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SUPPORTING NOVICE TEACHERS: PEER COACHING AND
COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY AS SUPPORT

by

Rotonya Rhodes

A Dissertation

Kennesaw State University

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctor of Education

In

Teacher Leadership

In the

Bagwell College of Education

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

2017

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Rotonya Rhodes
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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the memory of my grandmothers, Ida Rowland and Florence Rhodes, who are no longer with us. Although you are gone, I am forever encouraged and inspired by your work ethic, love, wisdom, and your appreciation for education.

Acknowledgements

There are so many people who helped me through this process.

To my sweet parents: You are a gift from God. Thank you, Dad, for encouraging me to finish this degree. Thank you, mom, for cooking my meals while I finished and for making each trip with me to KSU. Your unconditional love and support helped me along this educational journey, which began long before I enrolled in graduate school.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my committee – Dr. Julia Fuller, chair; Dr. Laurie Brantley-Dias; and Dr. Toni Strieker. I could not have asked for a better committee. You showed tremendous dedication to this work; set high standards and held me accountable for those standards; and provided guidance that was invaluable. You shared your knowledge; provided detailed feedback; and encouraged me to reach the finish line. You challenged me to think more critically about the work, stretching me beyond my comfort zone both as a professional and a scholar. I entered this process with big ideas, and you helped me to narrow my focus to work that was doable and meaningful. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to work with you.

I would like to acknowledge the school leaders who have mentored, coached, and supported me along this journey.

To my family and friends, thank you for being my support system.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine what happens when a peer coaching with collaborative inquiry model is implemented with novice teachers. The goals of the study include examining the peer coaching process as described by teachers, and understanding the relationships between novice teachers and their peer coaches based on the novice teachers' perspectives. This study employs a qualitative case study methodology, in which the group of novice teachers represents the case bounded by the peer coaching process. The study uses individual interviews, a focus group interview, and teachers' written reflections with 11 participants to address the research questions. Results showed that peer coaching for novice teachers can be an effective way to support novice teachers. Novices, however, must be given time for professional dialogue and paired with a coach with whom they are compatible. Given these conditions, novices use peer coaching for improving and reflecting on their practice.

Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY	1
Beginning to Teach.....	1
Continuing to Teach.....	1
Leaving Teaching.....	2
Background.....	3
The Needs of Novice Teachers	3
Peer Coaching for Novice Teachers	4
Problem Statement	4
Purpose and Research Questions	8
Significance of the Study	9
Benefits of the Study.....	9
Significance and the Research Site	10
Conceptual Framework.....	11
Collaborative Inquiry and Peer Coaching – An Overview	11
Peer Coaching as Teacher Support	12
Adult Learning Theory in Peer Coaching	12
Experiential Learning Theory	16
Defining Key Terms	17
CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE	20
The Life of a Novice Teacher	20
Induction Programs.....	21
Mentoring.....	23
Effective Pairing	24
Professional Learning	25
Time	25
Collaboration with Peers.....	26
Learning as a Novice	27
Peer Coaching	28
The Peer Coaching Relationship.....	28
Instructional Coaching and Peer Coaching.....	29
Characteristics of Peer Coaching	30
Phases of Peer Coaching.....	32

Summary	39
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	40
Introduction & Research Questions	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Research Approach and Tradition	41
Research Setting	42
Participants.....	45
Positionality and the Role of the Researcher	47
Roles of the Peer Coaches.....	51
Professional Learning for the Peer Coaches	53
Gathering Data.....	54
Interviews.....	54
Focus Group.....	58
Documents	58
Privacy of the Data.....	60
Timeline for Collecting Data	60
Data Analysis.....	61
Trustworthiness.....	62
Ethics	64
Summary	65
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.....	66
Research Question 1	67
Theme One: Time Matters	67
Time for Collaborative Planning	67
Time for Processing Learning.....	70
Theme 2: Professional Dialogue	71
Instructional Strategies.....	71
Planning to teach the standards.....	76
Summary of Findings to Research Question 1.....	77
Research Question 2	78
Theme 1- Emphasizing Students' Needs	78
Theme 2 – Self-evaluation and Reflection.....	81
Theme 3 – The Novice's Two Cs	87
Summary of Findings to Research Question 2.....	92

Research Question 3	93
Theme 1 – Pairing Matters.....	93
Theme 2 – Partnership	97
Summary of Findings to Research Question 3.....	100
Additional Themes.....	101
The Value of Instructional Coaches.....	101
Novices Value Supportive Administration	103
Summary of Additional Themes	105
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION.....	106
Summarizing the Study.....	106
Interpretation and Implication of the Study	108
Finding 1	109
Finding 2	109
Finding 3	110
Finding 4	111
Finding 5	112
Limitations	112
Future Research	113
Future Research and Theory	114
Future Research and the Peer Coaches	115
Future Research and the Novices’ Work	115
Conclusion	118
References.....	119
Appendix A: Coaching SMARTe Goal Template	132
Appendix B: District Walkthrough (Post-Conference Feedback) Tool	133
Appendix C: Individual Interview Questions	134
Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Questions.....	135
Appendix E: Focus Group Guidelines	136
Appendix F: Critical Incident (Video) Reflection Form.....	137
Appendix G: Teacher Learning Reflection Log	138
Appendix H: Organizing the Data	139

List of Tables

Table	Page
1 Characteristics of Supportive Environments	6
2 Demographic Data of Southern School District's Students	11
3 Detailed Description of Research Setting By School	43
4 Detailed Description of Research Participants	46
5 Aligning Individual Interview Questions to Research Questions	56
6 Aligning Focus Group Questions to research questions	57
7 Types of Data	60
8 Teacher Reflection Log Responses about Learning and Coaching Needs	72
9 Participants' Comments Regarding Individual Students	79
10 Participants' Comments about Progress Monitoring	82
11 Participants' Comments about Successes	84
12 Participants' Comments about Struggles	86
13 Participants' Comments about Communication	89
14 Participants' Comments about Collaboration	91
15 Participants' Comments about Commonalities in Peer Coaching Relationships	94
16 Participants' Comments about Proximity in the Peer Coaching Relationship	96
17 Participants' Comments about Partnership Principles in Peer Coaching Relationships	99
18 Participants' Comments about Instructional Coaches	102
19 Participants' Comments about Supportive Administrators	104

List of Figures

Figure		Page
1	Comparison of Poverty Percentages of Schools and Local Community	48

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCING THE STUDY

Beginning to Teach

There are several reasons that teachers enter the teaching profession, but the most prevalent reason seems to be love for children (Curtis, 2012). School districts have tried various methods of teacher recruitment. For example, districts promote their schools using their district websites; send representatives to teacher recruitment fairs; and in some instances use monetary incentives such as signing bonuses. Despite these efforts, many districts continue to struggle with recruiting teachers (Maranto & Shuls, 2012). Several studies report that despite extrinsic motivators like monetary incentives, the most common reason that teachers enter and remain in the profession is because they enjoy working with children (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Hughes, 2012; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Other motivational factors for entering the profession include philosophical beliefs about education (Ashiedu & Scott-Lad, 2012); personal fulfillment (Curtis, 2012); and social satisfaction such as the relationships with peers (Marston, 2010).

Continuing to Teach

Sometimes teachers remain in the field for the exact same reasons that they enter it. Sources suggest that although schools may offer extrinsic incentives such as loan forgiveness or bonuses (Maranto & Shuls, 2012), “altruism rather than salary (and other material incentives) is often noted as the key motive enticing teachers to enter their profession” (Shuls & Maranto, 2014, p. 239). Struyven and Vanthournout (2014) describe

this same altruistic drive as a major reason that teachers remain in the field. Second, teachers continue working in the profession for personal enjoyment. While personal enjoyment seems like a simple and logical basis for teacher retention, it can be complex, as the source of the enjoyment varies from teacher to teacher. A study of elementary teachers in Missouri found that personal enjoyment or job satisfaction is directly related to the likelihood that teachers will remain in the profession (Perrachione, Rosser, & Peterson, 2008). Teachers report enjoying their jobs for the reasons listed below.

- They want to know that they have made a difference (Perrachione, et al., 2008).
- They enjoy the actual work of teaching and, they find it fulfilling (Battle & Looney, 2012).
- Teachers experience enjoyment from the sense of community that exists in some schools (Kaufman, 2011).

Leaving Teaching

Research identifies several causes of teacher attrition. Those causes include burnout; lack of readiness traced back to their undergraduate teacher preparation programs; and feelings of isolation during the first few years on the job (Kaufman, 2011). The predominant reason that teachers leave, however, is lack of support (Curtis, 2012). Several sources identify the lack of support as a common reason for why teachers leave (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Buchanan, 2012; Cochran-Smith et al., 2012). Additionally, research shows that novice teachers, those within the first few years on the job (“Understanding the 2014 Certification Rule,” 2014), either leave the profession or their schools at alarming rates. For example, Ronfeldt, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013) reported that 30 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. Other sources

reported the number of new teachers leaving the field is as high as 50 percent (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Furthermore, the problem seems to be more significant in school settings where there are more challenges. For example, Ronfeldt (2013) noted that the attrition problem is even larger in high poverty schools, urban schools and schools with low achievement.

Background

The Needs of Novice Teachers

Novice teachers – those who have less than three years of experience - need supportive environments that foster continuous learning, collaboration, and professional growth (Darling-Hammond, 2003). When novice teachers work in supportive environments, they are more likely to remain in their schools and the profession (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Supportive environments also help ensure that teachers become effective instructors (Scherer, 2012). Teaching is challenging work that requires certain skills and knowledge (Ingersoll, 2012), and teachers need help developing and applying those skills (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2012). They need a space in which they can share their ideas, observe other teachers, and reflect on their own practice. They need to have the freedom to make mistakes and learn from their mistakes without the fear of punitive evaluations.

While collaboration is generally regarded as an effective practice for professional learning, research shows that in most schools, new teachers work in isolation from their peers (Clark, 2012; Hadar & Brody, 2010). Collaboration includes various practices, and it has several benefits. Some of the practices include instructional coaching, peer coaching, and collaborative planning. Collaboration is beneficial as it promotes

communities of learning and cultures in which teachers ask questions (Hadar and Brody, 2010). Collaboration may also build novice teachers' confidence and help them learn to problem-solve (Clark, 2012). Although research lists these benefits of collaboration, schools often do not make it a priority, giving teachers very little time for it (Clark, 2012). This study examines novice teachers in an environment in which they learn from each other, specifically through peer coaching and collaborative inquiry.

Peer Coaching for Novice Teachers

Rather than a traditional induction program, this study paired novice teachers with peer coaches as a part of the induction process. Peer coaching is an approach that schools use to improve the teaching and learning environment for novice teachers. "Peer coaching allows two or more professional colleagues to work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace" (Robbins, 1991). There are several different approaches – described later – to peer coaching (Gammson, 1987), but its core purpose is to emphasize and support the teacher as a learner (Robbins, 1991). One of the most effective ways for teachers to learn is in a community of other teachers supporting each other, reflecting and discussing their work, and learning and growing together (Easton, 2011). Peer coaching can provide a structure in which novice teachers can experience this kind of support.

Problem Statement

Teacher attrition is a problem plaguing many schools. Some teacher turnover is natural and almost unavoidable (due to teachers' life changes) and some even beneficial (Ronfeldt, 2013), but high rates of attrition can be detrimental to school districts in

several ways. First, high rates of attrition can harm student achievement. Although there is a limited amount of research to show a direct causal relationship between teacher attrition and student achievement, there is a correlation between the two (Ronfeldt, 2013). For example, teacher attrition is typically higher in schools with low student achievement than it is in high-achieving schools. Second, high turnover leads to instability and inconsistency in schools, which can undermine progress (Kaufman & Al-Bataineh, 2011). A third effect of high teacher turnover is financial loss. The monetary costs associated with teacher attrition include the following: professional learning; human resources details such as orientation and processing paperwork; and new teacher induction costs. Teacher attrition is especially problematic among novice teachers.

Various data (Ingersoll, 2012; Owen, 2015) indicate that teacher attrition varies from school to school. Generally speaking, however, data and research reveal that teacher attrition is especially a problem for new teachers across content areas, across the nation, and many times across grade levels. For example, studies show that forty to fifty percent of teachers leaving the profession do so within the first five years on the job (Ingersoll, 2012). Georgia school leaders have deemed the state's teacher attrition problem a "teacher dropout crisis," with forty-seven percent of its teachers leaving the profession within the first five years (Owen, 2015). Southern School District (the research site for this study) has consistently turned over thirty-three to forty percent of all of its teachers (including those with many years of experience) for the last four years. About half of Southern School District's teachers with 1 – 2 years' experience have left the district each year in the last two consecutive years.

Relevant literature underscores the importance of effective support for novice teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2012; Smeaton & Waters, 2013). Attrition literature reveals that the predominant reasons teachers leave schools are related to support (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). Teachers report feeling unsupported by their administrators; feelings of isolation from their peers; and that they are excluded from the decision-making process (Ingersoll, 2011). Exactly what do teachers mean when they speak of support, and what does teacher support entail? Support can come in many forms and from various sources. Supportive school environments, as shown in Table 1, have the following essential characteristics: frequent communication between teachers and school leaders, including administrators and teacher leaders (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011); time for collaborative planning among teachers (Clark, 2012); professional dialogue and reflection (Nelson, Slavit, Perkins, & Hathorn, 2008); and a sense of community in which teachers learn from each other (Easton, 2011).

Table 1

Characteristics of Supportive Environments

	Collaboration and sense of community	Professional learning	Frequent communication (at least once per week)
Supporting Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning lessons together • Setting goals together • Reflecting together and dialoguing about lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching • Mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written feedback on lessons and observations • Conversations/meetings

All teachers need and benefit from supportive environments, and it is especially important for novice teachers. Novices are transitioning into the profession. They are learning the standards and curriculum, and they may struggle more than other teachers with issues such as discipline and managing classrooms of students on various learning levels (Botwinik & Press, 2013).

Recognizing both the challenges that novice teachers face and the importance of retaining a strong teaching force, many schools are taking measures to create more supportive environments for their teachers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). These measures include utilizing induction programs (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), assigning mentors to new teachers (Kaufman & Al-Bataineh, 2011), and providing various professional learning opportunities for teachers (Olebe, 2005). Although schools are taking steps to create supportive environments, these steps have been seemingly ineffective, as teachers continue to report that they feel unsupported in their schools (Battle & Looney, 2014).

There may be several reasons that schools' attempts to support teachers have not been successful. Novices' actual experiences with new teacher induction, for example, have not met the standard of quality induction detailed in the literature review. Regarding mentoring, for example, novice teachers who have mentors have very little time to meet with them (Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, & Donaldson, 2004). Additionally, most American schools expect new teachers to be experts, and the schools do very little to foster an atmosphere of learning for them (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2012). These unsupportive environments consequently lead teachers to exit the profession or migrate from their schools to other schools (Gardner, 2010). Efforts to support novice teachers

must, therefore, be intentional, tailored to the individual teachers' needs, and designed to help novice teachers meet school and system requirements (Cherubini, 2009).

When describing their early teaching experiences and orientation to their schools, teachers report that there are very few or no discussions and collaborative planning focused on curriculum, instruction, or other topics that they find most significant (Johnson et al., 2004; Ingersoll, 2012). Lack of such discussions and collaborative planning indicate that teachers are not engaging in ongoing, collaborative professional learning. Instead, many schools use practices that are deemed ineffective, including: one-day workshop models of learning; providing very little time for collaboration; and either providing ineffective induction and mentoring for new teachers or failing to provide induction and mentoring at all (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Given the challenges that novice teachers face, this study explores what happens when novice teachers engage in peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry.

Purpose and Research Questions

Grounded in the research-based knowledge that collaboration is vital to new teachers' development (Wei, Andree, & Darling-Hammond, 2009), this study paired novice teachers with peer coaches to learn from each other by collaborating on curriculum, instruction, and planning. Teachers, "especially those just entering the profession, are generally collaboratively oriented people," who want to do a good job and need support doing it (Scherer, 2012, p.18). This, study, therefore, positions teachers to have dialogues with each other about practice, share knowledge, and collaboratively plan lessons, all of which are activities that support teachers and help them grow and develop (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). As teachers worked together, they engaged in

professional dialogue, and they reflected on their work to foster their professional growth. Experienced teachers collaboratively planned lessons with novice teachers, set goals, observed instruction, discussed feedback, and facilitated reflections on lessons. Building on the theoretical foundations of collaborative inquiry, novices engaged in reflection and professional dialogue by asking questions, examining their practice, and discussing ideas with peers (Nelson et al.2008; Cochran-Smith, 2011; David, 2008). The goals of the study included examining the peer coaching process as described by teachers, and understanding the relationships between novice teachers and their peer coaches based on the novice teachers' perspectives. The study addressed the overarching question of “What happens when novice teachers engage in peer coaching that utilizes collaborative inquiry?” The study sought to answer these specific questions: How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in? How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry? What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships?

Significance of the Study

Benefits of the Study

Research includes numerous studies on teacher attrition and why teachers choose to leave their schools or the profession. Much of the research leads to the same conclusion: teachers leave their schools because they do not feel supported. This study contributes to the current body of literature by exploring the phenomenon – support – that research commonly sites as a major contributing factor to teacher attrition. While this study examined what happens when a peer coaching with collaborative inquiry model is implemented with novice teachers, a part of its central purpose was to create more

supportive environments for teachers. Supportive environments and peer coaching have the potential to improve school culture around professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Showers & Joyce, 1996); positively affect teacher retention rates; and produce authentic learning experiences for teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Robbins, 1991). Many studies have been conducted on teacher attrition, collaborative inquiry, professional learning, and coaching. This study examined a specific type of coaching and its effects on novice teachers. It has implications for novice teachers, experienced teachers, and school leaders who recognize the power of retaining and supporting teachers. It also has the implication that novice teachers' colleagues – experienced teachers – can be a part of the solution to the support problem that schools and teachers face.

Significance and the Research Site

This study occurred in a rural school district (hereafter referred to as *Southern School District*, a pseudonym) in the southeastern United States. Teacher attrition is specifically problematic in the district. In the 2015-2016 school year, the district lost 40 teachers – approximately one-third of its teaching staff. During the previous school year, the district also experienced significant turnover. Internal exit interviews revealed that the lack of support was a major reason that teachers, especially novice teachers, left the district.

Southern School District has a little more than 2,000 students, and its demographic information is displayed in Table 2. It is important to consider this data because this district's schools (with the exception of one school) represent the kinds of schools that typically have the highest attrition rates with large minority populations; high levels of poverty; and several student achievement challenges (Ronfeldt, et al., 2013).

Table 2

Demographic Data of Southern District's students

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	District
Race/Ethnicity						
Black	76%	55%	73%	74%	7%	55%
White	7%	26%	16%	13%	81%	31%
Hispanic	15%	14%	7%	11%	5%	10%
Asian	<1%	<1%	<1%	0%	2%	<1%
2/More Races	2%	4%	3%	1%	0.50%	39%
Other Demographics						
SWD	10.90%	14%	12.70%	11.60%	3.50%	10.80%
Limited English Proficiency	8%	6%	1%	4%	0%	4%
Eligible for Free/ Reduced Meals	73%	69%	58%	67%	12%	57%

Conceptual Framework**Collaborative Inquiry and Peer Coaching – An Overview**

Collaborative inquiry is defined as “a structure in which members of a professional learning community (PLC) come together to systematically examine their educational practices” (Donohoo, 2013, p. 2). It is rooted in several different theories, including situated learning theory, adult learning theory, and experiential learning theory. This study was situated in the belief that peer coaching is a form of collaborative inquiry that supports teachers as learners. Encompassing many of the characteristics of collaborative inquiry, peer coaches in this study collaborated with novice colleagues to share ideas, set goals, provide feedback and learn together (Nelson et al., 2008; Robbins, 1991).

Peer Coaching as Teacher Support

Peer coaching in education grew out of the work of Joyce and Showers in the 1980s. Showers and Joyce began exploring peer coaching as a way to increase teachers' transfer of information from professional development sessions into their classroom (Showers & Joyce, 1996; Slater & Simmons, 2001). Ultimately, they aimed to improve instruction, and consequently student learning, by improving teachers' professional learning experiences (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Since its origins in teacher professional development, peer coaching has expanded to include the following uses: a tool for pre-service teacher education (Lu, 2010); a way for teachers to solve problems (Arslan & Ilin, 2013); and a tool that shifts teaching from an isolated practice to one of collaboration and support (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012).

Building on research that peer coaching is a structure for teacher collaboration and support, this study used Knowles' (1972) adult learning theory and Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory to provide insight about how the context of peer coaching affects novices' teaching and learning experiences. The following sections provide a brief overview of the theories, describe how the theories are related to the study, and give a brief description of how the theories shape the professional learning activities (detailed in the methods section) for the study.

Adult Learning Theory in Peer Coaching

Based on the common belief that peer coaching and collaborative inquiry are forms of professional learning (Showers & Joyce, 1996), this study relied heavily on adult learning theory, *andragogy*, for both the design of the entire study and to shape the learning process for new teachers. Knowles (1972) was one of the first people to define

andragogy, and other authors such as Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2012) have added to theory and research on how adults learn. Knowles (1972) initially described andragogy by comparing it to *pedagogy*. In his comparison, he states that he is not referring to specific differences between the way that children learn and the way that adults learn. Rather, he described four basic assumptions about the way adults learn, which distinguishes it from pedagogy. Those four assumptions can be summarized as the following: adult learners have more developed self-concepts; their learning should build on their experiences; adults are more ready to learn, specifically concepts related to their current situations or positions; and their orientation to learning is focused on solving problems. There is a fifth assumption that Knowles later added to his theory, which is that adults are more internally motivated to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). These assumptions are supported by research that underscore that adult learners are autonomous in that they direct their own learning (Rothes, Marina, & Goncalves, 2017). These assumptions of adult learning theory, along with Caffarella's (1993) work on self-directed learning, determined the format of the peer coaching and learning experiences for teachers in this study.

Self-concept and the novice teacher. The adult learner, having achieved a level of maturity and self-concept, has a desire to become self-directing (Knowles, 1972). As self-directed learners, teachers rely less on an instructor, and their daily experiences – teaching, planning, and interacting with colleagues – help compose their learning (Merriam, 2001). For the novice teachers in this study, this assumption means that novices understood their own strengths and areas of improvement; worked with their peer coaches to determine courses of action; and own their processes of planning, teaching,

and reflecting on practice. This assumption of adult learning also supports the idea that the peer coaching relationship is not driven by what the coach deems best, but what the novice needs instead.

The novice's prior experience. All teachers have knowledge and experiences that they can share with their colleagues to enhance collaboration (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Critiquing top-down, one-size-fits-all initiatives for school improvement, Butler and Schnellert (2012) emphasized the importance of considering teachers' knowledge and experiences when implementing professional learning. Adult learning experiences, such as peer coaching, are about meeting individual teachers' needs. In order, therefore, for the processes to be meaningful and valuable, the learning activities should take into account that the learner has prior experiences that shaped who the learner is (Knowles, 1972). Since novice teachers have prior teaching, learning, and life experiences, the peer coaching experience in this study did not position the coach as the expert giver of knowledge and the novices as the receiver. The novice and the coach worked as equal partners (Knight, 2011), who can both benefit from the process.

The novice's readiness to learn. Teachers want learning experiences that are based on their needs, including classroom management and their specific content areas (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Teachers want these experiences so that they can improve their practice. As adult learners, novice teachers, therefore, should have experiences that are relevant and that they can apply in their classrooms. Adult learners' readiness levels are about their current situations – where they are in their careers – and what they need relative to their current situation (Knowles, 1972). This study allowed novice teachers to assess their current situations in order to determine what they need to

address with their peer coaches. Once the teachers know that peer coaching is about their needs, and therefore relevant to them, they are more likely to embrace the learning (Knight, 2011).

Problem-solving and the novice teacher. Problem-solving experiences benefit teachers by increasing their confidence and their willingness to take risks (Butler & Schnellert, 2012). Teachers, especially novices, should have opportunities that allow them to solve problems, contributing to their own development and to the learning community. When adults enter a learning situation, they usually do so with the intent to solve a problem or to address an insufficiency (Knowles, 1972). This tendency is what Knowles labels a “problem-centered orientation to learning” (Knowles, 1972, p. 35). This study employs collaborative inquiry to facilitate the peer coaching process. Novices engaged in inquiry by asking questions and collaboratively exploring the questions with their peer coaches. This process of inquiry and collaboration is an essential part of the “life-long process of learning to teach” (Cochran-Smith, 2011, p. 22).

Motivation to learn. Research links internal factors such as teacher self-efficacy and the desire for growth to teachers’ motivation to learn and improve their teaching (Thoonen, Slegers, Oort, Peetsma, & Geisel, 2011). These internal factors support the fifth assumption of Knowles’ adult learning theory, which is that adults are more internally motivated than externally motivated to learn (Knowles, 1980). Knowles asserted that this internal motivation stems from a desire to grow and develop. For the novice teachers in this study, the peer coaching activities – collaboration, goal-setting, dialogue, and reflection – were designed to help the teachers grow. All of these activities

are considered professional learning activities which can contribute to the development and growth of teachers (Watson, 2014).

Self-directed learning. Directing one's own learning requires a knowledge of oneself, including prior experiences (Merrian, 2001). One of the primary factors of self-directed learning is that the learners must have autonomy in the learning process (Caffarella, 1993). Autonomy includes allowing the peer coaches to determine their own goals and giving them the opportunity to evaluate their progress toward meeting those goals. Ultimately, the novice takes initiative for their own professional development and exercises *choice* in determining his or her own goals and methods for achieving the goals (Knight, 2011).

Experiential Learning Theory

Building on peer coaching as a support structure, this study explored peer coaching and collaborative inquiry as experiential learning endeavors, which gave teachers the opportunity to learn and reflect with colleagues as a natural part of their work. The study relied on experiential learning theory as explained by Dewey (1916, 1938) and Kolb (1984). It recognized the workplace as an essential component of authentic learning (Webster-Wright, 2009), as effective professional learning is job-embedded and actively engages the participant.

Experiential learning theory asserts that experience is intertwined with education and that anything that happens to someone is considered an experience (Dewey, 1938). Additionally, meaningful experiences do not occur without thought (reflection) (Dewey, 1916). The novice teachers in this study, therefore, were to build on their experiences and include reflection as a part of the peer coaching process. Dewey described continuity and

interaction as two major parts of experiences (Dewey, 1938). Continuity refers to continued growth, while interaction refers to the response of the learner. Both continuity and interaction are important to this study and represented by the professional learning, implementation of the lesson and strategies, and reflection that occur within peer coaching.

Furthering Dewey's theory, Kolb defined experiential learning as "four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes" (Kolb, 1984, p. 40). The first stage in the experiential learning process is *concrete experience*, which is what is actually happening in a person's world, and it serves as the basis for the second mode. The concrete experiences in this study were the planning and the teaching. The second stage is *reflective observation*, during which people observe and intentionally think about the experience, represented in this study by the teachers' reflection logs. *Abstract conceptualization* is the third phase, in which the learners make sense of what they have experienced and observed and develop new understandings. This phase was represented by novice teachers' reflection on their own or with their peer coaches. The fourth phase is *active experimentation*, which includes what to do with the understanding – a kind of problem solving (Kolb, 1984). The novice teachers were asked to consider all that they have learned and decide, now what?

Defining Key Terms

For this study, the terms below are defined.

Attrition

Attrition refers to the exiting of teachers from the profession and the migration of teachers from one school/district to another.

Collaborative Inquiry

Collaborative inquiry is defined as a structure in which teachers work together to ask and think critically about questions (Cochran-Smith, 2011); engage in dialogue about their work (Nelson et al., 2008); and study their practices (Donohoo, 2013).

Feedback

In this study, feedback is non-evaluative information from the experienced teacher to the novice teacher about how the novice is progressing towards goals (Wiggins, 2012). The purpose of the feedback is to facilitate and encourage reflection on practice.

Induction

Induction is an ongoing process, lasting one to three years, for assisting teachers as they transition into a new school.

Instructional Coaching

In this study, an instructional coach is defined as “an on-site professional developer working in one school setting” to help teachers improve instruction (Knight, 2004, p. 33).

Mentoring

Mentoring is a professional relationship between a novice teacher and a more experienced teacher (Dennen, 2004). The purpose is for the mentor to guide the novice teacher, share information, and help the new teacher learn the culture of the organization (St. George & Robinson, 2011). Mentoring is an action that is a part of the induction process (Wong, 2004).

Novice Teachers

This study used two criteria to define novice teachers. According to prevailing state guidelines provided by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, two criteria define an induction phase teacher. First, induction phase teachers have less than three years of teaching experience, and they have not met all state requirements to become a

fully certified teacher (“Understanding The 2014 Certification Rule,” 2014). The second criterion is that the teachers are new to the school district, their school, or their content area or grade level.

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is defined as a non-evaluative process in which an experienced teacher works with a novice teacher to plan, discuss, and reflect on instruction. Both the novice teacher and the experienced teacher can learn from each other from their work together (Showers & Joyce, 1996).

Reflection

This study defines reflection as critically thinking about and systematically making plans for the future, and deeply understanding teaching as a practice. It can be used as a tool for increasing teacher effectiveness, giving teachers the opportunity to deepen their understanding of experiences (Fendler, 2003).

CHAPTER 2: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE

The body of literature that shaped this study consists of scientific and theoretical studies on peer coaching, collaborative inquiry, professional learning, and the experiences of novice teachers. This chapter begins by describing research-based, effective strategies for supporting novice teachers compared and contrasted to the typical experiences of novice teachers. Next, the chapter explains the role of professional learning in the study. Afterwards, it explains three of the major characteristics of peer coaching. Following the major characteristics, this review includes a discussion of the phases and activities in a peer coaching cycle. This chapter and the entire study explored all of these ideas within the context of collaborative inquiry. Reviewing these overarching ideas provided context for both the experiences of novice teachers and for the methods used to implement a peer coaching program.

The Life of a Novice Teacher

Grounded in an awareness that teaching requires specific skills and knowledge (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), that schools must work to build and maintain a healthy, professional teacher workforce (Teague & Swan, 2013) and that learning to teach is a continuous process (Cochran-Smith, 2011), schools have begun making attempts to more effectively support novice teachers (Iordanides & Vryoni, 2013). Given this awareness, it is especially important to ensure that schools provide supportive environments that are conducive to learning, growth, and collaboration for novice teachers. Research shows that support structures for novice teachers are increasingly composed of the following

components: induction programs (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Ingersoll, 2012); mentoring programs (Israel, Kamman, McCray, & Sindelar, 2014; Risser, 2013); and collaboration with peers (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). All of these components compose a support structure that can help novice teachers transition into their schools. There are, however, weaknesses in the support structure as implemented in school districts. The following sections describe novice teachers' actual experiences with induction, mentoring, and collaboration; explain what research says about this support structure; and describe limitations of the typical support structure for novice teachers.

Induction Programs

Teacher induction programs vary across school districts, but they have a common goal of supporting new teachers (Ingersoll, 2012). Induction programs are ongoing, comprehensive professional learning processes, supported by school administrators in providing social and professional support for new teachers (Howe, 2006). They are comprehensive in that they consider many factors including the instructional needs of the teacher; assistance with transitioning into the school culture; and they are embedded into the operations of the school (Howe, 2006). Effective induction programs are ongoing processes that last at least one year, and in some cases as many as three years (Fry, 2010; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The social and professional supports help teachers build relationships with their peers and make them feel that they are a part of a learning community (Risser, 2013).

Additionally, effective induction programs are tailored to the specific needs of teachers – what the teachers need to be successful with their students. For example, all teachers, including new teachers, are at various developmental phases in their careers

(Opfer & Pedder, 2010). Professional learning, therefore, is effective when it meets the developmental needs of the teachers. Teachers may also have learning needs that are specific to their content or specific to the groups of students that they teach. Novice teachers' needs vary from deepening content knowledge, to using effective instructional strategies, to classroom management (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). As a professional learning strategy, then teacher induction gives teachers choices – based on their needs – in what they learn (Devine, Houssemand, & Meyers, 2013).

While the research is clear regarding what makes induction programs effective, there are limitations to many schools' current programs. Collaboration is one of the main components that is absent from induction-phase teachers' experiences. For example, research shows that novice teachers continue to work in isolation, lacking collaborative experiences with colleagues (Koehler & Kim, 2012). Koehler and Kim (2012) asserted that this lack of collaboration could be due to the challenge of limited resources such as funding and staffing that many schools face. School cultures that are grounded in collaborative inquiry include: professional dialogue among teachers (Nelson & Slavit, 2008); opportunities for teachers to investigate problems and issues within their practice (Baecher, Rorimer, & Smith, 2012); and an environment in which teachers can generate questions and discover answers (Nelson, Deuel, Slavit, & Kennedy, 2010).

Another limitation of the typical induction program is that rather than a continuous model of professional learning, they use a workshop model of learning, which has been characteristic of professional learning across the United States (Athanases, Abrams, Johnson, Kwock, & McCurdy, 2008). While powerful and effective professional learning is continuous (Easton, 2011), some induction programs do not last long enough,

ending before the recommended one-year minimum (Fry, 2010). Research shows that the one-day workshop model is an ineffective way for teachers to learn (Jao & McDougal, 2015). This model is usually designed to occur in less than two days, during which an expert on the given topic presents information to a large group. Workshop models typically do not allow time for classroom application or follow-ups, which are key components for increasing learning for teachers. Collaborative inquiry activities such as peer coaching, on the other hand, are ongoing processes (Lu, 2010) in which teachers share learning (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012; Knight, 2011).

Mentoring

Mentoring is a commonly used strategy for supporting novice teachers (Risser, 2013). Mentoring is only one, but extremely important component of the induction process. Maintaining a central purpose of supporting teachers, mentors guide novice teachers in several different ways (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). First, the mentoring relationship can provide the emotional and social supports that novices need (Israel et al., 2014). Second, induction is a process that involves many factors including: professional learning; peer observations; mentoring; and helping novice teachers acclimate to their schools. Mentors' roles, therefore, include facilitating various induction components (Israel et al., 2014). For example, the mentors can help novices access certain resources, connect them to professional learning opportunities, and help them understand school procedures and operations. Third, mentors are often thought of as having a level of expertise that they can share with a more novice teacher (Dennen, 2004).

Research defines several characteristics of an effective mentoring program including: effective pairing of the mentors and novices; professional learning for the mentors; and time for the pairs to work together.

Effective Pairing

There must be compatibility and a good relationship between the mentor and mentee. Mentor selection and assignment vary across schools (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), but several factors should be considered when assigning mentors. Goldrick et al. (2012) in their policy review cited the following factors as seen in policies across different states: teacher certification; teacher location; grade levels; similar content areas or subjects; and teachers' instructional needs. While these factors are important and often a part of mentoring programs for novice teachers (Goldrick, 2012), it is important to include other factors as well. One of the major factors to consider is what the mentor and the novice have in common (Owen, 2006). Mentors and mentees' interpersonal similarities may provide for a more productive working relationship (Owen, 2006). Developing a mentoring program that adequately matches new teachers with the right mentor requires strategic planning. In order to increase effectiveness, program coordinators have to consider the needs of the novice teachers such as instructional support, classroom management strategies, content knowledge, and acclimation to the school culture; consider the strengths of the mentors; and make decisions (i.e. pairing decisions) that are appropriate for their teachers rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring (Kaufman, 2011).

Professional Learning

A second aspect of an effective mentoring program is training for the mentors. Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, and Burn (2012) stated that mentors should be carefully selected and appropriately trained. Just because someone is a good teacher does not necessarily mean that they inherently have the skills that it takes to be a good and effective mentor for teachers. For example, a mentor may need to have some familiarity with Knowles' descriptions of adult learners (referenced in the introduction). Using this basis for selecting and developing mentors, then, mentors need professional learning and development just as new teachers need opportunities to learn (Athanses et al., 2008). Few schools, however, actually invest time and resources into developing their mentors (Athanses et al., 2008). Consequently, many novice teachers may have mentors assigned to them, but the mentors may not be adequately prepared to help them.

Time

Teachers generally perceive that time is a precious and scarce resource. Given increased accountability requirements, large class sizes, and the increasing amount of required paperwork, it is easy to understand how important work may go undone. It is also easy to understand how while schools may use the term *mentoring* as a part of its induction process, the relationship between the experienced teacher and the novice inadvertently becomes brief hallway exchanges that never progress beyond a hurried, "how is everything going" from the experienced teacher to the novice. The novice responds "fine," and everyone continues with the business as usual – teaching "their own" students and barely remaining current with their own work. Clark (2012) suggests that new teachers need time for two specific purposes: collaborating with teachers in

similar content areas and grade levels; and meeting with their mentors. Darling-Hammond (2009) insists that time for this kind of collaboration is beneficial in that it creates a sense of shared responsibility for student achievement. This time includes regularly scheduled and protected common planning time or release-time for mentors and mentees (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011).

Collaboration with Peers

Collaborative inquiry, an ongoing process, gives teachers the opportunity to utilize skills that foster learning. Those skills include sharing knowledge (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012); practicing new skills (Nelson & Slavit, 2008); engaging in dialogue about the work (Neslon & Slavit, 2008; Baecher et al., 2012); and reflective thinking (Jao & McDougall, 2015). Employing these skills can move teachers beyond surface-level conversations to professional dialogue about teaching and learning (Rice, 2012).

Collaborative inquiry, during which teachers collaborate to solve problems, yields professional dialogue and growth for teachers. This dialogue and problem-solving occurs in a collaborative setting in which teachers learn together. While this kind of collaboration is important to school improvement, teaching in many schools is devoid of collaboration and professional community (Cochran-Smith, et al. 2012). Easton (2011), in a description of professional learning communities, noted that there are many groups that may call themselves communities, but they do not function as communities in practice. When a real community exists, not just an organization or association, everybody learns from each other. Teachers in the community hold themselves and each other accountable for improving learning for students (DuFour, 2004). Members of the community emphasize learning as a valuable component of growing and contributing to

the improvement of the organization (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Learning is “renewable, as members of a community contribute to its regeneration each time they learn and share learning.... A community is a type of organization that helps humans make meaning, connect, learn, and grow” (Easton, 2011, p. 6).

In addition to the learning component, another aspect of *community* is the social component. One study used the interviews of twenty-two former teachers to understand the perceptions of teachers who had left the field and understand why they would not return (Buchanan, 2012). The study found the lack of collegiality and community to be a commonality among the participants. Kaufman (2011) noted that authentic relationships with peers, providing a sense of family, are important for teacher retention, as teachers do not want to work and learn in isolation (Hadar & Brody, 2010).

Learning as a Novice

Research explains several approaches to professional learning occurring U.S. schools including: academic content-focused professional learning; mentoring support specific to novice teachers; the workshop model; and the collaborative approach to professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2009). The workshop model, while very common, is the least effective model (Darling-Hammond, 2009). Joyce (2004) asserted that workshops in and of themselves are not ineffective. Rather, the implementation of workshops is what causes teachers to perceive them as beneficial or not. For example, one study revealed that ninety percent of teachers have participated in a workshop or conference that was short-term (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Such short-term learning opportunities typically occur in schools, with little or no follow-up and little value to teachers. The same study revealed that teachers want professional learning that

helps them strengthen their content, and although the majority of teachers report participating in academic content-focused professional learning, the learning experience was not very meaningful.

This study used a collaborative approach to professional learning, relying on the skills and expertise of teachers and their colleagues, fostering collaboration, and borrowing from the instructional coaching approach to learning. As on-sight professional developers (Knight, 2004), instructional coaches help teacher set goals, help teachers learn and implement instructional strategies, and help monitor progress toward goals (Knight, 2015). The peer coaches in this study were positioned to do much of the same work. Peer coaches provided professional learning for novices by helping them set goals, collaboratively planning lessons, and facilitating reflection.

Peer Coaching

The Peer Coaching Relationship

In order to maximize the effects of instructional coaching, the instructional coach and the teacher should approach coaching as a partnership. Likewise, relying on Knight's (2011) partnership principles, this positions the novice teacher and the peer coach as equal partners working and learning together. It was important to this study that the peer coach was seen as a *peer* who supports the novice, rather than someone in a position of power to judge or give directives to the novice. The coaching relationship, therefore, emphasizes the following principles:

Equality. Both the novice and the peer coach were seen as equals, with both bringing value to the partnership and to the work.

Choice. The work (e.g.: the goals) was based on the needs of the novice. The novice determined his or her own goals. Rather than the peer coach telling the novice what he or she needs, the peer coach and the novice worked together to determine the goals and how to achieve them.

Voice. The novice teachers needed to feel comfortable sharing their concerns and professional needs with their peer coaches. Peer coaches, therefore, had to let novices know that their voices were heard.

Reflection. Novice teachers were to be given time to think critically about this work. The novice was to reflect by asking questions, examining their lessons, and reviewing their lessons with their peer coaches.

Dialogue. Conversations between peer coaches and novices were extremely important to this study. The peer coaches and novices were to have time to discuss their goals, plans, and strategies. The peer coach was to be careful to facilitate dialogue, ensuring that one person does not dominate the conversation (Knight, 2011). By relying on Knight's partnership principles, this study sought to help foster a collaborative, supportive environment that was free of judgment and focused on learning and improvement.

Instructional Coaching and Peer Coaching

Before discussing the specific details of peer coaching, it is important to elaborate on instructional coaching in general, as the two terms are closely connected. Instructional coaching is job-embedded professional learning designed to improve instruction (Knight, 2004). There can be several different approaches to instructional coaching; however, when done well, instructional coaching is a cycle including the following phases: the

coach and the teacher collaboratively setting a goal and selecting a teaching strategy; the teacher learning how to implement the strategy; and the coach monitoring the strategy implementation (Knight et al., 2015). Coaching is specific in that it targets particular goals, tasks, or areas of improvement (Dennen, 2004).

Joyce and Showers, who were some of the first researchers to introduce the coaching of teachers (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990; Slater & Simmons, 2001), described peer coaching as a mutually beneficial, collaborative learning process among teachers (Showers & Joyce, 1996). During this non-evaluative learning process, teachers may collaborate by reflecting on practice, solving problems, sharing ideas, and discussing strategies (Robbins, 1991). Teachers also collaboratively set instructional goals in the peer coaching process (Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens, & Stijnen, 2014). Originally introduced as an essential component of effective professional learning, coaching provides teachers with opportunities to apply newly learned skills and strategies (Joyce & Showers, 1980). While there may be different models of peer coaching, literature reveals several characteristics that effective peer coaching programs have in common. There are also common components included within peer coaching cycles. Those common characteristics and components are described below.

Characteristics of Peer Coaching

Trust. Trust is an essential element in fostering an environment of collaboration among teachers (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). By building trusting learning environments, peer coaching participants can more effectively learn from each other and improve the other components of peer coaching as well (Britton & Anderson, 2010). Teaching has been practiced as a traditionally private field that lacked collaboration among colleagues

(Watson, 2014). Peer coaching, however, when implemented effectively encourages trust and openness (Watson 2014). Trusting, collaborative learning environments, therefore, cultivate the *de-privatization* of teaching, creating safe places for teachers to openly and critically discuss their own and each other's practice (Cochran-Smith, 2012).

Non-Evaluative. Literature strongly states that peer coaching should never be about evaluating teachers (Showers & Joyce, 1996; Robbins, 1991). While peer coaching may encompass some of the components of supervising teachers (i.e. conferences and observations), peer coaching is not a supervisory or evaluative process (Showers & Joyce, 1996). When peer coaching has been used as a method of evaluating teachers, it is typically not successful in changing practice or encouraging collaboration (Slater & Simmons, 2001). Ensuring that peer coaching is not a part of an evaluative process improves the *trust* factor within the coaching pair, and it helps safeguard peer coaching as a learning process (Rice, 2012).

Collaborative. Meaningful collaboration gives teachers the opportunity to improve their practice and to form beneficial professional relationships with their peers (Britton & Anderson, 2010). By collaborating through peer coaching, both teachers benefit by learning from each other, although one teacher may be more novice than the other (Jewett & MacPhee, 2012). Some of the activities teachers may do together include planning lessons; developing units as a team; or developing and reviewing assessments. As they plan, they are thinking, discussing work, and learning collaboratively, making their process mutually beneficial (Showers & Joyce, 1996). While collaboration is important for all teachers, it is especially important for novice teachers, helping them to

grow, assisting them in forming collegial relationships, and making their overall induction a little easier (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Phases of Peer Coaching

The peer coaching process involves several activities between the teacher and coach that help the learner understand their practice and meet certain instructional goals. The major phases and activities in peer coaching include: setting goals; making observations; collecting, analyzing and discussing data; sharing feedback; and reflecting on the work.

Goal-Setting. Peer coaching is a form of professional learning, and a common standard of professional learning is that it is goal-oriented (Hooker, 2013). When teachers coach novice colleagues, therefore, clearly established goals are used to guide the work and measure progress. Research reveals several characteristics of goal-setting for instructional improvement. Three of the characteristics that are common throughout coaching literature are the following: goal setting is a collaborative process; goals are based on students' needs (Guskey, 2014); and goals address identified system needs. These characteristics helped guide peer coaching in this study.

Regarding peer coaching as a collaborative process, the teacher and the peer coach work together to establish the goals, and they discuss strategies that the novice can use to reach the goals (Knight, 2015). Fullan and Knight (2011) further emphasized the necessity of collaboration, stating that partnerships between the coach and teacher are more effective than top-down coaching in which the coach makes decisions (i.e. setting goals and determining strategies for meeting goals) for the teacher. Nelson and Slavit (2008, p. 103) stated that "an understanding of and ability to effectively move through an

inquiry process in support of a collaboratively agreed upon goal” is a foundation for collaborative inquiry. Peer coaching pairs who use this foundation as a goal-setting principle are, therefore, more likely to have a peer coaching process that is a collaborative partnership between the coach and the novice.

The second characteristic of goal setting that deals with the needs of students is perhaps the most important. Peer coaching pairs work together to set goals that will ultimately improve student achievement (Coninx, Kreijns, & Jochems, 2013). For example, there are certain instructional strategies that researchers commonly regard as effective for increasing student achievement including using multiple learning modalities and ensuring that lessons are student-centered. Such goals for improving student achievement should be the focus of the collaborative goal setting. Teachers, however, may also struggle with different classroom issues such as classroom management. In this case, the mentor and the teacher would select specific behaviors (strategies) to implement, followed-up by discussions and reflections of how the strategies worked, how the teacher saw students respond, or what the teacher may do differently.

Third, peer coaches and novices should set goals that fit within the needs of the school and system. Fullan and Knight (2011) stated that the schools within a district should function as one district with clear professional learning goals and working towards systemic improved instruction. Peer coaches, then, must understand the goals of their district and school improvement plans in order to help teachers set relevant goals. “*Goals* are...achievements that would create the future an organization desires while keeping its mission intact. Goals translate into *strategies* that outline the activities or game plan to

reach the goals, often described in broad, directional priorities” (Barkley, 2010, pp. 66-67).

Collecting Data & Making Observations. After the peer coaching pairs set goals and determine strategies for meeting the goals, the teacher begins to implement the strategy. During the implementation phase, the pair collects data, which may include the teacher’s own lesson plans and reflections about what is occurring in his or her classroom, the coach’s notes from classroom observations, and video recordings of the novice teaching a lesson. In this study, peer coaching pairs primarily collected three kinds of data: written lesson plans; classroom observation data, including videos; and written goals.

Classroom Observations. The practice of teaching has historically occurred in an isolated manner in which colleagues rarely collaborate to help their peers grow (Ingersoll, 2012). Teachers, therefore, often do not think of the term *classroom observation* as an opportunity to collaborate, learn, and grow. Rather, teachers associate *classroom observation* with its historically evaluative context. When conducting classroom observations, it is important for both the teacher and the observer to understand the purpose of the observations. In peer coaching, classroom observations are not tools to evaluate teachers. Instead, peer coaches observe novices to give them opportunities to develop and improve their instruction (Clark, 2012).

Grimm, Kaufman, and Doty (2014) stated that peer observations are teacher-driven, ensuring that the teacher’s role is that of a learner whose needs the observer works to meet through the observation process. They further described the following three important components of peer observations: focus meetings that occur prior to the

lesson; the actual classroom observation; and debriefing after the observation. Grim et al. (2014) described the focus meeting as a time that the teacher uses to develop a question about his or her specific practices. Other researchers (Pham & Heinemann, 2014) refer to the focus meeting as a pre-observation meeting during which the coach and the teacher decide the specific purpose of the observation and when the observation will occur. The observation is a time for the coach to note any occurrences relevant to the focus area including what the teacher and students are saying or doing (Rice, 2012). Finally, the debriefing session occurs after the observation. The coach and the novice discuss the collected data (written lesson plans, observation notes, and video recordings), engaging in collaborative dialogue about what the data means (Grim et al., 2014).

Video as Data. Video can be a powerful professional learning and instructional improvement tool, as it gives teachers an awareness of what they look like when they teach (Knight, 2014). There are several reasons that video is an effective tool for improvement and peer coaching. First, video recorded lessons help maintain a level of accuracy and impartiality (Knight, 2012) because they are primary sources that have not been interpreted by a human evaluator or observer. Second, videos can enhance discussions, particularly if the coach and the novice teacher watch the video together (Baecher et al., 2012). For example, the pair engages in collaborative discussion about what they see at specific points in the lesson. Additionally, learning is more effective when it is low-risk (Schon, 1983). Video reflection, therefore, provides non-threatening learning experiences compared to other professional learning, as teachers may view them privately (Stover, Kissel, Haag, and Shoniker, 2011). Finally, video can enhance reflection for novices (Calandra, Brantley-Dias, Lee, & Fox, 2009) by giving them the

opportunity to observe and critique themselves and understand the thought behind their instructional decisions (Sewall, 2009)

Data Analysis, Feedback & Reflection. After making observations and collecting data, the peer coaching pair collaboratively analyzes the data. This phase (analysis) in peer coaching includes: feedback through collaborative conversations, meaningful, timely, content-focused dialogue; and reflecting through critical thinking, answering questions, asking questions, and understanding how participants can apply the learning to future situations.

Feedback. Some people often use the word *feedback* interchangeably with other words including advice, praise, and evaluation (Wiggins, 2012). Wiggins (2012), however, advised that feedback may include these factors, but it cannot alone be any of these factors. Rather, feedback can simply be defined as “information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal” (Wiggins, 2012, p. 10). Wilkins (2011) described feedback as a type of professional learning that helps teachers become more efficient data driven practitioners. Given Wiggins’ definition and the general understanding that professional learning is designed to improve student achievement, then the purpose of feedback is to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Using the partnership approach to peer coaching, this study utilized feedback as a collaborative activity between the coach and the novice. The novice produced several pieces of data including written goals, lesson plans, reflection logs, and recordings of their lessons. While feedback often takes a top-down approach in which the coach is the authority (Knight, 2011), the coach and the novice collaboratively examined the novice’s data. The coach and the novice reviewed and discussed the novice’s goals, written lesson

plans, and videos. These data and conversations served as tools for novices to self-direct their professional growth and development. Peer coaches supported the process by asking questions, listening, and engaging in dialogue with the novice (Knight, 2011).

In addition to taking a partnership approach to feedback, peer coaches should also take steps to ensure that discussions are meaningful, helping achieve the goals of improved teaching and professional growth (Feeney, 2007). One way to ensure that discussions with feedback are meaningful and effective is by ensuring that the discussions occur frequently as a part of an ongoing process. Wilkins and Shin (2011) suggest three phases of feedback: a preconference in which the novice and the coach plan for instruction; the observation phase; and a post-observation conference to discuss the instruction. This ongoing dialogue between peers can strengthen instruction and give novices an added layer of support that traditional school leaders (administrators) do not provide.

Also, in order for feedback to be effective, it should be timely (Brookhart & Moss, 2015). Feedback is generally regarded as pointless if too much time lapses between the actual observation and the time that the observer (peer coach) follows up. The literature provided different perspectives regarding what constitutes optimal timing for feedback. On one hand, for example, feedback can be as immediate as during the teacher's instruction (Coninx et al., 2013). Coninx et al. (2013), however, cautioned that this kind of immediate feedback must be strategically provided, as to avoid disrupting the lesson. This kind of immediate feedback also does not allow for collaboration and dialogue about the lesson. Peer coaches in this study waited a short time to give the teacher the opportunity to reflect on his or her own lesson. The novice and the peer coach

then discussed the lesson together, using the observation form as a guide for the discussion.

Finally, peer coaches should focus on the content of their feedback – what they are actually discussing with teachers, ensuring that it meets the needs that the novices have identified for themselves. Dialogues must be personalized for each teacher and the lesson that they taught (Easton & Erchul, 2011). Personalizing the dialogue for the teacher means that it should speak specifically to what the coach and the novice observed the teacher and students doing (Coninx et al., 2013). In addition to personalizing feedback (Appendix B), the peer coaches need to ensure that they use descriptive language that is non-judgmental (Brookhart & Moss, 2015). For example, by describing the learning environment with concrete facts, the coach is perceived as a peer rather than an evaluator (Brookhart & Moss, 2015). Additionally, by stating the facts, the novice teacher can process the facts and make his or her own conclusions or judgment, enhancing the collaborative nature of the feedback (Charteris & Smardon, 2015).

Reflection. In order for learning experiences, such as peer coaching, to be meaningful, reflection must be included in the process (Hanson & Hoyos, 2015; Dewey, 1938). Dewey (1933, p. 118) defines reflection as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends.” Using Dewey’s work as a foundation for reflecting in education, the definition of *reflection* has expanded to include: critically thinking about and systematically making plans for the future; deeply understanding teaching as a practice; and as a tool for increasing teacher effectiveness (Fendler, 2003). In peer coaching, therefore, the teachers are learners (Robbins, 1991)

engaged in a process that uses reflection to help them grow professionally. It is important for the novices to have professional learning experiences that allow them to reflect, discovering answers to questions and generating additional questions (Kolb, 1984). These learning experiences may encompass teachers thinking about their practice, considering what they can do differently in teaching; and discovering strategies to more effectively support their students (Darling-Hammond, Newton, & Wei, 2013). Additionally, when teachers use written reflection they are able to utilize metacognition; think about how they can apply learning to future situations; and engage more deeply with their experiences (Dyment & O'Connell, 2014). Ultimately, the coaching experience should promote reflection in order to help teachers understand their own practice and own classroom, consequently enabling them to make better instructional decisions (Stover, Kissel, Haag, & Shoniker, 2011).

Summary

The literature on novice teachers showed that novices often do not have the ongoing support that they need for their growth, development, and success. Support for novice teachers encompasses induction programs, mentoring, and collaboration with peers. Such support should be job embedded, based on the needs of the teacher, and intentionally designed to provide risk-free, professional learning experiences that help teachers improve their practice.

Peer coaching literature revealed two major themes. The first theme is the importance of partnership in an effective peer coaching relationship. As equal partners in peer coaching, both the novice teacher and the peer coach should adhere to the principles of equality, choice, voice, reflection, and dialogue. Further, as equal partners, the

participants must be able to trust each other and operate with the purpose of true learning and collaboration rather than evaluation. The second theme is the cyclical, ongoing nature of peer coaching. The phases of the coaching cycle were revealed as setting goals; making observations; collecting, analyzing, and discussing data; and reflecting to enhance the learning experience.

There is a great deal of research on what makes teachers leave or stay in their schools (referenced in the introductory chapter), peer coaching, and teacher support. This study contributes to the existing body of literature by linking novice teachers to peer coaching as a support structure. It specifically examined collaborative inquiry-based peer coaching as a form of support. Examining the peer coaching relationship and the peer coaching process, it explored what happens when teachers engage in peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Introduction & Research Questions

This qualitative study examined the experiences and perceptions of novice teachers in a peer coaching setting. Specifically, the study examined how novice teachers described the peer coaching process and novice teachers' perspectives on the relationship between the novice and the peer coach. Interaction with novice teachers and attention to their environments help us more clearly understand the supports that novices need to feel like successful members of a professional community. I investigated novice teachers' experiences collaborating with peer coaches to set goals, plan and implement lessons, and reflect on practice. Specifically, novice teachers partnered with peer coaches to identify and work toward specific teaching goals that were aligned to the improvement goals of their schools and district.

Guided by the overarching question of what happens when novice teachers engage in peer coaching that utilizes collaborative inquiry, this study explored three specific questions about peer coaching.

1. How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in?
2. How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry?
3. What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships?

Research Approach and Tradition

This study employed a qualitative case study methodology to investigate, understand, and describe the peer coaching process and the relationship between novices

and peer coaches as perceived by novices. Case study is “an approach capable of examining simple or complex phenomenon, with units of analysis varying from single individuals to large corporations and businesses” (Berg, 2007, p. 283). This study explored teachers’ experiences with collaborative inquiry and their perceptions about peer coaching and professional support. Case studies also typically provide a rich and deep understanding of phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), which is why it was appropriate for this study, as it was designed to uncover teachers’ experiences in a peer coaching process that used collaborative inquiry.

One of the most important decisions in case study is to determine the *case* that the researcher will study (Yin, 2009). In this study, the case was represented by the group of novice teachers participating in peer coaching. This *case* represented a *bounded system*, with a “limit to the number of people who could be interviewed,” and it used various methods of data collection (Merriam, 2009, p. 41). I conducted an in-depth study of 11 novice teachers’ experiences with peer coaching including goal-setting, feedback, collaborative planning, and reflection. Case study lends itself to more deeply understanding such experiences. Case study is also naturally exploratory and provides insight into phenomena (Gerring, 2007). This case, the group of teachers, was bounded by the peer coaching process, while the units of analysis were the individual teachers’ experiences with the process.

Research Setting

I conducted this study in a rural school district in the southeastern United States. Southern School District has five schools, one of which is high achieving as indicated by its standardized test scores. It is the only start up charter school in the district. This high

achieving school has a teacher retention rate greater than ninety percent, and its novice teachers did not participate in the district's peer coaching support process. This school, compared to other schools in the district, also has a small minority population, a low poverty percentage, and low percentages of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The other four schools in the district have demographics, which are almost the direct opposite of the high achieving school. The four remaining schools are characterized by low achievement, high poverty, and large minority populations. Additionally, these four schools experienced low teacher retention (less than seventy percent for the last several years). I sought participants from these four schools, and teachers from three of the schools ultimately participated in this study. I describe each of the participating schools in Table 3.

Table 3

Detailed Description of Research Setting By School

	School A	School B	School C
Grade Band	Grades K-5	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Student Achievement - Score on State Accountability Measure (Grade out of 100 points)	63	56	59
Student Demographics (Race/Ethnicity)			
Student Enrollment	444	360	482
Black	76%	55%	73%
White	7%	26%	16%
Hispanic	15%	14%	7%
Asian	<1%	<1%	<1%
2/More Races	2%	4%	3%
Other Student Demographics			
SWD	10.90%	14%	12.70%
Limited English Prof.	8%	6%	1%
Eligible for Free/ Reduced Meals	73%	69%	58%
Faculty			
Number of Teachers	36	30	32
Average Years of Teaching Experience (Overall)	9	11	10
Number of Induction Phase Teachers	14	15	12
Teacher Retention (Percentage)	61%	60%	62%

School and district leaders in this research setting have been exploring ways to increase teacher retention. They have developed teacher mentoring programs, created opportunities for new teachers to come together in social settings, provided instructional support through instructional coaches, and recently conducted attrition studies to determine the causes of the high attrition rates. This study did not seek to understand attrition; nor did it seek to offer peer coaching as a remedy to high attrition. This site, however, was intentionally selected in order to understand from the site's current teachers how peer coaching affects their sense of support and their ability to build professional relationships with peer coaches.

Participants

I purposefully selected a sample of eleven participants for this study. I invited participants from four schools to participate in the study, and teachers from three schools agreed to participate. The participants either had three years or less experience in the following: the profession, their schools, the district, their grade levels or content areas. All of the teachers worked with peer coaches or mentors as a part of the teacher induction program. The district had approximately 30 teachers who were in the induction phase. Five teachers participated in individual interviews, and six teachers participated in a focus group interview. No one participated in all three data collection methods, and one person participated in both the individual interview and the focus group interview. I describe each of the participants in Table 4. Certain details about the participants have been omitted to protect their anonymity.

Table 4

Detailed Description of Research Participants

Participant	Description	Participation in Study
1	7 - 10 years' experience in a different school district; high school language arts	Individual interview; reflection log
2	7 - 10 years' experience in a different school district and different grade level; high school science	Individual interview
3	1 - 3 years' experience in the profession; middle grades	Focus group
4	1 - 3 years' experience in the profession; elementary grades	Focus group, reflection log
5	1 - 3 years' experience in the profession; elementary grades	Focus group, reflection log
6	More than 10 years' experience in a different school district; high school language arts	Individual interview; reflection log
7	More than 10 years' experience in a different school district; high school language arts	Video reflection
8	1 - 3 years' experience in the profession and in a different school; elementary grades	Individual interview, focus group
9	7 - 10 years' experience in a different school district and different grade level; elementary grades	Individual interview; reflection log
10	1-3 years' experience in the profession and in a different school district, grade level, and content; middle grades	Focus group
11	More than 10 years' experience in a different school district; elementary grades	Focus group; reflection log

The participants were a representative sampling of the district's teacher population. They had a diversity of teaching experiences, including high school, middle

school, and elementary teachers. They teach in various content areas, and the group included both regular education and special education teachers. Regarding the participants' support, prior to this study, the district paired novice teachers with mentors who helped them acclimate to their schools. This study engaged the teachers with peer coaches regarding instruction. Once per month the novice teachers either met for professional learning within their buildings (to discuss topics relevant to school and district expectations and topics relevant their needs) or they met with other novices throughout the district for such discussions.

Positionality and the Role of the Researcher

The purpose of this section is to transparently state information about my background, related experiences, and position in the research setting. I acknowledge an insider's perspective of the community, the school district, some of the participants, and the culture of the research setting (Unluer, 2012). This section specifically discusses the local school community, my experiences in the school district and my current positionality, and how my positionality and perception of the community's needs influenced my role as the researcher.

The schools in this study are significantly different from the local community regarding their demographics. For example, as noted in Table 3, the schools in this study have predominantly minority populations. The population of the local community, however, is about 62% white and 38% minority. Additionally, the average poverty rate of the schools in the study is much higher than the poverty rate of the local community.

Figure 1 shows the contrast between the schools and the community regarding poverty.

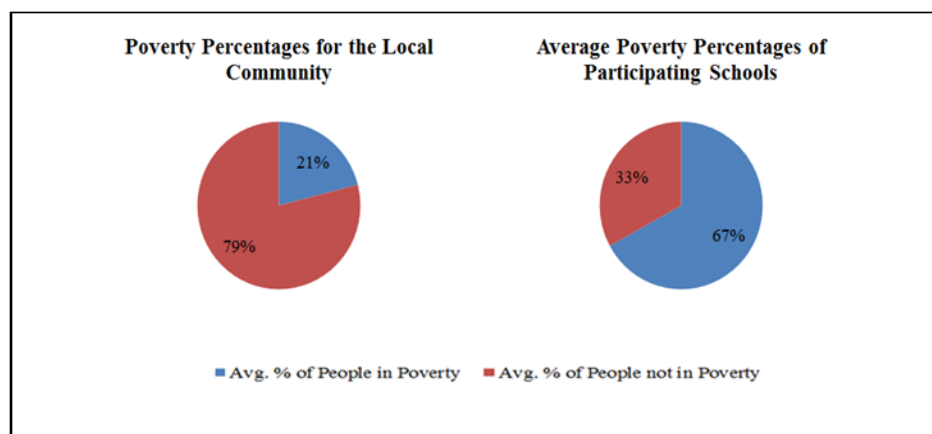


Figure 1 – Comparison of Poverty Percentages of Schools and Local Community

The schools' demographics are characteristic of schools which typically struggle with both high teacher attrition and low student achievement.

The schools in this study need significant improvements in academic achievement. For example, Table 3 shows that all of the schools have accountability scores that are lower than seventy percent. These accountability scores are largely determined by the percent of students passing state exams and the percent of students who are college and career-ready based on other academic indicators (i.e.: high school graduation rate and percent of students passing their academic courses). One of the most effective ways to improve student achievement, especially in high-need schools, is through stable, effective teacher workforces (Darling-Hammond, 2010). By intentionally focusing on new teachers and their growth and development, the district hopes to more effectively support novice teachers. Supporting novice teachers is one step toward addressing the teacher retention rate, therefore, stabilizing the workforce.

Driven by a sense of community and a desire to serve and give back, all of my professional experience has been in this local school district. If good school systems truly contribute to good communities, then working in this school district is not only a service to the children and the school district, but also to the community at large. I currently hold

a leadership position in the local school district where I collected data for this study. I also live in the local community and graduated from high school in the same system. My roles in the system have included classroom teacher, dropout prevention coordinator, principal, and currently district administrator. Understanding the culture of the community and the school district provides me with an insider's perspective as a researcher, which can strengthen the study. This understanding also had the potential to influence my objectivity because it is impossible to completely rid myself of my prior knowledge and perspective based on my past experiences. I took steps, therefore, to help bracket my presuppositions, as to lessen the possibility of them impacting my analysis (Crotty, 1998). For example, I wrote the positionality statement prior to reading the transcribed data, and I retained the statement throughout the analysis. I also asked participants to explain their responses during the interviews.

Recognizing that about one third of the district's teachers were leaving the school district, as shown in Table 3, this project began as a study of teacher attrition. Further study and review of literature revealed that teacher attrition was possibly a symptom of another problem – lack of teacher support -- and the study evolved into an examination of what causes teacher attrition. As discussed in the literature review, the lack of support is a leading cause of high attrition. This study, therefore, explored supportive environments through peer coaching.

Regarding teacher support, I have had experience with coaches and mentors. As a new teacher, I had a mentor who helped me acclimate to the school setting. We, however, had very few and limited conversations about instruction. I did not have a peer coach or an instructional coach to provide assistance. In my last two positions, I had an assigned

coach and a mentor, both of which worked in different school districts. I found one of the experiences to be only marginally helpful. The other experience was very beneficial, as we continue to have a professional relationship today. In the relationship that was most beneficial, my mentor held the exact same position as I held; her prior leadership experiences were very similar to my own; and she was very knowledgeable of the work. My experience, therefore, contributes to my belief in the possibilities of peer relationships and my desire to further study these peer relationships.

The needs of the system and my experiences in the system influenced me as the researcher in several ways. First, the needs of the system and my experiences gave me passion and the drive to do this work. While teachers everywhere need supportive environments, I feel a sense of responsibility and reward in working to improve my own school district. Second, I had to remain cognizant of my roles as both a local administrator and a researcher at all times, especially as I interviewed the participants. Having an understanding of the culture is important, but it was also important to make sure that I did not assume anything. For example, I had to ask several follow-up questions for the purpose of understanding and clarifying what the participants really meant by their responses. Finally, as a leader (assistant superintendent with a particular level of authority) in the district, it was important to ensure that my work as the researcher and that of an administrator remained separate. I found myself stating several times – to the point that I felt that I was overstating -- that participation in the study was completely optional so that no one felt obligated to participate. I emphasized that participation (in any parts of the study) was an option, and I emphasized myself as a student working to improve the district. The participants seemed comfortable sharing their experiences with

me, and some of them even stated a similar desire of seeing the district support and retain its teachers.

Roles of the Peer Coaches

In this study, peer coaches facilitated several activities with novice teachers. Those activities included setting goals; observing novices; providing feedback; planning and discussing lessons; and reflecting on teaching. While this study explored the experiences of the novices rather than that of the peer coaches, it is important to understand what the peer coaches did and what they did not do to support the novices. Peer coaches were not to act as instructional coaches in this study. Peer coaches' roles were completely non-evaluative, and the initiative was structured so that they could not be seen as evaluators in any way. Their roles were different from the district's instructional coaches in the following ways: instructional coaches were full-time coaches, while peer coaches were full-time teachers just as the novices; teachers sometimes perceived the district's instructional coaches as a part of administration (perhaps because they are no longer classroom teachers), while peer coaches were positioned as equal peers; and instructional coaches often report their coaching conversations back to their principals, conversations between novices and peer coaches were confidential.

A description of the roles of the peer coaches provides context for understanding the novices' experiences. The following list of activities expounds on the roles of peer coaches as they supported novices. The activities were based on characteristics of peer coaching described in the literature review (e.g.: Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Clark, 2012; Nelson et al., 2008). The activities also contribute to supportive school environments described in introduction the study and listed in Table 1.

1. Goal Setting with the Novice Teacher – The peer coaching pair collaborated to set classroom-specific goals for the novice. Peer coaches facilitated conversations with novices about their students, teaching, and data, and novices ultimately wrote goals that the novice determined to work toward. They used a S.M.A.R.T.E goal template, in which the “e” equals equity as described by Aguilar (2013). (Appendix A)
2. Collaboratively Planning a Lesson – After the novice teacher selected a goal, he or she planned a lesson with the assistance of a peer coach. As supported by literature, the peer coach listened, asked questions about the lesson, and encouraged the novice to ask questions (Knight, 2011).
3. Observing the Novice Teach a Lesson – The peer coach observed the lesson in the classroom. Peer coaches could have watched a video recording of the lesson. Including the observation gave the peer coach and the novice a data point for discussion, reflection, and the novice’s self-monitoring of progress toward the goal.
4. Facilitating Reflection – The peer coach and the novice reflected by discussing the written and executed lesson. The peer coach also encouraged the novice teacher to watch the video of his or her lesson, taking notes, and responding to prompts about the lesson.
5. Providing Feedback – The peer coach engaged in dialogue with the novice about their written lessons and the implementation.

Professional Learning for the Peer Coaches

All peer coaches participated in professional learning to ensure that they understood their roles as coaches and to ensure consistency of practice with the peer coaching process. The peer coaches had to read and discuss several articles, which are listed below along with the purpose for including them in their professional learning.

- First, it was important to help establish a need for supporting novice teachers. The first article that teachers read (prior to any formal meetings or professional learning sessions) was Cochran-Smith's (2012) "A Tale of Two Teachers." This article was included to help teachers begin thinking about teacher support; provide context for the district's peer coaching program; and help them see how instructional support or the lack of support can affect novice teachers.
- Another article that peer coaches read and discussed was Knight's (2011) "What Good Coaches Do." The purpose in using this article was to establish the peer coaching relationship as a partnership. It was important for the coaches to understand that the program did not expect them to act as experts imparting knowledge to new teachers. The purpose of including this article was to help peer coaches see themselves as facilitators of learning and to make them more comfortable in their roles as coaches.
- Excerpts from Robbins' (1991) "How to Plan and Implement a Peer Coaching Program" were used to provide a basic definition of peer coaching.
- Excerpts from Donohoo's (2013) "Collaborative Inquiry for Educators" were used to emphasize the importance of collaboration, asking questions, and setting goals.

Peer coaches were encouraged to read some of the articles independently, and they also participated in a three-hour professional learning session that the researcher facilitated. The session included direct instruction that used the following strategies: questions and answers; the teachers developing their descriptions of teacher support; a discussion of some of the articles; teachers' reflections of their experiences with mentoring and coaching; and a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation consisted of the following topics: learning communities; goal-setting with the novice teacher (Appendix A); collaboratively planning a lesson; observing a lesson and providing feedback through dialogue (Appendix B); facilitating reflection; and the use of video.

Gathering Data

This study used multiple data collection methods to address the research questions. In order to understand the coaching process and the novices' perceptions of the peer coaching relationship, I used the following data collection methods: included individual interviews, a focus group interview, and reflection logs completed by the novice teachers.

Interviews

Before conducting the study, I determined the units of study – new teachers' experiences – and research questions. Interviews are very effective in case studies, and they are an efficient way to learn what is on the minds of people (Merriam, 2009). The purpose of the interviews was to help reveal teachers' thoughts about the peer coaching process and their perceptions about supportive environments as they relate to peer coaching. The interview questions (Appendix C) were developed to address the research questions, giving participants the opportunity to reflect on and share their experiences in

the induction process. The interviews, on average, lasted about forty minutes. The following process was used to develop the interview questions:

- Reviewing and analyzing the research question. I read, re-read, and restated each of the interview questions. Taking this step helped ensure that the questions were clearly stated and that they addressed the purpose of the study.
- Aligning the research questions. The first research question is very broad, followed by three specific research questions. (Tables 5 and 6 show the alignment of the research questions to the interview questions, and they are also included in appendices C and D). I ensured that there were a balanced number of interview questions among the research questions. I ensured that the interview questions were mostly open-ended, as to obtain more data from the participants. I also ensured that most of the questions allowed the opportunity for probing and follow-ups (i.e.: Explain your response. Why?) It can be difficult to prepare probing questions in advance because such questions are based on the participant's response (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003; Merriam, 2009). While the general interview questions were prepared in advance, I prepared to ask probing follow-up questions as the need arose. I prepared for the participant's responses by maintaining a list of potential probes (Arthur & Nazroo, 2003). For example, I asked for clarity, additional details on subjects as needed, and asked participants to explain what they meant by certain answers (Seidman, 2006). I audio recorded and transcribed all of the interviews except one in which the participant asked that I did not record the interview. With the permission of the participants, I followed up with them via telephone, as needed, to ask for clarity and further explanations on some of the responses.

Table 5

Aligning Individual Interview Questions to Research Questions

RQ 1: How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in?	RQ 2: How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry?	RQ3: What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships?
How do you define teacher support?	What would be an ideal professional learning environment?	How frequently do you communicate with your peer coach?
How would you describe your recent peer coaching experience?	How has collaborative inquiry through peer coaching helped me in my teaching? How did goal-setting help me in my teaching? Collaborative planning? Discussing my lesson with my coach? Using video? Reflecting on my lessons?	Do you feel comfortable asking your peer coach for help? Why or why not?
Talk about your thoughts on the coaching process: goal-setting, collaborative planning, feedback, video, and reflection.		Has your peer coach helped you solve any teaching and learning problems? Explain/describe.
When you communicate with your peer coach, what topics have you discussed?		
Who initiates dialogue between you and your peer coach?		
If you were a peer coach, what are some of the things that you would do to help a novice teacher?		What do you see as the benefits of the peer coaching relationship?
		Would you be willing to become a peer coach to a teacher in the future? Why or why not?

Table 6

Aligning Focus Group Questions to Research Questions

RQ 1: How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in?	RQ 2: How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry?	RQ3: What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships?
What do you believe about professional learning?	Describe the professional learning that you have participated in this year?	I would like to hear about the peer coaching relationship. Describe the professional relationship between you and your peer coach.
Describe the professional learning that you have participated in this year?	What are your short-term or long-term teaching goals?	
I would like to hear about the structures that the district has in place to support novice teachers. In what ways has the peer coaching process been helpful to you?	Is there anyone who has assisted you in achieving your teaching goals?	Do you feel that you and your coach were equal partners? Explain.
	Has your peer coach helped you with your teaching goals? If yes, how have they helped?	
Do you feel that the peer coaching process has fallen short of supporting you? If yes, in what ways? Explain.	Describe the observations/feedback that you and your coach have discussed.	
	Regarding videos, what did you think about recording your lesson and seeing yourself teach?	
What else would you like to share about your peer coaching experience?	What else would you like to share about your peer coaching experience?	

Focus Group

Focus groups are a method of data collection in which people meet together to discuss a topic about which they all have knowledge (Merriam, 2009). Focus groups may have between six and ten participants (Merriam, 2009). The focus group interview (Appendix D) occurred after the individual interviews, giving the researcher the opportunity to synthesize the study by looking at the whole group rather than its individual parts (participants) alone (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). The focus group consisted of six members, as maintaining lower numbers gave all of the participants more opportunity and time to contribute to the discussion. The focus group interview lasted about one hour. I assumed the role of facilitator, and the focus group session was audio recorded.

I conducted the focus group interviews on school campus (at the district's professional learning room), a location that was easy for participants to access but also private and free from interruptions. The participants and I were the only people present for the interview. Prior to the focus group interview, I developed and shared a list of guidelines (Appendix E) with the participants. Guidelines included the following: everyone having the opportunity to participate; being polite; and reminding the group of the importance of confidentiality of the discussion.

Documents

It is difficult to determine what a document is or is not; however, documents may broadly be defined as *products* that contain a situated content and may be used in many different ways (Prior, 2003). This study utilized the following documents for data collection and analysis:

- Video reflections (Appendix F) that the novice completed based on a lesson that was video recorded. I recommended to the teacher that the peer coach record the lesson; however, teachers could have chosen someone different. The teacher and the coach had the option of watching the video and reflecting on it together, or they could have watched it separately and then the discuss it. The purpose of the Critical Incident (Video) Reflection Form was to help them reflect on the lesson together and provide data regarding the perceptions of this key coaching experience.
- Reflection logs (Appendix G) that novice teachers maintained to reflect on their experiences throughout the peer coaching process. The reflection logs were designed to be meaningful for both me as the researcher and for the teacher, as experiences become more meaningful once people reflect on them (Dewey, 1933). The logs asked teachers to think about their professional learning needs; think about their progress towards their goals; and reflect on their experiences with their peer coaches.

By using multiple sources of data, as shown in Table 7, I was able triangulate and substantiate the data, which enhances the study (Berg, 2007). Peer coaching pairs produced these documents continually throughout the peer coaching process.

Table 7

Types of Data

Individual interviews	Focus groups	documents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4 interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in 42 pages ○ 1 participant asked that the interview not be audio recorded. All responses were typed as the participant responded to the questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 focus group interview was conducted with 6 participants. The interview was audio recorded and transcribed in 17 pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Teacher Learning Reflection Logs • 1 Video (critical incident) reflection.

Privacy of the Data

I took several steps to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of participants and all data collected. Electronic data was stored on a flash drive in a Microsoft Word document and encrypted with a password. Hard copies of data were stored in a locked file cabinet in my office. Participants were only identified by pseudonyms (i.e. Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.). All files were maintained for the duration of the study. At the end of the study, all electronic files were deleted, and paper files were shredded.

Timeline for Collecting Data

The peer coaching and data collections were conducted over a twelve-week period from August 2016 to October 2016 as outlined below:

Week 1 – Novice teachers met with peer coaches to review their progress; discuss the needs of the novice; and schedule an observation.

Week 2-4 – Novices and peer coaches collaboratively planned a lesson. Novices began teaching lessons, and peer coaches observed novices and provided feedback using the walkthrough tool.

Week 5-6 - Novices continued teaching, and peer coaches continued observations and feedback.

Week 7 – Novices began completing reflection logs.

Week 8-9 - Novices and peer coaches met again to discuss progress.

Week 10-12 - Novices continued teaching, and peer coaches continued observations and feedback.

After peer coaches and novice teachers had completed a cycle of peer coaching, I began interviewing the research participants, analyzing the data, and writing the final chapters.

Data Analysis

I used inductive analysis methods in this study, heavily focusing on themes, patterns, and codes within the data. As a strategy, I followed the analytic procedures outlined by Marshall and Rossman (2006). These procedures include organizing the data, immersing myself in the data, developing themes and categories, coding, interpreting the data, searching for alternative understandings and writing the report.

- Organizing the Data – I entered basic descriptive information about the data into a table (Appendix H). The information included the date and place of the collection; the type of collection (e.g. focus group, interview); who participated; and key words from the data.

- Immersing in the Data – I read through the data several times looking for new findings with each read. I began to end the data analysis process once I recognized patterns across participant responses.
 - Coding the Data – A part of immersing in the data includes coding the data. I applied codes to the data in a way that made sense given the information that I had. For example, I color coded the data. As I coded the data, I looked for developing themes by taking notes and reading through the notes for patterns.
 - Developing Themes – I took notes from the data. I read through the notes to look for patterns, trends, and words or synonyms that were repeated frequently. Once I stopped recognizing new patterns and the codes became repetitive, (once I stopped learning new information), saturation had occurred (Saldana, 2009).
- Interpreting the Data – During this phase, I began to determine how the data would be used by asking questions about how the information informs the study. How significant is the data to the study?
- Searching for Alternative Understandings – During this phase I asked questions of my findings. What else could this data mean?
- Writing the Report – During this phase the data is summarized, and the theoretical constructs of the study are revisited.

Trustworthiness

One of the limitations of this study, due to the nature of its qualitative design is that it lacked generalizability. Exploring and learning about the lived experience of even the

smallest group, however, can illuminate truths about experiences of people in general (Hycner, 1985). It is also important to remain mindful that this limitation does not diminish the importance or strength of the study. In order to ensure credibility “researchers must continually ask the question: Do I, the researcher, really understand and describe what I am studying in the same way that the people who live it do? Did I really get it right?” (LeCompte, 2000, p. 152). I answered these questions, reflected on participants’ responses, and reflected on my analysis through a reflexive research journal. Using a reflexive journal also helped limit my bias as the researcher. One way that I ensured that my research met the criteria described by LeCompte is by using the research participants to review my understanding of the data (Hycner, 1985). Using the participants included actively listening to them and asking follow-up questions when I did not understand their responses during the actual interview (Seidman, 2006). It also included following up with the participants via telephone.

Several additional steps were taken to ensure trustworthiness and its components in this study. Regarding transferability, *rich, thick* descriptions were used throughout the study (Merriam, 2009). For example, explicit, descriptive details are used to describe the research setting, participants, and findings.

Using the three sources of data, – documents, individual interviews, and a focus group—contribute to the credibility and confirmability. Berg (2007) emphasizes the importance of using more than one data source. He states that researchers have at least one preferred method of study, and that preference can cause them to view reality from certain perspectives (Berg, 2007). Using the multiple sources is one way to avoid

imposing one's own perspectives on reality. It allows for triangulation, increasing trustworthiness and credibility (Denzin, 1978).

When a study has credibility, then it will likely have dependability also, as the two components are closely connected (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation, therefore, also contributes to dependability. In addition to triangulating the data, I ensured that the processes (coaching, data collection, and data analysis) of the study were detailed. Such details can contribute to the feasibility of a future researcher repeating the study (Shenton, 2003).

Ethics

This study utilized human subjects to understand feedback, goal setting, and mentoring in new teachers' experiences. In addition to using human subjects, the study used confidential documents produced by the participants. The researcher took the following steps to reduce risks and protect the participants and their confidentiality:

- Providing full disclosure to all participants, ensuring that they understand the purpose and requirements of the study;
- Securing IRB approval from the university;
- Securing appropriate approval from school district officials;
- Obtaining signed consent forms from participants prior to participation;
- Maintaining in a safe place, and electronic documentation was password protected;
- Informing participants that they could opt out of the study at any time; and
- Utilizing Pseudonyms in writing and presentations to reference specific cases being studied. No other names were used.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology used to explore novice teachers' experiences with peer coaching that used collaborative inquiry. The chapter included a discussion of the research questions; approach and traditions; setting; participants; and the positionality and role of the researcher. It also included a detailed description of the peer coaches and their professional learning in order to provide an understanding of how the coaches supported the novice teachers. Collecting and analyzing qualitative data from eleven participants, this section presented a case study method to understand novice teachers' experiences, which are shared in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Peer coaching for novice teachers is one way to help create a supportive environment for teachers as they transition into their roles. Implementing collaborative inquiry into the peer coaching process contributes to teachers' professional knowledge; encourages them to be more reflective; and positions them to engage in collaborative dialogue about instructional matters. Chapter 4 describes the findings of this peer coaching study that were discovered through data collection and analysis. This study utilized three data sources to understand the peer coaching process at Southern School District. Those data sources were individual interviews, a focus group interview, and reflective documents from the participants.

This chapter is organized according to the three research questions of the study. Each major section represents responses to a particular research question. Research question one is addressed through two themes: *time matters* and *professional dialogue*. Research question two is addressed through three themes: *emphasizing students' needs*; *self-evaluation and reflection*; and *the participants' 2Cs* – communication and collaboration. Research question three has two themes: *pairing matters* and *partnership*.

This study examined peer coaching that occurred over a twelve-week process at Southern School District. It included 11 participants across various grade levels and content areas. In addition to representing a diversity of content areas and grade levels, the group members also represented different races, genders, and years of experience. Participant demographics included the following: 6 white teachers and 5 black teachers;

and 8 male and 3 female. As referenced in Table 4, five teachers were novice in the profession; 3 teachers had 7-10 years' experience in other districts; and 3 teachers had more than 10 years' experience. This study does not attach the demographics to individual participants, as to protect the participants' anonymity. Including this information in a general sense, however, provides additional context for the group of people responding to the research questions.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 was how do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in? Two themes emerged in response to this question. The themes were *time matters* and *professional dialogue*. Following the themes that address the research questions, the chapter includes two additional themes.

Theme One: Time Matters

Although time is considered vital for the success of novice teachers, many schools provide little to no time for novices to plan and reflect on their practice (Kaufman, & Al-Bataineh, 2011). As the theme of *time matters* emerged in this study, teachers reported that time was important for two purposes. The first purpose of time was for planning effective lessons with their coaches, and the other purpose was for processing their own learning.

Time for Collaborative Planning

While the participants reported several benefits of the peer coaching process (described in the next sections), several data points revealed that some novices did not believe that they had enough time with their peer coaches. For example, when asked how

the district could support novice teachers, Participant 5, during the focus group interview, stated the following:

“My mentor and I, we ran into the same thing of actually having time to actually work together. For me to have that time to just ask questions, and to talk. There's just no time in the day because our plannings are different. If we do IEP meetings after school or other meetings, it's hard to find that time to just one on one, quiet space, talk uninterrupted. Timing. Schedule.”

Another focus group participant, Participant 11 stated the following: “It's very hard sometimes to have time to sit down and get questions answered.” The responses indicate the significance of providing set-aside time for teachers to participate in peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry. The teachers in this study, because some of them did not have common planning time, had to find time on their own to engage in this practice. As stated, their collaborative work often had to occur outside of regular school hours.

While some participants reported that they did not have enough time, other participants, reported that they found their collaborative planning time sufficient and helpful. Below, one focus group participant, Participant 8, compared her peer coaching experience at one of Southern School District's schools this year to her experience the previous year in a different school in the same district.

“I think my collaboration is a little bit differently because last year I was at a small school. I was a brand new teacher. Not just new to the county but new to teaching in general. I was the only one that was in my subject to my grade. My mentor teacher was a different grade. Same subject, but it was hard for me to plan with her because she had a different planning period than I did. I had after school

activities and she had kids that she had. Getting to collaborate with her wasn't realistic for us.

Since I have come to a bigger school now, my peer coach is my same age. She is the same grade, same subject, same planning period. I think that it has really helped me this year.

...It's real easy for me to see where she [peer coach] is and set goals for my students. I like how I can go ask her, "Well, how did you get your kids here. What can I do to do that?" Or one of us has questions about the wording of a standard before we implement it, or an assessment and how it works. All I have to do is go right next door during my planning period or after school and we'll sit there and have a whole conversation about it."

Similarly, Participant 2 stated in her individual interview that she spoke with her peer coach "all the time" about lesson plans, assessments, standards, and student data.

Participant 9 also had a similar experience, stating of collaborative planning, "We talk about standards that we are focusing on. We look for activities together, which makes planning easier." The two participants who reported that they had sufficient time for the process shared a common planning period with their coaches. These participants were, therefore, able to participate in the coaching process as a part of the regular school day. The participants' comments about time show that although their experiences with time for peer coaching were different, the theme of *time* was important to them. Planning time was a significant component of the peer coaching process that could affect how the novices described their experience with the process.

Time for Processing Learning

When professional learning is effective, it gives teachers the opportunity to process their learning; think critically about the learning; ask questions; and apply their learning to their realities (Easton, 2008). Collaborative inquiry-based peer coaching, then, as a form of professional learning should occur over time in such a way that the teachers understand and process their dialogues, plans, goals, and progress. For example, when asked on the Teacher Learning Reflection Log about applying professional learning and coaching experiences to practice, Participant 5 stated that the planning time and collaboration gave her more confidence in her work. Similarly, Participant 9 stated: “I am implementing almost everything I’m learning. I’m starting to feel more comfortable with teaching the math problem of the day, guided reading, math framework, etc.” Participant 8 stated the following in her interview, “I’ll ask questions like, what can I do to improve? What is it that I need to work on? I do a lot of self-reflection too.” All of these statements demonstrated the importance of processing time in the ongoing process of peer coaching. Regarding processing time, this need can be summarized in the words of Participant 10 when she described an ideal professional learning environment:

“I love professional learning. I agree that you should always be learning new things, and be open to those new things. The issue that I’m finding in schools these days is that they are trying maybe too many different methods at one time and it can be overwhelming to both the teacher and the student when it would be nice to maybe stick to one thing. See how it works. Be super rigorous with that one method and see if it works, so to speak, and go with that rather than trying to

do sixty gazillion things at once..... I like learning new things, but you just have to make sure you're giving it the time of day”.

Theme 2: Professional Dialogue

Dialogue is a type of communication in which the coach and the teacher share ideas, think critically, and value each other’s opinions (Knight, 2011). Professional dialogue arose as a dominant theme across data sources. The participants frequently cited examples of conversations or dialogues that they had shared with their peer coaches. Most participants reported that their dialogues were about instructional strategies and how to help individual students (described in the next section).

Instructional Strategies

Equipping novice teachers with instructional strategies and providing them time to apply the strategies is an important part of their growth and development, which contributes to their success in the field of education (Darling-Hammond, 2009). When asked about their needs and professional learning topics on the Teacher Learning Reflection Logs, four out of six teachers identified the need for help with some form of instructional strategies. Their responses are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Teacher Reflection Log Responses about their Learning and Coaching Needs

Participant	Response to question: What topic would I like covered during my next professional learning community?	Response to question: Regarding teaching and learning, how can a peer coach help me over the next several weeks?
Participant 1	I am teaching students with learning styles and behaviors that I have not encountered before in the classroom. So any help on disciplining strategies that can help or support teaching strategies would be something that I would find helpful and interesting.	Giving suggestions and modeling strategies to help with my goals of being more effective with my disciplining, classroom management, and differentiation.
Participant 4	In depth Fountas and Pinnell (Reading Strategies)	A peer coach could give me solid advice and strategies on how to handle so serious behavior problems...
Participant 9	I would like a review of doing a running record – Fountas and Pinnell (Reading Strategy).	My mentor is doing an excellent job with making sure I have resources for the lesson, understand what I should be teaching and how I should be teaching.
Participant 11	Using SmartBoard – how to create activities...	Using accommodations, strategies for use in working with nonverbal students (or students with limited communication).

The teachers in this study reported multiple dialogues about instructional strategies with their peer coaches. Each of the novice's responses to the questions above either included the word *strategies*, or some other language indicating the need for help with instructional strategies. Their responses show that they wanted and needed more than acclimation. They wanted advice, suggestions, and ideas about how to improve their instruction. They wanted someone to help them with the work of teaching and learning.

In addition to the emphasis on strategies in the reflection logs, interviews revealed that many of the dialogues between novices and peer coaches were about instructional strategies. During the focus group interview, Participant 8 described the dialogues about strategies with her peer coach in the following way:

"If there was something that she didn't necessarily agree with that I was doing, she would kind of approach it in a really good way. Not like, "Oh, you're doing this wrong." It was, "Hey, I see that you're trying. I see that you're taking this approach. This is what I've done that has worked with my students, do you think it would work with yours," type thing. I really like that. Especially because, like I said, she is my age as well, which I think helps."

Another focus group participant, Participant 3, remarked:

Mine [peer coach] is my co-teacher so she's in with me all the time. We're constantly talking. Even sometimes when I'm like, "That strategy didn't work, did it?" She's like, "Nope." Or if that went really well, a lot of the times she'll say, "That went really well."

Participant 3's comments are an example of the teachers beginning to reflect on if the strategies worked.

Another focus group participant, Participant 10, who struggled with behavior management described dialogue with her peer coach and how the strategies that the coach shared did not help her. The participant's responses are below.

Participant 10: One of my goals is for, it depends on the class. The particular class I'm thinking about is seventh grade. They are a particularly rowdy class, and they're very hard to manage. That's for every teacher. Me, personally, I really would like to see myself improve in terms of figuring out how to manage that class better for their benefit as well as my own. I feel like I've had some support in terms of ... They've tried to have the counselor come in and give them moral lessons, so to speak.

Interviewer: Character Ed?

Participant 10: Character Ed, I guess, of sorts, and things like that. It has unfortunately not been very effective or stable in terms of that. I'm still trying to figure out how to get that done.

Interviewer: Did you discuss this goal with your peer coach?

Participant 10: I did, and she gave me a tip about a bell ringing kind of thing. I do the strategy, like, you clap your hand once. Clap your hands twice, kind of thing. Do all those types of strategies. Those, again, have yet to be effective. I'm still trying to figure out what works for them. She said something about getting a bell strategy. You ring the bell once, or tap it once, or whatever you do with a bell. I don't have a bell, so that's the issue with that one, but she did give that advice. She teaches fourth or fifth

grade so it's a little different versus the higher level grades. She's giving me what she can.

The participants referred to dialogue about instructional strategies, including strategies for classroom management. Their dialogues were specific to what the novices needed and to what the novices were actually doing in their classroom.

Considering the participants' responses about instructional strategies and the frequency with which they referenced strategies, it is evident that teachers see instructional strategies as a professional learning priority. As shown in Table 8, four teachers referenced instructional strategies on their reflection logs. Three of the four teachers (Participants 4, 9, and 11) were elementary teachers, which may speak to the common practice or perception that elementary teachers, more than other teachers, focus on foundational strategies and skills that can help students learn various subjects. This perception may be especially true for elementary teachers who are not departmentalized and teach multiple subjects to one group of students. Additionally, the excerpts from the interview transcripts underscore the importance of instructional strategies. Three participants' transcripts – Participants 3, 8, and 11—illustrate this importance. All three teachers are novice (1-3 years' experience) in the profession. These patterns, based on grade bands taught and years' experience, further support the need for differentiated professional learning – even within peer coaching. While instructional strategies were an important part of the dialogue for the participating novice teachers, some groups of teachers (i.e.: elementary teachers and novices in the profession) discussed them more than other groups of teachers.

Planning to teach the standards

Knowing the content standards or the curriculum is important for all teachers, and it is especially important that teachers have support in this area (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). By supporting teachers with understanding the curriculum and planning to teach it, schools can improve teacher effectiveness and feelings of support, which can help develop and retain a more stable workforce. Across the data sources for this study, teachers pointed to dialogue about the standards with their peer coaches. During the interviews, when I asked teachers about their thoughts on the peer coaching process, they provided the following responses regarding instructional dialogue:

Participant 2: I love Mr. ____ [peer coach]. He reminds me of a co-teacher I used to have years ago. I could go to him for anything. He helps me go over the standards, I'll run some ideas by him to teach the standards, and he'll give me input. He'll give me some suggestions and I'll say, "What do you recommend?" He's like, "Well, you could do what you want to do but this is what I would do." He's a good person to bounce ideas off of on everything."

Participant 8: We do everything by standards. We give an assessment after every standard and then at the end of a unit, we look at and discuss the students' scores together.

Participant 9: "We talk about the particular standards that we are focusing on. We look for activities and mini-lessons together to match the standard, which makes planning easier."

Participant 11: “I did an activity today. For one child, it just didn't work. She [peer coach] happened to come in a few minutes after I had finished and I said, "Give me some ideas. You had this child last year. Give me some ideas." I knew immediately that we were going to have to redo that.”

Southern School District has recently made an effort to refocus on the state standards, especially since the state curriculum has changed within the last two years. They have, therefore, brought in experts from the state department of education, regional educational agencies, and private consultants to engage teachers in unpacking the standards, helping them understand the depth of knowledge, and developing effective instructional frameworks focused on the standards. The novices indicated teachers were doing similar work with their peer coaches. Their dialogues were about their specific content. Their dialogue included both initial planning for the content (e.g.: Participants 2 and 9) and reflecting on the implementation (e.g.: Participants 8 and 11).

Summary of Findings to Research Question 1

Research question one sought insight into the actual peer coaching process, asking how Southern School District’s novices described their peer coaching process. One way that novices described the process was by emphasizing the importance of time. They needed uninterrupted time to work with their peer coaches to plan their lessons, which included asking questions, reviewing data, and reviewing the content standards. Some of the teachers had this time when they had a common planning period with the peer coach. Other novices stated that they needed such dedicated time because in its absence, planning with their peer coach was a challenge. In addition to time for collaboration, the teachers needed time to process what they were learning through peer coaching. They

referred to the fact that they were able to apply their learning and reflect on their work, which is a part of an ongoing process that takes time to implement.

The second way in which the novices described their peer coaching process was as one that heavily relied on professional dialogue. They discussed how to implement strategies as they planned, and they discussed and reflected on students' performance after implementing an instructional strategy or giving an assessment. Several of the participants' comments suggested that they frequently had dialogues with their coaches. Instruction and planning to teach the standards were the main topics of their conversation, including understanding the standards, activities to teach the standards. They also had dialogues about how to manage student behaviors.

Research Question 2

The second research question that this study investigated was, how do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry? Three themes emerged to address this question. Those themes were emphasis on students' needs; self-evaluation and reflection; and the two Cs – communication and collaboration.

Theme 1- Emphasizing Students' Needs

The theme of *emphasizing students' needs* was apparent across the interviews. One of the reasons that teachers enter the profession is because they are intrinsically motivated to help students, and they feel a sense of reward in doing so (Hughes, 2012). Participants in this study often referred to the need to reach individual students or groups of students. They discussed the need to know individual students and their needs, how to manage their behavior, and how to build relationships with them. Table 9 presents teachers' comments regarding the needs of their students. Table 9 includes responses

from six participants who refer to the needs of students. Five of the six participants have at least seven years of experience, and only one of the participants has three years or less experience.

Table 9

Participants Comments Regarding Individual Students

Participant	Question/prompt	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	How much of that [support] exists now in your current professional learning environment?	I would say a lot of that exists now This is the first time that I've taught this type of kid and this type of environment. This, for me, I feel as much as a new teacher as any other new teacher because this is the first time I've done this.	Individual Interview
Participant 2	Any topics, specific topics, that you two have discussed?	We talked a lot about assessments. About how many questions I should give them, do you think this is a good question. I might bring a test to him and say, "Do you think this question was too ambiguous for this level of kids?" He'd say, "No those are juniors and seniors they should get that." Was the question at too low a level or is it too high? I might ask him about the level of the question.	Individual Interview
Participant 6	Describe your conversations/feedback from your coach, and has it been helpful?	It has been helpful because I appreciate, even if you're a second year teacher, I appreciate anybody else's point of view. It has been truly student-centered, so I do.	Individual Interview

Table 9 Continued

Participant	Question/prompt	Comments	Data source
Participant 8	Talk in general about your peer coaching experiences with your peer coach helping you with teaching?	My mentor is the same grade, same subject. While she does act like a mentor if I have a question, regardless of whether or not its content, or student behavior, or ... She was doing her Master's the same time I was. I felt it was really easy for me to talk to her. She knew my students very well and I know her students.	Focus Group
Participant 9	How did goal-setting help me in my teaching?	My goal was to decrease disruptive behaviors. I am not happy with my progress. My coach has been very helpful in helping me find ways to decrease the disruptions and manage better. But there are two students that I cannot seem to get through to. I have worked with my peer coach and the RtI coordinator to find solutions to the problems with these particular students. They helped me deal with both the parents and the students.	Individual Interview
Participant 11	Talk about collaborative inquiry and how that process has gone.	That has been a great experience because she was worked with the students from the last couple years. Things that she has seen that work with them, things that her and previous teachers have tried together that worked or didn't work. That has been a great experience.	Focus Group

The responses from Participants 2 and 9 are about specific students or groups of students whom they discussed with their peer coaches. Participants 6, 8, and 11 shared comments that reveal a sense of appreciation for the fact that their peer coaching focused on the needs of students. Further, Participants 8 and 11 found it beneficial that their peer coaches had knowledge of their students and how to work with them based on prior experience. Regarding the theme of emphasizing students' needs, the participants ultimately valued the opportunity to address their current situations – their students and their particular needs. This theme was especially true for teachers who had taught for a longer period of time compared to teachers who were in their first three years in the profession.

Theme 2 – Self-evaluation and Reflection

Self-evaluation and reflection are good practices for all teachers to practice (Daniel, Auhl, & Hastings, 2013). Healthy professional learning environments allow teachers to engage in this practice, which contributes to their growth and development. One of the ways that the novices in this study responded to the peer coaching process is by being reflective and evaluating their own practice. While the theme is self-evaluation and reflection, all of the teachers' comments seemed to fit into three categories or sub-themes of self-evaluation and reflection. Those categories were *progress monitoring*, *successes*, and *struggles*.

Progress monitoring. The research participants frequently referred to their own growth and reviewing student data to determine their success. I refer to this practice as progress monitoring – reviewing data to identify improvements, areas of strength, and

areas for growth. The participants' comments regarding progress monitoring are listed in Table 10.

Table 10

Participants Comments about Progress Monitoring

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	I am seeing some growth and some improvement, but I am also very frustrated that I am nowhere as effective as I want and need to be in ALL of my classes.	Teacher Learning Reflection Log
Participant 4	I feel, like I am directing my own learning. I'm basically seeing what works and what doesn't work. Okay, this works so I'm going to continue down that path in my lessons.	Focus Group
Participant 8	I generally look at something that I'm not very good at. I guess, I'm honest with myself about what I'm not necessarily good at or what I want to improve on. ... I'll talk to my coach, what do you think I can do? I'll go look at someone else... my coach and other teachers and see something that's ... Like I might find something that they're doing that really works or they have students that have really high achievement goals for NWEA or something like that. I try what they are doing and just try to use that to reach my goals or to set different pathways for me to reach them.	Individual Interview
Participant 10	[Regarding a struggling student] It was one of those things where I was like, "I can do this. I know I can do this," but I was like, "Okay, what did I do? How can I do it better?" You're in this constant state of self-learning. Directing your reflections and things like that.	Focus Group

These comments showed how throughout the process, teachers consciously thought about where they were with their instruction. Participant 1 expressed that he was showing growth in some areas and that he felt a sense of frustration that all classes were not progressing at the rate that he expected. Responses from participants 4, 8, and 10 showed that the novices knew what they wanted for their classes and that they were willing to adjust their instruction, goals, and techniques in order to improve. Three of the four participants had three years or less experience.

Successes. In addition to progress monitoring, a small number (2) of teachers identified their successes throughout their process. It is, nevertheless, important to explore teacher success in this study because knowledge can also be gained by exploring what the teachers did not say. In this case, most teachers said little or nothing about their successes or how they built on their strengths in the peer coaching process. Learning to teach is an ongoing process (Cochran-Smith, 2011), and teachers often point to their weaknesses as did Participant 8 in Table 10. While teachers are modest and often point to areas for growth, it also important that they recognize their successes and what they are doing well. The teachers' comments regarding their successes are listed in Table 11.

Table 11

Participants Comments about Successes

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 7	At the time I was carrying out the exercise with my students, I thought that it was a very useful way to communicate with students in such way that breeds familiarity with the context and allow them to voice their opinions. I thought that the example I used was helpful in breaking the ice for my students in my class especially for those who were having difficulty. Most students appeared happy to participate in the exercise. I explained the purpose of what we were doing and my intentions as a teacher. Once they understood the purpose of what I was trying to accomplish, I think that it made the lesson much more relevant. In the very beginning, I was somewhat discouraged and somewhat dismayed because I met some initial resistance, and I thought that I had failed. However, after I modeled the process by using an example that students can relate to, it became easier for me to engage my students. I was excited, and this reaffirmed that as a teacher, I must continue to meet students where they are not only at an academic level but socially as well.	Video Reflection
Participant 9	I think I have progressed toward my goal of having fewer discipline/behavioral issues.	Teacher Learning Reflection Log

Participant 7 initially described feelings of failure in his video reflection, and he later described the successes in his lesson, which made him feel excited. Participant 9,

although she did not use the word success or describe her feelings, she pointed her goal of decreasing behavioral issues, which she accomplished.

Struggles. Teachers also identified their struggles during their self-evaluation. Grappling or struggling with ideas and issues are a part of the teaching, coaching, and inquiry process. Such struggles, however, can be productive if they help the teachers learn, grow, and improve their practice. The participants' comments regarding their struggles are listed in Table 12. Two of the teachers who identified their struggles also identified their successes in Table 11.

Table 12

Participants Comments about Struggles

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	That's an area [assessment] with me that is new, so I'm usually playing catch up in terms of staying on task, how to use it, still learning the terms, still setting up my lesson plans in a way that will produce things to compare and contrast and those types of things. I feel behind the curve on that.	Individual Interview
Participant 7	From my perspective, at first, with all of my years of experience and expertise as an English Language Arts teacher, I thought this was one of my worst lessons. However, after being able to reach students and providing examples that they can relate to, I found that student engagement is critical to learning.	Video Reflection
Participant 9	I was having a problem with a student stealing things from other children. She asked questions that helped identify the problem. The student was stealing from other students' backpacks, so we decided to have the students go to the backpack station at different times. Once I changed the process for students getting their backpacks, the problem stopped. So, it was good to have a different perspective.	Individual Interview
Participant 10	One of my goals is for, it depends on the class. The particular class I'm thinking about is seventh grade. They are particularly rowdy class and they're very hard to manage. Me, personally, I really would like to see myself improve in terms of figuring out how to manage that class better for their benefit as well as my own.	Focus Group

The comments in Table 12 show teachers recognizing their own struggles, needs for improvement, and need for support. This recognition is vital to teacher success, and a part of teachers owning their own learning. Participants 1 and 7 spoke about planning and instruction. Participants 9 and 10 spoke about struggles with discipline and management, which is intertwined with instruction.

When reviewing the entire theme, including all of its sub-themes, seven of the eleven research participants spoke to self-evaluation and reflection in some way. It is important, therefore, to note patterns that occurred within the theme. First, only two teachers – both of whom have at least 7 years of experience – spoke to their successes, as shown in Table 11. None of the newer teachers discussed their successes. Second, four teachers referred to progress monitoring, as shown in Table 10. Three of these four teachers had three years or less experience. Third, four teachers referred to their struggles, as shown in Table 12. Two of these four teachers were also the same two teachers that referred to their successes. The teachers seemed to be very good at identifying their struggles, as well as monitoring their own progress. Their responses, however, suggest that teacher strengths and successes were not necessarily emphasized in the peer coaching relationships. This theme also reveals a need to emphasize teacher success, given that literature reveals that teachers want to feel successful (Fry, 2010).

Theme 3 – The Novice’s Two Cs

The third theme to emerge to describe teachers’ responses peer coaching was what I labeled the novices’ two Cs. The two c’s that they frequently referred to were communication and collaboration. Each of these elements are described in the next three sections, and presented with the participants’ data.

Communication. The word *communicate* or a synonym (talk) for communicate appeared several times as the participants responded to various questions. Successful coaching processes must include effective communication (Knight, 2015). Table 13 shows responses in which participants mentioned communication and the questions to which they responded.

Table 13

Participants Comments about Communication

Participant	Question/prompt	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	When you are engaged in coaching, who typically initiates the dialogue?	I would say it ... I would say it goes both ways because often a question is put out or something that's proposed, and then even if it's in a group, we may counter something or come from another direction. I would say it goes both ways, and they're ... I like that there's a... that is okay. It's an open environment where we can voice our concerns or we can ask questions. We can direct the direction of ... or at least verbalize our needs in terms of instruction or support.	Individual Interview
Participant 2	Why do you think that is [that you feel comfortable asking questions with your coach?]	He's very straightforward which is kind of refreshing sometimes. He's just very easy to go to and talk to. I have not had a problem talking to him since day one, since I met him the first day here.	Individual Interview
Participant 3	Discuss the observations and feedback you have gotten from your peer coach.	Mine [peer coach] is my co-teacher so she's in with me all the time. We're constantly talking.	Focus Group
Participant 8	How is the collaborative peer coaching process going for you?	I like how I can go ask her [peer coach], "Well, how did you get your kids here. What can I do to do that?" Or one of us has questions about the wording of a standard before we implement it, or an assessment and how it works.	Focus Group

Participant 1 mentioned the fact that he liked being able to ask questions and verbalize or communicate his learning needs, stating that his needs drive the communication with the peer coach. Participant 2 described the way that she and her peer coach communicate, stating that their communication is open or “straightforward” and that her peer coach is easy to talk to. Participant 3 mentioned the frequency – daily – with which she communicates with her coach. Participant 8’s comments reflect communication that benefits both partners, as they question each other about how to implement the standards. Ultimately the participants describe the kind of communication which is open and non-evaluative, which is important in peer coaching (Hooker, 2013).

Collaboration. Teachers, especially novice teachers, need an environment in which they can collaborate with someone by asking questions, solving problems, exploring data, and planning together. Collaboration emerged in response research question two about responses to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry. Teachers learn better in collaborative environments (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), and teachers actually want to collaborate with others. The teachers in this study revealed that this part of the coaching process was valuable to them. Their responses regarding collaboration are listed in Table 14.

Table 14

Participants' Comments about Collaboration

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 8	Planning together was very helpful. We worked on my lesson plan. We pulled resources and reviewed the pacing guide as we planned. I felt that was very helpful, especially to see the different ... how our results and our data drives things and how the standards align and I think that's something we need to do more frequently.	Individual Interview
Participant 5	[Regarding collaborative inquiry] "Having this opportunity has helped in learning new ways to work within the co-teaching setting." "Having the chance to work together and ask questions about my lessons has helped me gain more confidence in the delivery of my lessons."	Teacher Reflection Log
Participant 9	One thing that I really appreciate is collaborating with the coach on lessons – showing what lessons should look like. It gave me a mental picture of lessons, which gives me more confidence.	Individual Interview

The responses in Table 14 reveal that the teachers collaborated on data, the content standards, and their lesson plans. They particularly thought that collaboratively planning lessons was a helpful experience. Their responses also revealed that they appreciated the opportunity to inquire about their practice with their coaches.

Summary of Findings to Research Question 2

Research question 2 looked to understand how teachers responded to peer coaching that used collaborative inquiry. The novices responded to the peer coaching in many ways, three of which developed into the themes that address this question. One of the novices' responses to peer coaching was to emphasize students' needs. This response is evident in their specific conversations with their coaches about students' needs. For example, Participant 9 spoke with her coach about specific, negative student behaviors and how to change them. Emphasis on particular needs is also evident in Participant 2's description of hers and her peer coach's conversation about assessment items for a specific group of students.

Second, the novices responded to the peer coaching process by engaging in self-evaluation and reflection. They checked to see if they were successful by reviewing student data. They set goals and revisited their goals, which is an example of monitoring their own progress. Finally, as a part of progress monitoring, they identified – or in most cases neglected to identify – their successes, as well as their struggles. Self-evaluation and reflection were apparent in the actions – progress monitoring and identifying successes and struggles – that the participants took during their peer coaching process.

Third, the novices responded to their peer coaching process by communicating and collaborating with their coaches. Their communication included asking and answering questions with their peer coaches, discussing students' needs, and talking about their content. Their collaboration mainly consisted of planning lessons.

Research Question 3

The third research question that was investigated was what are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships? In analyzing the data to understand how novices perceive their relationships with their peer coaches, two themes emerged. The two themes include the following: *pairing matters* and *partnership*.

Theme 1 – Pairing Matters

Selecting the appropriate peer coach for novice teachers is important to the success of the peer coaching process (Lu, 2010). The coaches should be strong and add value to the relationship, and the novice has to be open to the process and willing to work with the coach. One of the themes that arose to address this research question is the importance of effectively pairing the coach and the novice. The novices in this study identified commonalities with the peer coach as an important part of effective pairing. They perceived such pairing as a benefit of peer coaching relationships. The participants' comments in Table 15 underscore that perception.

Table 15

Participants' Comments about Commonalities in the Peer Coaching Relationship

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 5	“My mentor and I, we ran into the same thing of actually having time to actually work together. For me to have that time to just ask questions, and to talk. There's just no time in the day because our plannings are different. If we do IEP meetings after school or other meetings, it's hard to find that time to just one on one, quiet space, talk uninterrupted. Timing. Schedule.”	Focus Group
Participant 6	She brought me, for example, the idea of this is what the kid was like last year and here are some of the things that this child struggled with or you may want to approach it in this different way. That has been invaluable.	Individual Interview
Participant 8	Having a peer coach in there with me gives me that support. Then if there is a strategy that isn't working out for me, then she's there to give me feedback. She does it in a very approachable way. She's about similar age, very close to my age. It's not like a, "I've been doing this for so much longer than you." It's, "Hey, I noticed this. What can we do to fix it?"	Focus Group
Participant 9	This is my first time teaching kindergarten, so it helped to have another kindergarten teacher as my coach. I ask questions. We talk about what is happening in my classroom.	Individual Interview
Participant 10	She teaches fourth or fifth grade so it's a little different versus the higher level grades. She's giving me what she can.	Focus Group
Participant 11	My coach and I worked together previously [at a different school]. We laugh all the time because when we worked together, we actually worked with the same students, shared the same classroom, that kind of deal.	Focus group

All of the comments in Table 15 refer to characteristics that the coach and the novice either have in common or characteristics that they should have in common to make the relationship more effective. Participant 6 and Participant 11, for example, discuss the importance of having similar (or in their cases) the same students. Participant 8 values the fact that she and her coach are close to the same age because it makes the coach more approachable. Participant 9 and her peer coach both teach the same grade level, which she finds helpful.

Comments from Participants 5 and 10 are examples of where the novice and coach were not paired appropriately for maximum effectiveness. For example, Participant 5 could not meet frequently with the peer coach because they did not have common planning periods. Participant 10 was a middle school teacher who was paired with an elementary grades teacher. The novice, therefore, did not believe that the peer coach could give her the help that she needed. Ultimately, the novices appreciated having characteristics in common with their peer coach, and when they did not have important commonalities with the peer coach, it impacted the effectiveness of the relationship, as perceived by the novices.

In addition to the commonalities of the pair, participants emphasized the importance of the proximity within the peer coaching relationship. Their comments revealed that they thought that it was important that they were paired with coaches whose physical locations were close to their own. Table 16 includes comments that emphasize this perception.

Table 16

Participants' Comments about Proximity in the Peer Coaching Relationship

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	I'm in a freshman academy or freshman hall, so I'm physically very far removed from them [other department members]. It's like an effort to have the...Not that this is a giant building, but it's an effort to have to go, seek them, and those types of things. It makes me long to be on the same hall to have that closeness. We bonded because we're all new, so it's hard being distanced in that way. They have a lot of experience, and I've been relying on their experience a lot.	Individual Interview
Participant 2	My first year teaching this is what I was told, and this was my first year teaching, [former school] has 1400 students and I was on this wing and my mentor teacher is over in the eighth grade wing across the school. I made a comment to a co-worker. They're like, "She ain't ever going to come and visit you. You've got to go to her." She never came and visited me. I finally found somebody else in my seventh grade school that I used as a mentor, and she never checked on me. Whereas Mr. ____ [peer coach] is right here beside me and he's always checking on me every day as I walk by just to see how things are going. He's right here and having him as a coach I can say has been very helpful.	Individual Interview
Participant 3	Mine is my co-teacher, so she's in with me all the time. We're constantly talking. Even sometimes when I'm like, "That strategy didn't work, did it?" She's like, "Nope." Or if that went really well, a lot of the times she'll say, "That went really well."	Focus Group
Participant 8	All I have to do is go right next door during my planning period or after school and we'll sit there and have a whole conversation about it [the lesson].	Focus Group

Participant 1 wanted to be near his peer coach and colleagues who taught the same subject. Participant 2 and Participant 8 appreciated being paired with coaches who worked in classrooms adjacent to their own, and Participant 3 remarked that her peer coach was actually in the same classroom with her as her co-teacher. These responses show that it can be helpful to ensure that novice teachers are near their peer coaches. Close proximity helped for the practical reason of making it easier for coaches and novices to meet, as described by Participants 1, 2, and 8. Additionally, when the coach and the novice actually share a space, they may take more of a partnership approach to teaching and learning, as described by Participant 3.

Theme 2 – Partnership

Instructional coaching is an effective practice when participants take a partnership approach to the work (Knight, 2011). Knight (2011) identified seven principles of the partnership approach to coaching: choice, voice, equality, reciprocity, reflection, dialogue, and praxis. These different principles continually arose as I interviewed the novices in this study, which led to the identification of *partnership* as a theme in response to research question three. While participants' comments reflected all of the principles at some point in the process, four of the principles were apparent in addressing the question of peer coaching relationships. Those four principles were equality, reciprocity, choice, and voice. Table 17 contains the participants' statements and the particular principles reflected in their statements.

Table 17

Participants' Comments about Partnership Principles in the Peer Coaching Relationship

Participant	Comments	Principle	Data source
Participant 1	It's an open environment where we can voice our concerns or we can ask questions. We can direct the direction of ... or at least verbalize our needs in terms of instruction or support.	Voice, Choice	Individual interview
Participant 2	Also with him I guess it's a two-sided relationship too, because I'm from middle school. He has sophomores, and he's like, "Help me understand. How do middle schoolers think?" They're two years from transitioning. I say, "You know what?" He has problems with the basics. He's doing math, and the kids are struggling with subtracting basic math. I said, "Mr. ___ they were taught it in middle school. They were taught it. I said, "If they didn't get it you may have to go back and teach them that." I said, "That's something middle schoolers struggle with." I was sharing that with him, "If they're messing up subtracting you might need to show them how to do it one time. Show them how to subtract like 325 from 254. Show them how to borrow. They might have forgotten that." I give him feedback too and it's a two-sided relationship. He comes to me, "Help me understand. What do you think they're thinking?"	Reciprocity, Equality	Individual interview

Table 17 Continued

Participant	Comments	Principle	Data source
Participant 3	We're there to bounce off each other. Even just with teaching. When she's teaching, if I see something that I might think there's a misconception or something going on, then sometimes I'll pretend like I'm the student. I'll ask her a question and she'll clarify. We do that. We work really well together.	Reciprocity	Focus group
Participant 8	I think that's what has helped me best is having someone that's the same grade, same subject. Being the same age kind of helps a little bit because we're about the same experience. We also have a math coach that collaborates with us as well. She's got the experience that we don't have. Overall, if I went to another school, I'd want to keep this experience here because it has been really beneficial in me learning as a new teacher.	Equality	Focus group
Participant 9	My goal was to decrease disruptive behaviors.	Choice	Individual interview
Participant 11	She comes to me with questions.	Reciprocity, Equality	Focus group

Participant 1 and Participant 9 provided descriptions that demonstrated choice.

Participant 1 stated that he directed his own learning, which demonstrated his own choices and abilities to make decisions throughout the process. Participant 9, likewise, demonstrated choice as her goal was her own decision based on her needs.

Participants 2, 3, 8, and 11 all provided responses that showed equality and reciprocity in their relationships with their peer coaches. For example, Participant 2 provided a detailed description of how she helped her peer coach with one of his questions. Her peer coach approached her with one of his struggles and asked her how to solve the problems. This incident demonstrated a relationship in which both the coach and the novice benefit. The incident also indicated that no one in the relationship was positioned as an expert. Rather, they were partners who collaborated on instructional matters and learned together, which indicated that there was a sense of equality between the two teachers. Likewise, Participant 11 mentioned that her coach comes to her with questions. These examples show that the content that they discussed – the *what* of the process – in peer coaching is not the only important component of the process. The way that the pairs interact – the *how* is also significant for teachers to see relationships as beneficial (Knight, 2011).

Summary of Findings to Research Question 3

Research question three addressed novice teachers' perceptions of peer coaching relationships. Data analysis revealed that the participants held two primary perceptions about the relationships. First, they believed that the peer coach and the novice should have something in common in order for the relationship to be productive. Commonalities included age, content, grade level, and students. The novices' second major perception was that a partnership approach is important. They valued Knight's (2011) principles of equality, reciprocity, choice, and voice. The teacher's perceptions of the peer coaching relationship can be summarized in the words of Participant 6, as she responded to the

question of if you were a peer coach, what are some of the things that you would do to help novice a novice teacher?

“I think it’s really critically important especially with novices that they feel that they’re heard, that they’re not scared, that they have a path and a direction and they may not know what that is, especially their first, second, third year of teaching I think they need a lot of positive support. I think they need very targeted nuts and bolts kind of things that can support them, targeted and basic instructional things where it just might not have occurred to them to try something different. They need honest feedback and they need to have a place where they can vent and have guidance saying that it’s okay...”

Additional Themes

In addition to the themes that answered the research questions, two other themes were apparent in the participant’s responses. Those two themes were the *value of instructional coaches* and *novices value supportive administrators*. Explanations of these two themes are in the following two sections.

The Value of Instructional Coaches

Instructional coaching programs are a useful form of professional learning in that that they provide intensive support for teachers, and they can offer one on one support to teachers that is tailored to the teachers’ individual needs (Devine & Meyers, 2013).

“Instructional coaches next to the principal, are the most crucial change agent in a school” (Fullan & Knight, 2011). Participants in this study saw the value in their instructional coaches, commenting several times about how the instructional coaches had

supported them with their instruction. Table 18 has novices' descriptions of how their instructional coaches helped them.

Table 18

Participants' Comments about Instructional Coaches

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 2	I'm always out there looking. You ask Ms. [instructional coach], I talk her head off all the time. I tell her to give me ideas. Give me ideas because, to me, I'm going to go seek and try to find what works. That's me and my classroom. Somebody might be doing something that I never heard about and I'm open to learn.	Individual Interview
Participant 4	I've had the reading coach especially give me some ideas. Come in and help me come up with various topics and various things that help the kids and help spark the learning process. Help them be more engaged finding different subjects that we'd use in order to help the kids learn. Basically, I guess the word I'm looking for is to basically keep them engaged in something. Relevant things that they like. Subjects that they like in order to do that.	Focus Group
Participant 10	I have to figure out, again, partly differentiation of trying to figure out what to do with the different students. Our instructional coach for math gave me some ideas what to give the students, what to do with them to help them, challenge them, extend it a little bit.	Focus Group

Southern School District has instructional coaches in all of its schools. The district began utilizing instructional coaches four years ago as a way to support teachers and improve student achievement. The instructional coaches focus on instructional planning and using data to drive instruction. Participant 2 described how she approached

the instructional coach for ideas. Participant 4 identifies student engagement as a challenge and how the instructional coach helped with the challenge, and Participant 10 has a similar experience with differentiated instruction. Given their descriptions, it is evident that the teachers perceived their instructional coaching program beneficial and that, in addition to their peer coaches, the instructional coaches were an additional layer of support for the novices.

Novices Value Supportive Administration

Support from school principals or other administrators is important for novice teachers (Ingersoll, 2013). This support may include frequent communication (Ingersoll, 2013); responding to the teachers' needs (Hughes, 2012); and providing good instructional leadership (Darling-Hammond, 2010). It is especially important for novice teachers to receive this kind of support as transitioning into a new profession, new school, or new content area will present challenges of its own. Participants in this study underscored the importance of this support as evidenced by their descriptions in Table 19.

Table 19

Participants' Comments about Supportive Administrators

Participant	Comments	Data source
Participant 1	I would say this has been probably, certainly, it's been as supportive of an administration that I've been involved with, been incredibly open, supportive, and really working hard to give us the support and the tools that we need to be successful. That's been one of the biggest positives I would say.	Individual Interview
Participant 2	If I have any problems I can always go to Dr. ____ [administrator] if I've got any problems, or Mr. ____ [administrator]. Any of them, I feel very comfortable. If I have a problem to go to them.	Individual Interview
Participant 8	I mean, in talking about the support, the principal at my school ... I had this tough student for a while, kind of got over that little hump. When she realized how tough a time I was having, she brought me into the office like, "How are you doing? What's going on?" She's like, "Are you happy here?" Things like that. She was concerned about my wellbeing. Not just in the classroom, but my general, happy wellbeing. I was like, "Yeah, I'm fine. We'll get through it. It will be fine."	Focus Group
Participant 8	She [administrator] came in one day and clearly, I have a lot to work to do as a teacher and she came in one day and she's like, "You know, I was just really impressed with your content knowledge." That was something that I didn't expect to hear. That really kind of brought up the cheerfulness and made me feel like I was doing something right and that I could use that content knowledge to transfer it to my students.	Individual Interview

Participant 1 appreciated the openness of the school administration and the fact that the administration worked to give them the tools or resources that they needed. Comments from Participant 2 suggested that she found her administration both approachable and available to her. Participant 3 expressed an appreciation for her principal's concern for her as a person and for the principal's acknowledgement of her good work, which was encouraging to her.

Summary of Additional Themes

The two themes in addition to those which answer the research questions were the *value of instructional coaches* and *the value of supportive administrators*. Participants appreciated that they could go to their coaches for help and that the coaches shared ideas about how to improve their instruction. The descriptions that the participants shared indicated the relationships between the instructional coach and the novices were based on what the novices needed. Words such as *comfortable* and *open* emerged as the participants described their administrators. Both the support of the instructional coaches and that of the school administrations seem to have contributed to a supportive environment which novices need.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study grew out of my interest in improving teacher retention in Southern School District in which I grew up, live, taught, and currently work as a district leader. Year after year I would watch several teacher colleagues as well as school administrators leave Southern School District. Students even recognized the trend of high attrition, as they made remarks about all of their good teachers leaving them. Teacher attrition and retention has been a topic of education research for many years, and recruiting and retaining high quality teachers is especially difficult for rural schools like Southern School District (Sutton, Bausmith, O'Connor, Pae, & Payne, 2014). Since teacher attrition is such a broad topic, the study evolved into an exploration of the causes of high attrition, which was narrowed down into teacher support, ultimately becoming a study of peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry to support novice teachers. This section provides a summary of the study; explains the interpretation and implications of the findings; describes the study's limitations; and suggests opportunities for future research.

Summarizing the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand peer coaching that used collaborative inquiry as support for novice teachers. I wanted to answer the following three research questions: How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in? How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry? What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships? These three research questions helped answer the overarching question of what happens when novice teachers engage in peer coaching that utilizes collaborative inquiry? A case study design

was used to answer these questions in a small, rural school district in the southeastern United States.

The literature review encompassed three major themes to support and establish a need for the study. First, it explored the life of a novice teacher, describing what research says teacher support should like for novice teachers. The support should include ongoing induction programs in which teachers are appropriately matched with mentors and in which the content of the program is specific to the needs of the teacher (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Although the research was clear about what novices need regarding support and induction, the literature review further revealed that many schools fall short of providing that kind of intense, ongoing support (Koelher & Kim, 2012). Second, it described effective professional learning initiatives as ongoing, job-embedded, and relevant to the teachers' situation (Opfer & Pedder, 2010), which are some of the benefits of peer coaching and collaborative inquiry as professional learning. Third, the literature review used Knight's (2011) partnership principles – equality, choice, voice, reflection, dialogue, and praxis to illustrate what peer coaching should like.

Employing adult learning theory and experiential learning theory to underpin the study, the study paired novice teachers with peer coaches to engage in a peer coaching process that utilized collaborative inquiry. Peer coaches facilitated the process, engaging in dialogues and sharing practices as the novices set goals; collaboratively planned lessons; implemented their lessons; and reflected on the lessons. Participants came from three different schools, teaching different subjects and grade levels.

Data collection and analysis methods were research-based, consisting of three main sources of data. Two sources of data included individual interviews and a focus

group interview, as such methods allow the researcher to understand what is on the minds of participants (Merriam, 2009). The third data source was documents – reflection logs – that the novices produced throughout the peer coaching process. Utilizing these multiple sources of data gave the researcher insight into the novices' experiences and responses to the process as well as their perceptions of their relationships with the peer coaches. Analyzing the sources helped the researcher to recognize themes that emerged to answer the research questions and two additional themes.

This study resulted in a description of novice teachers' responses to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry and an understanding of how they perceived their relationships with peer coaches. Based on the data, the research finding included seven major themes that answered the three research questions. These themes emphasize factors that are important to novice teachers and illustrate what teachers do when they have opportunities to direct their own professional learning in the peer coaching process.

Interpretation and Implication of the Study

“...Learning to teach is no longer thought of as a one-time process of "teacher training" where student teachers are equipped with theory and methods and then sent out to "practice" teaching....Learning to teach takes place over time rather than at isolated moments in time....Learning to teach is about raising questions and working with others to generate local knowledge rather than simply receiving information from outside experts and applying it the same way for every student in every context. Simply put, we now know that learning to teach really never does end.” (Cochran-Smith, 2011).

Cochran-Smith (2011) wrote these words when responding to the question of if or when the learning process ends for teachers. Her article addressed inquiry, collaboration, and problem-solving in teaching, and it supported several of the findings in this study.

Cochran-Smith's words were echoed in the findings of this study as the study addressed the overarching question of what happens when novice teachers engage in peer coaching

that utilizes collaborative inquiry? The following sections answer this question by discussing the findings of the study relative to the research questions.

Finding 1

Novice teachers value time for professional learning when the learning is relevant to them and driven by their needs (Devine, Houssemand, & Meyers, 2013). They like learning new things and engaging in professional learning that helps them improve their practice (Nelson & Slavit, 2008). The learning needs to be an ongoing process such as collaborative inquiry, for example (Donohoo, 2013). The learning process should allow for time to ask questions, apply the learning, reflect on the learning and allows for follow-up (Cochran-Smith, 2011). Peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry is one way to engage novices in this kind of learning.

Finding 2

Novice teachers want and need to engage in professional dialogue, and this study supports existing research that emphasizes this need (Nelson & Slavit, 2008). The dialogue should be based on the needs of the individual teachers (Coninx et al., 2013). One of the questions that I asked participants at the end of the each interview was would you be willing to be a peer coach to a novice teacher. Participant 2 gave the following response which captures in part what novices believe about professional dialogue: “He [peer coach] is a sounding board because I know my content, and we talk about it. That's just an extra set of ears and I guess for somebody, else I would like to be their sounding board.... Whatever person, if I do become a peer coach and get with, be a sounding board because I can learn a lot from them as a new teacher, because new teachers do bring a lot.” This participant’s response also underscored the need for the dialogue to be balanced

in the sense that one person does not dominate the conversation (Knight, 2011). Rather, each person should contribute to the dialogue, ensuring that both perspectives are respected and that both people benefit from the process (Knight, 2011).

This novice teacher recognized her own content knowledge and recognized that the dialogue can be beneficial for both the novice and the peer coach. When engaged in professional dialogue with a peer coach, the pairs discussed instructional strategies, planning the curriculum, student behavior, data and assessment. Ultimately, they held conversations about the things that matter – teaching and learning – for improving schools (Rice, 2012).

Finding 3

When the novices participated in peer coaching that used collaborative inquiry, they responded by emphasizing students' needs, evaluating and reflecting on their own practice, and actively becoming members of a learning community. Research shows that it is important for teachers to feel successful and like they are making a difference with their students (Fry, 2010). This study supports this research through the multiple references that the novices made to their individual students. In addition to wanting to help the students succeed academically, the novices expressed a desire to learn more about their students' cultures and backgrounds. As the novices worked to support students in their learning, their peer coaches supported them by facilitating teacher self-evaluation and reflection. Peer coaches did not evaluate the teachers, which the literature supports as effective practice (Rice, 2012; Showers & Joyce, 1996; Robbins, 1991). Rather, the peer coaches had the role of partnering with the novices and ensuring that they monitored their own work through setting goals and reviewing their progress toward

those goals. These partnerships were strengthened through frequent and open communication and collaboration based on the principles of partnership (Knight, 2011).

Finding 4

This study shows that relationships between peer coaches and novice teachers are an important part of the peer coaching process, as found in the literature (Risser, 2013). “Knight (2011, p. 18) stated that way we interact with others makes or breaks most coaching relationships.” This assertion is supported by the participants’ responses about their relationships with their coaches. For example, Participant 8 mentioned several times that she appreciated that she and her peer coach were the same age. She perceived her coach as approachable and liked that rather than critiquing her, the coach asked her questions and engaged in a conversation with her. Participant 2 seemed to appreciate that her peer coach also asked her opinion and learned from her. These examples support the literature on the partnership principles for effective coaching (Knight, 2011).

Both parties should recognize the value that each person adds to the relationship, and be open to the idea of peer coaching as a mutually beneficial experience. This study found that novices perceived the relationships as beneficial, with some of the participants commenting on what they received from their peer coach and what they were able to offer to their coaches, including advice, suggestions, and collaboration through planning and dialogue. Novices found it particularly helpful when they shared common characteristics with their peer coaches (Goldrick, 2012). Those common characteristics included students, age, content areas, and grade levels. The novices also found it beneficial when the coaches were more accessible through their physical proximity.

Finding 5

Peer coaching is an effective way of supporting novices in their instructional practices; however, it does not operate in isolation from the rest of the school culture. The lack of administrative support is one of the reasons that novice teachers leave their schools (Ingersoll, 2013). This study contributes to the existing body of peer coaching literature by emphasizing the importance of school culture and administrator support for a peer coaching initiative. For example, the study showed that in addition to the support that the peer coaches provided, novices felt as though their teaching environments were supportive, as shown in Table 17. Particularly, they found their instructional coaches to be beneficial as content experts. Novices reported that their building administrators supported them through providing resources; being accessible and approachable; sharing encouraging, positive comments about their work; and by caring about their well-being. While I cannot say that administrators are the reason for the novices' responses to the peer coaching and perceptions of the relationship, the data showed that the novices saw value and appreciated both the peer coaching support and administrative support.

Limitations

Case study, as with any research method, has strengths and limitations. Case study offers the benefits of deeply understanding participants' lived experiences and providing detailed information about a particular phenomenon (Berg, 2007; Merriam, 2009). This study sought to understand novice teachers' experiences and responses to the peer coaching process. Case study was selected as the method because it was the best method to answer the research questions and achieve the purpose of the research.

Generalizability is a principal concern of case study, and it represents one of the limitations of this study. By focusing on even a small group of people and exploring their experiences, one can learn about people, in this case, novices in general (Hycner, 1985). Utilizing case study provides insight by studying phenomena, such as peer coaching, in a real life context (Yin, 2003). Although not generalizable, these data will inform future peer coaching implementations in the school district. Additionally, trustworthiness and credibility were established as discussed in previous chapters.

I purposefully selected a relatively small group of participants, which may also represent a limitation of the study. The design of the study does not provide for random selection (Hycner, 1985). Randomness in the selection process was absent because the research purpose and questions dictated that I select participants in particular phases of their career and who are participating in peer coaching (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004). The small number of participants provided written reflection logs participated in interviews which resulted in large amounts of data that were sufficient to answer the research questions (Siedman, 2006). Although these limitations exist, the findings can provide valuable information to school leaders regarding how to support novice teachers; they provide leaders and professional developers with insight into the characteristics of peer coaching; and they offer an awareness of how to foster collaborative environments and productive relationships among colleagues.

Future Research

This study explored three specific research questions; was principally grounded in two theories – adult learning theory and experiential learning theory; utilized documents and interviews as data sources; and explored novice teachers’ experiences with peer

coaching that used collaborative inquiry. Data analysis and research findings were presented based on the perspectives of the novice teachers. While the research methods, data analysis, and research findings addressed the specific research questions, this study also generated additional questions or topics of exploration that may be investigated through future research. This section makes suggestions for how this study may influence or lead to future research based on the theories of the study; the work of the novices; and the perspectives presented.

Future Research and Theory

Adult learning theory and experiential learning theories were the primary theories that this study employed. Since peer coaching and collaborative inquiry is a kind of professional learning (Showers and Joyce, (1996), I utilized adult learning theory as theoretical foundation for the study. Likewise, experiential learning theory was utilized as the study occurred in the workplace in which the participants would learn, work, and apply their learning. While this study primarily employed these theories, future research may utilize other theories to understand this process. Activity theory is one additional theory that researchers may consider using to understand peer coaching and collaborative inquiry. Leontiev (2005, p. 59-60) stated that “the very development of man is determined now by the development of labor, and, acting with labor with the help of labor relationships on the external side of nature and changing it, man, at the same time, changes his own nature.” Future researchers may utilize activity theory to investigate different questions and use different methodologies to understand how novices or peer coaches develop as a result of their participating in peer coaching.

Future Research and the Peer Coaches

This study focused on the novice teachers' responses to peer coaching and how the novices perceived their relationships with their peer coaches. Future research may consider how the peer coaches respond. How do peer coaches perceive the relationship between peer coaches and novices? What do the peer coaches gain from the process? How do peer coaches describe their coaching experiences? How do they respond to the process, and do they learn anything about themselves or their own practice from the coaching experience? Considering the partnership principle of reciprocity (Knight, 2011), understanding how peer coaching may benefit both parties in the relationship, may reveal benefits of the practice, further emphasizing the need for this collaborative practice in schools.

Future Research and Measuring Progress

An important part of the peer coaching process is setting goals (Coninx, Kreijns, & Jochems, 2013). It is also important for teachers to measure progress toward their goals. The novices in this study set goals for their classrooms, and they discussed their goals with their peer coaches. As the researcher, however, I did not collect data to speak to whether the goals were met. Future research may include determining if the novices met their goals. This determination may be made through interviews, observation, and student achievement data, and it can be used to further determine the effectiveness of peer coaching programs.

Future Research and the Novices' Work

All of the novice teachers in this study were a part of a larger professional learning process at Southern School District. Southern School District has implemented a

new teacher induction program for several years. Their past two years of new teacher induction programs were limited to teachers who were in their first year in the district. Each teacher received a mentor, and the role of the mentor was to help the new teacher acclimate to the district by helping them with processes, procedures, and school operations. The district changed its focus within the last two years to include novice teachers (novice in their schools, grade level, or content area), and they shifted their focus from acclimation to instruction. The instructional focus of the program was peer coaching that used collaborative inquiry including goal-setting, collaborative planning, dialogue that included non-evaluative feedback, and reflection.

Reflection was a required element of the peer coaching process, and teachers completed written reflections with their goals and needs. Teachers were also encouraged to use video reflections, with the opportunity to determine what lesson they recorded and how and when they recorded their lessons. Video reflections were to be completed once within the induction year. Some teachers expressed reservations about the video because they were uncomfortable with how they may have looked or sounded, and they were uneasy about seeing their mistakes.

As the researcher, I provided a consent form that asked teachers to indicate in which specific parts (interview, focus group, or reflections) of the research they would be willing to participate. I collected one video reflection, in which the teacher provided very detailed responses. Future research may consist of exploring only the video components of peer coaching, looking for themes specifically related to the use of video in peer coaching. Video can be a powerful tool to improve teaching and learning as it gives teachers the opportunities to see themselves; acts as a catalyst for change; assists in

setting goals; and helps teachers monitor their progress (Knight et al., 2012). While several teachers either had not yet completed their videos at the end of the study or did not consent to sharing their video reflections, as a researcher who also worked in the research setting, I experienced or heard about several of the video experiences which motivated me to continue researching this practice. Those experiences are described in the vignette below.

The Researcher's Experiences with the Use of Video

When I introduced the idea of video to our novice teachers, the idea was met with mixed reactions. Novices with more experience had reservations, and many of them wanted to know who would see their videos. I assured them that I would not see the video and that the videos were for their personal growth and reflection. Sighs of relief filled the room. One novice teacher with zero years of experience interjected that recording a lesson would not be a problem because as a recent college graduate, videos were a part of their certification process.

When I introduced the idea of video to the peer coaches (during their professional learning), they seemed okay with facilitating reflection with the novices and watching their videos with them. I suggested that they may consider recording their own lessons both for their own growth and to model the practice for the novices. I asked who would be willing to record their own lessons, and none of the peer coaches volunteered. I told them that I would record one of my own meetings or professional learning sessions that, complete the video reflection, and share my reflection with them.

In other areas, teachers and administrators in my school district are beginning to see the benefits of using video in teaching and learning. For example, one of our principals asked me for help with a novice teacher who was struggling. She stated that she was supporting the teacher and providing coaching; however, the principal did not believe that her advice/coaching was helping. When she asked me for a recommendation, I suggested using video and reflection. The principal shared the reflection protocol with the novice; the novice used the protocol, and shared the following response with her principal: "I see exactly what I am doing wrong. I don't need you to tell me. I see three areas that I need help in, and I just need you to give me suggestions for how to do it differently."

Conclusion

Teachers are one of the greatest factors that influence student achievement, and teacher effectiveness can have effects on students' academic performance that last for years. It is, therefore, important that education leaders work intentionally and systematically to develop and retain a strong teacher workforce. Peer coaching is one way to contribute to a strong teacher workforce. Peer coaching provides teachers with support and opportunities to learn, grow, and develop professionally.

As I explored this phenomenon, I discovered the value of collaboration and the importance of teachers driving their own professional learning. I also understood more clearly the value of investing in teachers. Each theme that emerged was related to the essential characteristics of a supportive school culture. The themes and findings supported the claims that learning to teach is a continuous process; that teachers need and want to own their learning process; and that teachers supporting teachers is an effective practice.

Conducting this study gave me the opportunity to reflect on my own practice, examine and begin to develop and implement teacher support practices in my own district; and obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the needs and experiences of novice teachers. It also illuminated areas of future research that can have a positive effect for schools in the areas of peer coaching and overall professional learning. My hope is that this study will bring a greater awareness to novice teacher support; promote the use of teachers' peers as instructional support; and emphasize the importance of collaborative and reflective practice.

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Appendix A: Coaching SMARTe Goal Template

Instructions: Consider your teaching over the next several weeks. Answer these questions regarding your next several weeks of teaching.

<u>S</u>pecific – Where do you want to go? (What, exactly, is it that I want to achieve? What strategies will I use?)
<u>M</u>easurable – How will I know that I have achieved it?
<u>A</u>ttainable – What tells me that this action is realistic and challenging? How can a coach/mentor help me reach this goal?
<u>R</u>elevant – Why am I setting this goal? Is it really what I want?
<u>T</u>ime Bound – When will I achieve this by?
<u>E</u>quity/everyone – How will this benefit every student? (Consider the diversity of learners: ESOL, exceptional needs, etc.).
Reflection – After working on my specific goal for a period of time...
I could improve my performance in reaching this goal the next time by...
Possible goals to set for the next quarter are:

Appendix B: District Walkthrough (Post-Conference Feedback) Tool

Teacher Name (Coach Name): _____

Instructions: The coach and the teacher should collaboratively complete this form while discussing a recorded lesson, or the novice may complete it prior to discussion. These prompts may guide the discussion: What did you observe students doing during the lesson? What were the learning goals? To what degree did your students master the concepts, and how do you know? What did you do really well? In which category was the lesson strongest? How did you engage students? If you could do something differently, what would you do?

	Check all that apply		Check all that apply
Student Engagement:		<i>Challenging Environment</i>	
Students are working cooperatively.		Teacher is encouraging critical thinking. (<i>HOT questions</i>)	
Students can explain what/why they are learning.		Students are creating products.	
Students are asking questions.		Instructional time is maximized.	
Students are summarizing/paraphrasing.		Differentiation	
Students are comparing/contrasting.		Students are working in stations/centers.	
Students using graphic organizers.		Students are working in cooperative groups.	
Students using content vocabulary words.		Students working on different assignments, tasks, or standards.	
Learning Environment		Lesson is based on students' readiness.	
<i>Positive Environment</i>		Use of Technology	
Well-managed, safe & orderly.		Technology is integrated into the lesson and directly related to the learning task/objective.	
Student work with teacher commentary is posted on walls.		Technology is used as an add-on and is not needed for task completion.	
Teacher reinforces effort & provides recognition.		Teacher is using technology.	
		Students are using technology.	

Appendix C: Individual Interview Questions

RQ 1: How do novice teachers describe the peer coaching process that they engaged in?

1. How do you define teacher support?
2. How would you describe your recent peer coaching experience?
3. Talk about your thoughts on the coaching process: goal-setting, collaborative planning, receiving feedback, video, and reflection.
4. How frequently do you communicate with your peer coach?
5. When you communicate with your peer coach, what topics have you discussed?

RQ 2: How do novice teachers respond to peer coaching that uses collaborative inquiry?

1. What would be an ideal professional learning environment?
2. How has collaborative inquiry through peer coaching helped me in my teaching? How did goal-setting help me in my teaching? Collaborative planning? Discussing my lesson with my coach? Using video? Reflecting on my lessons?

RQ3: What are novice teachers' perceptions about peer coaching relationships?

1. Who initiates dialogue between you and your peer coach?
2. Do you feel comfortable asking your peer coach for help? Why or why not?
3. Has your peer coach helped you solve any teaching and learning problems? Explain/describe.
4. What do you see as the benefits of the peer coaching relationship?
5. Would you be willing to become a peer coach to a teacher in the future? Why or why not?
6. If you were a peer coach, what are some of the things that you would do to help a novice teacher?

Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Questions

1. What do you believe about teaching and learning?
2. What do you believe about professional learning?
3. Describe the professional learning that you have participated in this year?
4. What are your short-term or long-term teaching goals?
5. Is there anyone who has assisted you in achieving your teaching goals?
6. Has your peer coach helped you with your teaching goals? If yes, how have they helped?
7. Describe the observations/feedback that you and your coach have discussed.
8. I would like to hear about the structures that the district has in place to support novice teachers. In what ways has the peer coaching process been helpful to you?
Note/Probe: What about collaboratively planning lessons? Reflecting on your lesson? Receiving feedback from your peer coach?
9. Do you feel that the peer coaching process has fallen short of supporting you? If yes, in what ways? Explain.
10. I would like to hear about the peer coaching relationship. Describe the professional relationship between you and your peer coach.
11. Do you feel that you and your coach were equal partners? Explain.
Note/Probe: How did that make you feel?
12. Regarding videos,
 - a. What did you think about recording your lesson and seeing yourself teach?
Note/Probe: What did you learn by watching yourself teach? Would you be willing to use videos for reflection and professional learning in the future? Why or why not?
13. What can we do to improve/increase support for novice teachers?
 - a. How can we improve the peer coaching process?
14. What else would you like to share about your peer coaching experience?

Appendix E: Focus Group Guidelines

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of our focus group, which we are using to gather information about our teachers' experiences with peer coaching. The sole purpose of this focus group is to learn information that may help us improve our processes and support for new teachers.

Guidelines

1. This session will be recorded for informational purposes only. Only the researcher will hear/see the recording.
2. This session should remain confidential. Participants should not discuss the interview outside of the session.
3. Everyone should have the chance to participate.
4. Participants should be polite, with only one person speaking at a time.
5. There will be different perspectives, and there are no right or wrong answers.
6. Participants should interact with each other.

Appendix F: Critical Incident (Video) Reflection Form

What are Critical Incidents?

Critical Incidents are the “oops,” “ouch,” “aha...,” or “oh...” moments that you experience during a teaching episode or as you watch your videotaped lesson. The incident may be something that “intrigued” or “annoyed,” was “typical” or “atypical,” or a “felt success” or “felt difficulty.”

Why use Critical Incidents?

One goal of using critical incidents is to help you look beyond the experience of the incident to the *meaning* of the incident. This is a form of *reflection-on-action*. Another goal is to help you develop your ability to reflect on these incidents as they happen, or *reflection-in-action*. Finally, using critical incidents can help you adjust your lesson and strategies for future teaching cycles, or *reflection-for-action*.

How do I reflect on the Critical Incidents that I select?

Remember, there is no “right” or “wrong” way to select an incident. It should be something useful and meaningful to you. (As you reflect, you are encouraged to consider the goals that you set with your mentor or coach). After watching your videotaped lesson for a critical incident, use the statements and questions below to guide you as you reflect about the critical incident that you selected.

Incident:

What

Provide an in-depth description of the event. Try to write this without judgment or interpretation.

Emotions

Describe the feelings you had as you “experienced” the incident.

Why

Explain the incident from the perspective of each participant (student, teacher, etc.). Use “I” for each participant’s explanation.

Reflection on Incident:

Cultural Relevance

In what ways did you take into account the needs and backgrounds of your audience? (For example, the type of language you were using; the particular examples that you chose; choice of how to open the presentation; gathering information about students’ interests in and understandings of the topic.) You might begin with “As an educator, I was/was not able to. ...”

Position

What are some of your personal beliefs related to teaching and learning that you identified when reflecting on this incident. You might begin with “As an educator, I believe/value. ...”

Actions

After considering this incident, what will you do differently in the next lesson in light of your new understandings? You might begin with “As an educator, I will...”

Reflection on the Process:

How did it feel to record a lesson and watch myself teach?

How can/will using video affect my teaching?

I would/would not use video again because:

Appendix G: Teacher Learning Reflection Log

Instructions: Use the space below to reflect on your professional learning and coaching experiences. Use the following questions as prompts to guide your response.

1. What professional learning experience has been most helpful to me over the last few months? Explain.

2. What topic would I like covered during my next professional learning community (PLC)?

3. In what ways have I used recent professional learning and coaching experiences to enhance my teaching?

4. Regarding teaching and learning, how can a peer coach help me over the next several weeks?

5. How have I progressed in the areas or towards the goals stated in my previous self-assessments?

Appendix H: Organizing the Data

Date Collected	Data Type	Location	Participants (by number)	Key Word(s)
October 27	Reflection Logs	Professional Learning Room	Participants 1 and 6	Strategies, differentiation, discipline, share, student achievement
November 10	Individual Interview	Participant's Classroom	Participant 6	Community, planning time, resources, differentiated, dynamic friends, bounce ideas, challenged, time, tribal knowledge, student centered
November 11	Individual Interview	Participant's Classroom	Participant 9	Resources, perspectives, work w/other teachers, pressure, confidence, expectations
November 11	Individual Interview	Participant's Classroom	Participant 1	Safety net, comfortable to take risks, afraid, environment, closeness, team oriented, lesson plans
November 15	Individual Interview	Participant's Classroom	Participant 8	Facilitating, opportunities, explore, success, self-reflect, planning, results, standards, culture, relationships, comfortable, strategies, modeling
November 16	Individual Interview	Participant's Classroom	Participant 2	Management, strategies, community, sounding board, transition, relationship, get ideas, listening, benchmark, team player, reflect
December 1	Reflection Logs	Professional Learning Room	Participants 4, 5, 9, 11	Engage, learning process, collaborate, technology, strategies, accommodation, collaborative planning, behavior management, GOIEP, different skills, intervention, classroom management, resources
December 14	Focus Group	Professional Learning Room	Participants 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11	Relevant, time, open to learn, strategies, collaborative planning, standards, same students, interdisciplinary, differentiated, sharing, classroom management, resources, modeling, goals, comfortable, questions, listening,

				mistakes, approachable, accessible, directing, co-teacher, different planning, backgrounds, constantly talking
December 23	Video Reflection	E-mail	Participant 7	Chunking, calm, neutral, communicate, purpose, experience, student engagement, hesitant, diversity planning, motivation, “meeting students where they are,” effective