EXPLORING THE SUPPORT NEEDS OF TEACHERS USING A CAREER STAGE FRAMEWORK

by

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This qualitative research study explored the specific support needs of teachers as they progress throughout their careers. The teachers for this study, chosen randomly from schools in and around the Grande Prairie area, included teachers from various grade levels who had teaching experience ranging from 0 to 35 years. The participants were divided into four groups based on their years of teaching experience: 0-5, 6-15, 16-25, and 26-35 years. Fifty-nine teachers completed and returned the surveys. The results were then analyzed to identify support needs related to six categories of support and were compared to years of teaching experience. In addition, eight teachers were selected, two from each experience category, to participate in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. The data were then coded to identify themes related to the support needs of teachers based on their ranges of teaching experience. The results highlight that all teachers in all stages of their careers felt there was a need for more time to perform all of their required teaching duties. There were specific needs reported by teachers based on the stages of their teaching careers. Those teachers in the second stage identified a need for more administrative support. Teachers in the third stage of their careers reported a need for opportunities to incorporate professional development into their teaching and finally, those teachers in the last stage of their careers identified a need for collegial support.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract
Table of Contents
List of Tables
Glossary
Acknowledgement
Introduction

Chapter One
Introduction
What Teachers are Saying to Me
Chapter Summary

Chapter Two
Literature Review
Administrative Support
Colleague Support
Chapter Summary

Chapter Three
Research Method
Methodology
Sampling
Ethics
Data Collection
Surveys
Interviews
Data Analysis
Surveys
Interviews
Chapter Summary

Chapter Four
Results and Discussion
Results of the Interviews
Discussion
Survey Results
Administrative Support
Community
Collegial Support
Interview Results
Teaching Duties
Collegial and Administrative Support and Collaboration
TEACHERS' SUPPORT NEEDS

Professional Development 42
Chapter Summary 44

Chapter Five
Conclusion 47
Main Conclusion 47
Pedagogical Implications 48
Methodological Implications 49
Recommendations 50
  Recommendation One 50
  Recommendation Two 50
  Recommendation Three 50
Reflections 51

References 52

Appendix A  Information Letter / Consent Form for Superintendents 56
Appendix B  Information Letter / Consent Form for Principals 57
Appendix C  Information Letter to Accompany Surveys 58
Appendix D  Information Letter/ Consent Form for Teachers for Interviews 60
Appendix E  Questionnaire 62
Appendix F  Interview Questions 64
List of Tables

Table 1. Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (0 to 5 Years Teaching Experience)..........29
Table 2. Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (6 to 15 Years Teaching Experience).........30
Table 3. Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (16 to 25 Years Teaching Experience).......31
Table 4. Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (26 to 35 Years Teaching Experience).......32
Table 5. Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (Average responses for all four teaching stages).........................................................................................................................33
Table 6. Emerging Themes and Codes from Interviews with eight teachers...............35
Glossary

21st century learner

These students have distinct learning styles and need to learn through collaboration, co-creation, and social networking and they need professors and teachers who guide and coach rather than top-down, authoritarian educators. (Kitchenham, 2011)

mentorship

Mentorship is a personal developmental relationship in which a more-experienced or more-knowledgeable teacher helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable teacher.

multiple intelligences

There are nine distinct intelligences. It is the extent to which students possess different kinds of minds and therefore learn, remember, perform, and understand in different ways (Gardner, 2006).

professional development

Professional development is the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from preservice teacher education to retirement (Fullan, 1991).

professional learning communities

A group of teachers who share common interests and beliefs and are actively engaged in learning together and from each other.
school culture

School culture is the guiding beliefs, assumptions and expectations that are evident in the way the school operates (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996)

support

Support is defined as both professional and personal assistance from colleagues and individuals in administration. It can also stem from professional development which aids to assist someone who is wishing to grow professionally.

teacher leadership

Teacher leadership for the purpose of this project is defined as a teacher who takes on the role of a leader in order to support other colleagues and students and who exhibits best practice for the success of all involved.
Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Much of the research on teachers' support needs focuses on the needs of teachers within the first few years of teaching. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), there is a need for much support for new teachers; up to 30 percent of teachers leave the profession after three years and up to 50 percent leave after five years. However, there is much less information about the support needs of teachers as they progress through their teaching careers. As a teacher myself, I know that my needs as a teacher have changed throughout my career and that little support was offered directly after the first few years of teaching.

At this point in my career, I believe that teacher leadership development is essential, yet the opportunities to access such development are not offered but rather need to be sought out. I began to wonder how my support needs would continue to change as I progress through my career. Also I wonder whether my support needs are the same as other teachers who have similar years of experience or whether their needs are different from my own.

One of the pieces of research that I reference throughout this project supports the hypothesis that teachers have varying support needs and comes from a charity organization known as The Teacher Support Network (2012). This charity is meant to benefit teachers as well as their families. I chose to use this study, even though it is not from Canada, as the issues listed that teachers are contacting the organization about are the same concerns that teachers in Canada are experiencing. They published the following results in autumn of 2012. Health and well-being accounted for 4,589 of incidents reported, specifically relating to anxiety. A further 3,002 incidents concerned problems with family relationships, while 2,180 were logged by people losing sleep over their worries.
Another study indicates that teachers' needs differ as they advance in experience in their career. Johnson and Donaldson (2007) conducted interviews with teachers in the second stage of their career who had moved beyond the classroom to leadership and administrative roles. Findings suggested that many experienced teachers want to vary their responsibilities, collaborate with peers, and influence teaching beyond their classrooms. In many ways, these teachers are ideal candidates to provide the teacher leadership that schools urgently need. However, the teachers' accounts also revealed that their experience as teacher leaders often fails to fulfill their expectations and may have done little to build their schools' instructional capacity (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007).

What Teachers Are Saying To Me

In my conversations with colleagues, teachers have expressed the opinion that although professional development opportunities are available, they are not always easy to access and the implementation of the new knowledge into the classroom is not always supported. With an ever-changing curriculum designed to adapt to 21st century learners, teachers are constantly bombarded with new information. The most-common complaint seems to be the lack of support; more specifically, the time to be able to incorporate new curriculum and methods into teaching. Furthermore, with technology making information so readily available, teachers need support to access and manipulate this technology to help them keep current. There is also a need for support as new technological tools are being provided to students in the classroom and teachers need the technological tools themselves to incorporate technology in the classroom. They also need the professional development to develop their curriculum around the new technology to better their teaching practices.
In conducting the literature review for this project, it has also become apparent that there is a need for teacher leaders in the school. I know that as I progress in my career there is a need for empowerment in the school and to feel as though I am part of the decision making that is being done. There have been teachers who have expressed to me that as they become more confident as educators they would like to see more support from their administrators in advancing in their career or at the very least becoming an integral part of the learning community and feeling supported by administration.

Many teachers in the district have also expressed a need to meet with colleagues and receive support in order to better their teaching. When collaboration between colleagues happens, teachers feel as though they are much more effective educators. It is also an opportunity for teachers to feel supported by their colleagues in their teaching practices, and their effectiveness as educators. It is a chance to create more of a community and to feel as though other teachers care about their well-being and their role in the school.

In my career thus far I know that there are times when I have felt the pressure and the stress that can sometimes come with having a career in the educational field. I also know of many other teachers who have experienced this as well. However, it has been through the support of others that I have progressed in my career and have made me become a better educator. When I feel less stress, I feel I am a better teacher to my students and in supporting other teachers I have seen them rise to their roles as educators as well.

In this study, I identified what the support needs were of teachers based on their years of teaching experience so that administrators and teachers themselves were aware of upcoming changes, if they existed, of the types of support that was going to be needed and sought out. I focussed specifically on support from administration and colleagues.
My research has attempted to highlight the need for identifying support needs throughout teachers’ careers. It was my intent that, by identifying where teachers need support throughout their careers, administration could work with teachers to ensure that avenues for providing supports were made available and that teacher needs were being met. Much of the conversation in the staff rooms and at meetings seemed to center on the perception that beginning teachers are getting the most support. In fact, school districts in Grande Prairie have mentorship programs in place in which teachers with many years of experience are placed with teachers who are in their first years of their teaching professions. However, this program does not extend to teachers in later years (i.e., more than one year).

In my study, teachers felt that individualized support simply dropped off after the first few years of teaching and they were left to their own devices as they continued in their teaching careers. As I completed this project, I wanted to identify how teachers can be supported throughout their entire careers rather than just at the beginning where currently it is concentrated. Teachers impact the lives of children throughout their entire careers. Teachers are considered to be the support for their students. If we believe that students need support from their teachers throughout their entire schooling years then we should also believe that our teachers need support throughout their careers through lifelong learning.

Through this Master’s project, it is my intent to provide administrators and teachers with detailed information about the type of support teachers need as they progress through their careers so that schools and administration may take the necessary steps to ensure that support needs are being met. In addition, this project is meant to illustrate the type of support needs required during specific stages of a teacher’s career in order to ease the transitioning role of the teacher throughout his or her career. For instance, Lynn (2002) developed a model of the teacher
cycle which consists of eight stages throughout a career: pre-service, induction, competency building, enthusiasm and growth, career frustration, career stability, career wind-down and career exit. I have taken these eight stages to develop the four categories of teaching experience for the purpose of this project.

Methodologically, I sent out 104 surveys and completed eight one-on-one interviews with teachers from several of the schools from the approved district. When doing the surveys and the interviews, I collected information on the participants' years of experience in the teaching field. By then taking the results and graphing them I identified in which area teachers identified the need for the most support based on their years of experience.

Although there is much information on the type of support that teachers need and information regarding methods to support teachers, there is little information on the types of supports teachers need at specific times in their careers. Through this study, I intend to share my insights on what types of support teachers may need based on how many years of teaching experience they have. It is meant to inform local decision makers, administrators, and teachers about how support needs have been met and what types of support teachers may need as they progress through their careers.

Chapter Summary

Using the information from the literature review and what has been expressed orally through informal conversations with colleagues and my own support needs throughout the teaching field, I completed this project based on those identified support needs. I conducted this project to determine which types of support teachers needed in their careers. It was my objective to survey and interview teachers to find out at exactly what point during their careers certain
supports were needed and, more specifically, if certain supports were needed much more than other types of support throughout their teaching careers.

The literature review formed the basis for identifying the types of support teachers need throughout their entire careers and the importance of these supports to their teaching practices. The review was also the basis for the formatting of the questions for the surveys and for the interviews in order to receive responses to determine at what stages teachers needed particular supports.

The results of the surveys and the interviews were then broken down into tables to compare and contrast easily what was reflected by the teachers' responses. The responses were then outlined in tables for facility of presentation, followed by the discussion of both the surveys and interviews.

In the final chapter, the pedagogical and methodological implications of the study are stated as well as recommendations to administrators and stakeholders to ensure teachers' support needs are being met. The chapter and the project conclude with reflections on the research project.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

There is a significant amount of research on the importance of teachers being supported during the first few years of the profession. There is also a significant amount of literature on the types of supports that teachers need. Additionally, the extant research demonstrates the importance of administrators and school personnel supporting their teachers throughout their entire professions, but when it comes to the specific support needs of teachers during particular times in their careers, there exists a dearth of research studies.

Teachers, during all stages of their careers, need support in one or more areas that affect their teaching to the best of their abilities. Without support, some teachers may not excel within their teaching careers or may choose to change careers altogether due to the lack of support that can have a direct impact on their personal lives. As Hargreaves (2005) pointed out, educational change is very difficult for teachers due to several factors; such as, when educational changes are poorly conceptualized or not clearly demonstrated. This poor conceptualization may translate into insufficient support for teachers who wish to initiate change but lack knowledge or confidence to do so. As technology and teaching methods and roles all change throughout a teacher’s career, these changes will be most successful when teachers are fully supported. Too often, induction programs only offer short-term support to help new teachers survive their first years on the job (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).

Being supported during the course of one’s teaching profession is critical and the types of support vary considerably. The following chapter is an overview of the main types of support that teachers need. The first section of the literature review discusses studies that examine the main types of support which administrators can provide. The second section of the literature review discusses studies that examine main types of supports provided by colleagues.
Administrative Support

In this section I will be discussing the types of support which administrators can provide to teachers. I will discuss each of the different supports which administrators can provide to ensure positive effects in their teachers as discussed in the extant professional literature.

Teachers need to feel empowered in their roles to make decisions which positively affect not only their students, but their colleagues and the school as a whole. Teachers who are leaders in their schools like to see that educational change is occurring and that the school and its students are progressing toward a successful future. Teachers need to feel that they have a voice in what happens in their school and are able to take part in implementing changes.

Melenyzer (1990) stated that true empowerment leads to increased professionalism as teachers assume responsibility for and an involvement in the decision making process. Blase and Blase (2001) noted that teachers desire more power and freedom as they progress through their careers. Such power and freedom can only be established through respect and dignity which occurs when administration empowers their teachers.

Teacher empowerment has a much stronger impact on teacher satisfaction when it takes place in an organizational context that supports individuals (Bogler & Nir, 2012). When teachers feel empowered they contribute to the school in more ways thereby affecting the overall school effectiveness. Bogler and Nir (2012) aimed to investigate the mediating effect of teacher empowerment on the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of their school support and their intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. Data were collected from a sample of 2,565 teachers in an Israeli elementary school. A path analysis procedure was employed in order to determine cause and effect. The results revealed that teacher empowerment mediated relations between organizational support and satisfaction. Teacher empowerment has a much stronger impact on teacher satisfaction when it takes place in an organizational context that supports individuals.
TEACHERS' SUPPORT NEEDS

Bogler and Nir (2012) argued, based on their results that school leaders need to focus on the different qualities of teacher empowerment, depending on the qualities of satisfaction that they wish to provide.

Bogler and Somech (2004) focused on the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. It examined which subscales of teacher empowerment can best predict these outcomes. The data were collected through a questionnaire returned by a sample of 983 teachers in Israeli middle and high schools. Pearson correlations and multiple regression analyses indicated that teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment are significantly related to their feelings of commitment to the organization and to the profession, and to their organizational citizenship behavior. Based on their findings, they concluded that participation in decision-making is a predictor of organizational citizenship behavior and that school principals should acknowledge the significance since it carries great advantages for other members in the organization, including other teachers, students and the school as a whole. Keiser and Shen (2000) found that empowerment leads to higher teacher self-esteem, increased teacher knowledge of subject matter, improved staff collegiality, enhanced motivation, and higher student achievement.

Professional development opportunities need to be provided on a regular basis if teachers are to excel to the best of their abilities to ensure quality teaching and student success. As Guskey (2002) pointed out, professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students. Guskey (2002) presented a model of teacher change and the implications for teacher development. He stated that professional development activities
frequently are designed to initiate change in teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. Whether professional development means providing upgrading for teachers who are further into their career or providing new ways of looking at old ideas, professional development must be provided to teachers so that teachers' knowledge and pedagogical expertise is in line with their students' needs.

Teachers are being encouraged to plan their curriculum and lesson plans while bearing in mind the multiple intelligences exhibited by pupils (Coolahan, 2002). Coolahan pointed out that the integration of information and communication technology into the teaching-learning activity of teachers and pupils offers unprecedented opportunities of access to, as well as dissemination and creation of knowledge.

As technology becomes more evident in everyday life, teachers need to be prepared for the future in knowing the knowledge and opportunities that can be accessed through technology. In addition, jobs and careers will continue to require knowledge and manipulation of technological skills and communication. To effectively be prepared, teachers need professional development specific to the areas of changing curriculum and instructional approaches. Teachers who are engaged in cycles of effective professional learning take greater responsibility for the learning of all students. When teachers have been given the support they need professionally through professional development opportunities, they in turn become much more effective leaders for their classroom and for their students.

Boyle, Lamprianou, and Boyle (2005) completed an ongoing longitudinal investigation of the influence of professional development on teaching strategies. This study is based on a survey-type data collection design with short self-completion questionnaires. Percentage conversions were done to compare the results. The data suggested that the majority who do
participate in longer term professional development do change one or more aspects of their teaching practice.

Teachers need to know that the tools exist to be able to implement information learned through professional development and teach lesson objectives using the most efficient methods. These tools can be in the form of time, materials, technology and so on. Based on the Principal Quality Practice guidelines (2009) it is the administrators' responsibility to ensure that teachers are given the tools they need to effectively teach and for student learning to be successful.

Sometimes teachers need to be given time away from their classroom to improve their plans and to implement new ideas from professional development into their teaching. Other times, teachers need to be given technological tools to effectively teach and build 21st Century Learning Skills.

Levin and Wadmany (2008) completed an exploratory, longitudinal study, which examined six teachers' views on the factors that affect technology use in classrooms. The research examined teachers of grades 4, 5, and 6—for three years, studying the teachers both as a group and as individual case studies. Three case studies were selected for analysis, with the aim of exploring the relation between the changes that occurred in the teachers' educational views and practices as a result of their exposure to teaching and learning with the aid of rich technology and their views on factors affecting technology integration. The methodology consisted of a combined exploratory case study approach and a collective case study approach. Three data sources were examined: open questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observation. The results showed that teachers highlighted their need for formal training by experts at an earlier stage of their new classroom experiences with ICT.

Beetham and Sharpe (2013) presented a critical discussion of the issues surrounding the design, sharing, and reuse of learning activities. In examining a wide range of perspectives on
effectively designing and delivering learning activities to ensure that future development is pedagogically sound, learner-focused, and accessible, they came to the conclusion that wherever we find an impossible challenge to inclusive education provision there is usually a way in which digital technology could make a significant difference.

**Colleague Support**

Colleagues play an important part in any job and with teaching it is especially important that colleagues support each other. Support through interactions with each other can be through some of the following ways. This section of the literature review will outline some of the support systems.

When teachers feel they are being supported by their colleagues they tend to feel better valued in their profession and become more effective at teaching. According to the MetLife Survey of the American Teacher (2013), more than ninety percent of teachers believe that other teachers contribute to their success. Professional learning groups are meant to foster professional collaboration to ensure student success. These learning communities enhance teachers’ ability to learn how to teach challenging students more effectively, increases their certainty that what they do can make a difference in their students’ lives, and increases their commitment to the task of teaching (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). These positive influences of collegiality have produced networks of professional learning communities that are being established in certain schools. However, learning communities are not implemented in all schools right now which begs the question of whether teachers who participate in these learning communities feel just as or more supported than non-participating teachers.

Hargreaves (2002) drew from a study of the emotions of teaching and educational change that comprised interviews with 50 teachers in a range of elementary and secondary schools in the
province of Ontario. The sample was distributed across 15 varied schools of different levels and sizes, and serving different kinds of communities (urban, rural, and suburban). In each school, they asked principals to identify a sample of up to four teachers that included the oldest and youngest teachers in the school, was gender mixed, contained teachers with different orientations to change, represented a range of subject specializations (within secondary schools), and (where possible) included at least one teacher from an ethno-cultural minority. The interviews lasted for 1 to 1.5 hours and concentrated on eliciting teachers' reports of their emotional relationships to their work, their professional development and educational change. A substantial part of the interview drew on methodological procedures used by Hochschild (1983) in her key text on the sociology of emotion, The Managed Heart: the commercialization of human feeling. It asked teachers to describe particular episodes of positive and negative emotion with students, colleagues, administrators and parents. He concluded that fewer interactions mean fewer opportunities for professional learning and lessened chances of school improvement.

Barth (2006) stated that relationships among educators in a school define all relationships within that school's culture. Teachers and administrators demonstrate all too well a capacity to either enrich or diminish one another's lives and thereby enrich or diminish their schools. Teachers need mentoring throughout their career with the most significant time for mentorship being when a teacher is new to the field. However, mentoring can be effective at any time during a teacher's career. Similarly, Zachary (2012) argued that experience can be a primary learning resource and the life experiences of others will enrich the learning process. With peer encouragement and guidance, teachers are more willing to navigate through new curriculum, manipulate new technology or develop newer and better teaching methods. Furthermore, mentors
themselves may experience increased job satisfaction thus renewing their enthusiasm and commitment to teaching and ultimately their careers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000).

Teacher efficacy was found to improve through the provision of mentoring support early in their careers. Efficacy was also found to improve for longer serving teachers in coaching models build upon trust. Joyce and Showers (1982) found that when teachers are involved in coaching type professional development 90 percent of teachers will develop the skill and a further seventy-five to ninety percent will accurately use the knowledge in their classrooms.

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) did a review of 15 empirical studies, conducted since the mid-1980s, on the effects of support, guidance, and orientation programs for beginning teachers. Most of the studies reviewed provided empirical support for the claim that support and assistance for beginning teachers have a positive impact on three sets of outcomes: teacher commitment and retention, teacher classroom instructional practices, and student achievement.

According to Ferguson, Frost, and Hall (2012) negative occupational stress may lead to depression and anxiety among teachers. Their study investigated predictors of anxiety, depression, and job satisfaction in teachers in northern Ontario. Using data from self-report questionnaires, factor analysis and multiple linear regression were performed to determine which sources of stress predict stress-related symptoms among teachers and to explore job satisfaction as predicted by: stress, depression, anxiety, years of teaching experience, gender, grade level assignment and position. A self-report teacher stress questionnaire was developed from a review of previous research. Ferguson et al. (2012) found that stress and depression are significant and negative predictors of job satisfaction.

Colleagues must support each other emotionally to deal with issues that arise during different times throughout their career. This support can be through formal communication in
which teachers state an issue which has arisen and colleagues encourage and support to establish a solution. This support can also be through informal conversations in which colleagues motivate and encourage each other. Social support from colleagues and principals helps prevent emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and a perceived lack of personal accomplishment (Brouwers, Tomic, & Boluijt, 2011).

Pomaki, DeLongis, Frey, Short, and Woehrle (2010) examined the role of social support in turnover intention among new teachers. First, they tested and found evidence for a direct negative relationship between social support and turnover intention. Second, they tested the social support buffer hypothesis, and found that teachers with higher social support had lower turnover intention in the face of higher workload, compared to teachers with lower support. Third, they examined a mediational hypothesis, and found that social support acts indirectly, through job satisfaction in relation to turnover intention. These findings suggest that social support can be a valuable resource for new teachers.

Chapter Summary

Through the literature review, I have outlined the types of support which teachers need and became the basis for the questions in the survey and the interview portion of my project. I have divided the types of support into two main sections.

Firstly, I reviewed those types of supports that are offered by administrators. These supports can be offered through different forms. Empowerment is one in which teachers feel they have a voice in the decisions that affect their classrooms and the school and are able to become leaders for change. Another such support is that of professional development in which teachers receive the support that they need to further improve their teaching practices and become more
effective educators. Teachers also need tools to feel supported in their teaching practices whether it be technological devices in their classrooms or time to work collaboratively with colleagues.

The second type of support which I have focused on is that of collegial support. One of the ways in which colleagues can offer support to others is by forming a welcoming community in which colleagues feel supported in their profession and in their goals for student success.

Another way in which colleagues can offer support is through mentoring which occurs mostly at the beginning of teachers’ careers in which a more experienced colleague can offer guidance and advice. Finally, colleagues can offer support through counseling. When colleagues are there to listen and have informal conversations with one another and support each other through times of distress, it leads to less stress and better job satisfaction overall.
Chapter 3: Research Methods

In this chapter, I define the research methods used to conduct the study. I discuss the site and sampling techniques as well as the ethical considerations discussed in the distribution and completion of surveys and the administration of the eight interviews. Additionally, I justify the design of the surveys and the questions for the interviews. Then I review the data collection techniques for both the surveys and the interviews that were completed by teachers. Finally, I outline the data analysis for both the surveys and the interviews.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used for this study. Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter in an attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A qualitative approach was most appropriate for this study because it aimed to show how supports change for teachers during their teaching careers. It allowed participants the opportunity to articulate where support is most needed; more specifically, by whom or in what form.

In particular, a case study approach was selected for this research to carry out an in-depth investigation to provide understanding of how support needs change as years of teaching experience increase. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009). This case studied teachers in the province of Alberta and investigated how their support needs changed as they have progressed through their careers. The researcher had no control over the behavioural events and the focus of the study was of a contemporary phenomenon in its real world context (Yin, 2009).

Specifically, a descriptive research study was used whereby a combination of surveys as
well as interviews was used to illicit responses from the participants, thus using two types of evidence. Surveys are an important tool for collecting and analyzing information from selected individuals and are widely accepted as a key tool for conducting and applying basic social science research methodology (Rossi, Wright, & Anderson, 1983). The term survey is commonly applied to a research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population, or a sample from the population, and typically utilizes a questionnaire or an interview as the survey instrument (Rea & Parker, 2005; Robson, 1993).

**Sampling**

The sites chosen for this study were five schools from one of the districts outside of the capital city. The five schools were also chosen based on the grades taught in that particular school in order to receive a sample which was representative of teachers from all grades K to 12. Once principals signed the consent form, they were asked for the number of surveys that needed to be provided to allow every teacher in the school the opportunity to complete a survey. Therefore, the total number of the possible sample was 104 teachers. Convenience sampling was used since subjects were selected based on the convenient accessibility of schools in the area in relation to their proximity to the researcher. No school was beyond 50 kilometres outside of the target city. Convenience sampling was also chosen since the population for this study, teachers from the represented district, was too large to include every individual. Gender was not a consideration for this study as the research is based only on years of teaching experience and no other participant variable.

**Ethics**

To gain consent, I sent out a letter to the superintendent of the district (see Appendix A) requesting permission to carry out the study. Once the superintendent consented, I then
approached the principals of several schools in the district that would include teachers from all grade levels (K-12) and gave them a consent form with all the necessary information describing the project (see Appendix B). Concurrently, I applied to the UNBC Research Ethics Board (REB) for their review of my research application and the project proposal. I received permission from the UNBC REB on February 3rd, 2015 and began the process of conducting the research.

The surveys were delivered in a pre-stamped, self-addressed envelope so that no one else in the school would have access to the teacher surveys. For the surveys, teachers had to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) which was separated from the completed surveys once received so as not to have any identifying information linked to the surveys. The completed consent forms and the surveys were stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home office.

For the interviews, the teachers were given a consent form to sign (see Appendix D) in which they agreed to be interviewed by the researcher and for the interview to be audio taped. These consent forms and the transcribed interviews were also stored in a locked cabinet at the researcher’s home office.

All those that participated in this study did so on a volunteer basis. Anyone who did not wish to participate in this study did not sign or return the survey. Anyone who was approached by the researcher to participate in the interview could refuse to participate. In addition, the participants could refuse to complete the interview at any time during the interview process. To ensure privacy for all participants, including those interviewed, I ensured anonymity in the reporting of the results in this project by never referring to any of the schools that participated by name; but simply as schools in the catchment area. In addition, none of the participants are referred to by name in the study, nor was the school identified in which they taught.
Data Collection

As previously outlined, the two main data collection methods were print-based surveys and semi-structured interviews. The returned surveys comprised a pool from which the researcher identified interviewees.

Surveys. All of the questions that were developed took into consideration the guidelines provided by survey researchers (Dillman, 1978; Rea & Parker, 2005). The questions were applicable to all respondents and were kept to a maximum of one sentence each and the survey consisted of only one page of 12 closed-ended questions. Each question addressed only one type of support at a time (e.g., colleague support) and was limited to what the support was referring (e.g., teaching style). The questions were precise and developed so that direct transfer of data from the questionnaire to the computer for analysis was possible. They were meant to facilitate comparison among respondents yet kept anonymity among the respondents (Rea & Parker, 2005).

The surveys were constructed based on the literature review and all 12 questions reflected the research of the types of support that teachers need throughout their careers. Specifically, the questions reflected the two types of support that I focused on in the literature review; six questions reflecting administrative support and six questions reflecting collegial support. In the literature review each of those two supports was broken down to three types of support (e.g.: professional development support from administrators). As Guskey (2002) pointed out, professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students. Bearing this information in mind, I constructed question number 12, for instance, as “I feel that I have support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my
Two questions were developed for each of the three themes under the two main supports.

McIver and Carmines (1981) stated that the most fundamental problem with single-item measures is not that they tend to be less valid, less accurate, and less reliable than their multi-item equivalents. It is, rather, that the social scientist rarely has sufficient information to estimate his or her measurement properties. Thus their degree of validity, accuracy, and reliability is often unknowable. For this particular research, a modified Likert scale was used creating an even-point scale thereby not giving participants the ability to choose a neutral option (i.e., central tendency). The four choices from which respondents could choose for any of the given questions were: *none of the time,* *some of the time,* *most of the time,* or *all of the time.* Each of these answers was represented by the numbers 1 to 4 respectively. The surveys also included a section in which respondents could provide additional comments so they could add detail to any of the closed-ended questions if they so wished. A small minority of respondents wrote comments in this section. The responses mostly reflected the supports as reflected in the survey questions. For example, one of the respondents wrote, "I believe that our school is going through many technological upgrades. This is a fantastic thing for both the students and staff".

I delivered these surveys to the schools for which the superintendent and principals had granted permission for this research to take place. The surveys were hand-delivered rather than mailed out for both cost savings and convenience. Surveys were delivered immediately when the principals were approached to consent to the teachers in their school participating in the survey so they would distribute them immediately to their staff. Principals either gave them to the teachers at a staff meeting or placed them in their teachers’ mailboxes. Teachers then sent the
sealed surveys back through registered mail since the surveys were provided with a pre-stamped and pre-addressed envelope.

The researcher decided to do print-based instead of web-based questionnaires based on a study done by Manfreda and Vehovar (2002) in which two groups of participants were given the same survey in written and in web form. Their research conclusion was that item non-response was statistically-significant for web surveys. It seemed as if respondents were less committed to completely answering web surveys than paper surveys unless controls for the item non-response are used which forces them to answer.

Each of the surveys was in pre-stamped return envelopes and delivered to each of the schools including primary, intermediate, and secondary schools. Teachers who consented to do the surveys had to sign a consent form (see Appendix C) before completing the survey. Out of 104 surveys sent out, 59 surveys were returned for a return rate of 57 percent. The participating teachers had experience in various grades as well as various subjects due to the fact that surveys were sent out to various schools that spanned all Grades K-12.

Interviews. Kvale (2007) stated that the qualitative interview is a key venue for exploring the ways in which subjects experience and understand their world. Subjects, in their own words, describe their activities, experiences, and opinions. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to use interviews as the other type of support for the research to complement the surveys. The questions were developed using the research question (what supports do teachers need as they progress through their careers?). The interview questions were developed to gain further insight into the Likert scale survey choices made by the teachers previously.

A total of seven questions were devised to ask the interviewee and included questions such as, “In what aspect of your career do you feel you are receiving the most support?” and “In
what area of your career do you feel you are receiving the least amount of support?”. A final question asking for suggestions on how support needs could be met was developed to give teachers the opportunity to provide further insight into the questions already asked.

Due to the fact that the researcher had established four categories of years of teaching experience for the analysis of the interviews, she chose to have two teachers for each category for a total of eight teachers complete the interviews. For the interviews, a total of eight teachers were interviewed. The researcher selected informants by approaching teachers (two from each of the four years of pre-established experience categories) from her own school and from the other schools participating in this study and inquired as to whether or not they would be willing to complete a one-on-one interview on support needs. This selection was purposeful as I selected those teachers with whose teaching experience I was familiar. Teachers who consented to participate in the interview had to sign a consent form (see Appendix D).

In an interview conversation, the researcher asks about, and listens to, what people themselves tell about their lived worlds. The interviewer hears their views and opinions in their own words and learns about their work situation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). For these reasons, it was felt by the researcher that in addition to the surveys, interviews would be the optimal other source of evidence for this descriptive research case study. The average time to complete the interview was about eight minutes. They were conducted with only the interviewer and interviewee present at a location of the interviewee’s choosing. These interviews were recorded and then transcribed in order to be evaluated for emerging themes of support needs.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis stage of the research project, the researcher first analyzed the surveys using a frequency count approach. Next, she moved onto the interviews by coding and
theming the transcribed interviews. Once both data sources were analyzed, the researcher looked for comparison across both data sets in order to discuss the significance of the findings (see Chapter 4).

**Surveys.** The surveys were then separated into the previously-established four categories based on reported years of teaching experience on the survey: 0 to 5 years, 6 to 15 years, 16 to 25 years, and 26 to 35 years. The first category of five years was established based on the work by Ingersoll and Smith (2003) who stated that 40 to 50 percent of teachers leave the profession after the first five years. Therefore, it seemed important to use 1-5 years as a signifier for change in the profession since many teachers stay in teaching once they get past the five-year mark (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The other three categories of years of teaching experience reported were divided evenly into nine years of teaching experience each.

First, I established the total number of participants that responded in the category. For example, there were a total of 19 respondents for the 6 to 15 years teaching experience category. Then a frequency count was conducted for how many respondents answered the question with a "1" (none of the time), a "2" (some of the time), a "3" (most of the time) or a "4" (all of the time). The counts were then converted to percentages by dividing by the number of respondents out of the total. For example, when 12 respondents answered with a "3" out of a possible 19, then the percentage conversion was 63.1 percent. This method was followed for each of the four possible choices for each of the 12 questions on the survey.

The results were then developed into four separate tables (see Tables 1 to 4 in the next chapter) by the four established categories of years of teaching experience. The percentage results were then examined to look for differences in the responses and then for similarities or differences of responses based on the years of teaching experience.
Interviews. The participants were asked for their years of teaching experience before conducting the interview to obtain demographics and to use demographic coding (Saldaña, 2013). The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in a location of the interviewee’s choice with no other people in the vicinity. Each of the interviews was audio recorded and later transcribed into a Word document by the researcher. She also wrote notes about the responses to the questions on a paper copy during the interview to ensure that answers were recorded in case there was a problem later with the audio recordings. Before leaving the interview, the researcher checked with the interviewees that the recorded responses on the paper copy were consistent with the responses they gave.

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher disaggregated the data by code for emerging themes. She analyzed each interview through descriptive coding as well as values and versus coding (Saldaña, 2013). Once these coding types were complete, the researcher used second cycle coding through pattern coding. For instance, Participant A answered the question “In what area of your career do you feel you need the most support at this time?” with the response, “Professional Development for new courses that I am going to be teaching” so the researchers coded this responses as Courses. Initially, the eight interviews revealed 648 codes so these codes were analyzed to examine any redundancies and repetition and to merge similar codes. For example the code travel and the code money were very similar so they were merged to become availability under the theme of professional development. After merging and subsuming some of the original defined codes, a total of 40 main codes emerged. From these 40 codes, four main themes emerged: administrative support, professional development, collegial support and teaching duties. For example, the code of Courses from Participant A’s response as noted in the preceding paragraph was placed under the theme professional development. Another theme that
emerged was that of collegial support. Thus the statement from Participant C, “The majority of support that I get is from other staff members” was coded as collegial support under that theme. Under the main theme of teaching duties, the main code of student success was applied to the statement, “Teachers want to encourage the kids to be successful”.

The researcher reported the number of times the codes from each of the themes appeared in all eight interviews in the form of frequency. She then represented visually the main themes and major codes in the form of a table (see Table 5 in Chapter 4) in addition to the frequency of codes for each of the themes. The researcher then examined the data in much the same way she analyzed the survey data to look for differences in the responses and then for similarities or differences of responses based on the years of teaching experience. Finally, she examined both sets of data in the form of the over-riding themes for the purposes of discussion.

Chapter Summary

A qualitative research approach was applied for this study. Specifically, a descriptive research case study whereby two types of data, surveys and interviews, were used as evidence.

Participants were chosen from the researcher’s approved district and included five schools that encompassed all grades K to 12. Participants were mailed a survey to complete and a total of 59 surveys were returned. A further eight participants were approached and agreed to participate in a one on one interview with the researcher.

All survey and interview questions were first reviewed and approved by the UNBC Research Ethics Board. Completion of the surveys was completely anonymous. Any identifying information of participants for both the surveys and the interviews was kept completely confidential by the researcher.
TEACHERS’ SUPPORT NEEDS

The surveys were constructed of a total of 12 closed-ended questions for participants to complete. Respondents had a choice of four possible responses to each question in the form of a modified-Likert scale. For the interviews, participants were asked a total of seven questions. These interviews were recorded and transcribed in order for the data to be analyzed later.

The returned surveys were divided into four previously-established stages of the teaching career. The results of the surveys for each group were analyzed to establish and identify the support needs for teachers based on the particular stages of the teaching career. The results from each of the four groups were then compared and analysed to each other for similarities and differences between the stages. The interviews were coded into major codes for emerging themes. A total of four themes emerged based on the major codes.

The analyzed data has the ability to be further utilized by administration and school boards to ensure that support needs are being addressed and are available to the teachers at specific moments in their teaching profession. This information will be discussed in the final chapter of this project.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

A descriptive research study involves the use of several sources of evidence when gathering information. This research included a survey sent out to and completed by 59 teachers in an Alberta school division and eight interviews with teachers representing varying years of experience in the profession.

The returned surveys were divided into four previously-established stages of teachers’ careers and the results were analyzed to establish and identify the support needs for teachers based on the particular pre-established stages of the career. The results from each of the four groups were then compared and analysed to each other for similarities and differences. The interviews were coded into major codes for emerging themes and the results were analyzed and compared to the responses of the surveys for similarities.

The following chapter will present the results of the two types of evidence, the surveys and the interviews, used to gain data for the research by analyzing the responses in relation to the central research question: “How do support needs change as teachers progress through their careers?” The results of the surveys, as broken down by teachers’ career stages, as well as the coded interviews, are presented in the form of a table followed by a discussion of the results.

Results of the surveys. Surveys were completed and returned by a total of 59 respondents. The total number of surveys was then broken down into the four established categories of the teaching career based on the demographics as stated by respondents. The total number of respondents for each category was established and a frequency count was conducted for how many respondents answered the questions with: none of the time, some of the time, most of the time or all of the time. The counts were then converted to percentages for ease of discussion.
Table 1

*Teachers' Questionnaire Responses (0 to 5 Years Teaching Experience) (numbers are reported in percentages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my decisions.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my colleagues.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness and job satisfaction.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current technological tools to my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met and supported by colleagues.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I experience success.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by administration when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers represented are a percentage of the total responses. A 1 indicates none of the time, a 2 indicates some of the time, a 3 indicates most of the time and a 4 indicates all of the time.

Tables 1-4 present the results of the surveys as tabulated in the form of percentage representations and broken down by years of teaching experience while Table 5 represents the average percentage for each question based on years of experience. The results of the surveys are then discussed in detail.
Table 2

*Teachers' Questionnaire Responses (6 to 15 Years Teaching Experience) (numbers are reported in percentages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my decisions.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my colleagues.</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness and job satisfaction.</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current technological tools to my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met and supported by colleagues.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I experience success.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by administration when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers represented are a percentage of the total responses. A 1 indicates none of the time, a 2 indicates some of the time, a 3 indicates most of the time and a 4 indicates all of the time.

With teachers who had 0 to 5 years of teaching experience, the most notable satisfaction was with question 6 since 85.7 percent of teachers that completed the survey felt that administrators provided adequate and current technological tools for their classrooms all of the time (4 = All of the time) (see Table 1). Another high indication of satisfaction is with school administrators supporting teachers and their decisions, and the belief that teachers were part of a learning community with both questions resulting in 71.4 percent responding "all of the time".
Table 3

Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (16 to 25 Years Teaching Experience) (numbers are reported in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my decisions.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my colleagues.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness and job satisfaction.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current technological tools to my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met and supported by colleagues.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I experience success.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by administration when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers represented are a percentage of the total responses. A 1 indicates none of the time, a 2 indicates some of the time, a 3 indicates most of the time and a 4 indicates all of the time.

Also notable is that while over half of the respondents felt that their health and well-being needs were being met and supported by colleagues, only 28.6 percent of the respondents felt it was some of the time. Also to note only about one-third of respondents felt that they were receiving the resource materials they needed all of the time with a further one-fifth of respondents reporting only some of the time. When it came to mentorship opportunities only a third reported that opportunities were available all of the time with 10.6 percent saying only some of the time.
Table 4

Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (26 to 35 Years Teaching Experience) (numbers are reported in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my decisions.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my colleagues.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness and job satisfaction.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current technological tools to my classroom.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met and supported by colleagues.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I experience success.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by administration when I need them.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me when I need them.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my classroom.</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers represented are a percentage of the total responses. A 1 indicates none of the time, a 2 indicates some of the time, a 3 indicates most of the time and a 4 indicates all of the time.

With teachers who had 6 to 15 years of experience only 21.1 percent of teachers felt that their colleagues were concerned with their happiness and job satisfaction all of the time with over half saying most of the time and yet a further one fifth of respondents said none or only some of the time (see Table 2). Additionally, only about one-third of respondents felt that they were receiving the resource materials they needed all of the time with a further one-fifth of respondents reporting only some of the time. When it came to mentorship opportunities only a
### Table 5

**Teachers’ Questionnaire Responses (Average responses for all four teaching stages) (numbers are reported in percentages)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decisions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and job satisfaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technological tools to my classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and supported by colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>administration when I need them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when I need them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas from professional development opportunities into my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The numbers represented are a percentage of the total responses. A 1 indicates none of the time, a 2 indicates some of the time, a 3 indicates most of the time and a 4 indicates all of the time.

third reported that opportunities were available all of the time with 10.6 percent saying only some of the time.

With teachers who had 16 to 25 years of experience only 14.3 percent reported that their colleagues supported their teaching style all of the time (see Table 3). As well, when it came to colleagues, only 35.7 percent reported that colleagues were supportive of their happiness and job
satisfaction all of the time while almost half of respondents reported none or only some of the time. Yet again, when it came to colleagues being concerned about experiencing success, only 64.3 percent reported colleagues being concerned most or all of the time with another one third reporting none or only some of the time. The greatest area of satisfaction was with technology access since almost six times as many teachers reported that administrators provided adequate technology to classrooms most or all of the time compared to only some of the time.

With teachers who had 26 to 35 years of experience, the greatest satisfaction seems to be with administrators providing current technological tools to the classroom, with almost all respondents reporting most or all of the time (see Table 4). Two-thirds of respondents felt that they were part of a learning community with their colleagues most or all of the time compared to the other one-third reporting some of the time. Also worth noting, one-third of respondents reported feeling their health and well-being needs were met and supported by their colleagues only some of the time.

Overall, more than half of the teachers surveyed felt that administrators provided adequate and current technological tools to their classrooms all of the time (see Table 5). Slightly more than one fifth of teachers felt that health and well-being needs were being met and supported by colleagues none or only some of the time.

Results of the interviews. Eight teachers were interviewed and the recorded data was transcribed. Once the interviews were completed, I analyzed the interviews by disaggregating the data by code for emerging themes (see Table 6). Initially, the eight interviews revealed 648 codes so these codes were merged to define a total of 40 main codes. From these 40 codes, four main themes emerged: administrative support, professional development, collegial support and


Table 6

Emerging Themes and Codes from Interviews with eight teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Major Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Sample Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Duties</td>
<td>new technology, new assignments, student success, lesson plans, time, concerns, new learning, collaboration, resources, support, reporting, assessments, stress.</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Sometimes you feel like you don’t have enough time in the day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>district, support, time, changes, involvement, stakeholders, advice, evaluation, advancement, needs, continuity</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>It would be nice to have some more support from administration to make sure that I am progressing nicely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>Maybe just even having different opportunities to do those professional developments other than ‘this is only available in August’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>courses, support, new ideas, absent, time, opportunities, availability, improvement, accessibility</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>We are such a great community within our staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial Support</td>
<td>support, direction, inquiries, collaboration, interactions, time, community</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*teaching duties.* The number of times the codes from each of the themes appeared in the eight interviews is represented in the form of a frequency.
Based on the results of the coding of the interviews, teachers need the most support when it comes to their teaching duties as these were reported the most significantly by teachers in the interviews, a full three times more than any other emerging theme. Additionally of interest, three main themes of support had an almost equal representation in the interviews; those three themes being collegial support, administrative support, and professional development. The major code of time emerged from teachers’ responses about those same three supports.

Discussion

The following discusses in detail what supports teachers needed based on where they are in their teaching careers. This section of the discussion reviews the results of the surveys and what it means for teachers, administration and stakeholders. It aims to identify where supports are needed most as well as identifies those supports that already exist and are meeting teachers’ needs.

Survey Results

**Administrative support.** A significant percentage of teachers from all four groupings, specifically 94.9 %, reported that school administrators supported them and their decisions most or all of the time. Additionally, it was reported by 92.1 % of all respondents that administrators provided mentorship opportunities when needed most or all of the time. This finding demonstrates that these teachers are mostly satisfied with support for empowerment and improvement from administrators which supports the findings of Blase and Blase (2001) who noted that teachers desire more power and freedom as they progress through their careers.

Almost all teachers, a total of 90.6 percent, indicated that professional opportunities are available to them when needed most or all of the time, except for those with 16 to 25 years of teaching experience. These teachers were the same ones to report, more than any other group,
that none or only some of the time were supports in place to incorporate professional
development opportunities into their teaching. This finding reflects that most teachers feel they
are getting professional development support from their administrators most or all of the time
except for those teachers in the last stage of their career. Guskey (2002) pointed out that
professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom
practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students.

A total of 93.4 percent of respondents, with no discernible difference in years of teaching
experience, were satisfied with administrators providing the technological tools they needed all
or most of the time. Also almost all teachers indicated they felt supported most or all of the time
with having resource materials available to them except for those teachers with 6 to 15 years of
experience. Over twenty percent (21.1) reported that support was only available some of the
time. These findings indicate that overall teachers feel mostly or fully supported with the tools
given to them by their administrators to fulfill their teaching duties except for one-sixth of
teachers in the second stage of their career. The results of the study completed by Levin and
Wadmany (2008) already highlighted the need for formal training with ICT. It would seem,
based on the results of the surveys, that after the first five years of their teaching career, teachers
need more support provided to them by administrators for ICT professional development.

Community. When it comes to feeling as though they are part of a community, it would
seem that teachers in the first stage of their careers, those with 0 to 5 years of experience, have
the most satisfaction with support from colleagues since all teachers in this stage reported getting
support most or all of the time. This is almost the same for teachers in the second stage of their
careers, those with 6 to 15 years of experience, with only 15.9 percent reporting feeling part of a
learning community only some of the time. However, for teachers in the third stage of their
careers, those with 16 to 25 years in the teaching profession, a full 28.6 percent reported that colleagues supported their teaching style only some of the time with another 21.4 percent reporting feeling part of a learning community only some of the time. These findings indicate that there is a need for colleagues to support each other and shows that there is a need for professional learning communities or embedded collaborative time. These types of opportunities need to be established by administrators and the school board. For teachers in the last stage of their careers, a 33.3 percent reported feeling part of the learning community only some of the time. It is therefore indicative, based on the results, that where support is lacking most when it comes to collegial support to become part of a community are for those teachers in the last half of their careers. Hargreaves (2002) concluded from his study that fewer interactions with colleagues means fewer opportunities for professional learning and lessens the chances of school improvement. Stakeholders, schools, and teachers are always looking to improve practices to improve student success. When a school community does not exist or as indicated by the results of the study, is lacking support, this lessens the likelihood of improving student success.

Collegial support. For support from colleagues for mentoring opportunities, the first two groupings of teachers, those with 0 to 15 years of teaching experience, most teachers feel they are receiving support most or all of the time, with about 15 percent reporting only some of the time. Since the school division in which the research was conducted has a beginning teacher mentorship program in place, one can make the connection between these programs and the satisfaction of beginning teachers with mentorship opportunities.

Yet, for the third grouping of teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience, almost one-third of respondents reported that colleagues were concerned with their success only some of the time. As for colleagues offering mentorship 28.5 percent felt this was only happening some of the
time. One fifth of teachers who are in the last stage of their career reported only being supported some of the time through colleague mentorship and only some of the time were colleagues being concerned with their experiencing success. To conclude, when it comes to teachers feeling as though their colleagues are concerned with their success and offering mentorship opportunities, teachers in the beginning of their careers have the strongest satisfaction for support, compared to teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience who appear to have the least amount of satisfaction with colleague mentoring. Since Zachary (2012) argued that experience can be a primary learning resource and the life experiences of others will enrich the learning process, the survey results are positive in that beginning teachers are confident with being supported through mentorship opportunities.

The first grouping of teachers reported that colleagues were being supportive of their happiness most or all of the time. About one-sixth of respondents reported only some of the time that health and well-being needs were being met by colleagues with all other respondents reporting most or all of the time. For the second grouping, teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience, with colleagues being supportive of their happiness and job satisfaction, a full 21 percent reported that colleagues were being supportive of their happiness and job satisfaction none or some of the time. Teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience had the most significant reporting of colleagues being concerned with their happiness with 42.8 percent reporting none or only some of the time. Another 28.5 percent reported only some or none of the time that their health and well-being needs were being met by colleagues. The last grouping of teachers, those with 26 to 35 years of experience, had one-third of respondents report that their health and well-being needs were being met by colleagues only some of the time. These findings are most concerning since Ferguson, Frost, and Hall (2012) stated that negative occupational stress may
lead to depression and anxiety among teachers. Based on the results of the surveys it would seem that teachers in the second half of their careers are the least supported when it come to emotional support from colleagues while those teacher in the first half of their careers seem to be receiving the most amount of support from colleagues.

**Interview Results**

**Teaching duties.** The theme of teachers needing support with teaching duties had the largest representation when the interviews were broken down into codes. Based on the findings, it would seem that teachers need the most support when it comes to having time as expressed by Participant E with 17 years of experience who expressed, “There’s a lot of stress on your time during the day to get things done”. Support for teaching duties was also expressed by Participant F in the same years of experience category who stated, “I think to move forward I think technology is going to be more of an increasing component of our lesson plans”. The same was identified in the surveys as 16 percent of all respondents reported that support to incorporate professional development into their classrooms, meaning being able to improve their teaching duties, was available none or only some of the time.

Interestingly, both teachers interviewed within the 6 to 15 years of teaching experience category reported that, as they have progressed through their careers, there is less support or no longer a need for as much support, to be able to accomplish teaching duties outside of direct teaching in the classroom. For example, one respondent indicated that “You probably need the support but you learn to get by without it” (Participant C) and the other respondent indicated that “I think in the beginning I really needed support in how to be the best at what I was teaching; I feel I’ve mastered that now” (Participant D).
One of the respondents reported receiving the least amount of support in the form of resources for the classroom as expressed by Participant C who stated “There isn’t enough money or resources to just support all that you want to do”. Of the completed surveys, for those teachers in the second stage of their career, a full one-sixth reported being supported only some of the time with the resources that they need to fulfill their teaching duties.

**Collegial and administrative support and collaboration.** The most significant need for supports from colleagues and administrators were for those teachers in the first stage of their career, those teachers with 0 to 5 years teaching experience. For example, one respondent indicated that “There is definitely a lot of support from my colleagues” (Participant A). The coding for these two supports, from colleagues and administrators, was most significant for the interviews for these two teachers than any of the other teachers interviewed.

Interestingly, both teachers interviewed felt they needed support with new programs being implemented such as reporting students’ learning and with learning how to teach new courses when their teaching assignments have changed. The belief is apparent through the two statements “I had to go to other divisions to get help for how to report properly” (Participant A) and “I would say the least amount of support is for trying to learn all the new stuff that’s coming into the school” (Participant B).

One of the two interviewees in the 6 to 15 years of teaching experience category reported that they were receiving the most support when it came to emotional support from colleagues as exemplified in the statement “Just even the concern from others about are you doing ok as in I’m not being overburdened by too much” (Participant C).

Both interviewees in the 16 to 25 years of experience category felt that in moving forward they would need the most support, either in the form of time to collaborate with
colleagues indicated by Participant E who expressed: “I think sometimes we don’t get enough quality time in the day with colleagues” or collaborating with colleagues to incorporate new methods and technology into their classrooms as indicated by Participant F who stated “I think teachers in general always want to be better and find new methods to encourage the kids to be successful and I think as we move forward that that’s going to be more the focus on technology too”. The same was reported for those teachers that completed the surveys. A total of one-fifth of teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience reported feeling part of a learning community only some of the time.

For those teachers in the last stage of their careers, it was reported that where support is needed most was in collaboration with colleagues and the involvement of stakeholders as the teaching process changes. For example, Participant H reported “The grade team is pretty fragmented; there needs to be more respect instead of everyone keeping to their own area”. Additionally, Participant G stated “I think sometimes stakeholders are left out of the picture”.

One respondent reported that there is a difference in support now as compared with earlier stages of their career in that they now need preparation for retirement as exemplified by the statement “I know that I won’t be teaching forever so to start thinking about bridging the final years of teaching and retirement and planning for that. You don’t think of that in year one and two of teaching”. When asked where they would need support in the next stage of their career, Participant H responded with one word, “Technology!” which indicates the need for technological support. Both of these statements indicate a need for support for technology and with planning for retirement for those teachers in the last stage of their teaching careers.

Professional development. The two interviewees with 16 to 25 years of experience reported having the most support with professional development as indicated by Participant E
that “PD and the opportunities for those; there’s more than enough” and with support from colleagues as indicated by Participant F that “The majority of support that I get is from other staff members”. One of the respondents reported needing a lot of support when it came to teaching new courses and administrators providing support. For example it was expressed by Participant F that “It would be helpful if I knew what the courses were and if I had help from colleagues as well as administration” and “The least amount of support currently is from my administrators”. Participant E reported needing a lot of support when it came to assessing students and with learning ways to document those assessments; a belief apparent in the statement “I need the most support assessing students and ways to document those on an ongoing basis”. Support for professional development, specifically for students’ improvement, was exemplified by Participant F within the 16 to 25 years of teaching experience category in the statement, “I think PD is really strong for assessment of students and PD for how to be better teachers”.

The two interviewees who fell into the category of 26 to 35 years of teaching experience reported already having a great deal of support when it came to professional development opportunities, specifically with being given the opportunities to access courses to improve their teaching styles. This was apparent in the two statements “I think the material we have received has caused me to rethink and re-examine my assessment practices” (Participant G) and “I feel like I’m learning more and reading more about courses I teach” (Participant H). This was also indicative of the surveys in which a total of 90.6 percent of all respondents reported that professional opportunities are available to them when needed most or all of the time.

Both teachers with 0 to 5 years of experience reported that in the next stage of their careers they would need opportunities to receive supports through professional development as
TEACHERS’ SUPPORT NEEDS

exemplified by Participant A who stated “Getting professional development that is subject specific and how to adapt it with using it” and especially for new teaching assignments as expressed, “I think as my assignments change I’ll need lots of PD support to make sure I know what I’m doing” (Participant B).

Subject-specific professional development was an area of need for support as indicated by Participant F who said “I don’t find there’s a lot of PD support for the particular subject I teach”. It was the belief of teachers with 16-25 years of experience that they would need support as they enter the next stage of their careers with professional development support for new courses they might be teaching or new teaching methods and new technology as indicated by the two statements “I feel at the next stage it will be important for PD support to expand on your knowledge base” (Participant E) and “I think that as technology changes, because it changes so fast, that I will need ways to keep up with it” (Participant F). This was also indicated by teachers who completed the surveys as it was those teachers in the 16 to 25 years of teaching experience who indicated more than any other group the need for supports to be in place to incorporate professional development opportunities into their teaching

Chapter Summary

In taking the results of the surveys and indicating the responses in the form of percentages in a table, I was able to identify where it teachers indicated that support is most needed and in what particular stages of teachers’ careers these supports were most needed. By breaking down the transcripts of the interviews into codes and then taking those codes to develop four emerging themes; I was able to identify supports needed and reinforce the findings of the surveys.
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In regards to administrative support it would seem that, overall, teachers are mostly satisfied with support in the form of empowerment and improvement of their teaching careers and practices. For those teachers with 6 to 15 years of experience, a full 21.1 percent reported that support was only available some of the time. This would indicate that overall teachers feel mostly or fully supported with the tools given to them by their administrators to fulfill their teaching duties except for a significant minority in the second stage of their careers.

Most teachers were satisfied with professional opportunities available to them except for those teachers within the 16 to 25 years of teaching experience category. These teachers were the same ones to report, more than any other group, that none or only some of the time were supports in place to incorporate professional development opportunities into their teaching.

When it came to feeling as though they were part of a community; for teachers in the third stage of their career, those with 16 to 25 years in the teaching profession; a full 28.6 percent reported that colleagues supported their teaching style only some of the time with another 21.4 percent reporting feeling part of a learning community only some of the time. Additionally, for teachers in the last stage of their career, a full 33.3 percent reported feeling part of the learning community only some of the time.

When asked about collegial support, for those teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience, almost one third of respondents reported that colleagues were concerned with their success only some of the time. As for colleagues offering mentorship more than one quarter felt this was only happening some of the time. Teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience appeared to have the least amount of satisfaction with colleague mentoring and one fifth of teachers who are in the last stage of their career reported only being supported some of the time through colleague mentorship and only some of the time colleagues were concerned with their experiencing
success. Therefore, mentorship opportunities are in place and teachers in the beginning stage of their career feel supported. However, there needs to be stronger supports on the form of mentorship opportunities for all teachers entering the next stages of their careers.

When it came to teachers being asked about collegial support, emotionally and otherwise, teachers with 16 to 25 years of experience had the most significant reporting of colleagues being concerned with their happiness with 42.8 percent reporting none or only some of the time. Another 28.5 percent reported only some or none of the time that their health and well-being needs were being met by colleagues. The last grouping of teachers, those with 26 to 35 years of experience, had a full one third of respondents report that their health and well-being needs were being met by colleagues only some of the time. It would appear, based on the findings, that collegial support drops off as teachers enter the second half of their teaching careers.

When it came to support for the classroom and for teaching duties, it would appear that the largest need for support is in the form of time as reported by many of the teachers specifically in the interviews. It was also indicated by those teachers entering the second stage of their career that there is a need for support in the form of resources for their classrooms. This was reported by teachers both in the surveys and in the interviews.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

I completed this project to obtain information on teachers' support needs, in general, and, in particular, to gain insight into where teachers need the most support in relation to their years of teaching experience. My ultimate intention is to inform administration and educational stakeholders about the specific types of supports teachers need, focusing on where the teacher is in her or his career. Using the professional literature, I identified which supports teachers need, the importance of these supports in relation to years of teaching experience, and the different stages teachers go through in needing different supports. Additionally, these factors became the basis for construction of the surveys and interviews that I conducted with teachers.

In this chapter, I discuss my main conclusion, followed by the pedagogical and methodological implications of the completed project based on the research results. Next, I outline specific recommendations based on the results of the completed surveys and interviews. Then, I discuss ways in which one could determine whether support needs are being met to ensure success for both teachers and, consequently, the students they teach. I conclude the chapter with a reflection on what I learned during the execution and completion of the research project.

Main Conclusion

Based on the results of the surveys, I have concluded that, while time is a support need identified by all teachers at all stages of their teaching careers, there is a noticeable contrast to the types of support teachers need depending on where they are in their careers. Based on the research findings, as teachers progress through their careers, their support needs change. Additionally, the types of support differ depending on the stage of the teachers' careers:
administrative support, opportunities to incorporate professional development, and collegial support.

**Pedagogical Implications**

As stated, teachers' support needs definitely vary depending on their years of experience in the classroom. This conclusion means that teachers need to ensure that they are seeking out supports that are needed. As a teacher myself, when my support needs are being met, these supports transfer directly to the classroom. When teachers feel supported, teaching practices improve, and as practices improve, so does the success of the students.

Teachers in the second stage of their careers identified a need for support by administrators. When administrators are supporting their teachers, teachers, in return, want to make the school as a whole a better place. A sense of community is born when teachers feel that administrators are supporting their teaching styles and their request and need for professional growth. Teachers who feel supported by their administrators want to see these techniques implemented in their classrooms and acknowledge their drive to ensure student success.

Teachers in the last stage of their careers identified a need for collegial support. Knowing this finding, teachers reading this study would do well to meet with their colleagues more often, to share experiences and concerns. It has been expressed to me by teachers with 25 or more years of teaching experience that they would like to be able to collaborate with new teachers as they are the ones with new ideas. Even I, in the second stage of my teaching career, would enjoy the opportunity to be able to meet with new teachers to get new ideas. When colleagues support each other emotionally and professionally, a positive symbiotic relationship occurs, in which both parties benefit from being able to help each other.
Methodological Implications

The professional literature was used in depth as the basis for the formation of the questions for both the survey questions and the interview. The literature reviewed for this study is very useful for any researcher wanting to know the types of supports that teachers need and the importance of these supports to the teaching practice. The qualitative content analysis method was crucial for the completion of a proper descriptive research study and as a method for the examination of the data. In reviewing the data, I relied on the research methods outlined in Chapter 3 to follow to design the study and found it extremely useful to ensure proper analysis of the data. This qualitative content analysis was new to me as I had not learned about it in my qualitative research course and was introduced to it by my project supervisor.

Qualitative content analysis was very effective in analyzing the interview responses data. For my coding process, I relied on the research for the types of codes to be used. For this study, Saldaña’s (2013) book helped me with identifying codes and themes. In particular, his coding techniques were extremely useful in guiding me to break down the different codes and to find my emerging themes. By coding for themes in this manner, it made explicit those support needs as identified by teachers who completed the interviews. The analysis method of transcribing the interviews and coding for emerging themes was also useful to compare and contrast between years of teaching experience and where supports are most needed or are already being met.

Qualitative content analysis is a valid methodological approach to analyze responses from respondents; in this case, particularly surveys and interviews. It allowed for evaluation of the results and, in turn, an interpretation of the data. It is useful for any researcher whose ultimate goal is to research how respondents feel in a particular setting, about a particular situation or circumstances.
Recommendations

Based on the results of this project, there are several recommendations for administrators and other stakeholders to ensure that teachers’ support needs are being met and to ensure that teachers are able to perform their teaching duties to the best of their abilities.

**Recommendation one.** Administrators need to ensure that their teachers are receiving the supports they need, particularly during the second stage of a teacher’s career. This support could easily be offered through informal conversations with staff and through collaboratively-built personal professional growth plans in which teachers receive feedback in the form of guidance and support in a manner that recognizes the teacher’s level of expertise and simultaneously leads him or her to professional growth.

**Recommendation two.** Since there is a need for collegial support during the last stage of a teacher’s career, it would be well advised that opportunities are available, whether provided by administration or the school board, to allow time for colleagues to collaborate and opportunities for all teachers to share knowledge and insights on their teaching practices. It is also important that colleagues understand that by supporting each other, not only professionally but emotionally, that a stronger community is built within the school which can lead to opportunities for better practice and therefore increasing student success.

**Recommendation three.** All teachers indicated that there is a need for time to perform teaching duties that are required of them. It would, therefore, be reasonable that school boards and administrators ensure that teachers are given enough time to complete duties required of them in addition to teaching duties that will better their practices. If teaching duties are to increase as education progresses forward, then it is imperative that adequate time is given in addition to the time already given to teachers to perform these duties.
Reflections

Reflection on the entire research process was insightful and I gained meaningful understanding of the coding process for interviews and how to break down the categories to arrive at major codes which became themes. My supervisor was invaluable in this process as he taught me a great deal about the steps to data analysis and how to present those data. The return rates of the completed surveys were also interesting as a higher return rate of surveys was expected than what actually transpired. The facility of the interview process was also interesting as it was much easier to conduct the interviews than what I previously assumed. Overall, the entire research process, from development to execution to analysis, was a positive one that provided interesting and noteworthy results.

Through this research project, I have gained valuable insight as to how teachers feel about the supports they are receiving. While the original intention was to discover where teachers need the most support depending on where they are in their careers, in completing the research, I also discovered where teachers are already receiving the valuable support that they need. During the course of completing this project, I was also able to gain insight into my own teaching practices. I found it very informative to see through the surveys how teachers felt about their supports and whether it agreed with how I feel about the supports I am receiving at this point in my career. It was even more valuable in analyzing the results of both the surveys and the interviews to gain insight as to where I, as well as other teachers, will need support as we progress through our teaching careers.
References


Appendix A

Information Letter/Consent Form for Superintendents

I am asking for permission for teachers in your schools to be invited to participate in a Master of Education (MEd) research project conducted by the researcher, Cindy Parsons, a University of Northern British Columbia MEd student. The purpose of this project is to study the professional support needs of teachers as they progress through their careers. The teachers in this study will be asked to complete questionnaires or interviews with the researcher.

This study is voluntary. Teachers are free to participate in questionnaires or interviews and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Consent forms and data for the surveys and interviews will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in Cindy Parsons’ home office and identifying information will not be included in the results. For the questionnaires, identifying information such as names and schools will not be collected.

The interviews are to determine possible professional development needs. There is a minor risk of emotional upset to the participants is answering questions asked and a small risk of being identified due to a small sample size. The major benefit is a deeper understanding of how professional learning supports are being met at your schools and/or in your school division.

If your schools participate in the questionnaire or interview portion of the research, a copy of the final results will be sent to the school administrator. If your school did not complete questionnaires or interviews you may still request a copy of the results by emailing the researcher. The information gathered from this study will be kept for three years. It will then be securely destroyed by shredding the paper copies and/or deleting digital copies.

By consenting, I am agreeing to allow Cindy Parsons to conduct research in this school division for the purposes of having teachers complete a survey and/or agree to take part in an interview.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this information letter for your own records.

- Your signature indicates that you consent to Cindy Parsons conduct research in this school division.

______________________________________  _______________________
Superintendent Signature                        Date
Appendix B

Information Letter/Consent Form for Principals

I am asking for permission for teachers in your school to be invited to participate in a Master of Education (MEd) research project conducted by the researcher, Cindy Parsons, a University of Northern British Columbia MEd student. The purpose of this project is to study the professional support needs of teachers as they progress through their careers. The teachers in this study will be asked to complete questionnaires or interviews with the researcher.

This study is voluntary. Teachers are free to participate in questionnaires or interviews and may withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Withdrawing from a completed survey is technically impossible but participants may wish to shred completed surveys and not return to the researcher. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. Consent forms and data for the surveys and interviews will be kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in Cindy Parsons’ home office and identifying information will not be included in the results. For the questionnaires, identifying information such as names and schools will not be collected.

The interviews are to determine possible professional development needs. There is a minor risk of emotional upset to the participants is answering questions asked and a small risk of being identified due to a small sample size. The major benefit is a deeper understanding of how professional learning supports are being met at your schools and/or in your school division.

If your school participates in the questionnaire or interview portion of the research, a copy of the final results will be sent to you as the school administrator. If your school did not complete questionnaires or interviews you may still request a copy of the results by emailing the researcher. The information gathered from this study will be kept for three years. It will then be securely destroyed by shredding the paper copies and/or deleting digital copies.

By consenting, I am agreeing to allow Cindy Parsons to conduct research in this school for the purposes of having teachers complete a survey and/or agree to take part in an interview.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this information letter for your own records.

- Your signature indicates that you consent to Cindy Parsons conduct research in this school.

________________________________________  ______________________________________
Principal’s Signature                                           Date
Appendix C

Information Letter to Accompany Surveys

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by the researcher Cindy Parsons, a University of Northern British Columbia Master in Education student. The purpose of this MEd project is to study the professional support needs of teachers as they progress through their careers and to determine if supports are being provided or not. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. The results will also be available to you the participant and to administrators.

You will be asked to complete the attached survey and return it to [specific person in respective school]. You may also choose to mail the survey to Harry Balfour School, 10815 104 Street, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6R2. There is a minor risk of emotional upset to the questions being asked. You may refuse to participate in this study by shredding the completed survey before returning to the researcher. The major benefit is a deeper understanding of how your professional learning needs are being met at your school and/or in your school division. The researcher, Cindy Parsons, is conducting this project as a researcher and not as a teacher.

You may withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences by deciding to no longer complete the survey. If you do so, your survey responses will not be included in the study and any survey data from you can be destroyed through shredding. The survey responses will be sealed by [specific person in respective school] and kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home office. Your participation in this project will remain completely anonymous. Identifying information such as your name and the name of your school will not be collected and therefore all responses will remain anonymous. The information gathered from this study will be kept for three years. It will then be securely destroyed by shredding the paper copies.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for adherence to ethical guidelines through the UNBC Research Ethics Board and approved by Cindy Parsons’ graduate supervisor, Dr. Andrew Kitchenham. If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at reb@unbc.ca. You may also contact the researcher Cindy Parsons at parson0@unbc.ca or the Supervisor Andrew Kitchenham at Andrew.kitchenham@unbc.ca.

Additionally, you may contact the researcher at any time at the following email address: parson0@unbc.ca. If you would like a copy of the final anonymized results, please email Cindy Parsons (parson0@unbc.ca) and it will be sent to you at your school through email.

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time.
without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your employment. One form will be signed and returned to the researcher and the other to be kept for my own personal records. By consenting, I am agreeing to complete the survey.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature    Date
Appendix D

Information Letter/Consent Form for Teachers for Interviews

You are being invited to participate in a research project conducted by the researcher Cindy Parsons, a University of Northern British Columbia Master in Education student. The purpose of this MEd project is to study the professional support needs of teachers as they progress through their careers and to determine if supports are being provided or not. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. The results will also be available to you, the participant and to administrators.

You will be asked to complete an interview with the researcher and have indicated your willingness to take part in an interview as part of a previous survey. These interviews are to determine possible professional development needs and should last approximately thirty minutes at a location that is comfortable to the participant. There is a minor risk of emotional upset to the questions asked and a small risk of being identified due to a small sample size. You may refuse to participate in this study at any time. The major benefit is a deeper understanding of how your professional learning supports are being met at your school and/or in your school division. The researcher, Cindy Parsons, is conducting these interviews as a researcher and not as a teacher.

You may withdraw from the interview at any time without negative consequences. If you do so, your input will not be included in the study and any interview data from you will be destroyed. The interview audiotapes will be transcribed and kept secure in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home office. Your participation in this project will remain completely anonymous. Identifying information such as your name and the name of your school will not be collected and therefore all responses will remain anonymous. The information gathered from this study will be kept for three years with only the researcher having access to raw data. It will then be securely destroyed by deleting digital files. Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your employment. One form will be signed and returned to the researcher and the other to be kept for your own personal records. By consenting, you are agreeing to participate in an interview with the researcher and are agreeing to be contacted for clarification of information provided.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for adherence to ethical guidelines through the UNBC Research Ethics Board and approved by Cindy Parsons’ graduate supervisor, Dr. Andrew Kitchenham. If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the UNBC Office of Research at 250-960-6735 or by e-mail at reb@unbc.ca. You may also contact the researcher Cindy Parsons at parson0@unbc.ca or the Supervisor Andrew Kitchenham at Andrew.kitchenham@unbc.ca.
Additionally, you may contact the researcher at any time at the following email address: parson0@unbc.ca. If you agreed to participate in this interview portion of the research, a copy of the final results will be sent to you at your school by emailing the researcher.

- Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
- Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date ____________
Appendix E

Questionnaire

Date ____________________

Please complete the following information:

Years of teaching experience ____________

Please answer the following questions by circling 1 to 4 based on the following criteria:

1. None of the time 2. Some of the time 3. Most of the time 4. All of the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel that colleagues support my teaching style.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I feel that my school administrators support me and my decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. I feel that I am part of a learning community with my colleagues.</td>
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<td>4. I feel that my colleagues are concerned with my happiness and job satisfaction.</td>
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<td>5. I feel that I have all the resource materials that I need in order to fulfill my teaching duties.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I feel that my administrators provide adequate and current technological tools to my classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I feel that my health and well-being needs are being met and supported by colleagues.</td>
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<td>8. I feel that my colleagues are concerned about ensuring I experience success.</td>
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<td>9. I feel that more experienced colleagues are willing to offer mentorship at any time during my career.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I feel that mentorship opportunities are provided by administration when I need them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I feel that professional opportunities are available to me when I need them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I feel that I have the support in place to incorporate ideas from professional development opportunities into my classroom.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please provide any additional comments:

Are you willing to take part in an interview? If so, please provide your name, email, and school phone number.

Name: ___________________________  Phone: _______________________
Email: __________________________

Appendix F
Interview Questions

1. In what area of your career do you feel you need the most support at this time?

2. In what aspect of your career do you feel you are receiving the most support?

3. In what area of your career do you feel you are receiving the least amount of support?

4. How have your support needs changed as you have progressed through your teaching career?

5. What area of support do you feel will become most important at the next stage of your career?

6. Do you feel there are enough opportunities to access and receive the support you need at this time?
   i) If yes, what are these opportunities?
   ii) If no, what needs to be put in place to access these support needs?

7. Are there any suggestions you would make to ensure your support needs are being met?