis involves a categorizing strategy used to reduce broad information into patterns and themes (Hatch, 2002). The two categories defined were Helped and Hindered. Under the Helped category, these codes emerged: mentor, observing/shadowing others, administration, students and families, PD, KTIP, and other. Under the Hindered category, these codes emerged: mentor, KTIP, administration, workload, mental health, overextended self, and didn't like curriculum. Finally, some respondents added what they needed help with, this became its own category where these codes emerged: general support, classroom management, better training/PD, more time to prepare, and wanted to observe others.

Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, a researcher-developed survey instrument was sent via email to all elementary school principals in Kentucky. The recipient email addresses were found mostly using the school websites and by phone calls when the needed information was not available on the website. The surveys were distributed using a voluntary, non-probability sampling method. Individual results gathered from the survey were coded using two methods. Descriptive coding was used for the initial round of coding (Miles et al., 2014; Richards and Morse, 2013; Saldana, 2003; Wolcott, 1994). Then, focused coding was used to finalize the categories used to create the official results of the study (Charmaz, 2014).

Chapter Four

Results

When reporting the findings of the study, it is important to reflect on the purpose of the study. It can be most simply stated through the four main concepts: (a) identifying the challenges and needs of FYT, (b) identify and explore the trainings provided to FYT, (c) identify and explore the supports provided to FYT, and (d) identifying what is needed to effectively support FYT. The research question driving this study is a summation of these four components. The question: What are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators? The hypothesis created by the Primary Investigator (PI) prior to conducting the study stated that having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year.

This chapter will first discuss the difficulty associated with gathering information regarding the response rate for this study. Next, the demographic information of the participants will be explored; followed by the findings. The findings will present a table for each question, followed by a brief narrative.

Response Rate

Due to the scale of this survey, it is impossible to know exactly how many elementary school teachers received the survey. Although correspondence was sent to 724 principals, all 724 did not receive the survey. Thirty-seven emails were returned to the sender because they were flagged as spam by some inboxes. As a result, 687 principals received the survey, although some

of those 687 may have been flagged by their spam filter and sent to a folder other than their traditional inbox.

In addition to challenges with principals receiving the emails, those who did receive the correspondence, may not have sent the link to their staff. This makes knowing the exact response rate impossible. Overall, 271 survey responses were collected. However, 36 potential respondents had not finished their first year of teaching, so their survey was ended after the second question. This left 235 complete survey responses to be analyzed.

Demographic Information

Item 4: In what school year did you complete your first year of teaching (e.g., 2019-2020)?

First Year Taught	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Data Set
before 1985, before KTIP	4	2%
1985-1994, initial KTIP model	17	7%
1995-2013, modified KTIP program	136	58%
2014-2018, Danielson Framework was adopted	49	21%
2019, KTIP was abolished, districts had to create their own program.	22	9%
Invalid response	7	3%

Table 2

Item 5: What is your gender?

Gender	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Data Set
Male	21	8.9%
Female	205	87.2%
Prefer not to say	8	3.4%

Table 3

Item 6: Please identify your race.

Race	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Data Set
African American/Black	4	1.7%
Caucasian/White	215	91.5%
East Asian	1	0.4%
Latino/Hispanic	2	0.9%
Prefer to not say	13	5.5%

Table 4

Item 7: What grade did you teach during your first year of teaching?

Grade Taught	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Data Set
Kindergarten	42	17.9%
First Grade	48	20.4%
Second Grade	29	12.3%
Third Grade	35	14.9%
Fourth Grade	40	17%
Fifth Grade	41	17.4%

Findings

As shown in Table 5, the training and PD provided to FYT in Kentucky varied between respondents. Some received no PD and some received multiple trainings. Participants that listed multiple PD or training sessions had each response coded and added to the results. Answers were coded by training/PD category and then tallied. Percentages calculated were taken out of 235 (the number of codable survey responses) instead of N equaling the total number of individual pieces of coded data. This was done to calculate the total number of participants who received that training out of all participants including those who did not have training.

Table 5

Item 8: What trainings and/or professional development did you receive as a first-year teacher from the district and/or state? Please list all that you remember. If you do not remember the exact name of the training(s), please list the general subject matter covered. If you do not remember, please type that in the box below.

Training/PD Category	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Participants (235)
Do not remember	32	14%
No trainings received	15	6%
Standards	5	2%
Safety	10	4%
SPED	13	6%
Curriculum	19	8%
Classroom/Behavior Management	32	14%
New Teacher/FYT-specific	29	12%
Technology	8	3%
Testing	10	4%
Content Areas (respondents did not provide specific subjects)	4	2%
Student Engagement	3	1%
ELA	62	26%
Math	28	12%
Science	3	1%
Other	33	14%

When asked if the trainings they listed (Table 5) were helpful to them as a first-year teacher, 93 (36.9%) responded they were very helpful; 95 (40.4%) responded they were somewhat helpful, 27 (11.5%) responded they made no impact, 4 (1.7%) responded they were somewhat of a hindrance, 1 (0.4%) responded they were very much a hindrance, and 15 (6%) responded that they received no training. The number of respondents who received no training was consistent in both items eight and nine.

Table 6 shows the responses to item ten which asked participants what supports they received as a FYT. When asked if those supports were helpful to them as first-year teachers, 114 (48.5%) responded they were very helpful, 78 (33.2%) said they were somewhat helpful, 11 (4.7%) said they had no impact, 15 (6.4%) said they were somewhat of a hindrance, 8 (3.4%) said they were very much a hindrance, and 9 (3.8%) said they received no support as a FYT. The number of respondents who received no support as a FYT was consistent in both items nine and ten. Percentages calculated were taken out of 235 (the number of codable survey responses) instead of N equaling the total number of individual pieces of coded data. This was done to calculate the total number of participants who received that support out of all participants including those who did not have support.

Item twelve asked participants to describe their overall experience as a FYT. This was coded in two ways. During the first round of coding the responses were first coded based on the general connotation of the response where applicable. 73 (31%) participants described an overall positive experience while 65 (28%) described an overall negative experience. 35 (15%) responses were coded as ‘conflicted’ as the written response had both positive and negative impacts listed without further clarification. 62 (26%) responses did not have an overarching tone and simply listed the supports received. Therefore, the connotation of the response was not able

to be coded. Then, the responses were coded based on what participants said helped or hindered them as a FYT (Table 7). Finally, some respondents (N= 64) listed what they needed help with as FYT. 22 (9%) listed they needed help with classroom management, 2 (1%) said they needed more time for preparation,10 (4%) said they needed better training/PD, and 29 (12%) said they needed general/overall support.

Table 6

Item 9: What support(s) did you receive from the state and/or district as a first-year teacher (e.g., KTIP, peer mentor, days allotted to shadow a colleague, etc.)? Please list all that you remember. If you do not remember, please type that in the text box below.

Support Category	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Participants (235)
Do not remember	2	1%
KTIP	173	74%
Mentor	111	47%
Guided planning/planning days	4	2%
County-specific induction	1	Less than 1%
Observing/shadowing others	26	11%
Being observed	7	3%
No support received as a FYT	9	4%

Item thirteen asked participants to rate their experience as a FYT in Kentucky. 66 (28.1%) said it was excellent, 108 (46%) said it was good, 35 (14.9%) said it was fair, 15 (6.4%) said it was poor, and 11 (4.7%) said it was horrible. Finally, item fourteen asked participants to list their biggest challenges as FYT. Participants were able to select as many options from the given list as they wanted as well as enter in their own responses (Table 8). In regards to the

'other' category, six respondents wrote about special education and were given their own line on the table. The remaining responses from the 'other' category were unique and were therefore kept lumped together under 'other'. One response in the other category spoke to what many others described when responding to how supports helped or hindered them. The respondent wrote, "Unreasonable KTIP requirements while also trying to establish my own classroom and effective teaching."

Table 7

Item 9: Please describe your overall experience as a first-year teacher. Please include what supports helped or hindered you.

Helpful to FYT	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Participants (235)
Mentor	121	51%
Observing/shadowing others	3	1%
Administration	20	9%
Students/families	4	2%
Professional Development	3	1%
KTIP	2	1%
Other	2	1%
Hindered FYT	**Number of Teachers**	**Percentage of Total Participants (235)**
Mentor	19	8%
KTIP	37	16%
Administration	5	2%
Workload	25	11%
Mental Health	3	1%
Overextended Self	2	1%
Older Mentor	2	1%
Didn't Like Curriculum	1	Less than 1%

Table 8

Item 14: As a first-year teacher, what were your biggest challenges? Please select all that apply.

Challenge	Number of Teachers	Percentage of Total Participants (235)
Using data to drive instruction	83	
Organization of physical space	20	
Collecting data	62	
Using curriculum	86	
Communicating and working with parents	62	
Differentiation	127	
Behavior management	104	
Time management	67	
Working with peers	123	
Special education students	6	
Creating lesson materials	56	
Other	8	

Table 9

Connecting items to concepts.

Concept	Survey Item
Identifying the challenges and needs of FYT.	12 and 14
Identifying and exploring the trainings provided to FYT.	8 and 9
Identifying and exploring the supports provided to FYT.	10 and 11
Identifying what is needed to effectively support FYT.	12

Overall, the results of the survey support the question this study is centered around. The study focuses on four main concepts that were addressed by the fourteen-item survey (Table 9). The following chapter will explore these results and draw conclusions based on these findings.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The final chapter of the study will explore a summary of the study up to this point, conclusions drawn in regards to the research question and hypothesis, discussion of those conclusions, recommendations for action, and recommendations for future study. Implications and the significance of the results for stakeholders are provided.

Summary

The demands of teaching, combined with a shortage of qualified teachers, makes retaining First-Year Teachers (FYT) critical (Darling-Hammond 1997, 2000). The need for support and training for new teachers has been identified by educational leaders and thus most states have induction and support programs (National Council of Teacher Quality, 2017). Some induction and support programs include a comprehensive approach while some only provide mentoring. However, Wiebke and Bardin (2009) stated that mentoring should not be the only support for novices as this induction can influence an entire career. Ergo, poor mentorship can create poor habits that last the duration of a new teacher's career.

According to DeMonte (2013), effective teaching practices can be learned. Studies have found learning can take place through comprehensive support programs which include (a) mentoring, (b) instructional coaching, (c) observation, (d) feedback, and (e) professional development. In addition to improving their overall practice, these supports give FYT access to both physical resources and the knowledge of their peers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; DeAngelis et al., 2013; Goldhaber, 2019; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Teague & Swan (2013) noted that novice teachers are burdened with the same responsibilities as their seasoned colleagues and are

expected to produce the same results and high-performance level. Their findings indicated that poor support was a critical factor in FYT retention and that induction programs improved poor retention rates. Comprehensive support programs have been shown to help all FYT, especially if their mentors are trained on best mentoring practices (Kueker, 2005). Furthermore, Seok & Berliner (2012) found that assigning a mentor to a novice teacher decreased the chance they would leave the profession in the first year. Villani (2009) cited support programs as an essential, cost-effective strategy to develop novice educators. Thus, all findings point to quality, comprehensive support programs leading to a decrease in novice teachers leaving the profession.

The purpose of the study can be condensed into four main concepts: (a) identifying the challenges and needs of FYT, (b) identify and explore the trainings provided to FYT, (c) identify and explore the supports provided to FYT, and (d) identifying what is needed to effectively support FYT. This purpose can be achieved by answering the driving question of the study. The question: what are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators? When looking at this question, the following hypothesis was created: having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year.

When looking at key terms used throughout the study, the terms novice and first-year teachers were used interchangeably. By definition, FYT are novices, allowing for the varied word choice. Other critical terms in the study are: training and support. Training in this study refers to more formal training in which an experienced, knowledgeable professional delivers content to a trainee. These trainings can be taken voluntarily, or be required for FYT by school administration. Next, when using the term: supports, the study is referring to other mechanisms

used to improve the teaching practices of a novice teacher that are not formal trainings. Finally, supports, as used in the study can refer to, among other things: (a) mentoring, (b) instructional coaching, (c) observation, and (d) feedback.

This study was created due to the extensive changes made to the comprehensive induction program for first-year public school teachers in Kentucky. The KTIP program was in place for the better part of the last four decades. This program was established in 1984 by the Kentucky General Assembly, becoming effective January 1, 1985. This program gave FYT three main supports, all in the form of human supporters: principals, university faculty (sometimes replaced with a resource teacher), and instructional supervisors. In 1990, the program was strengthened by the Kentucky Education Reform Act. This act established the Educational Professional Standards Board (EPSB) to govern teacher certification for the state (Darolia, 2018).

Adkins et. al. also wrote of changes between the 1993 and 1994 KTIP manual. The 1994 manual consisted of 196 pages while the 1993 manual had only 18. The increase of 178 pages was to allow for significantly more information to be divulged to interns. The interns were not only told *what* they were supposed to do to achieve a recommendation, but *how* to achieve that goal. The overall structure of the program was the same, with a required number of hours spent, a portfolio being created by the student, and observations being completed by resource teachers. Unfortunately, no reliable materials are available describing KTIP from 1996-2014. It may be assumed that the program stayed the same from 1994 to 2014. Between 2014 and 2018, KTIP, had focused on Kentucky Framework for Teaching. This framework, created by Charlotte Danielson, was adapted for use by the state.

In 2018, Governor Matt Bevin abolished the EPSB as it was known and transferred its responsibilities to the KDE. Within the KDE the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness was created. Because of these changes, the KTIP was not funded for the first time since 1985. Districts in Kentucky were then expected to form an induction program for new hires even though they were deprived of the formal structure of KTIP. (Darolia, 2018). This does not, however, mean that the challenges have abated as well. The same challenges remain, but now districts are responsible to create their own induction programs without the structured support of KTIP. It is critical to know what training and support has been found to be impactful by those who know best, the FYT who have experienced new teacher induction. The tides must shift from disappointment-filled, overwhelming challenges to supported, fulfilled teachers. This study aims to help foster the success of FYT by exploring what has best served FYT in Kentucky.

Discussion of Results

When looking at the demographics of the study, the vast majority of participants were female (N=205) and Caucasian/White (N=215). According to the United States Census (2019), 87.5% of the Kentucky population is Caucasian/White, meaning that the number of participants in this study that identified as Caucasian/White closely resembles that of the general population of the state. That same census data shows that 50.7% of the state identifies as female. This means that this study has an overrepresentation of females. However, it is more common for teachers to be female (Kentucky Department of Education, 2017).

The majority of participants were FYT between the years of 1995 and 2013. This was after the first reform, but before the Danielson Framework was adopted (Darolia, 2018). As a whole, most participants (86%) went through the KTIP induction program. However, when

asked what supports they received as a FYT (Table 6), fewer participants responded that they had been through KTIP. It is possible that the respondent listed an aspect of the KTIP program (i.e., a mentor) instead of naming the program, or that they responded that they did not remember. It is also possible that while they *should* have been receiving the comprehensive support program of KTIP, their school did not participate and recommended the teacher for certification without actually completing the program. All of these are reasonable causes of the inconsistency found within the data.

When looking at the impact that trainings had on these FYT, only 2% responded that the trainings had a negative impact, and 11.5% stating the trainings had no impact. This means that 80% of respondents said the trainings provided to them as a FYT were helpful to some degree. There were not any participants who responded that they received no trainings.

When looking at the impact that various supports had on FYT, contrary to the trainings received, 9 (3.8%) of respondents stated that they received no supports as a FYT. This number is consistent with the coded responses from item ten. It is interesting that all teachers received training, but not all received support. Seven of the nine (78%) who said they had received no support began teaching prior to 1985, or after 2019; either before KTIP was established, or after KTIP was abolished and districts had to implement their own support programs. It is also interesting to note that of the nine who received no support, five rated their first-year as horrible or poor. Of the teachers who received support, 10% reported that the supports given had a negative impact on their first-year, 5% said that the supports had no impact on their first-year, and 85% reported that the supports had a positive impact.

Finally, when examining the challenges, the participants chose as their 'biggest' challenges within their first-year, the most selected items (a response rate of over 30%) were: (a) differentiation (53%), (b) behavior management (44%)., (c) using curriculum (37%), and (d) using data to drive instruction (35%). Other than the 32 participants who responded that they received training in behavior/classroom management, none of these top four challenges were listed among the top trainings and supports provided to FYT.

Conclusions

In regards to the driving question of this study (what are the training and support experiences of first-year K-5 teachers and how can these experiences be improved for future educators?) and the hypothesis (having been provided comprehensive induction programs, FYT will have a positive first year teaching experience and remain in the teaching profession beyond the first year), through the analysis of the results, four main conclusions can be drawn. First, as the majority of respondents (80%) rated trainings as helpful, this form of trainings should be continued. The top four trainings listed were: (a) English language arts, (b) behavior/classroom management, (c) training specific to first-year/new teachers, and (d) mathematics.

Second, as the majority of participants who were given supports as FYT reported the supports positively impacted their first-year, it can be concluded that providing supports to FYT is beneficial to their experience as a FYT. The top three supports reported by participants were: (a) KTIP, (b) mentor, and (c) observing/shadowing others.

Third, as both trainings and supports were found to have a positive impact on FYT, schools should continue to provide trainings and specific supports focused on the most listed challenges identified by participants, which would be beneficial to FYT.

Fourth, as the majority of teachers who stated they received no support as FYT were those whose first year was prior to the establishment of KTIP, or after KTIP was abolished, it can be concluded that having a state-mandated program in place, helped provide support for FYT. Furthermore, as the majority (56%) of respondents who received no support rated their first-year teaching as ‘poor’ or ‘horrible’, it can be said that those who receive support have a better experience than those who do not. Also, due to the fact that most participants (96%) received some sort of training and/or support, and most (74%) rated their experience as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ when analyzing their experience teaching as a FYT in the state of Kentucky; it can be concluded that training and support programs have a positive impact on the first-year of teaching.

Recommendation for Action

Based on the collected data and the conclusions drawn based on the analysis of the results, this study suggests one recommendation for action to the Kentucky Department of Education. This recommendation is to bring back another state-supported and mandated program in order to provide comprehensive support to FYT. This program does not need to be an exact replica of KTIP; however, it should be comprehensive to fully support the participating FYT.

Recommendation for Future Study

In future studies, it is the recommendation of the PI that the participant pool be widened. Also, the methods of this study could be tweaked slightly to reduce the amount of qualitative coding. If this study were repeated, it would be suggested that items eight and ten be turned into a ‘select all’ type of question with an option for the participant to choose ‘other’ and enter their own responses. This could be done using the categories determined in this study through coding.

Finally, the PI recommends that further study be done using more participants where the respondents (i.e., teachers who went through the KTIP program) identify what specific things about KTIP were helpful and which were hindrances.

Appendix A

Narrative Used to Obtain Participants

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Ashley Dunn, I am currently earning my educational specialist degree from Murray State University. I am conducting a research study regarding the trainings and supports given to first-year teachers in Kentucky and how those trainings and supports can be improved. This anonymous survey is for anyone who has completed at least their first-year teaching elementary school (K-5) in Kentucky. I would greatly appreciate it if you would forward the link below to your entire teaching staff. Those who complete the survey can choose to be entered in a drawing to win a $100 gift card.

This survey will close Friday, March 12, 2021.
Link to survey: (removed in post-production as the survey has now closed)

As a teacher, I understand that your time is valuable and I truly appreciate your time. I would also like to thank you in advance for sending this survey to your teaching staff.

Thank you,

Ashley Dunn
adunn20@murraystate.edu
Principal Investigator
Murray State University

Appendix B

Survey Questions and Answer Formatting/Choices

Words written in italics are direct quotes from the survey.

The first page of survey was the informed consent narrative and answer choices.

If participants did not consent, they were directed to the last page of the survey which will thank them for their time and instruct them to close their browser. If they did consent, the study continued as is written in the following pages.

1. *Have you completed your first year of teaching as a classroom teacher at an elementary (K-5) school in Kentucky?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*

Participants who chose no will be directed to the last page of the survey which will thank them for their time and instruct them to close their browser. Participants who chose yes will continue on to question 2.

2. *What school district did you work at during your first year of teaching?*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.
3. *In what school year did you complete your first year of teaching (e.g., 2019-2020)?*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.
4. *What is your gender?*
    a. *male*
    b. *female*
    c. *other*

d. *prefer not to say*

5. *Please identify your race.*
    a. *African American/black*
    b. *Caucasian/white*
    c. *East Asian*
    d. *Latino/Hispanic*
    e. *Middle Eastern*
    f. *South Asian*
    g. *Three or more races*
    h. *Other*
    i. *Prefer not to say*

6. *What grade did you teach during your first year of teaching?*
    a. *Kindergarten*
    b. *First Grade*
    c. *Second Grade*
    d. *Third Grade*
    e. *Fourth Grade*
    f. *Fifth Grade*

7. *What trainings and/or professional development did you receive as a first-year teacher from the district and/or state? Please list all that you remember. If you do not remember the exact name of the training(s), please list the general subject matter covered. If you do not remember, please type that in the box below.*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.
8. *Were those trainings helpful to you as a first-year teacher?*
    a. *very helpful*
    b. *somewhat helpful*
    c. *no impact*
    d. *somewhat of a hinderance*
    e. *very much a hinderance*
    f. *I attended no trainings as a first-year teacher*
9. *What support(s) did you receive from the state and/or district as a first-year teacher (e.g., KTIP, peer mentor, days allotted to shadow a colleague, etc.)? Please list all that you remember. If you do not remember, please type that in the text box below.*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.
10. *Were those supports helpful to you as a first-year teacher?*
    a. *very helpful*
    b. *somewhat helpful*
    c. *no impact*
    d. *somewhat of a hinderance*
    e. *very much a hinderance*
    f. *I was given no support as a first-year teacher*

11. *Please describe your overall experience as a first-year teacher. Please include what supports helped or hindered you.*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.
12. *Overall, how would you rate your experience as a first-year teacher in Kentucky?*
    a. *excellent*
    b. *good*
    c. *fair*
    d. *poor*
    e. *horrible*
13. *As a first-year teacher, what were your biggest challenges? Please select all that apply.*
    a. *organization of the physical space and materials*
    b. *using curriculum*
    c. *differentiating for diverse groups of learners*
    d. *behavior management*
    e. *time management*
    f. *working collaboratively with peers*
    g. *creating lesson materials*
    h. *using data to drive instruction*
    i. *collecting data*
    j. *communicating and working with parents*
    k. *other (please specify as many as you'd like)* -there was a text box here for respondents to elaborate

14. *Thinking back to your first-year of teaching in Kentucky, what supports and/or trainings do you wish your district and/or the state had provided to you and why?*
    a. Participants entered their answer in a text box.

Following question 12, participants went to the next page with the following message:

Thank you for participating in the survey. The Principal Investigator of this study can be contacted with any questions or concerns via email at adunn20@murraystate.edu If you would like to be entered in a drawing to win a $100 Amazon gift card, please click this link (link removed in post-production as the survey has now closed). *Personal information collected will only be used for the purpose of the drawing and will not be connected with your survey response in any way. If you do not wish to enter the drawing, please close this browser.*

Clicking that link took participants to a google form which said the following:

The information gathered here will not be linked in any way to the survey you completed, it will only be used for the purposes of the prize drawing. By completing this form, you affirm that you are willing to have the personal information entered below used to send you a $100 Amazon gift card if you win the drawing. A winner will be randomly selected one week after the survey closes. The winner will be contacted by email regarding their prize. Only the winner will be contacted. If the winner does not respond to the email within one week, another winner will be contacted. This will continue until a winner responds.

1. *Your Name*
    a. Participant entered their answer in a text box.
2. *Your Email Address*
    a. Participant entered their answer in a text box.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Narrative

Study Title: Training and Support Systems for First-Year Elementary School Teachers

Primary Investigator: Ashley Dunn and Dr. Chhanda Islam, Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Faculty Sponsor Contact: Dr. Chhanda Islam, 270-809-6868, 3223 Alexander Hall, Murray, Kentucky 42071

You are being invited to participate in an online research study conducted through Murray State University. This document contains information you will need to help you decide whether to be in this research study or not. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. Please read the form carefully and ask the study team members questions about anything that is not clear. You should print a copy of this page for your records.

1. Nature and Purpose of Project: The purpose of this study is to understand and improve the training and support systems put in place for first-year elementary school teachers in Kentucky.

2. Explanation of Procedures: The study activity is one online survey which has a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Study duration: This survey should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete.

3. Discomforts and Risks: There are no anticipated risks and/or discomforts for participants as the data is collected anonymously.

4. Benefits: This study is not designed to benefit you directly. However, your participation may help to increase our understanding of the training and support systems put in place for first-year teachers in Kentucky.

5. Participant Compensation: If you choose to participate, after completing the online survey you will be given the opportunity to enter in a drawing for a $100.00 Amazon gift card. The final page of the survey will provide a link to a google form. This form will ask you to input your name and email address. Once the survey closes, one winner will be randomly selected. Your personal information will only be used if your name is drawn as the winner of the gift card. Your name and email will not be linked in any way to your survey responses. We will only contact you if you have won the gift card.

6. Confidentiality: Your participation in this study is anonymous. Neither the researcher nor anyone else will know if you have participated or how you responded.

7. Refusal/Withdrawal: Your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw/stop participating at any time with absolutely no penalty. All questions in the survey must be answered for your responses to be included in the study results.

8. Contact Information: Any questions about the procedures or conduct of this research should be brought to the attention of Dr. Chhanda Islam at 270-809-6868, or cislam@murraystate.edu. If you would like to know the results of this study, please contact Dr. Islam.

Choosing the option below to continue to the survey indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Murray State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the MSU IRB Coordinator at (270) 809-2916 or msu.irb@murraystate.edu.

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