Perceived Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs for Traditionally and Alternatively Certified Novice Teachers

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Abstract

The teacher workforce at the beginning of the 2020s continued to be plagued by a teacher shortage with too few teachers to fill open teaching positions. Trends including an aging group of teachers reaching retirement age, a growing number of teaching positions due to specialized need, and high attrition rates are contributing to the teacher shortage (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, Collins, & Harrison, 2021a). One solution to fill open positions includes alternative routes to the classroom in the form of alternative certification (AC) programs (García & Weiss, 2019c). However, the solution to the teacher shortage requires recruiting new teachers but also retaining teachers already in the field (Woods, 2016a). Mentoring programs are one researched and supported way to minimize teacher attrition; however, little research has been done on the effects of mentoring programs specifically for teachers entering the teaching field through AC programs. This study involved the examination of the perceptions of effectiveness of a mentoring program of both traditionally certified (TC) and AC novice teachers in rural Kansas schools. A quantitative descriptive survey design was used to collect information to analyze the perceptions of effectiveness of a mentoring program for novice teachers. The results of this study indicate that both TC and AC teachers perceived the elements of the mentoring program as effective. Additionally, there were no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of effectiveness between TC and AC teachers. The results of this study add to the current body of research regarding the supports needed for both TC teachers and AC novice teachers.

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially my parents, that have always loved, encouraged, and supported me in every endeavor in every way. They have instilled in me the confidence to pursue my every goal and aspiration, for which I am so grateful. I'd also like to dedicate this achievement to my husband, John, for his never-ending and unfailing love and support. I could not have done it without you!

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

From the late 1980's through the 2010's, the makeup of the teacher workforce changed. These changes in the demographics of the workforce have created new challenges and concerns for state policymakers, boards, and administrators across the United States. Ingersoll, Merrill, and Stuckey (2018) explained that the emergent trends in the workforce provide considerable implications for education leaders. These trends included less stability in the availability of potential candidates in the teacher workforce (Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018). These teacher trends have left open teaching positions in schools that administrators have not been able to staff properly (García & Weiss, 2019c). Some states have used alternative certification (AC) programs to fill the gaps in their staff as AC programs have continued to become more popular (García & Weiss, 2019c; Redding & Smith, 2016).

Ingersoll et al. (2018), while studying trends in the teacher workforce since the late 1980's, identified six trends that emerged from their ongoing study of the workforce through analysis of the Schools and Staff Survey and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey. The trends identified in the workforce include ballooning, graying, greening, becoming more female-dominated, becoming more racially and ethnically diverse, and becoming less stable (Ingersoll et al., 2018). Of these six trends, four trends provide notable connection to the growing number of AC teachers.

First, Ingersoll et al. (2018) identified ballooning as a dramatic growth in the teaching field. The authors reported the number of teaching positions has increased dramatically since the mid-1980's, growing faster than the growth of student enrollment.

The authors explained this rapid growth might be attributed to factors such as a push for smaller student-to-teacher ratios and a growing demand for teachers in specialty areas such as special education and English as a second language (ESL). Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas (2016) also indicated teacher demand had been increasing due to student enrollment changes and class sizes, but also high teacher attrition rates.

A second trend includes an aging (or graying) workforce, which, according to Ingersoll et al. (2018), has also brought an increase in the number of teacher retirements. Younger people are comprising more of the workforce, perhaps to fill the gaps left by aging retirees. Ingersoll et al. (2018) explained a third trend has emerged simultaneously with the graying trend. The authors described trend three as a "greening" of the workforce. However, Sutcher et al. (2016) indicated high attrition rates are not due solely to retirement and are also affecting younger teachers. According to Sutcher et al. (2016), 19% to 30% of the teachers leaving their current position have been new teachers who are leaving the profession within the first five years of teaching. Additionally, García and Weiss, (2019c) and Bowling and Ball (2018) explained the pool of potential teachers has been declining, in part, due to a decrease in enrollment in teacher prep programs and a lack of credentialed teachers in areas of need, a decrease in the availability of teacher preparation programs, and the increase in turnover and attrition rates over time. These factors create staffing vacancies that administrators have been filling by hiring teachers trained in AC programs (Constantine et al., 2009).

According to Ingersoll et al. (2018), not only are young people being hired to fill the increasing number of open teaching positions, but there are older professionals also entering the teaching field for the first time after switching careers. Some of these

professionals are likely entering teaching through an AC program. Redding & Smith (2016) indicated the number of AC teachers increased dramatically between the 1999-2000 school year and the 2011-2012 school year. García & Weiss (2019c) explained that the teaching population has lost experience over time because the teachers replacing those leaving do not have the level of experience. Some of the AC teachers in career and technical education bring abundant technical skills, likely acquired from their time in the workforce, however, these AC teachers are often lacking pedagogical and program management skills (Bowling & Ball, 2018).

The fourth trend connected to the present topic is less stability. As indicated above, teacher turnover rates have increased, with teachers moving to other positions, but also leaving the occupation (García & Weiss, 2019c; Ingersoll et al., 2018). The teacher turnover provides more complications than is apparent in the overall numbers, according to Ingersoll et al. (2018). For example, the number of departures are higher for beginning teachers and Ingersoll et al. (2018) estimated 40% to 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of teaching. Turnover rates are also higher in schools with high poverty rates, high minority rates, urban, and rural schools (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Sutcher et al., 2016). Not only are beginning teachers leaving the profession, according to Redding and Smith (2016), AC teachers were more likely to leave the teaching profession than traditionally certified (TC) teachers. Sutcher et al. (2016) indicated that because new and beginning teachers comprise more of the workforce, their attrition and turnover rates are making a greater impact.

The trends described above present implications for schools to understand the impact on hiring practices and the current state of the teacher workforce. As schools face

growing staffing challenges, administrators are hiring more AC teachers. According to Redding and Smith (2016), the likelihood for turnover is higher for AC teachers than for teachers who are traditionally certified. With a growing pool of AC teachers, schools should be supplying supports and professional development to help reduce the attrition rates of beginning teachers. The trends discussed above, including the growing number of AC teachers in the workforce, provide implications for researchers to explore the specific needs of beginning AC teachers to better inform administrators, educators, and policymakers and, to provide supports that address issues identified by the current trends in education.

Background

According to García and Weiss (2019c), lack of support is cited as one of the main factors for beginning teachers who choose to leave the teaching profession. As of 2019, the Education Commission of the States (2019) reported that an induction or mentoring program is required in 31 states, with 10 of those states requiring only one year of mentoring and others requiring two or more. Heider (2005) explained that state education associations have used formal mentoring programs to help with the high attrition rates because mentoring programs can help reduce feelings of isolation and provide encouragement. The Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE, 2016) reported similar data across the state of Kansas. The Kansas teaching profession is greening, aligning with Ingersoll et al.'s trend of inexperienced teachers comprising a majority of the workforce. Because of this trend, KSDE (2016) identified teacher retention as an "immediate priority" (p. 9). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also acknowledged the positive impact of teacher induction programs within the research,

especially mentoring programs. The authors cited results such as higher satisfaction, commitment, and retention, better teaching performance in various aspects, and higher student achievement for those teachers who participated in a program.

The setting and sample for the current study included beginning teachers, within the first two years, working in rural Kansas schools and participating in a mentoring program provided by Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRSC). According to the KSDE (n.d.), one year of mentoring has been required for new teachers to obtain a professional license since 2008. The most recent modification to the induction program requirements were adopted in 2017. The document outlines the guidelines for new teacher induction programs in Kansas, including guidelines such as a mentee driven program, practical application for the mentee, criteria for mentor selection, mentor training criteria, multi-year support for the mentee, and accountability measures (KSDE, 2017). The guidelines do not, however, provide separate requirements for induction programs to meet the specific needs of AC teachers.

SWPRSC (n.d.) is an educational resource center that provides services to educators across Kansas, including professional development and a KSDE approved mentoring program. In the 2019-2020 school year, SWPRSC serviced 39 school districts by providing the mentoring program for beginning teachers, or teachers within their first and second year (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, July 17, 2020). Within these districts, 208 teachers participated with nearly 25% classified as AC teachers (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, July 17, 2020). All beginning teachers participated in the same mentoring program, regardless of method of certification.

Statement of the Problem

According to García & Weiss (2019c), the teacher shortage continues to increase, affecting the teacher workforce. The burgeoning lack of qualified teachers has prompted states to continue to identify alternative routes to teacher certification to fill open positions. García & Weiss (2019c) also noted that the number of teachers entering the workforce via alternative certification programs continues to grow. These teachers typically do not have the same background knowledge and foundational pedagogy training when entering the classroom for the first time (Bowling & Ball, 2018). According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), mentoring and induction programs have been a source of support for novice teachers to help them to succeed during their first and second years; however, more research is needed to identify how the needs of new AC teachers differ from those of TC teachers. Specifically, more research is needed to identify and compare the needs of new AC teachers in their first two years of teaching to provide mentoring programs tailored to their unique needs and to provide effective support to help them to succeed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative survey study was to examine the perceptions of the effectiveness of a teacher induction/mentoring program for novice teachers employed in rural Kansas schools and participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-22 school year. Specifically, the study examined the extent that TC teachers perceived the effectiveness of the mentoring program. Secondly, the study examined the extent that AC teachers perceived the mentoring program was effective. Lastly, the study examined the difference in the perceptions of effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring

program between TC novice teachers AC novice teachers participating in the same program.

Significance of the Study

With the growing number of teachers entering the workforce through AC programs, special consideration should be given to provide professional development tailored to their specific needs. Specifically, more research examining the perceptions of the effectiveness of mentoring and induction programs for AC teachers in rural schools in Kansas in comparison to the perceptions of TC teachers participating in the same program could provide a better understanding of specific AC teacher needs. The study of beginning teachers' perceptions of effectiveness of the mentoring program provided by SWPRSC and comparing the perceptions of TC teachers and AC teachers may lead to a better understanding of the perceived needs of both TC teachers and AC teacher. This information can be used by SWPRSC to gauge the effectiveness of their mentoring program and can also add to the literature concerning induction program needs for TC and AC teachers in rural Kansas. With further research that can be applied to supporting novice teachers more adequately, perhaps fewer teachers will leave the profession.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to a survey of first- and second-year teachers teaching in rural Kansas school districts, during the 2021-2022 school year, and participating in the mentoring program provided by SWPRSC.

Assumptions

For this study, the researcher assumed the following: (a) participants understood the survey questions, (b) participants responded truthfully to the survey instrument, (c)

the study sample accurately represented the total population, (d) participants had equal access to the benefits the SWPRSC mentoring program provided, and (e) participants engaged and participated fully in the SWPRSC mentoring program to gain the full benefits possible.

Research Questions

The research questions listed below helped to guide the study to compare the perceived effectiveness of a teacher induction program for TC teachers versus AC teachers.

RQ1. To what extent do TC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

RQ2. To what extent do AC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

RQ3. To what extent is there a difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of a teacher mentoring program between TC teachers and AC teachers enrolled in the same program?

Definition of Terms

Alternatively Certified Teachers. Teachers that enter the teaching profession without completing a traditional teacher preparation program as described above. These expedited paths to the classroom can include many different programs that are discussed in more detail in chapter 2 (Jang & Horn, 2017; Woods, 2016a).

Mentoring Program. Programs in which an experienced teacher is paired with a novice teacher to provide assistance and support for novice teachers, help inexperienced teachers adapt to the new job, help to improve skills, build confidence, provide modeling

and feedback, and includes various components that help provide support to new teachers (García & Weiss, 2019b; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Zembytska, 2016). The terms induction programs and mentoring programs are often used interchangeably because mentoring is such an essential component of induction programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Zembytska, 2016). Because of this use of both terms within the existing literature to mean the same program, the term mentoring program will be used in this paper to refer to both mentoring and induction programs. More thorough explanation regarding mentoring programs is provided in chapter 2.

Novice Teacher. The term novice teacher is generally used to indicate a teacher that is new to the teaching profession or inexperienced. However, some authors refer to novice teachers as any teacher with less than five years of teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2019). Others, such as Curry, Webb, & Latham, (2016) refer to novice teachers as those within their first year, specifically within the first semester, of teaching. For the purpose of this study, the term novice teachers will be used to refer to teachers within the first two years of teaching.

Traditionally Certified Teachers. Teachers that have attained certification in their state according to the requirements outlined by the state department of education after completing a four-year undergraduate program studying pedagogy and content area instruction (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Requirements for TC teachers are further discussed in chapter 2.

Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study and includes an overview of relevant information, including the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, assumptions, research questions, and definition of terms that will be used throughout the paper. Chapter 2 provides information needed to understand the context of the current study through a literature review. The literature review in chapter 2 includes an overview of the state of the teaching profession since the 1980's, including an explanation of relevant influences and the consequences of those trends on the teacher workforce. Of notable concern addressed in chapter 2 are issues related to school staffing and teacher attrition. This study examines how novice teachers perceive the effectiveness of a common mentoring program in providing support necessary for success. The study will look at both AC teachers and TC teachers. To fully understand the differences between AC and TC teachers, the teacher preparation programs are examined and defined to provide context to the results of the study. Finally, the research regarding mentoring programs is investigated, including the effectiveness of mentoring programs, common mentoring program components, and the specific components of the SWPRSC mentoring program. This information will help to provide context to the current study and will allow for professional assessment of the results.

Chapter 3 includes the methodology used in the study, including the research design, how participants were selected, a description of the instrument used to collect data, the data collection procedures used, a description of the data analysis used, the hypotheses being tested, and the limitations of the study. Chapter 4 discusses the results

of the data analysis in reference to the three research questions presented in chapter 1. Finally, chapter 5 examines the major findings of the study and the interpretation of the findings, how these findings relate to the literature presented in chapter 2, and implications and recommendations for future considerations and research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Chapter 1 introduced the background and purpose of this study, explaining the importance of understanding the current influences on the teaching profession and the consequences of those influences. Of notable concern is the teacher shortage and the subsequent demand for teachers to fill positions (Aragon, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the already pressing teacher staffing problem with many teachers leaving before retirement because of the pandemic and stress (Church & Simmering, 2022; Diliberti, Schwartz, & Grant, 2021). Kansas is no different, as was reported by Church and Simmering (2022). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) predicted education jobs in the United States are projected to grow 10 percent from 2020 to 2030. With this projected growth, the number of teachers needed to fill these positions must also increase to keep up with industry need. According to Feistritzer, (2005) states have turned to alternative routes to teacher certification to hire teachers in needed areas since the early 1980's as one solution to teacher shortages. This spurred the necessity to create alternative routes to the classroom; however, not all of these alternative routes were equivalent. Feistritzer (2005) further explained that some of those routes included renaming emergency certifications or waivers as alternative certification, but the late 1990's brought a more defined set of requirements for these alternative certification pathways. This move to create a more rigorous alternative pathway to the classroom will be discussed later in this chapter.

Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, Collins, & Harrison (2021b) examined the trends of the teaching workforce over the past three decades by analyzing the data collected in the

Schools and Staff Survey, later renamed the National Teacher Principal Survey and the Teacher Follow-Up Survey from 1987 – 2018. This information has provided insight into the trends in the teacher workforce since 1987; however, as the researchers explained, these analyses summarize the existing trends and lay the groundwork for further research. One such article by Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016) indicated that since 2015, media and schools districts have been reporting that districts have been unable to fill open positions. Researchers Sutcher et al., (2016) surmised that as the economy began to recover from the Great Recession, administrators had a difficult time filling open positions. This difficulty finding teachers led some states to expand emergency permits or to look for other solutions (Sutcher et al., 2016). In some cases, issuance of emergency permits allowed untrained or less qualified teachers to fill teaching positions across the country. However, looking for creative or alternative ways to entice teachers into the classroom is not new, as was mentioned above. As will be discussed, a number of factors have contributed to the teacher shortages and without significant change in trends, the problem will continue to worsen (Sutcher et al., 2016). One such intervention that was noted to help with teacher retention and reduce attrition was the use of induction and mentoring programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The usage of induction or mentoring programs to help provide support for new teachers has increased since 1990, (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) with thirty-one states requiring an induction or mentoring program in 2019 (Education Commission of the States, 2019). With states trying to retain current teachers, a growing number of states are providing support through induction programs while simultaneously trying to attract more teachers

through alternative certification as a solution to the shortage of teachers. However, little research addresses the specific support and needs of those alternatively trained teachers.

This chapter examines the literature available to establish a relevant understanding of the research this study aims to contribute to. Notably, this chapter will delve into school staffing issues and teacher attrition, the different types of teacher preparation programs, and how mentoring programs provide support for new teachers. Finally, this chapter will provide foundational information about the KSDE requirements for a mentoring program and will summarize the research and literature that serves as a basis for the SWPRSC's mentoring program.

School Staffing and Teacher Attrition

Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2019) asserted that to define teacher shortage is to understand the multiple factors plaguing the teaching field, including too few new teachers in various fields, changes in educational programs and teacher demand, attrition, and staffing difficulties in specific locations or fields. Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, Collins, & Harrison (2021a) identified seven trends impacting the teacher workforce since the 1980's, with many of these trends relating back to the factors presented by Sutcher et al. (2019). Five of the identified trends seem to relate back to the topic of this study, looking at the makeup of the teacher workforce, identifying if and why teachers are leaving, and working to address the issues associated with teacher attrition through mentoring programs and support. Examining and understanding these trends helped to provide background knowledge concerning the teacher workforce and supplies critical information to understand how states are reacting to these trends. Interestingly, not all the trends identified by Ingersol et al. point toward a

decline in the number of teachers in the workforce (2021a). The first trend is a ballooning of the workforce, or a larger number of teachers than in the past (Ingersoll et al., 2021a). Changes in the employment or assignment of teachers, changes in the teacher demographic, and instability in the profession have contributed to the current state of the teaching profession. These trends, coupled with societal issues and stress, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Diliberti et al., 2021), have intensified the staffing issues plaguing schools.

Ingersoll et al (2021a) described the first trend as a ballooning of the teacher workforce, indicating that there are more teachers now than in the 1980's. The authors explained that the student population was rising for a while; however, the workforce continued to grow even as the student population growth slowed and even declined. Ingersoll et al. (2021) indicated the larger teacher workforce includes growth in teachers being employed in private or charter schools, an effort to reduce class sizes requiring more teachers to lower the student-to-teacher ratio, and a redistribution of teachers due to needing teachers in certain areas. The authors also indicated that although there are more teachers in the workforce than in years past, they are not equally distributed, with low-income, urban, and rural schools being underrepresented and needing more teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2021a; Sutcher et al., 2016) and with certain fields growing at a disproportionate rate in comparison to other subject areas. The authors specifically cited the growth in hiring math, science, special education, bilingual, reading, and elementary specialist teachers due to high demand (Sutcher et al., 2016) while other areas have grown at a much slower rate since 1987.

Another implication for the teacher workforce comes from a combination of several factors. Ingersoll et al. (2021a) explained that the second trend seen in the teacher workforce is a graying or getting older. According to the researchers, this trend likely has less to do with the teacher shortage than other factors. Sutcher et al (2016) stated that high levels of attrition, or leaving the workforce voluntarily before retirement, was a primary factor in the shortages in the teaching profession. In trend three, the authors indicated that although the workforce is older, the workforce has also become less experienced, or "greener" (Ingersoll et al., 2021a). Some of this inexperience was due to new, young teachers entering the workforce but also a result of older professionals entering teaching for the first time due to a change in careers. This mid-career switching (Ingersoll et al., 2021) could point towards the utilization of alternative certification (AC) programs as professionals leave the private sector and turn to teaching to share the knowledge they have gained on the job with students (Redding & Smith, 2016). Recruiting teachers from the private sector may sound like an effective solution to the teacher shortage to some; however, studies have indicated that teachers entering the workforce through alternative certifications are not immune to the stressors of the teaching profession and also contributed to the high teacher attrition rate (Diliberti et al., 2021; García & Weiss, 2019, 2020; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014; Redding & Smith, 2016). Ingersoll et al (2021a) indicated that the greening of the workforce means there are more teachers in the beginning years of their career with less veteran teachers to serve as mentors. Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2019) explained that studies indicate the high rate of turnover, due to attrition and the growing number of

inexperienced teachers, has been shown to negatively impact students and the quality of education they receive.

As the workforce gets older and less experienced, Ingersoll et al. (2021a) explained in trend four and five that there are also more female teachers and more racial and ethnic diversity in the teacher workforce. More explanation reveals that this may be due to more females entering the career field since 1987, but also more opportunities in other positions, such as administration (Ingersol et al., 2021a). Additionally, government programs have worked to recruit more minority teachers to help provide representation in the teaching field (Ingersoll et al., 2021a). Although minorities have been entering the workforce at a faster rate, the literature also reports these individuals are working in higher-poverty schools serving primarily urban communities. This same group of teachers are also leaving at a higher rate, accounting for higher attrition than their white counterparts or those serving more affluent communities (R. Ingersoll et al., 2021a; Sutcher et al., 2016).

Trend six and seven address the academic ability and stability, or lack thereof, of teachers in the workforce (R. Ingersoll et al., 2021a). The authors explained that trend six shows a consistency in the academic ability of teachers entering the workforce since the 1980's (R. Ingersoll et al., 2021a), yet there are large numbers of professionals leaving the teaching profession each year, resulting in trend seven, instability. Research indicates that teacher turnover and attrition is higher in certain schools, including high-poverty and high-minority schools, urban schools, and rural schools (Sutcher et al., 2019). The current study will examine the perceptions of support of teachers in rural school districts in Kansas to more thoroughly understand the higher attrition rate for

teachers in rural schools as indicated by Sutcher et al. (2009). Understanding that these teachers may be at a higher risk of leaving teaching provides incentive to provide the professional support needed to help retain these teachers.

A large body of research supports the fact that teachers are leaving the workforce, with a large number of those within their first few years of teaching (Ingersoll et al., 2021a, 2014; Sutcher et al., 2016). As referenced above, teachers are leaving for a variety of reasons, including dissatisfaction, working conditions, stress, lack of safety, school climate, family or personal reasons, retirement, and insufficient pay (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Diliberti et al., 2021; García & Weiss, 2019a, 2020; Ingersoll et al., 2021b; Sutcher et al., 2016, 2019). Specifically, according to (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019), teachers working in the most challenging schools and those who enter the profession through alternative pathways are leaving the profession at a much higher rate. Kansas is also reporting growing teacher shortages. Church and Simmering (2022) noted that in Kansas, "teacher vacancies increased 62% between fall 2020 and 2021" (p.2). This trend is a well-known issue and one that can have negative consequences for students, including negative effects on student conduct and assessment results and student achievement (Berry, 2019).

Teacher Preparation Programs

Ingersoll et al. (2014) asserted the need for high quality teachers for all students, explaining that there is a large body of research that supports the claim that teacher quality affects student learning. Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow (2002) explained that universities have been working to strengthen their teacher preparation programs, while a competing trend to sustain the demand for teachers in the field has led to lower

standards for emergency permits and increases in alternative certification programs. The literature supports this trend as various researchers have examined these alternative certification programs across the United States (Bowling & Ball, 2018, 2018; Uriegas, Kupczynski, & Mundy, 2014). Feistritzer (2009) related the success of alternative teaching pathways as a direct connection to demand in the teaching market. Feistritzer (2009) even suggested that diverse pathways may provide a solution to teacher shortages by allowing more opportunities to get effective teachers into the classroom. As the popularity of alternative pathways to education continues to grow, more research and attention has been focused on the effectiveness of the alternative routes to the classroom. Ingersoll et al. (2014) acknowledged the debate related to teacher preparation and education as it pertains to student outcomes; however, the authors indicated the limited research referencing the link between teacher preparation and retention. The current study aims to add to this body of research.

In their study, Ingersoll et al. (2014) found that teachers who finished a traditional teacher preparation program were slightly less likely to leave the profession after one year, in contrast to those that completed an alternative program. Ingersoll et al. (2014) also supported the prior findings in their study; teachers that participated in programs that included pedagogical preparation, teaching methods, and teaching practice were less likely to leave the field after one year, indicating that the content of the preparation program was important in teacher retention. Alternatively, Feistritzer (2009) claimed that the type of program, either traditional or alternative, often does not have an effect on the attrition rate of teachers. The author noted that alternative teacher preparation programs have become more rigorous and comprehensive over time, with over half of the

alternative teacher preparation programs being delivered by institutions of higher education and some that include extensive coursework culminating in a Master's degree (Feistritzer, 2009).

Traditional teacher preparation programs. To become a teacher in the state of Kansas, candidates must meet the criteria as outlined by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). According to Ingersoll et al. (2014), their review of the data showed a wide variety of teacher education and preparation for new teachers, though a majority still entered the teaching profession with a professional teaching license and were trained through a traditional program. The U.S. Department of Education, (2020) identified traditional programs as four-year undergraduate programs that prepare students in pedagogy and content area instruction. Jang & Horn (2017) explained that "traditional teacher preparation generally refers to a four- or five-year undergraduate program at a postsecondary institution" (p. 1) that indicates candidates have completed the requirements for licensure. The authors stated that this includes pedagogy courses, content knowledge, and coursework aimed at teaching special populations (Jang & Horn, 2017). When comparing traditional routes to certification amongst the different states in the United States, Zirkle, Martin, and McCaslin (2007) noted that the traditional route consistently includes coursework related to pedagogical and general education preparation, content, and field experiences. Humphrey, Wechsler, and Hough described traditional programs as normally consisting of coursework ending in student teaching (2008); however, the authors mentioned that many programs are also integrating coursework into student teaching. Most traditional teacher preparation programs include the following components: completion of a bachelor's degree; completion of an

accredited education program; major in education and, for secondary education, majoring in the subject area to be taught; liberal arts foundation; and successful completion of a teacher licensure exam (Jang & Horn, 2017). Zirkle et al. (2007) also noted that testing, such as the Praxis exams, and completion of a new teacher induction or mentoring program is a common requirement of new teachers, which will be addressed later in this chapter.

Specifically, the KSDE outlines the following requirements for teachers completing a traditional teaching preparation program in the state of Kansas and applying for an initial license. Candidates must have obtained a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, must have completed a state-approved teacher preparation program within the last six years, and must pass the content and pedagogy exams (KSDE, 2022a). According to the KSDE (2022b) testing information, to qualify for a teaching license in Kansas the candidate must pass two exams. First, the candidate must pass a content knowledge assessment in each subject area of the teacher preparation program completed that the teacher intends to teach. Secondly, the candidate must complete the Principles of Learning and Teaching, a teaching skills or pedagogy test. Both testing requirements are administered by Educational Testing Services (ETS) and EW part of the ETS Praxis II Series (KSDE, 2022b). After completion of these requirements, teachers apply for an Initial Teaching License. To upgrade an initial license, the teacher must complete an approved one or two year mentoring program and complete one year of accredited teaching experience in an endorsement area on the candidate's initial license (KSDE, 2022c). The requirements of the approved mentoring programs will be addressed later in this chapter.

Although many of the traditional routes to teaching tend to include similar requirements as referenced above, with the advent of more and more pathways to the classroom, one must not assume that the traditional program described above is the primary route to the classroom. Humphrey et al (2008) explained that their research revealed a blurring of the lines between traditional and alternative certification programs. With this variety of pathways into the teaching profession, one must identify the elements of the alternative certification programs.

Alternative certification programs. Woods (2016a) described alternative certification pathways as aiming to provide a quicker path to the classroom while providing more education and support than individuals with just an emergency license. According to Jang and Horn, (2017) alternative certification pathways to the classroom can encompass many different programs, ranging from independent programs such as Teach for America, Troops to Teachers, and The New Teacher Project to coursework programs that are provided by Institutions of Higher Education (IHE). Feistritzer (2005) noted that half of alternate route programs are provided through colleges and universities with the other half being administered by school districts, service centers, consortiums, and state departments of education. Jang and Horn (2017) described alternative preparation programs as varying in time, format, and location while providing accelerated pathways to the classroom. Zirkle et al. (2007) characterized some alternative pathways as relying on work experience and assessments to assess readiness, while coursework, often through a university, provides information to remove deficiencies to become a fully licensed teacher in that state. Jang & Horn, (2017) supported this claim in stating these pathways normally include a licensure exam requirement.

Ingersoll et al. (2014) described these alternative certification pathways as programs in which teachers are teaching while also working on coursework to accelerate the path into the classroom and may include the issuance of a provisional, temporary, or alternative certification until the teachers have completed the program to receive a full teaching license. Uriegas et al. (2014) expanded on the understanding of alternative programs by explaining that the expedited process into the teaching field often eliminated steps such as student teaching from the program or coursework. Zirkle et al. (2007) reviewed and compared different state certification and licensure requirements and noted that the alternative routes could include a variety of requirements such as work experience, completion of portfolio reviews, coursework, and teacher preparation programs, passing scores on entry and exit tests, peer reviews, and professional certification requirements.

Woods (2016a) explained that alternate pathways primarily focused on a quicker, more efficient path to the classroom. To do this, often these programs allow those that already have a bachelor's degree to bypass the traditional route of obtaining a teaching degree and have candidates working in the classroom while simultaneously completing coursework. The U.S. Department of Education, (2020) further added that generally these individuals already have a degree in another area and may have work experience in another industry, so the coursework can focus on pedagogy and not content specific information. Alternatively, Zirkle et al. (2007) noted that in some career and technical education (CTE) subject areas, candidates are not required to have a college degree; however, these programs require substantial industry and work experience and possibly a professional certification or licensure in that content area.

Specifically, in the state of Kansas in 2019-2020, there were 29 providers of teacher preparation programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Of the 29 programs, 24 programs were traditional programs and 5 programs were alternative certification programs provided by IHE (U.S. Department of Education, 2021b). In 2019-2020, there were 2,134 total program completers, with 431 completing an alternative program through an IHE (U.S. Department of Education, 2021a). Of the alternative certification programs available, the primary alternative certification program is the Restricted Teaching License Alternative Pathway that has been available since 2003 (Schuckman, 2021). This program allows candidates with a bachelor's or master's degree in a specific content area to teach in a Kansas high school in that subject area with a restricted license while simultaneously completing the coursework to earn a full teaching license (KSDE, 2022c). This program requires participants with at least a bachelor's degree who want to teach middle or high school to participate in the Transition to Teaching (T2T) program through one of the 5 IHEs. Candidates participating in the T2T program must pass the appropriate content area test, complete the coursework from an IHE while teaching full-time during the first two years, and collaborate with the IHE, district, and mentor assigned to the teacher (KSDE, 2015). While completing the coursework, participants must also complete an approved mentoring program through the school district to be eligible to upgrade to a Professional License (KSDE, 2022b). Other alternative routes to the classroom through KSDE include the possibility of teaching under a STEM license for individuals with at least five years of work experience and a degree in science, math, engineering, computer technology, finance or accounting to teach the specific subject area in which that individual is experienced (KSDE, 2015).

Individuals with experience and training in CTE areas can teach under a CTE Specialized Certificate, CTE Restricted Certificate, or CTE Full Certificate. These programs require industry experience plus an industry recognized credential, license, trade competency, or industry credential (KSDE, 2015). Depending on the type of CTE certificate teacher candidates are hoping to obtain, program participants may also complete the pedagogy coursework and requirements as described above for the Restricted Teaching License Alternative Pathway (KSDE, 2015).

The benefit to these pathways may not be limited to a career change or opportunity to get into the field at an expedited rate. Woods (2016a) also mentioned that 20% of teachers are entering the profession through an alternate route and these pathways are attracting more diversity, males, and minority candidates into the teaching profession and districts may be more likely to fill difficult positions in high-needs schools. This information may, in fact, help to alleviate some of the issues and trends as discussed earlier in this chapter. Additionally, Constantine et al. (2009) reported that schools are using alternative certification programs to help fill vacancies and staff shortages. In fact, some alternative certification programs require new teachers to have a job placement before beginning coursework (Zirkle et al., 2007).

With teachers entering the profession through these accelerated pathways, teacher quality is of concern. Woods (2016a) addressed this concern in stating that teacher effectiveness is similar across different programs and the specific program does not seem to affect teacher quality. Uriegas et al. (2014) explained that teacher effectiveness may have more to do with teacher age and experience. It may be more important to understand individual background, life experience, circumstances, and classroom

experience of teacher candidates which may be more beneficial and indicative of teacher success and effectiveness than the type of certification program (Uriegas et al., 2014). Similarly, Robertson and Singleton (2010) noted that the type of program does not affect the ability of teachers to handle the stressors of the job. Humphrey et al. (2008) suggested that alternative certification programs can help support new teachers through coursework, content, and timing to help aide in the challenges that new teachers are facing during the program, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Mentoring Programs

Regardless of the type of teacher training a new teacher has completed, many states and programs require novice teachers to participate in an induction or mentoring program (Zembytska, 2016; Zirkle et al., 2007). Mentoring programs have been a popular way to provide support to new teachers since the 1980's (Villani, 2002) because of the evidence of their effectiveness in creating a supportive and positive relationship between a new teacher and a mentor, producing more effective teachers in the classroom, and helping to improve teacher retention (Callahan, 2016). Villani (2002) described the following ways mentor teachers provide this support, including: providing encouragement and emotional support; answering questions and providing practical guidance concerning daily tasks; promoting cultural proficiency and explaining cultural norms regarding the school and community; and providing peer coaching. In general, Cardichon, Darling-Hammond, Yang, Scott, Shields, and Burns (2020) asserted that studies support that experienced teachers are more effective in the classroom, but also benefit the other teachers around them. Teachers that are surrounded by more experienced teachers are also more effective than teachers in schools with a majority of

inexperienced teachers (Cardichon et al., 2020), indicating that being around experienced colleagues can be beneficial in supporting new teachers.

It is evident that mentoring and induction programs are popular in teacher preparation for several reasons and will be discussed more extensively later in this chapter. First, induction and mentoring programs must be defined. García & Weiss (2019b) noted that mentoring and induction programs help inexperienced teachers adapt to their new teaching position, improve skill and confidence, support new teachers through role modeling and feedback, and help retain new teachers with strong potential. Teacher induction programs can include several different factors and activities designed to provide support to new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Some components of teacher induction programs could include: mentoring and assignment of an on-site mentor, orientation sessions, faculty collaboration and communication, developmental workshops, seminars and lectures, summer institute, meetings, surveys and ongoing assessment, additional classroom assistance, reduced workloads, and common planning and preparation time with other teachers in the same subject or grade level (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Zembytska, 2016).

Kutsyuruba and Walker (2015) defined mentoring and induction programs as forming a supportive and learning relationship between the mentor, or an experienced colleague, and a new, or less experienced, teacher. Zembytska, (2016) further expanded on the definition of mentoring, describing the programs as assistance and support of teachers with zero to three years of experience, but noted it could also include training of pre-service student teachers, guidance offered to teachers moving to another state or school districts even with prior teaching experience, and support for teachers coming

back to the profession after a break of three years or more. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), mentoring is an essential component of a teacher induction program and refers to the guidance provided to beginning teachers by veteran teachers. However, mentoring has come to encompass more than the traditional meaning of transferring knowledge and skill (Zembytska, 2016). Mentoring has evolved into understanding that the mentoring process includes the development of a mutually beneficial partnership between a beginning teacher and an experienced teacher, including ongoing professional development, support, learning, guidance, advice, and feedback (Zembytska, 2016). Ingersoll & Strong (2011) asserted that teacher mentoring programs have become a predominant form of teacher induction, so much so that it has become common to refer to induction and mentoring programs interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, the term mentoring will be used to refer to both mentoring and induction programs.

As referenced above, mentoring programs have become a common requirement for most new teachers (Zembytska, 2016; Zirkle et al., 2007). Understanding the benefits of mentoring programs and the subsequent potential solutions to issues plaguing the teaching profession does provide some rationale for requiring new teachers to participate in a mentoring program. As discussed earlier in this chapter, teacher attrition is high, leading to the teacher workforce becoming less experienced (Ingersoll et al., 2021a). This leads to questions concerning teacher effectiveness with the frequent turnover of teachers, especially in schools with the highest levels of need. Research has indicated that induction and mentoring programs can help provide a solution to some of these problems by decreasing new teacher attrition and turnover. Mentoring programs can decrease attrition by: addressing some of the reasons teachers leave the teacher

workforce; positively impacting classroom performance, instruction, effectiveness, and student achievement; and increasing teacher satisfaction, trust, commitment, self-efficacy, and job-satisfaction (Cardichon et al., 2020; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015; Schwan, Wold, Moon, Neville, & Outka, 2020; Woods, 2016b; Zembytska, 2016). These benefits are not limited to new teachers that have completed a traditional teacher preparation program. The support mechanisms as provided by a mentoring program can also help teachers that have entered the workforce through an alternative certification program (Woods, 2016b). On a district and state level, investing in the development and support of new teachers through mentoring programs helps to enhance and prevent the loss of human capital, improve student performance and academic achievement, and therefore, provides an effective financial investment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The benefits of an effective mentoring program stem from helping to mitigate some of the stressors and obstacles new teachers face in their first years of teaching. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) referenced lack of support as one of the main reasons new teachers leave the profession. García & Weiss (2019b) described the difficulties of first year teachers that can be eased through supports provided by a mentoring program, including adjusting to a new environment and workplace, balancing instruction and classroom management, and acclimation to the job and improving teaching practices. Trust in the mentoring relationship is paramount, allowing new teachers to ask questions, provide another perspective, and provide feedback and critiques of another's work (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2015).

Mentoring program components. Regardless of the potential benefits of participation in mentoring programs, not all new teachers are required to participate in a mentoring program and not all mentoring programs are equal in the quality or requirements of the program (García & Weiss, 2019b). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) noted that the objective of mentoring programs is to provide a local guide for new teachers, but the content and quality vary immensely. This variety in quality and effectiveness may be because the program content, duration, funding, intensity, and various components can vary amongst programs (Zembytska, 2016). Mentoring programs may be less effective based on a number of factors, including few experienced teachers to serve as mentors and other stressors (García & Weiss, 2019b). Even with the potential diversity in quality and content, research has identified several factors that are commonly part of successful mentoring programs.

The first, and possibly the most impactful component of a mentoring program, deals with the assignment of an effective mentor teacher. A knowledgeable and supportive mentor teacher can help new teachers to gain the skills and confidence needed to be successful. Not only can the mentoring relationship be beneficial to the new teacher, but Schwan et al. (2020) indicated that the mentor teachers also benefit from reflection concerning their own teaching, new ideas and teaching strategies for implementation into the classroom, positive and contagious energy and interactions, and a sense of community.

Research suggests that mentor teachers benefit from professional development and training to improve the skills necessary to be a supportive mentor and are key to the success of a mentoring program (Villani, 2002). Although veteran teachers have

experience and knowledge that can be helpful to new teachers, initial and continued mentor training can provide knowledge related to andragogy and adult learning theory, emphasis and guidance to improve the development of interpersonal relationships, knowledge related to classroom management and leadership, pedagogy and teaching methods, classroom resources and the practical use of formative assessment tools, coaching and effective classroom observation methods, the ability to provide meaningful feedback, and dialogue regarding the importance of development of values in the classroom (Callahan, 2016; Woods, 2016b; Zembytska, 2016). The selection and training of an effective mentor teacher is especially important when guiding new teachers that have entered the field through alternative training programs (Humphrey et al., 2008). According to Zirkle et al. (2007), these same new teacher induction programs are often a requirement for AC new teachers. These mentor teachers can help new teacher candidates to plan, can share lesson and curriculum information and ideas, can provide feedback and demonstrations, and can provide specific support to help improve candidates knowledge and skills (Humphrey et al., 2008). Although the mentor teachers are imperative to a quality mentoring program, mentor teacher training also varies widely based on the program. According to Villani (2002), training and ongoing support for mentor teachers are vital to a successful program. Callahan (2016) echoed this sentiment, indicating the strength of a mentoring program depends on the quality of its mentors and a well-trained mentor will help new teachers to develop reflective practices and help to support and build necessary skills in classroom management, pedagogy, building relationships, and incorporating respect and other critical values into the classroom.

Some essential components to effective mentor teacher training include selecting well-educated individuals and providing training in: andragogy or adult learning theory; developing interpersonal relationships; educational management and leadership; teaching methods and techniques; coaching, counseling, and observation skills; and the latest research, resources, and support (Humphrey et al., 2008; Zembytska, 2016). Additionally, Callahan (2016) noted the importance of providing clear and concise goals for mentors when providing support for new teachers. Zembytska (2016) explained that mentor teacher training is often accomplished through individual and collaborative methods, such as providing instructional materials and resources, workshops, seminars, and orientation sessions, conferences, and professional development, coaching and training, and support groups or communities. SWPRSC's mentoring program includes annual mentor teacher training, either available in-person or through the online platform, Moodle (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). The SWPRSC mentor training includes resources and practice providing support, observation and consultation, instructional coaching, collaboration, andragogy, communication, relationships, goal setting, assessment of needs, strategies to assess needs, guidance, and specific practices to address new teachers' needs related to learners and learning, content knowledge, instructional practice, and professional responsibility as suggested by KSDE (Adams, Bechtel, Helbert, & Myers, 2015; Knight, 2018; Lipton & Wellman, 2018; SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021).

Not only is it important to have a trained and competent mentor teacher, effectively matching a mentor and mentee is crucial to the success of the program. Specifically, the subject area and grade level of the mentor and mentee is critical.

Schwan et al. (2020) noted that effective pairing of a mentor teacher and a new teacher also affected the success of the program. For the best and most supportive mentoring relationships, the mentor teacher should teach in the same subject or grade level as the mentee, should have time to meet with, collaborate, and provide coaching to the mentee, and should be in close proximity to their mentee (Cardichon et al., 2020; Schwan et al., 2020). Mentor teachers are often assigned by local principals or program facilitators (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021; Zembytska, 2016). According to the SWPRSC Mentoring Handbook (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021) and the KSDE Model Mentor and Induction Program Guidelines for New Leaders (Adams et al., 2015; KSDE, n.d.), mentor teachers must also have a minimum of three years teaching experience in the mentoring area, have a current teaching license from KSDE in the mentoring area, be recommended by an administrator, uphold the professional qualities expected of a mentor, complete mentor training that includes coaching skills and the processes of mentoring, and complete the required tasks of the mentoring program.

The SWPRSC Mentoring Program provides annual mentor training and also generally provides two years of support for new teachers, with the potential for continued support through a plan for providing additional training and support with the potential for continued participation in the mentoring program beyond the first one or two years (Adams et al., 2015; KSDE, n.d.; SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021; SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, November 14, 2021). Although KSDE only requires one year of new teacher support to be able to upgrade from an Initial Teaching License to the Professional license, a plan for additional support

and training beyond the first year is required (Adams et al., 2015; KSDE, n.d.). This continuation of support in a multi-year program model has been supported through research to be more effective in maximizing the potential benefits to student achievement (Woods, 2016b).

SWPRSC mentoring program components. As addressed previously, SWPRSC provides a mentoring program for schools in Kansas to meet the KSDE mentoring requirements for new teachers. The perceived effectiveness of this program is the focus of this research study and the components of the SWPRSC Mentoring Program will be examined later in this paper. It is important to be aware of the specific elements of the SWPRSC Mentoring Program and the research, discussed above, that supports the effectiveness and inclusion of these components. These components comprise specific elements on the survey instrument developed for this study and will be discussed later in this paper.

SWPRSC provides the requirements for new teachers in the state of Kansas to participate in a one-year mentoring program to be able to move from an Initial Kansas Teaching License to a Professional License (Adams et al., 2015; SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). This includes required annual training for each mentor, with mentors meeting the requirements outlined earlier in this chapter. The SWPRSC Mentoring Program relies heavily on the Mentee Needs Assessment, taken at the beginning of the mentoring program to help guide the content and support provided to novice teachers to more effectively provide the specific support needed (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, July 15, 2020). This needs assessment helps to prioritize the needs of the mentee and make the resources and program more beneficial to

the new teacher. According to Woods (2016b) the needs assessments can be used to identify areas of need and help to provide feedback and documentation to program coordinators concerning the effectiveness of the program. Specifically outlined in the SWPRSC mentoring program and the KSDE Mentoring Handbook, areas of focus that might be identified include topics related to learners and learning, content knowledge, instructional practice, and professional responsibilities (Adams et al., 2015; SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021).

Throughout the program, mentors provide support, resources, feedback, and coaching through weekly interactions or weekly meetings (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). These weekly meetings allow time for collaboration and support amongst the mentor and mentee. During these meetings, mentors can help to address areas of concern or weakness the mentee has identified through personal communications or on the Mentee Needs Assessment. The mentor also observes the new teacher four times throughout the year in Quarterly Observations (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). Each observation should include a debrief between the mentor and mentee to allow for constructive feedback and positive coaching. The mentee is also expected to observe two other classroom teachers and should include a debrief with their assigned mentor (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). These components align with the requirements as outlined by KSDE by "providing practical application of practices that outline a new teacher's/specialist's professional learning needs related to: the learner and learning; content knowledge; instructional practice; professional responsibility" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 6), including an accountability process and data to measure program effectiveness. Through inclusion of

the KSDE required elements, the primary goal of the SWPRSC mentoring program is to effectively provide support to new teachers while aligning with the KSDE guidelines.

Summary

The information in this chapter has provided background to understanding the significance of the current study as related to the current trends in the teacher workforce, the research and information available concerning the effectiveness of mentoring programs, understanding common mentoring program components, and specifically understanding the various requirements and elements of the SWPRSC Mentoring Program. This information will provide context to the research being presented in this paper examining the perceptions of novice teachers, teaching in rural Kansas during the 2021-22 school year and participating in the SWPRSC Mentoring Program. As noted, teaching positions have been increasingly more difficult to fill with qualified applicants; therefore, administrators have looked to alternative certification options to fill vacancies in their school staff. Also discussed was the varying qualifications and backgrounds of new teachers because of the many pathways to the classroom. Mentoring programs have been examined and have been found to be an effective form of support for inexperienced teachers to help with their transition into the classroom. As teachers have a direct effect and highly influence student success, it is important to provide teachers with the support and resources needed to be effective. The current study aims to add to the research presented in this chapter and examine the unique perspective of novice teachers in rural Kansas.

Chapter 3

Methods

This study examined the extent that novice teachers perceived the effectiveness of the mentoring program for two separate groups of teachers, teachers who obtained certification through TC methods or AC methods. The study also examined the difference in the perceptions of effectiveness of the mentoring program between TC and AC teachers participating in the program. The specific procedures followed throughout the study are described in this chapter.

Research Design

A quantitative descriptive survey study design was used to collect information that can be statistically analyzed from participants in the SWPRSC mentoring program. The participants served as a sample of the population of new teachers participating in a mentoring program teaching in rural Kansas schools. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicated that a survey design uses a sample of the population to "provide a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or test for associations among variables" (p. 147). The type of certification program the teachers completed or will complete comprised the independent variable. The dependent variables were the perceived frequency and effectiveness of the mentoring program for both AC and TC teachers and the difference in perceived effectiveness between the two groups.

Selection of Participants

The population for this study included novice teachers, within the first two years of teaching, participating in a mentoring program and teaching in a rural Kansas school. The population included both TC and AC beginning teachers. A sample of the

population was surveyed. Participants for this study were selected based on their participation in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-2022 school year, within their first two years of teaching in a Kansas school. The SWPRSC provides a mentoring program for new teachers that fulfills the requirements outlined by KSDE as a service to member districts (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, July 15, 2020). During the 2021-2022 school year, 40 member districts used SWPRSC's mentoring program to fulfill these requirements with three of these districts only participating in the administration or counseling mentoring portion of the program (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, October 22, 2021). These three districts were not included in the current study.

The participating group of school districts included 237 new teachers in the SWPRSC mentoring program (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, May 11, 2022) and comprised a purposive sample (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). According to Lunenberg and Irby (2008), purposive sampling indicates a sample is "based on the researcher's experience or knowledge of the group to be sampled" (p. 175). The email request for participants included a description of the study and an explanation of why their input was requested and would benefit current and future research. The teachers who chose to participate in the survey comprise the sample. The data were collected by SWPRSC through email correspondence, with 127 participants completing the survey (SWPRSC, 2022).

Measurement

The instrument for this study was developed by the researcher in collaboration with a SWPRSC consultant to examine the effectiveness and frequency of the SWPRSC

mentoring program as perceived by novice teachers (personal communication, January 21, 2020). The survey statements also focused on the effectiveness of the specific elements of the SWPRSC mentoring program as outlined in the SWPRSC Mentoring Handbook (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). The survey instrument is included in Appendix A. An electronic version of the survey was developed using Google Forms. The survey link and an informed consent letter was distributed by SWPRSC via email to novice teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-2022 school year.

The instrument was a 22-item survey, divided into two parts. The first 13 survey items collected information regarding the frequency of completion of the SWPRSC program elements and participants' perceptions of effectiveness of those specific elements. Survey items for Section One were rated using a Likert-type scale and selecting the best fit concerning the participants' experience in the SWPRSC mentoring program. Survey items regarding the frequency of activities completed were answered by selecting the number of activities completed or were rated using the following scale: *1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Very Often, 5-Always.* Some of the frequency survey items were used to collect information for SWPRSC that was not needed for this study but could provide helpful information during analysis of the results. Effectiveness survey items were answered using a 5-point Likert-type scale in which the candidate indicated to what extent they perceived specific elements of the mentoring program were effective. The following scale was used: 1-*Extremely ineffective,* 2-*Ineffective,* 3-*Neutral,* 4-*Effective,* 5-*Extremely effective.*

Section Two included seven survey items relating to participants' current teaching assignment and the type of training program completed. Section Two also included one open-ended statement for further comments or suggestions. The final statement was included to collect additional information not related to this study. Table 1 illustrates the connection of survey statements to the corresponding hypothesis statements.

Table 1

Alignment of Survey Item and Hypotheses

Survey Item	Hypotheses
Mentee Needs Assessment	H1, H10, H19
Required weekly meetings/contacts with mentor	H2, H11, H20
Quarterly observations from mentor	H3, H12, H21
Two observations of other teachers	H4, H13, H22
Debrief of observations	H5, H14, H23
Support and resources regarding Learners and Learning	H6, H15, H24
Support and resources regarding Content Knowledge	H7, H16, H25
Support and resources regarding Instructional Practice	H8, H17, H26
Support and resources regarding Professional Responsibilities	H9, H18, H27

Because the survey instrument was developed by the researcher, the validity of the instrument had to be determined. A panel of experts, including three representatives from SWPRSC, were consulted to determine the clarity of the questions and establish the validity of the instrument. Additionally, two former SWPRSC Mentoring Program participants were consulted to provide feedback regarding the clarity of survey items and format of the survey. Feedback from the panel of experts was used to revise the instrument. Because single-item measurement was used, specifically self-reported facts, reliability was not an issue for this measurement (Wanous, Reichers, & Hudy, 1997)

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to beginning the study, the researcher contacted a representative for SWPRSC in July 2020. The representative expressed initial interest in partnering with the researcher for the study. Permission from SWPRSC to conduct the study and use of the SWPRSC name in the study was received via email on January 10, 2021 (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, January 10, 2021). Upon receiving permission from SWPRSC, the researcher submitted a proposal to the Baker University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval on June 16, 2022. IRB approval was granted on July 1, 2022 (see Appendix B).

The survey instrument was developed and the SWPRSC consultant sent the initial email to the teachers on February 22, 2022. The email included an explanation of the study's purpose from SWPRSC, an introduction to the researcher, an explanation of the study, details of consent, and a link to the survey instrument distributed through Google Forms. The initial email content is included in Appendix C. Participants provided consent to participate by voluntarily completing the survey. A follow-up email was sent on March 4, 2022, to encourage participation (see Appendix D). The survey was closed on March 11, 2022, and the survey response data were input into an Excel Spreadsheet.

Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Data from the electronic surveys were populated into an Excel Spreadsheet and uploaded into IBM SPSS Statistics for statistical analysis of the quantitative data. The three research questions, followed by their corresponding hypotheses statements, are listed below.

RQ1. To what extent do TC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

H1. TC teachers perceive the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective.

H2. TC teachers perceive the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

H3. TC teachers perceive the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

H4. TC teachers perceive the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

H5. TC teachers perceive the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

H6. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section to be effective.

H7. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section to be effective.

H8. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section to be effective.

H9. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section to be effective.

Nine one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H1-H9. For each of the tests, the sample mean for TC teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involved the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is a numerical variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

RQ2. To what extent do AC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

H10. AC teachers perceive the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective.

H11. AC teachers perceive the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

H12. AC teachers perceive the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

H13. AC teachers perceive the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

H14. AC teachers perceive the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

H15. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to learners and learning to be effective.

H16. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section to be effective.

H17. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section to be effective.

H18. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section to be effective.

Nine one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H10-H18. For each of the tests, the sample mean for AC teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is a numerical variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

RQ3. To what extent is there a difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of a teacher mentoring program between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program?

H19. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC

mentoring program between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H20. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H21. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the quarterly observations of their teaching between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H22. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the two observations of other classroom teachers between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H23. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H24. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H25. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program

mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H26. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H27. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

Nine independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to address H19-H27. The two sample means for the perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program were compared between TC and AC teachers for each of the hypothesis tests. An independent-samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it involved the examination of the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups and the means are calculated using data for numerical variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

Limitations

According to Lunenburg & Irby (2008), limitations are factors outside of the researcher's control that may affect the interpretation of the findings; however, stating the limitations can help to avoid misconstruing the information. The limitations outlined are

provided to avoid misinterpretation of the results of this study. Limitations of the study include the following:

1. The teachers included in the study were limited to participation in one mentoring program provided by one resource center. To participate in this mentoring program, school districts must contract with SWPRSC to receive services. This may limit the ability to generalize the information to teachers from other regions or participation in other mentoring programs.
2. Data collected is limited to the teachers who chose to respond to the survey.
3. Teachers may have varying background experience working in various industries, working with children in other capacities, and educational experience that could affect their perceptions.
4. The teachers surveyed may have varying degrees of external influences, such as support from administration or participation in other sources of professional development that could affect their perceptions.
5. Teachers surveyed could have varying degrees of internal influences that were not studied, such as motivation or natural teaching ability.
6. The researcher could not control for the quality of teaching and the measurement was limited to the teacher's own perceptions.
7. The quality and effectiveness of the individual mentor assigned to each teacher is unknown.
8. Teachers' experience teaching at the time of the survey varied from those within the first year of teaching to those in their second year of teaching.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods used in the current study to examine the perceptions of both TC and AC novice teachers in the state of Kansas participating in a mentoring program concerning the effectiveness of the mentoring program. The chapter addresses the procedures followed in the research design, selection of participants, measurement, data collection, and analysis. The participants self-elected to participate in an online survey developed by the researcher in collaboration with representatives from SWPRSC. Data were collected by SWPRSC and the archived data were statistically analyzed by the researcher. The limitations above outline factors beyond the researcher's control that may affect interpretation of the results. Results will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Results

In this study, the researcher aimed to determine the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program for novice teachers in rural Kansas schools. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which novice teachers perceived the various elements of the SWPRSC mentoring program effective in providing the support needed in their first two years of teaching. First, the study examined the extent to which TC teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-22 school year perceived the elements of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective. Secondly, the extent to which AC teachers in the same program perceived the elements of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective was examined. Lastly, the researcher examined the difference in the perceptions of effectiveness between the TC teachers and the AC teachers. The results of the survey data collected from this quantitative study are examined and analyzed in Chapter 4. The descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and results are presented below.

Descriptive Statistics

The researcher used archived data collected by SWPRSC for this study. The SWPRSC representative emailed the 237 teachers enrolled in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-22 school year with a link to the survey instrument. 127 participants completed the survey. Of the 127 participants, 84 participants identified as traditionally certified (TC), 40 participants identified as alternatively certified (AC), and 3 participants did not provide that information and were not included in the analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the statistical analysis used to test the hypotheses of the study are reported here. The three research questions of this study are listed below; each is followed by an explanation of the statistical analysis used to test each associated hypothesis. Following RQ1, the nine hypothesis statements are listed (H1-H9) with the results of each test reported below each statement. The same organization is used for RQ2 and the associated hypothesis statements (H10-H18). Following RQ3 and the explanation of the statistical analysis, H19-H27 are listed. The results of each test follow the hypothesis, listed in Table 2.

RQ1. To what extent do TC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

Nine one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H1-H9. For each of the tests, the sample mean for TC teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is a numerical variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

H1. TC teachers perceive the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program and the test value, $t(83) = 3.421$, $p = .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.380$. The sample mean ($M = 3.35$, $SD =$

0.92) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H1 was supported. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H2. TC teachers perceive the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor and the test value, $t(83) = 8.828$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.967$. The sample mean ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.90$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H2 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H3. TC teachers perceive the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor and the test value, $t(82) = 10.888$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.190$. The sample mean ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.79$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H3 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H4. TC teachers perceive the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the two observations of other classroom teachers and the test value, $t(82) = 10.382$, $p = .000$,

Cohen's $d = 1.370$. The sample mean ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.73$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H4 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H5. TC teachers perceive the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers and the test value, $t(81) = 4.433$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.490$. The sample mean ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.02$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H5 was supported. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H6. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section and the test value, $t(82) = 8.804$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.969$. The sample mean ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.96$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H6 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H7. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section and the test value, $t(82) = 9.580$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.043$. The sample mean ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.92$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H7 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H8. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section and the test value, $t(82) = 9.491$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.043$. The sample mean ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.94$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H8 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H9. TC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for TC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section and the test value, $t(83) = 9.845$, $p =$

.000, Cohen's $d = 1.056$. The sample mean ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.90$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H9 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

RQ2. To what extent do AC teachers perceive the mentoring program is effective?

Nine one-sample *t* tests were conducted to test H10-H18. For each of the tests, the sample mean for AC teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program was compared to a test value of 3. The one-sample *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing because it involves the comparison of one group mean with a known value, and the group mean is a numerical variable. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, the effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

H10. AC teachers perceive the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated no statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program and the test value, $t(39) = 1.984$, $p = .054$. The sample mean ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.88$) was not different from the test value (3). H10 was not supported.

H11. AC teachers perceive the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor and the test value, $t(39) = 4.051$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.646$. The sample mean ($M = 3.73$, $SD =$

1.13) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H11 was supported. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H12. AC teachers perceive the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor and the test value, $t(38) = 6.260$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.012$. The sample mean ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.84$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H12 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H13. AC teachers perceive the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the two observations of other classroom teachers and the test value, $t(38) = 6.474$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 1.041$. The sample mean ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.74$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H13 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H14. AC teachers perceive the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers and the test value, $t(38) = 2.737$, $p = .009$, Cohen's $d = 0.444$. The sample mean

(M = 3.44, SD = 0.99) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H14 was supported. The effect size indicated a small effect.

H15. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to learners and learning to be effective.

The results of the one sample t test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to learners and learning and the test value, $t(38) = 4.941$, $p = .000$, Cohen's d = 0.790. The sample mean (M = 3.79, SD = 1.00) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H15 was supported. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H16. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section to be effective.

The results of the one sample t test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section and the test value, $t(39) = 4.972$, $p = .000$, Cohen's d = 0.789. The sample mean (M = 3.75, SD = 0.95) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H16 was supported. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

H17. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section and the test value, $t(39) = 5.687$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.907$. The sample mean ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.86$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H17 was supported. The effect size indicated a large effect.

H18. AC teachers perceive the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section to be effective.

The results of the one sample *t* test indicated a statistically significant difference between the group mean for AC teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section and the test value, $t(39) = 4.972$, $p = .000$, Cohen's $d = 0.789$. The sample mean ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.95$) was significantly higher than the test value (3). H18 was supported. The effect size indicated a medium effect.

RQ3. To what extent is there a difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of a teacher mentoring program between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program?

Nine independent-samples *t* tests were conducted to test H19-H27. The two sample means for the perceptions of the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program were compared between TC and AC teachers for each of the hypothesis tests. The independent-samples *t* test was chosen for the hypothesis testing since it involves the

examination of the mean difference between two mutually exclusive independent groups and the means are calculated using data for numerical variables. The level of significance was set at .05. When appropriate, an effect size, as indexed by Cohen's *d*, is reported.

The results of the nine independent-samples *t* tests indicated no statistically significant differences between the means for TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program. H19-H27 were not supported. Certification status does not influence perceptions of the effectiveness of the teacher mentoring program. The hypotheses are listed below followed by Table 2, which contains the descriptive and test statistics for the *t* tests.

H19. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the SWPRSC mentoring program between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H20. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H21. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the quarterly observations of their teaching between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H22. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the two observations of other classroom teachers between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H23. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after the two observations of other classroom teachers between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H24. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H25. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H26. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

H27. There is a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section between TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the mentoring program.

Table 2

Results of Independent-Samples t Tests for H19-H27

	Certification Status								
	Traditional			Alternative					
H	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	*t*	*df*	*p*
19	3.35	0.92	84	3.28	0.88	40	0.402	122	.688
20	3.87	0.90	84	3.73	1.13	40	0.764	122	.446
21	3.94	0.79	83	3.85	0.84	39	0.599	120	.550
22	3.83	0.73	83	3.77	0.74	39	0.436	120	.664
23	3.50	1.02	82	3.44	0.99	39	0.325	119	.745
24	3.93	0.96	83	3.79	1.00	39	0.702	120	.484
25	3.96	0.92	83	3.75	0.95	40	1.196	121	.234
26	3.98	0.94	83	3.78	0.86	40	1.143	121	.255
27	3.96	0.90	84	3.75	0.95	40	1.218	122	.226

Summary

Chapter 4 contained the descriptive statistics and results of the hypothesis testing for novice teachers' perceptions of effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program. Participants in the SWPRSC mentoring program responses indicated that both TC and AC teachers perceived each element of the mentoring program to be effective except the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the program. The group of TC teachers perceived this element as effective, but AC teachers did not. Chapter 5 includes the study summary, an overview of the problem, the purpose statement and research questions, a review of the methodology, and a discussion of the major findings of this

study. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the findings related to the literature presented and conclusions.

Chapter 5

Interpretation and Recommendations

Chapter 4 contained the results of the study survey, including the descriptive statistics and the analysis of the results. Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the survey results to further add to the body of knowledge concerning providing support and mentoring for new teachers. Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the study, major findings as related to the literature, and conclusions.

Study Summary

The present study examined the perceptions of effectiveness of TC novice teachers and AC novice teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program. The summary of the study below includes an overview of the problem and a review of the purpose statement and research questions, originally presented in Chapter 1. Then, the summary contains a review of the methodology used in the present study and the major findings from the survey.

Overview of the problem. The changing teacher workforce has presented challenges for schools to recruit, hire, and retain qualified teachers to fill vacant positions within their districts. These challenges, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, include teachers leaving the workforce due to retirement, attrition, and other factors (Ingersoll et al., 2018). The vacancies left by those teachers leaving the workforce, along with a number of other contributors, have created a teacher shortage that García & Weiss (2019c) have described as a crisis. These challenges and vacancies in the workforce have contributed to states utilizing alternate routes for teachers to obtain certification to fill open teaching positions. In an effort to provide the support necessary for teachers to be successful in

their roles, many states require novice teachers to participate in mentoring programs (Education Commision of the States, 2019). However, although AC teachers often do not have the same background knowledge and training and do not feel as prepared as TC teachers (Redding & Smith, 2016), AC teachers often participate in the same mentoring program as TC teachers. This study examined whether TC and AC teachers perceived the elements of the mentoring program as effective in providing the support needed for a novice teacher. Specifically, the study investigated perceptions of both TC teachers and AC teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program to identify and better understand the types of support both TC and AC teachers might need from a mentoring program to prevent attrition and help new teachers be successful. Additionally, this study compared the perceptions of TC teachers and AC teachers to identify differences in perceptions of effectiveness for mentoring program components. The information from this study could add to the body of knowledge discussed in Chapter 2 and allow administrators to identify and better understand the types of support both TC and AC teachers might need from a mentoring program to help new teachers be successful and to prevent new teacher attrition.

Purpose statement and research questions. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of effectiveness of the mentoring program by TC and AC novice teachers participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-22 school year. The first objective of the study was to examine the extent both TC teachers and AC teachers perceived the mentoring program to be effective, as reflected in RQ1 and RQ2. RQ3 examined the extent there is a difference in TC and AC teacher's perceptions of effectiveness of the program.

Review of the methodology. This study used a quantitative descriptive survey study design to collect information from participants in the SWPRSC mentoring program teaching in rural Kansas schools. The author, in collaboration with an education consultant from SWPRSC, developed the survey and received feedback from a panel of experts. The survey and a description of the study was sent to all SWPRSC mentoring program participants via email by a SWPRSC Education Consultant. The study sample consisted of teachers employed in a rural Kansas school during the 2021-22 school year, within their first two years of teaching, and participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program. Those teachers that chose to complete the survey comprised the sample. The author accessed the archived data collected by SWPRSC, entered the data into an Excel spreadsheet and uploaded the data into IBM SPSS Statistics for statistical analysis.

Major findings. The results of the statistical analysis were reported in Chapter 4. The statistical analysis used to address the study's three RQ's by testing the 27 hypotheses are interpreted and discussed in this section. To answer RQ1 and RQ2 and test the corresponding hypothesis statements, 18 one-sample *t* tests were used to test the perceived effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program elements for TC teachers and AC teachers. The sample mean of the teachers' perceptions of effectiveness was compared to a test value of 3, indicating a neither ineffective nor effective rating. Of the 18 hypothesis statements, only one hypothesis was not statistically significant. H10 was not supported, meaning the participant responses for the corresponding survey statement were not found to be significantly different from the test value (3). The results of TC and AC teacher's perceptions of effectiveness of the SWPRSC include the following specific elements:

- TC teachers perceived the Mentee Needs Assessment as effective.
- AC teachers did not perceive the Mentee Needs Assessment as effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the required weekly meetings/contacts with the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the quarterly observations of their teaching from the assigned SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the two observations of other classroom teachers to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the debrief with their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section to be effective.
- Both TC and AC teachers perceived the support and resources provided from their SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section to be effective.

To address RQ3 and test the corresponding nine hypothesis statements, nine independent samples *t* tests were used. This test compared the sample means of TC teachers and AC teachers to indicate the extent there is a difference in the perceptions of effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program between the two groups. After analysis, the results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the responses of TC and AC teachers. This indicates that the perceptions of TC and AC teachers regarding the effectiveness of the SWPRSC mentoring program elements were similar.

Findings Related to the Literature

Chapter 2 included a discussion of the relevant literature and research pertinent to the topics addressed in this study. This study was intended to add to the current body of research regarding providing necessary support for novice teachers to be successful. The literature review examined the makeup of the teacher workforce and attempted to identify known causes of teachers leaving the profession, subsequently resulting in a teacher shortage. The review of the literature then included a summary of the teacher preparation programs, notably the difference between TC preparation programs and AC programs. Finally, the chapter contained an examination of the effects of providing novice teachers the opportunity to participate in a mentoring program to help them to be successful, leading to greater job satisfaction and lowering the levels of attrition for novice teachers.

The teacher workforce has been changing and has resulted in a shortage of teachers across the country, including Kansas (Church & Simmering, 2022; Diliberti et al., 2021; García & Weiss, 2019c; Ingersoll et al., 2021b). As was discussed previously, many factors have contributed to the teacher shortage. Woods (2016a) explained there

are two ways to address teacher shortages, by recruiting or increasing the number of teachers and by retaining the teachers that are already in the classroom. Because of this, some schools are turning to alternative routes to the classroom to help individuals gain a teaching certification and fill open positions (Woods, 2016a). Also important to note, one intervention that was identified to help reduce attrition and help retain teachers was the use of mentoring and induction programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), much like the focus of this study.

The positive effects of mentoring programs have been supported often enough that many states now require novice teachers to participate in a mentoring program, including Kansas (KSDE, 2022d; Zembytska, 2016). The SWPRSC mentoring program examined in this study is a KSDE approved mentoring program designed to fulfill the requirements outlined by KSDE to provide new teachers with the support needed to be successful (SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, August 25, 2021). However, the elements included in the SWPRSC mentoring program are not specific to the type of certification that each participant completed. The elements included in the mentoring program that were subsequently included in the survey are listed below:

- Mentee Needs Assessment
- Required weekly meetings/contacts with the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor
- Quarterly observations completed by the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor
- Two observations of other classroom teachers

- Debrief with the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor of the two observations of other classroom teachers
- Support and resources provided from the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding Learners and Learning
- Support and resources provided from the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding Content Knowledge
- Support and resources provided from the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding Instructional Practice
- Support and resources provided from the SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding Professional Responsibilities

Both TC and AC teachers complete the mentoring program, generally for the same length of time, and participate in the same activities and elements of the SWPRSC mentoring program. The basis of this study was to examine whether both TC and AC teachers perceived the mentoring program as effective. By having teachers complete the same requirements regardless of their differing backgrounds, and presumably differing needs, of TC and AC teachers, some needs may not be identified or met.

Examination and analysis of the survey results revealed that TC teachers perceived all nine elements of the mentoring program, listed above, as either very effective or extremely effective. Interpretation of this data demonstrates that the TC teachers who participated in the survey found all 9 elements as helpful in providing support during their first two years of teaching. Perhaps this is due to the emphasis placed on the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the year in which mentors and mentees identify areas of support needed to be addressed during the program

(SWPRSC consultant, personal communication, July 15, 2020). Because of the emphasis placed on the Mentee Needs Assessment, the support and feedback for each novice teacher should have been specialized to provide the appropriate assistance and encouragement for each individual teacher. Although the nine elements of the mentoring program were consistent for all participants, the specific method and scope related to each element could differ significantly. When examining the literature, one impactful component of a mentoring program is the relationship between an experienced teacher and a novice teacher (Cardichon et al., 2020). Perhaps the knowledge and skill of the veteran teacher to tailor the support and feedback provided based on the Mentee Needs Assessment is one contributing factor to the success of the program. Kutsyuruba & Walker (2015) and Zembytska (2016) supported this assertion in defining mentoring programs as the supportive and learning relationship between an experienced colleague and a less experienced teacher, including the guidance, support, advice, learning, and feedback provided to the novice.

The results of the AC teacher participants indicated the responses regarding the perceived effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment were not significantly different from the test value of 3, indicating the AC teachers responded that the Mentee Needs Assessment was neither ineffective nor effective. However, the AC teacher participant responses regarding the other eight elements of the mentoring program were either very effective or extremely effective. Because of the significance of the Mentee Needs Assessment to guide the other elements of mentoring program, these results should be examined further. Perhaps the professional development, guidance, advice, and support provided by the mentor teacher, as Zembytska (2016) referenced, helped in the

interpretation of the Mentee Needs Assessment more than the novice teacher realized. Another factor might be the background knowledge, skill, and understanding of the AC teachers. Because the Mentee Needs Assessment is the first item to be completed, vocabulary might be unfamiliar to AC teachers, areas of weakness for AC teachers might not be known, or AC teachers might not understand the intent of the Needs Assessment as a whole.

When comparing the perceptions of effectiveness between TC and AC teachers, the results indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of TC and AC teachers. This indicates that neither group interpreted any element of the mentoring program as statistically more or less effective than the other group. The lack of significant difference in the responses of the two groups indicate the mentoring program was perceived as effective for all teachers, regardless of the path to certification. These findings seem to align with Feistritzer's (2009) claim that perhaps the lines are blurring between the TC and AC routes to education and a more diverse set of pathways to the classroom would help alleviate some of the demands for teachers. These results also support Humphrey et al.'s (2008) findings in that effective mentoring is a key component in the success of teachers entering the classroom through AC programs.

The results of this study support the literature regarding the benefit of mentoring programs to help support novice teachers. The elements identified above as central to the SWPRSC mentoring program support Zembytska's (2016) assertion that mentoring programs include individual and collaborative methods of instruction and support. With the results of this study indicating that novice teachers perceived the mentoring program

as being effective in supporting teachers in their first two years of teaching, the findings align with the literature discussed in Chapter 2.

Conclusions

As discussed previously, a mentoring program for novice teachers has become common practice and is an important component in the transition into the classroom. With the growing popularity of utilizing AC pathways to the classroom, more information is needed to understand the specific supports needed by AC teachers from a mentoring program. The results of this study will add to the body of knowledge about the support needed by AC teachers and have multiple implications. The final section will discuss implications for action, recommendations for future research, and will end with concluding remarks.

Implications for action. The implications from the findings of this study can help SWPRSC improve their mentoring program to make it more effective for novice teachers. The findings regarding the Mentee Needs Assessment were a main source of focus. Because AC teachers did not find this assessment as effective, more research is needed to understand the source of these findings. Because this assessment is the first task of the SWPRSC mentoring program completed by participants, AC teachers with little educational background might not understand the purpose of the assessment. AC teachers might also be unfamiliar with the education-related language and jargon used in the assessment. Understanding the reason for these results would be beneficial for SWPRSC and other mentoring programs to make this element more relevant or provide an alternative. This may be achieved by examining the Mentee Needs Assessment instrument and making modifications, giving the Mentee Needs Assessment multiple

times throughout the course of the program to assess changing needs as the year progresses, or encouraging this task be completed collaboratively with the program mentor to help provide clarification of the assessment elements.

The findings of this study also have implications for other mentor program service providers and state departments of education. The current mentoring program approach to providing support for both TC and AC teachers was found to be effective for the current sample of participants. However, the sample may not be representative of all novice teachers working in Kansas schools. More information could be collected to better identify the specific strengths of the program and the areas of need that were not identified.

Finally, the implications of this study are important for school administrators to identify the areas of support needed for novice teachers within their schools. The need for support from a mentor teacher is important, as referenced above, but administrative awareness and support is also crucial to successful teachers. The support provided by this mentoring program might also be beneficial for other teachers that are not within the first two years of teaching. For example, teachers that change positions, grade level, or subject area they are teaching might also benefit from the elements included in the mentoring program.

Recommendations for future research. The purpose of the research conducted for this study was to examine the perceptions of effectiveness of a teacher mentoring program for teachers within the first two years of teaching in a rural Kansas school district and participating in the SWPRSC mentoring program during the 2021-22 school year. The study examined TC teachers' perceptions of programs effectiveness, examined

AC teacher's perceptions of program effectiveness, and examined the difference in perceptions of TC and AC teachers. Because the study sample was limited to those teachers participating in one mentoring program during one school year, the results might not be relevant for participants of other mentoring programs. However, further research could be conducted examining mentoring programs provided by other service centers and compared to this study. Specifically, other mentoring programs with different elements could be examined and compared. There is already a body of research examining TC teachers' experiences participating in mentoring programs. However, more research is needed to identify the specific elements that are perceived as effective for AC teachers.

The study conducted for this dissertation was a quantitative study using a survey instrument developed by the researcher and a representative from SWPRSC to examine specific elements of the program. Additional research concerning the extent of effectiveness of various elements of mentoring programs would add to the existing literature. For example, a qualitative study in which a researcher conducts interviews with mentoring program participants might reveal more information or a deeper understanding of the current study's results. The survey instrument only allowed participants to rate the identified elements of the program; however, feedback from participants might reveal areas of concern or need that were previously unknown.

The type of AC program and the training institution might also produce varying needs for novice teachers. Some AC programs might provide more support or background information for novice teachers. Other teachers might require more basic support and training. Additional avenues of research could include a comparison of the various AC pathways.

Additional research could include investigating the affect that various teachers' background experiences have in the support and resources needed to be successful. For example, a novice teacher that has worked as a daycare provider or a community outreach educator might have developed various skills through previous experiences that were not associated with their formal teacher education program. Other external influences outside of the mentoring program could also be the subject of research. For example, the level of support from administration in the current position, school culture, participation in other professional development opportunities, the school schedule and time to participate in mentoring activities, and proximity to the mentor teacher could be of interest for future research.

Finally, further research may be of value comparing the effectiveness of the mentoring program elements at different times during the program. For example, key findings may be gleaned from a longitudinal study following program participants for more than one year to track the perceptions of effectiveness from the first semester participating in the mentoring program to the last semester participating in the program. The program timing and length have been identified as important factors in the effectiveness of a mentoring program (Woods, 2016b). Because of this, perceptions of teachers within the program may differ based on the timing of data collection. Additional research could also examine the perceptions of effectiveness after completion of the mentoring program and teaching independently in the following months or years.

Concluding remarks. Woods (2016a) explained that the solution to the teacher shortage problem includes both recruiting new teachers and retaining current teachers. States and school administrators are increasingly using AC programs to recruit new

teachers into the field, but with high attrition rates, new teachers being recruited is not enough. According to Ingersoll et al., (2021b), beginning teachers have the highest rate of attrition, with 40-50% of teachers leaving the field within five years. After teachers are recruited, schools must work to retain the teachers they have hired to avoid the cycle of teachers staying a short period of time and then leaving, creating the need to recruit and hire again. Woods (2016b) asserted that induction and mentoring programs are one such way to improve teacher retention; however, the quality and elements of the specific mentoring program can affect retention. Teachers in rural schools are also at risk of high rates of teacher turnover (Ingersoll et al., 2021b). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to help more fully understand the perceived effectiveness of the elements of a mentoring program for TC and AC teachers to help aid in the retention of new teachers in rural Kansas schools. With effective mentoring programs for all teachers, regardless of certification pathway, perhaps the recruitment and retention of teachers can combat the teacher shortage.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey

Based upon your reflection of your participation and experience in the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center mentoring program so far, please rate the following elements of the mentoring program using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = extremely ineffective, to 5 = extremely effective, concerning the support received as a novice teacher. Please rate the statements or the survey items indicating frequency of activities completed using a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 = Never, to 5 = Always, or select the answer indicating the number of activities completed. Select the choice that best represents your experience.

1. Rate the effectiveness of the Mentee Needs Assessment taken at the beginning of the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRSC) mentoring program.

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

2. Indicate how often the required weekly meetings/contacts with your SWPRSC/Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) program mentor were completed.

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Very often, 5 = Always

3. Rate the effectiveness of the required weekly meetings/contacts with your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor.

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

4. Indicate the number of quarterly observations of your teaching that were conducted by your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor.

0 observations completed, 1 observation completed, 2 observations completed, 3 observations completed, 4 observations completed

5. Rate the effectiveness of the quarterly observations of your teaching, conducted by your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor.

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

6. Indicate how often your two observations of other classroom teachers were completed.

0 observations completed, 1 observation completed, 2 observations completed

7. Rate the effectiveness of your two observations of other classroom teachers.

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

8. Indicate how often your two observations of other classroom teachers included a debrief with your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor.

1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Very often, 5 = Always

9. Rate the effectiveness of the debrief with your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor after conducting the two observations of other classroom teachers.

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

10. Rate the effectiveness of the support and resources provided from your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Learners and Learning section (ex: planning lessons; determining student needs; using a variety of resources; etc.).

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

11. Rate the support and resources provided from your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Content Knowledge section (ex: providing opportunities for student problem-solving, critical-thinking, and real-world application; etc.).

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

12. Rate the support and resources provided from your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Instructional Practice section (ex: aligning learning objectives to content standards; differentiating and scaffolding instruction; providing a variety of assessment strategies; etc.).

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

13. Rate the support and resources provided from your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor regarding topics related to the Professional Responsibilities section (ex: finding school policy, procedure, and resources; using data to alter instruction; managing stress; supervising and directing paraeducators; planning instruction with specialists; reviewing FERPA, SPED, 504 plans, EL student, Migrant student requirements; etc.).

1 = Extremely ineffective, 2 = Very ineffective, 3 = Neither ineffective nor effective, 4 = Very effective, 5 = Extremely effective

Please provide the appropriate answer to each survey item below describing your current situation.

14. Current semester of participation in the SWPRSC Mentoring Program:
    a. Semester 1
    b. Semester 2
    c. Semester 3
    d. Semester 4
    e. Semester 5
    f. Semester 6

g. Semester 7
h. Semester 8

15. Most accurate description of your teacher preparation program:
    a. Traditional university teacher preparation program
    b. Alternative certification program
16. If you chose alternative certification program in #15 above, specify the alternative certification program completed: _____
17. If you chose alternative certification program in #15 above, please specify the College/University of program completion: _____
18. K-12 total student enrollment of district where you are currently employed: _____
19. Teaching assignment (include grade level(s) and content subject area(s), if applicable): _____
20. Your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor is teaching at the same grade level that you are currently teaching.
    a. Yes
    b. No
21. Your SWPRSC/KSDE program mentor is teaching in the same content subject area that you are currently teaching.
    a. Yes
    b. No
22. Please provide other comments/suggestions regarding the SWPRSC Mentoring Program.

Appendix B: IRB Approval Letter

Baker University Institutional Review Board

July 1st, 2022

Dear Jacqulyn Wasinger and Denis Yoder,

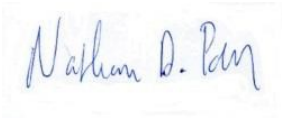
The Baker University IRB has reviewed your project application and approved this project under Exempt Status Review. As described, the project complies with all the requirements and policies established by the University for protection of human subjects in research. Unless renewed, approval lapses one year after approval date.

Please be aware of the following:

1. Any significant change in the research protocol as described should be reviewed by this Committee prior to altering the project.
2. Notify the IRB about any new investigators not named in original application.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents of the research activity.
4. If this is a funded project, keep a copy of this approval letter with your proposal/grant file.
5. If the results of the research are used to prepare papers for publication or oral presentation at professional conferences, manuscripts or abstracts are requested for IRB as part of the project record.
6. If this project is not completed within a year, you must renew IRB approval.

If you have any questions, please contact me at npoell@bakeru.edu or 785.594.4582.

Sincerely,



Nathan Poell, MLS
Chair, Baker University IRB

Baker University IRB
Committee Sara Crump,
PhD
Nick Harris, MS
Susan Rogers, PhD

Appendix C: Initial Survey Email

Teachers,

You are receiving this email because you are a new teacher currently participating in the Southwest Plains Regional Service Center (SWPRSC) Mentoring Program teaching in a Kansas School District. The purpose of this email is to request your participation in the following survey. Your reflections will help to provide valuable feedback to improve the support and content provided to beginning teachers participating in mentoring programs in the future.

The data collected will also be used by Jacqulyn Wasinger, a doctoral candidate from Baker University, for analysis as part of the dissertation requirements. The study will investigate the perceptions of novice teachers participating in the program regarding the effectiveness of the SWPRSC Mentoring Program. Specifically, this study will explore the similarities and differences in the perceptions of teachers trained in traditional licensure programs versus teachers entering the education workforce through alternative certification methods.
Your participation in the survey will directly affect the quality of the data collected and the implications for future mentoring programs. A summary analysis of the data will be conducted, and no individual participant will be identifiable. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to skip survey items or stop participation at any time.

The survey consists of 22 survey items and should take about 15 minutes to complete. Please consider completing the survey before Friday, March 11, 2022. By clicking the following link and submitting the survey, you indicate your consent to participate and your consent for researchers to use your answers for educational purposes. The survey can be completed using the following link:

_____ENTER LINK HERE_____

Your participation in the survey is genuinely appreciated! Thank you for your support!

Jacqulyn Wasinger
Baker University Doctoral Candidate
jacqulynmwasinger@stu.bakeru.edu

Appendix D: Reminder Email

Teachers,

This email is to follow up on the email sent on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, regarding the survey of your perceptions of the SWPRSC Mentoring program. Please consider this reminder as a request to participate in the survey before Friday, March 11, 2022.

All responses to the survey will be anonymous and no teacher will be identified from their response. The collected data will be used to further research regarding the perceived effectiveness of mentoring programs. Participation in the survey is voluntary and you may choose to skip survey items or stop participation at any time.

The survey consists of 22 statements or survey items and should take about 15 minutes to complete. By clicking the following link and submitting the survey, you are indicating your consent to participate. The survey can be completed using the following link:

_____INSERT LINK_____

Your participation in the survey is genuinely appreciated! Please take a few minutes to complete the included survey as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support!

Jacqulyn Wasinger
Baker University Doctoral Candidate
jacqulynmwasinger@stu.bakeru.edu