Exploring the role of urban early career teachers' perceptions of social elements of the school context and their feelings of teacher efficacy

Kristine Anne Herrell

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Teacher turnover is a problem impacting students, schools, and the community. Teacher turnover is highest in urban, high-poverty schools servicing primarily minority students with approximately half of teachers leaving within their first five years. High turnover rates negatively impact students and schools through instructional discontinuity and financial hardships. The factors that are most predictive of a teacher’s decision to stay or leave (perceptions of supports, colleague relationships, principal leadership, student discipline, teacher efficacy) are evident in the empirical literature. Less is known about early career teachers’ (ECTs) specific interactions and experiences that contribute to their perceptions of these factors. Utilizing a conceptual framework that encompassed aspects of teacher efficacy and the school social context, the author employed a qualitative secondary analysis of semi-structured interview data collected with 14 urban ECTs to further explore, define, and provide clarity to these factors predictive of ECT turnover. The author strived to
come to a better understanding regarding how experiences and interactions contributed to teacher efficacy development, strong relationships with colleagues, and an enhanced sense of being supported to be successful.

Findings from this study point to the importance of strong, personal relationships with colleagues and administrators as the basis for perceiving supports as being effective. ECTs in this study expressed a desire to work in a positive school culture where they belonged and had trusting relationships with their colleagues. It was informal interactions, versus formal, that had the greatest influence on teachers’ perceptions of their colleagues, principals, and the school culture as supportive or unsupportive. Positive collegial relationships not only enhanced personal connections with colleagues but also made formal supports, such as mentorship, more effective. In addition, teachers from this study expressed the importance of having not only their professional but more importantly their personal needs met. Having hands-on, successful teaching experiences and observing other teachers in similar contexts also being successful enhanced efficacy beliefs. Personal experiences, upbringing, and a teacher’s identified race served as facilitators or barriers to connecting with students, in turn impacting efficacy beliefs. Supports were described as being ineffective when they did not meet the individual needs of the teacher or the ECT could not personally connect with the person providing support. Furthermore, urban ECTs in this study were looking for more support from their administrators to be responsive to their pleas for help and support when student behavior became disruptive or aggressive. Therefore, a paradigm shift is needed moving beyond providing teachers with supports to ensuring that teachers feel supported.
EXPLORING THE ROLE OF URBAN EARLY CARRER TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF 
SOCIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL CONTEXT AND THEIR FEELINGS 
OF TEACHER EFFICACY

BY 
KRISTINE ANNE HERRELL
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL 
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FOR THE DEGREE 
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, AND FOUNDATIONS

Doctoral Directors:
   Daryl M. Dugas
   Lee Shumow
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On the personal side, I am eternally grateful to my husband (Ben), mother-in-law (Janet), and mother (Debbie). This work has required me to spend many hours away from home and you all, especially Ben, have held the fort down and ensured that the kids were happy and not missing Mom too much! I know that this work has taken much time away from family but hope that it has instilled in our children the importance of working hard and also an admiration for the scientific way of knowing.
DEDICATION

To my children Benjamin, Jacob, and Madison

“To be gritty is to keep putting one foot in front of the other. To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest day after week after year in a challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times and rise eight.” Angela Lee Duckworth
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Teachers have a significant impact on student learning, performance, and motivation (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Haynes, 2014). However, early career teachers (ECTs), teachers with five or fewer years of teaching (Shernoff, Frazier, Marinez-Lora, Atkins, & Keel, 2011), are leaving the field of education or changing positions at alarming rates. Whether teachers leave a school building or change jobs, this turnover negatively impacts learning and instructional cohesion (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Gray & Taie, 2015). This movement by ECTs is exacerbated in high-poverty, urban communities servicing primarily minority students, with up to one-half of teachers working in those contexts leaving within the first five years (Barnes et al., 2007; Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). Over the past 20 years, much research has turned focus to the relationship between a teacher’s perceptions of school contextual factors, teacher efficacy, and teacher turnover. The primary school contextual factors that are empirically predictive of turnover are collegial relationships, student discipline problems, and perceptions of supports provided to ECTs (Flores, 2010; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2011). Furthermore, a strong connection has been discovered between teacher efficacy and turnover. Teachers with a better sense of efficacy are more likely to remain teaching
The empirical predictors of teacher attrition are statistically validated but vaguely described. Specifically, ECTs’ interactions with their colleagues and perceptions of the supportive structures that are important to their efficacy development must be explored further. Given that efficacy development is context specific and based on experience (Bandura, 1997), more context-specific research is needed to understand the experiences that contribute to a positive sense of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). I explored the teaching experiences of ECTs from urban, high-poverty schools in order to gain a better understanding of their experiences with forming collegial relationships, feeling supported, and developing a positive sense of teacher efficacy.

Problem

ECT turnover is a widespread matter of educational, social, and economic concern affecting many countries (Long et al., 2012). Within the first five years of teaching, up to 50% of urban ECTs leave the teaching field or move to more attractive jobs within education (Gray & Taie, 2015; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). High turnover rates not only impact student learning but also lead to financial hardships on school systems, causing districts to spend already scarce resources on recruiting, hiring, and training new teachers. Furthermore, high rates of teacher turnover lead to organizational instability, curriculum discontinuity, and negative impacts on instructional efficacy (Boyd et al., 2011).
Teacher turnover across the career follows a U-shaped distribution with highest rates occurring at the beginning of the career and at end of the career with retirement (Guarino et al., 2006). It has been previously hypothesized that the United States will experience a teacher shortage as many teachers from the baby boom generation retire without enough new teachers to fill positions (Ingersoll, 2001; Kaiser & Cross, 2011). Yet as student enrollment has increased by approximately 20% since the 1980s, the number of teachers has surpassed student enrollment by more than double the rate, increasing by 48% over the same time period (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll et al., 2014). Although the proportion of teachers in the workforce has significantly increased compared to student enrollment, the percentage of teachers leaving the field each year has also steadily increased with 6.4% leaving in 1988-89 to 9% of the workforce leaving in 2008-09, a 41% increase. This trend in the percentage of teachers leaving is also seen in those leaving after their first year of teaching. In 1988, 9.8% of teachers left after their first year. In 2008, 13.1% left, making a 34% increase in first-year teachers leaving the workforce. Additionally since the 1980s, the average class size has decreased from 26.2 to 21.1, leading to the need for more teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

Therefore, although more teachers are entering the workforce, teachers are also leaving at higher rates in the early years of their careers (Ingersoll, 2012). As a result, the influx of new teachers has not stabilized the teaching workforce (Haynes, 2014). Policies put into place to recruit more professionals into teaching have been successful. Furthermore, induction and mentoring have become commonplace and generally are effective at increasing retention and teacher effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). However, aspects of the school context expend the greatest influence over
ECT success and retention (Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010). Providing continuity in high-quality and effective teachers to all students continues to remain a problem afflicting American school systems, particularly schools servicing minority, low-income students in urban communities (Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012). Therefore, the problem remains in the need to retain rather than recruit teachers (Ingersoll, 2003; Ingersoll et al., 2014).

**Impact of Teacher Turnover on Student Learning**

Longitudinal data suggests that teachers have a cumulative effect on student learning over time. Having a series of ineffective teachers can be devastating to a student’s learning while high-quality instruction can remediate the learning differences between advantaged and disadvantaged peers (Haynes, 2014; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005). Moreover, when controlling for differences in student achievement, teacher quality outweighs the impacts of social and economic factors on a student’s learning (Haynes, 2014). Although there are notable gains in teaching ability in the first year of teaching, teachers in their first through third year of teaching tend to be less effective than teachers with four or more years of experience (Rivkin et al., 2005). It is vital to have more experienced teachers in a school to mitigate the impact of less experienced teachers. Therefore, having high-quality, effective teachers with experience is of utmost importance for those students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Due to high turnover rates among urban ECTs, these are the students who are most likely to experience
discontinuity with teachers and are more likely to experience going to a school with a disproportionately high number of new teachers making up the workforce (Haynes, 2014).

Teacher Turnover and Financial Hardship on School Districts

Teacher turnover puts financial strain on already scarce resources available to school districts. The Department of Labor estimates that when an employee leaves a company, it costs the employer approximately 30% of the leaver’s salary in recruiting, hiring, and training new staff. A recent analysis of costs associated with teacher turnover reports that American schools spent $2.2 billion dollars on recruiting, hiring, and training new staff in the 2009-2010 school year (Haynes, 2014). Furthermore, 25 years ago, 65,000 new teachers entered the workforce each year, compared to 200,000 entering each year currently. This influx of new teachers puts added financial strain on the pocketbooks of schools (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

This problem is particularly concerning and costly in urban communities that experience the highest rates of turnover. The total cost of turnover in Chicago Public Schools is estimated at 86 million dollars per year (Barnes et al., 2007). High rates of turnover impede the obligation to communities and society of providing consistency in high-quality teachers for all students (Borman & Dowling, 2008). In summary, the high rate of ECT turnover in urban, high-poverty school districts is causing a significant financial strain on districts and negatively impacts student learning.

Necessity of This Study

The cost associated with the high rate of teacher turnover coupled with the importance of having high-quality teachers in every classroom has led researchers to investigate the
causes of teacher turnover (Tickle et al., 2011). Early explanations of teacher turnover highlighted the relationship between student demographics, individual teacher characteristics, and high rates of turnover (Boyd et al., 2006; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). The problem was framed as teachers abandoning the students they teach. However, more recent research has shown a strong link between teachers’ perceptions of the school context, teacher efficacy development, and turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012). Perceptions of the school context and development of teacher efficacy are based on experiences, yet, little research exists exploring the specific experiences of ECTs in urban, high-poverty settings that contribute to the sense of working in a supportive school in which they feel connected to colleagues and successful at engaging learners (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Rumley, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). I sought to explore the subjective experiences of urban ECTs related to teacher efficacy development, connectedness to colleagues, and perceptions of the supports that they receive. These factors are quantitatively predictive of turnover but qualitatively lacking in the description of what the terms mean to the teachers being studied.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

Two frameworks were used to guide this study. First, Bandura (1977) provided a framework grounded in social cognitive theory for studying self-efficacy. The study of teacher efficacy is concerned with understanding teachers’ beliefs about their capabilities to bring about desired change in students, even with students who appear to be unmotivated to learn (Bandura, 1997). Second, Johnson et al. (2012) proposed a framework for studying the
myriad of variables that compose the school context. Johnson and colleagues (2012) described these variables as being social (school culture, principal leadership, collegial relationships, governance, professional expertise, and community support) and concrete (time, resources, facilities) in nature. A teacher’s perception of the environment which is based on experiences mediates the relationship between school context and teacher efficacy. I sought to explore urban ECTs’ experiences related to several social school contextual factors, specifically collegial connectedness and perceptions of supports in place to build teacher efficacy. Furthermore, efficacy development is influenced by context; therefore, I sought to understand how the school context and supports bolster teacher efficacy development. The following research questions were explored:

1. What elements of the school context do urban ECTs reference when describing their experiences with support?
2. What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being effective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?
3. What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being ineffective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?
4. What do urban ECTs describe as the facilitators and barriers to developing their teaching efficacy?

Operational Definitions

1. Early career teachers (ECTs) are those who have been teaching for five years or less (Shernoff et al., 2011). In this study, the terms “beginning” and “novice” are also used to describe early career teachers.
2. Teacher turnover refers to teachers who change school buildings or leave the field of teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The terms “movers” and “leavers” are used to describe these two types of ECT turnover respectively (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

3. Teacher retention is the percentage of teachers who return to the same teaching position in the same building from year to year.

4. School context refers to a number of elements that make up the environment and working conditions experienced by employees in a school. Johnson et al. (2012) classify school contextual elements as being concrete and social. This study focuses on several of the social elements that are harder to see and measure.
   
   a. Social elements - principal leadership, colleague relationships, school culture, community support, professional expertise, and governance
   
   b. Concrete elements – time use, resources, and facilities

5. Self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). The study of self-efficacy is concerned with understanding people’s beliefs in their ability to maintain the necessary efforts to attain specific goals while facing hindrances to achieve the goal. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct that is based on self-perception of competence (Bandura, 1997). In this study, the term “self-efficacy” is used when referring to Bandura’s (1997) encompassing theoretical framework of self-efficacy. Given that efficacy development is context specific and does not occur in a vacuum (Bandura, 1997), the study of teacher efficacy must be considered within the context of the school environment. In this study, the term
“teacher efficacy” is used when discussing efficacy development specifically within the context of school and teaching.

6. Teacher efficacy is a teacher’s judgments or beliefs about his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes in student learning and engagement, even in those students who are unmotivated or difficult to motivate (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura 1977). Teacher efficacy is further described as a belief in one’s ability to engage students in learning activities, manage student behavior in the classroom, and effectively implement instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). There are other aspects of efficacy, such as content knowledge, not specifically included in this study’s definition of teacher efficacy. Other aspects of efficacy that arise will be included in the analysis of the data.

7. Collegial connectedness (Shernoff et al., 2011) occurs when teachers have frequent contact with their colleagues and work in an environment where there is shared responsibility for student learning and school improvement (Kardos, Johnson, Peske, & Kauffman, 2001). Collegial connectedness serves as a conduit to building teaching skills that lead to a positive sense of efficacy and promotes a strong sense of belonging to the school community in order to promote commitment to teaching (Shernoff et al., 2011).

8. Experience. Given that the term “experience” is ambiguous, three studies that also specifically analyzed teachers’ experiences were referenced in order to develop a definition of “experience” for this study (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Kardos et al., 2001). These studies used the conceptual framework
and research questions of the study to guide their definition of experience. Experience is defined as teachers’ interactions with people (colleagues and students) and interpretations of structures (structured meeting times, evaluation, induction/mentoring programs). These experiences are considered within the context of how they support or barricade teacher efficacy development and connectedness to colleagues.

Methodology

Much is known about the predictive validity of ECTs’ efficacy development (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) and the school’s social context (i.e., connections to colleges and supportiveness of the working environment) on turnover (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012). Most research on ECT turnover has focused on using large-scale quantitative data to discover the empirical predictors of turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012), yet, less is known about ECTs’ specific experiences that contribute to a stronger sense of teacher efficacy, productive connections to colleagues, and perceptions of a working environment that is supportive to teachers (Rumley, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). I employed a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interview data to explore the specific experiences and interactions that teachers have early in their careers related to efficacy development, building relationships with colleagues, and perceptions of the supports that are in place to support retention of ECTs.

I conducted a secondary analysis of semi-structured interview data collected through the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban
Schools study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (R305A090085, Principal Investigator: Dr. Elisa Shernoff, 2009). The purpose of the three-year study was to create, refine, and test a professional development/intervention model and to determine feasibility of implementation of the model in schools. The original study explored the influence of the professional development model on teacher connectedness to colleagues and teacher effectiveness. In this study, a six-step thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the semi-structured interview data. Semi-structured interview data collected with 14 ECTs teaching in one of three urban, high-poverty elementary schools in the midwestern United States was analyzed.

Chapter 1 Summary

Teacher turnover is a problem impacting students, schools, and the communities. ECT turnover is highest in schools servicing primarily minority students in high-poverty, urban communities. High turnover rates impact students, school organizations, and society through instructional discontinuity and financial hardships. Much is known about objective contextual factors that influence a teacher’s decision to stay or leave, but less is known about ECTs’ specific interactions and experiences that contribute to their perceptions of these factors’ prominence in particular contexts. Specifically, ECTs’ experiences with their colleagues and the supportive structures that they see as important to their efficacy development must be explored further. Utilizing a conceptual framework that encompasses aspects of teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and the school social context (Johnson et al., 2012), I employed a
qualitative analysis to further explore, define, and provide clarity to these factors predictive of ECT turnover.
CHAPTER 2
FRAMING THE STUDY

In the United States, aggregate data on teacher turnover indicates that 10 to 15% of the entire teaching workforce leave the field or change teaching jobs each year (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). This is an issue of social, economic, and educational concern not only impacting the United States but also Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, and the United Kingdom (Long et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). The rate of teacher turnover is highest among ECTs over the first five years of teaching, who demonstrate a 30 to 40% turnover rate (Gray & Taie, 2015; Perda, 2013). Even higher rates of turnover exist in urban schools servicing high concentrations of minority, poor, and low-achieving students. In these schools, teacher turnover within the first five years of teaching is reported at a rate of up to 50% of teachers leaving or moving buildings within the first five years (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Barnes et al., 2007; Ingersoll et al., 2014; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Individual teachers and students within the educational system have been the primary focus of the empirical research aiming to address this issue. While individual teacher and student factors are related to turnover, the disentanglement of the turnover data demonstrates the importance of school contextual factors (Boyd et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Skaalvik & Skallvik, 2011; Tickle et
al., 2011) and teacher efficacy (Caprara et al., 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) in relation to turnover. In order to address ECT turnover, the problem must be reframed as an organizational problem rather than a problem with the individuals within the organization.

Background on Early Career Teacher Turnover

In the early 1980s, researchers began focusing on the projected teacher shortages in elementary and secondary schools (Ingersoll, 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began collecting data through the Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and the Teacher and Principal Follow-Up Surveys. The purpose of these surveys was to gain information about teacher demand and shortages; characteristics of teachers, administrators, and schools; and information on general conditions in schools. Since the late 1980s, the aggregate number of teachers as a whole leaving the field each year has increased from 6.4% to 9%, an increase of 41% (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Despite the increase in empirical inquiry studying the problem of ECT turnover, the problem continues to worsen. Consequently, researchers must refocus empirical efforts and reframe the problem to address the underlying causes of teacher turnover.

Teacher Turnover Across the Career – A U-Shaped Distribution

Contradictory findings regarding the patterns of teacher turnover across the teaching career exist. Debate exists as to whether or not retirement accounts for a significant portion of teacher turnover. In 2001, using SASS data, Ingersoll analyzed teacher turnover and attrition
from an organizational perspective. Ingersoll (2001) proposed that organizational issues must be addressed to solve the problem of teacher turnover. He concluded that the primary cause of teacher turnover results from “the revolving door – where large numbers of teachers depart their jobs for reasons other than retirement” (Ingersoll, 2001, p. 525). Furthermore, he argued that organizational issues are the primary underlying problem impacting teacher turnover. According to Ingersoll (2001), the answer lies in decreasing the demand for new teachers by decreasing turnover. Schools can accomplish this by increasing administrative support, decreasing student discipline problems, and increasing staff involvement in important school-wide decision making or governance (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012). Guarino et al. (2006) also reported highest rates of turnover for teachers within their first five years of teaching and lower rates for older teachers until the age of retirement. Furthermore, a more current analysis conducted by Ingersoll et al. (2014) indicates that retirement accounts for less than one-third of turnover each year. Thus, retirement does not account for the majority of turnover.

To further the information gathered in the SASS survey, the Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Study (BTLS) was initiated. The BTLS was launched in the 2007-2008 academic year through the Institute of Education Sciences due to the growing concern with high rates of teachers leaving the field early in their careers. The purpose of BTLS was to follow a cohort of teachers over their first five years to better understand the factors that influence ECTs’ decisions to leave or stay. The most recent BTLS update reports a 27% turnover rate over a five-year period. Specifically, 17% of the beginning teacher population left the education field and 10% moved buildings (Gray & Taie, 2015).
Policies to Address Teacher Turnover

Due to these high rates of teacher turnover, policies have been put into place to increase the supply of teachers (Ingersoll, 2001), suggesting that policy makers view the solution to the problem as having more teachers in the field. These policies have been successful at increasing the number of those entering the teaching workforce, as between 1980 and 2008 the percentage increase of those entering the teaching profession, 46.4%, outweighed the student population growth, 19.6%, by more than double. The “balloon” of teachers entering the workforce ceased in 2008 with the economic downturn. The increase was seen mostly in special education teachers, elementary education enrichment teachers (art, physical education, music, or those teaching only one subject), and secondary math and science teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Despite the ballooning of new teachers entering the field, the teacher workforce is also becoming increasingly unstable with the percentage of teachers leaving the workforce steadily increasing since the 1980s. This is of particular concern in urban schools servicing large concentrations of African American, Latinos, and high-poverty students. These schools continue to struggle with continuity in workforce and curriculum due to turnover with about one-half of teachers leaving or moving buildings within their first five years (Ingersoll et al., 2014).

Other policies to address teacher attrition have been implemented. First, to address increasing the supply of teachers due to concerns with teacher shortages (Ingersoll, 2001), states have provided alternative certification programs and financial incentives, such as faster track program options and signing bonuses, to aspiring teachers. However, teachers receiving
their credentials through an alternative certification program rather than a traditional program are more likely to leave the field of teaching. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that 48% of those teachers participating in alternative certification programs moved buildings or left the field in their first three years compared to 16% of those who participated in traditional certification programs. Second, induction including mentoring programs has become commonplace. Ninety-one percent of ECTs reported participating in these programs in 2008 (Ingersoll, 2012). While induction programs do positively influence teacher effectiveness, student achievement, and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), the circumstances and conditions within a school (school leadership, collegial relationships, workload, adequate supplies, time for planning with colleagues) expend the strongest influence over ECT success (Wechsler et al., 2010). Despite these policy incentives, the financial burden on school districts and educational impact on students of ECT turnover remains of grave concern. Consequently, understanding the causes and expanding on the solutions already in practice to address the problem must be prioritized.

Early Explanations of Early Career Teacher Turnover

Previous exploration to the problem of ECT turnover emphasized individual teacher characteristics and school characteristics as the main causes of teachers leaving the field or moving to other school buildings (Simon & Johnson, 2015; Tickle et al., 2011). The sections below review these factors in detail.
Teacher Characteristics and Turnover

Teachers play a significant role in student achievement and motivation (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Haynes, 2014; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). A part of understanding the phenomena of beginning teacher turnover is identifying the characteristics of teachers who are more likely to stay, leave, or move buildings. Minority teachers tend to display lower turnover rates compared to European American teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Guarino et al., 2006). Furthermore, women tend to display higher turnover rates compared to male teachers (Guarino et al., 2006). A link exists between teacher abilities, as measured by test scores and competitiveness of university preparation programs, and turnover. Teachers from more competitive universities who also have higher test scores on ACT and licensure tests are more likely to leave the field of teaching (Boyd et al., 2006; Podgurksy, Monroe, & Watson, 2004).

Interestingly, teachers who are more effective as measured by student gains on test scores are more likely to remain teaching (Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007). In North Carolina, Goldhaber and colleagues (2007) analyzed the relationship between teacher turnover and teacher effectiveness measured by teacher contributions to student learning on standardized tests. The authors’ purpose was to look at the relationship between teacher effectiveness and teacher credentials with turnover. All early to mid-career elementary school teachers in the state of North Carolina were followed over a six-year period (1996-2002). Movement between buildings, transfers to administrative positions, and movement out of the teaching workforce were tracked. The authors found that the most effective teachers tended
to stay teaching the longest and remained in specific schools regardless of the context. Contrary to common belief and previous findings, they did not find that the most effective teachers were more likely to leave teaching positions in the most challenging contexts (Goldhaber et al., 2007). The authors surmise that those teachers who are more effective with their students are more satisfied with their jobs, which in turn impacts career decisions. Understanding the relationship between individual teacher characteristics and turnover is important as it sheds light on who is more likely to leave. However, these findings do not offer solutions to solve the problem of ECT turnover.

**School Characteristics and Turnover**

School characteristics refer to the location of a school, size of a school, and student body characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, race, income level, and behavior problems). In 2004-2005, 45% of teacher turnover existed in just one-fourth of public schools. Therefore, a large percentage of turnover exists in a small portion of public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2014). Teachers in high-poverty areas are twice as likely to leave compared to counterparts teaching in low-poverty areas (Ingersoll et al., 2014; Loeb et al., 2005). Statistically speaking, urban, rural, high poverty, and high concentration of minority students are all characteristics that are predictive of high teacher turnover rates. Therefore, some have argued that teachers are leaving the students in schools with specific student demographics (Boyd et al., 2004; Hanushek et al., 2006), stating that teachers’ decisions to leave were being driven by their own “preferences for student race or ethnicity” (Hanushek et al., 2004, p.352). However, when ECTs from high-poverty schools were asked why they left, ECTs did not report leaving
merely because of the students. They reported leaving to find schools that were more supportive of their desire to be successful teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Student engagement and discipline problems have been shown over time to predict teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). Teachers frequently report difficulty with student discipline as an important reason for their decision to stay or leave (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). This factor is particularly relevant in urban schools where not only are disruptive behaviors more frequent compared to suburban schools, but the problem behaviors tend to occur in more severe forms (Warren et al., 2003). Furthermore, schools that have difficulty maintaining a safe environment have a harder time keeping beginning and experienced teachers (Boyd et al., 2006).

Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, and Easton (2010) provide a different interpretation of the role between student discipline and school context. At the beginning of the study, the two schools, Hancock and Alexander, were similar in student achievement scores, student demographics, and school demographics. Both schools were situated in high-crime neighborhoods servicing primarily minority students. While student demographics remained stable over the 10 years, student achievement was vastly different at the end of study, with Hancock making tremendous growth and Alexander showing regression. A factor that was just as problematic for both schools at the end of the decade was school safety, described as teachers’ reports of the frequency of student behavior problems and students’ perceived level of safety in the school. Furthermore, at the end of the study, the two schools remained vastly different in their organizational structures. Despite both schools reporting similar concerns with school safety at the end of the decade, Hancock had managed to
transform their organizational structures and working conditions, improve parental involvement, and significantly raise student achievement (Bryk et al., 2010).

This finding (Bryk et al., 2010, p. 76) exemplifies the importance of analyzing the influence of perceptions of the school’s context on teacher efficacy development and turnover. If one were to just look at Hancock’s school safety rating, one could reasonably conclude that Hancock also rated poorly on measures of organizational structures, leadership, and student achievement. However, Hancock was able to transform organizational structures that impacted working conditions and student achievement without impacting school safety. This finding does not negate the years of research showing the link between student discipline and teacher turnover (Boyd et al., 2011; Hakanen et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). While it is only one study comparing two schools, it raises the possibility that ECTs are leaving their dysfunctional work environments rather than abandoning the students they teach (Johnson et al., 2012). Framing the problem as one of teachers fleeing schools with specific demographics and characteristics does not recognize the complexity of ECT turnover. Research must explore this complexity and focus on the relationship between school contextual factors and teacher efficacy that impacts teacher turnover. I investigated this by hearing from the voices of urban ECTs regarding their experiences with school context and teacher efficacy development.

Student discipline is an important factor within this mesh of elements influencing teachers’ perceptions of working conditions. Research and practice must continue to build instructional strategies to improve a teacher’s classroom management and student engagement skills in order to reduce behavior problems. The examples of Hancock and Alexander schools
(Bryk et al., 2010) provide evidence that the problem of turnover is more complex than simply using school characteristics, such as discipline, as a predictor or explanation of teachers’ satisfaction with the work environment. While student discipline is predictive of turnover, little is known from the ECT’s perspective as to what types of school structures and collegial supports facilitate their development of efficacy with classroom management skills and engaging learners (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). There is more to discover from the voices of urban ECTs regarding specific experiences and interactions that support their sense of teacher efficacy development with the hopes of deterring student behavior problems. This study aimed to contribute to this need.

Reframing the Discussion

Previous research on teacher turnover has paid less attention to the influence of the working environment and more attention to school characteristics and individual teacher characteristics (Boyd et al., 2006; Hanushek et al., 2004; Scafidi et al., 2007). Studies using large, quantitative data sets and an organizational perspective to describe turnover in high-poverty schools have increased in frequency over the past decade. All of the studies that included student race and working conditions in their model found that perceptions of working conditions account for most of the relationship between student demographics and turnover (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011; Loeb et al., 2005). Furthermore, in a qualitative analysis of 50 ECTs’ experiences, those who chose to move schools all moved to wealthier districts (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). This is a similar finding to Hanushek et al. (2004), but methodology did not allow the researchers to
provide explanation for why the teachers moved in the Hanushek study. When Johnson and Birkeland (2003) asked ECTs why they moved, teachers did not report that they moved because of the student population. Teachers reported that they moved to schools that provided more supports and structures to help students and teachers be successful (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Although schools do not have control over the students who walk through their doors, schools do have control over policies and structures that can influence working conditions to promote retention of ECTs in high-poverty, primarily minority, urban schools. Research is turning focus to the mounting evidence that teachers in urban, high-poverty schools are not leaving merely because of their students but leaving because of the dissatisfaction with the schools’ working conditions (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2011; Haynes, 2014; Johnson, et al., 2012; Loeb et al., 2005) and their sense of failure as teachers in these schools (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

In addition to feeling a “lack of success” as a teacher, teachers have consistently reported factors related to the school context, specifically perceptions of the supportiveness of the school and connectedness to colleagues, as the impetus for their exodus (Bryk et al., 2010; Durham-Barnes, 2011; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015). Dissatisfaction with salary and resources (i.e., class size, facilities, and curriculum resources) is a factor in the decision-making process but not as prominent as the factors listed previously (Johnson et al., 2012; Loeb et al., 2005). Therefore, to improve the rates of ECT retention, researchers must reframe the problem. The new paradigm should view novice teachers as fleeing the “dysfunctional” work environments
of their employment rather than “abandoning” the students they teach. They are seeking schools where they can feel like successful teachers (Johnson et al., 2012). It is the negative experiences, not merely the students, in these schools that lead to a sense of failure as a teacher.

In order to explore this possibility, research must focus on examining the relationships among the factors that influence ECT turnover as a means to understand how school systems can be designed to support teachers, decrease turnover, and improve teacher efficacy or a “sense of success” at teaching. Based on findings from quantitative studies, teachers’ perceptions of their working conditions and the people they work with are important to their decision to stay or leave (Allensworth et al., 2009; Guarino et al. 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012; Tickle et al., 2011). Furthermore, in order to stay, teachers must also feel that they can be effective at teaching and managing their classrooms (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). While empirical predictors of turnover are known, research is needed to understand the specific experiences and interactions that contribute to urban ECTs’ positive perceptions of these contextual factors cited in these quantitative studies, namely supportiveness, teacher efficacy, and collegial connectedness. This study, the author addresses that need.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Social cognitivists theorize that at the core of “humanness” is the desire and ability to exercise control over one’s life. Human agency is described as intentionally making things happen by one’s actions, which allows people the capacity to control their lives. Social
cognitivists theorize that the social environment profoundly influences human development. The social environment and actions of the individual person reciprocally influence each other. “People are producers as well as products of social systems” (Bandura, 2001, p.1).

Self-efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977). The study of self-efficacy is concerned with understanding people’s beliefs in their ability to maintain the necessary efforts to attain specific goals while facing hindrances to achieve the goal. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct that is based on self-perception of competence. Self-efficacy refers to a person’s beliefs in one’s own capabilities to organize and carry out a specific course of action to attain a specific result. Unless people believe they can be successful in attaining the goal, then they have little motivation to act. If people believe that they have little control to produce results, then they will not even attempt to act. Hence, efficacy beliefs are the major basis of people’s intentional actions or human agency (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy determines how people think, feel, and motivate themselves to accomplish tasks. A person who has a strong sense that she or he can exercise control over her or his actions views challenges as something to overcome rather than to avoid. A high sense of self-efficacy leads a person to create challenging yet attainable goals. People with strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to intensify efforts in the face of failure. Contrarily, people with low self-efficacy avoid difficult tasks and lack the motivation necessary to sustain efforts in the face of failure (Bandura, 1997). They are slow to recover in the presence of setbacks and are more prone to stress and depression (Bandura, 1994).
Teacher Efficacy

Teacher efficacy is a teacher’s judgments or beliefs about one’s capabilities to bring about desired outcomes in student learning and engagement, even in those students who are unmotivated or difficult to motivate (Armor et al., 1976; Bandura, 1977). Teacher efficacy is further described as the ability to engage students in learning activities, manage student behavior in the classroom, and effectively implement instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The development of teacher efficacy is related to school-level variables such as school atmosphere, leadership, and efficacy of the school organization, or collective efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Teacher efficacy is situational and influenced by the school context. Therefore, environmental factors and experiences play key roles in the development of a teacher’s efficacy beliefs. Thus, it is vital to study the environmental factors influencing efficacy development to better understand how the school context can positively influence teacher efficacy in urban ECTs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Sources of Efficacy Beliefs

People’s efficacy beliefs are hypothesized to develop through four main sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. First, mastery experiences are those that come from successful teaching experiences. Mastery experiences are hypothesized to be the most powerful in the development of teacher efficacy. Efficacy is elevated if a teacher perceives an experience to be successful, which impacts perception of future success. Efficacy beliefs are lowered when a teacher perceives his or her
performance to be a failure (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Since novice teachers have less experience, it is hypothesized that ECTs rely more on the other three sources of experience when developing teacher efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Second, verbal persuasion is defined as the teacher’s interactions with colleagues, parents, and community members on the topic of the teacher’s performance. Verbal persuasion serves as a means of strengthening a teacher’s beliefs that she has the capacity to succeed. When teachers are persuaded that they have the ability to succeed, it is theorized that they are more likely to elicit the necessary effort and maintain the motivation to achieve goals in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1997). For urban ECTs, verbal persuasion may especially be important given the many obstacles they face early in their careers. Hearing from others who have been in their shoes that they can do it and are doing it enhances urban ECTs’ sense of support (Shernoff, Lakind, Frazier, & Jacobsons, 2015).

Third, vicarious experiences refer to learning through social models. Seeing people of similar capabilities sustain and put forth the effort to achieve a goal raises the beliefs that they too can reach similar levels of competencies. On the contrary, efficacy development is hindered when an observer sees another fail despite sustained effort. The impact of modeling on efficacy development is strongly influenced by the person’s beliefs that he is similar to the social model observed (Bandura, 1994). For urban ECTs, vicarious learning can support the development of classroom management skills and enhance ECTs’ capabilities to engage learners. Given that most ECTs report feeling ill-prepared to teach in urban settings (Siwatu, 2011), learning through social models on the job is vital to the successful development of teacher efficacy and commitment to teaching.
Fourth, a person’s mood or physiological state impacts that person’s judgments about his or her efficacy. Physiological arousal adds to feelings of success or failure (Bandura, 1997). When a teacher experiences happiness or pleasure from teaching a successful lesson, her sense of teacher efficacy increases (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Intense feelings of stress and failure negatively impact current and future efficacy judgments (Bandura, 1997).

Teaching in urban, high-poverty areas is stressful, which has a negative impact on teacher efficacy development. Formal (coaching, induction/mentoring, school structures) and informal supports (connections to colleagues) provided to urban ECTs allow for them to build skills and experience pleasure from teaching, hence leading to a stronger sense of success.

**Efficacy-Activated Processes**

There are four main psychological processes through which the development of efficacy beliefs affect human functioning: cognitive processes, motivational processes, affective processes, and selection processes. Efficacy-activated processes allow people to create ideal environments. First, efficacy beliefs influence thought or cognitive processes which impact performance. Teachers with a high sense of teacher efficacy visualize successful scenarios that support performance. Those with low teacher efficacy dwell on the things that could go wrong and are more erratic in their thought process (Bandura, 1994).

Perceived efficacy and cognitive processes are bidirectional. A high sense of efficacy fosters cognitive processes that support successful action; enactment of these thought processes strengthens efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).
Second, efficacy beliefs play a role in motivation in several ways. They determine the difficulty of the goals that an urban ECT will set for himself. Efficacy contributes to motivation by determining how much effort a teacher will commit to achieving a goal. It influences how long a teacher will persevere in the face of challenges and impacts her resilience to failures (Bandura, 1994).

Third, a teacher’s beliefs about his ability to cope impact is level of stress and depression in problematic situations. Perceived efficacy to exercise control over stress and anxiety in these situations plays a key role in the level of anxiety experienced. The stronger a teacher’s sense of coping efficacy, the more likely one is to take on challenging situations with students. Those who have a lower sense of coping efficacy view experiences as threats to be thwarted leading to avoidance behavior. Coping is an important skill for urban ECTs to development to sustain the necessary effort to teach in school settings that can be quite stressful. For example, student behavior problems are more frequent and intense in urban, high-poverty settings (Warren et al., 2003). If urban ECTs lack the coping skills to manage these challenging situations, their teacher efficacy development will be impacted and commitment to remain teaching in the school most likely will dwindle.

Last, teacher efficacy beliefs influence the types of environments and experiences teachers choose. Teachers engage in activities that they perceive they can attain success in and avoid school environments and experiences in which they visualize failure. By the choices that teachers make, they create different social experiences, competencies, and interests. Selection of a career is one example of the power of efficacy beliefs to influence one’s life path, experiences, and opportunities (Bandura, 1994). If urban ECTs do not see
themselves as being successful, they will not remain teaching within that school. Most likely, they will seek out a school that will support them to be successful teachers (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

In summary, teacher efficacy is the belief that one has the capacity to impact student engagement and the motivation to stay the course despite derailments. Teacher efficacy is hypothesized to develop through four types of experiences: mastery, vicarious, verbal persuasion, and physiological. Within the experiences, the teacher engages in four main psychological processes that influence teacher efficacy development: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection. Teacher efficacy is heavily influenced by the school context (Bandura, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007) and is an important predictor of a teacher’s commitment to remain teaching (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Thus, it is important to understand the situations and experiences that hinder or bolster teacher efficacy development.

Teacher Efficacy and Turnover

In the late 1970s, the idea that a teachers’ perceptions of their own teaching abilities matter to student learning began with a two-prompt survey (Armor et al., 1976; Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977). The two prompts asked teachers to rate, 1 through 5, if they strongly agreed or disagreed with the following statements: (1) When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can’t do much. Much of a student’s motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment, (2) If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students. These two prompts had a
profound impact on the study of Bandura’s concept of efficacy in education. The Rand Corporation studies reported a strong correlation between the responses to these two prompts and student achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Berman et al., 1977). Since the late 1970s, considerable developments have been made in the measurement of teacher efficacy. More recently, teacher efficacy is described and measured by a teacher’s self-rating of her or his ability to engage students in learning activities, manage student behavior in the classroom, and effectively implement instructional strategies (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Many studies have been conducted revealing links between teacher efficacy and student and teacher outcomes. In relation to teacher turnover, teachers reporting a stronger sense of teacher efficacy report higher levels of job satisfaction and are more committed to remain teaching (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). The reasons for the lower turnover rate among teachers with higher efficacy levels may be due to the fact that these teachers have a number of positive experiences in the classroom. Teachers who report higher levels of efficacy have students who perform better academically and are more motivated to learn (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Moore & Esselman, 1992). The influence of teacher efficacy on student achievement appears to be indirect. Teachers who report higher levels of efficacy engage in numerous teacher behaviors that directly influence student achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers’ ratings of efficacy are related to their level of aspiration and effort that they invest into teaching. Teachers with higher efficacy ratings are more willing to experiment with new teaching methods (Allinder, 1994). They spend more time on instruction and less time on discipline (Onafowora, 2004).
Teachers with a high sense of efficacy maintain high levels of student engagement and believe that they can teach all students (Good & Brophy, 2003).

**Teacher Efficacy and Early Career Teachers**

Several studies have examined the development of efficacy over the teaching career. Understanding how the development of efficacy differs for novice and experienced teachers can help school systems provide supports tailored to specific needs at different times of the teaching career. Experienced teachers have consistently demonstrated higher ratings of efficacy compared to their novice counterparts (Campbell, 1996; Cheung, 2008; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Wilson & Tan, 2004; Yeo, Ang, Chong, Huan, & Quek, 2008). However, there are some school contextual factors that are positively influential in the development of ECTs’ efficacy. Studies that highlight the influence of school practices on teacher efficacy development have found that ECTs who gave higher ratings of the adequacy of support provided to them reported higher ratings of teacher efficacy at the end of the first year of teaching (Hoy & Spero, 2005; Villeme, Hall, Burley, & Brockmeier, 1992). Hoy and Spero (2005) conducted a longitudinal study with 29 ECTs from pre-service training through their first year. The participants partook in a cohort preparation program that focused on preparing teachers for diverse, urban school settings. To obtain a support index score, ECTs were asked to rate their perception of the quality of teaching resources provided, support from colleagues, support from administrators, support from parents, and support from the community on a scale of 1 through 9. After their first year of teaching, higher ratings of support were related to positive teacher efficacy development (Hoy & Spero, 2005).
Additionally, Chester and Beaudin (1996) found that at the end of the first year of teaching in the context of an urban school, a number of school practices impacted the development of ECTs’ efficacy. ECTs who had more opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and were observed with feedback provided by a supervisor more frequently reported higher levels of teacher efficacy (Chester & Beaudin, 1996).

Bandura (1997) suggests that teacher efficacy beliefs are most pliable early in the career. Of the four sources of efficacy beliefs, mastery experiences are thought to be the most potent to the development of teacher efficacy. Yet ECTs have less experience to pull from and therefore are hypothesized to rely more on the other three experiential sources (vicarious, physiological, and verbal persuasion). Furthermore, there is a small amount of research looking at the contribution of the four sources of experience, or experiences in general, to teacher efficacy development early in the teaching career (Klassen, Tze, Betts & Gordon, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007).

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) sought to examine the relationship between novice and experienced teachers’ efficacy ratings and their assessment of key resources and supports provided in their school. The authors examined the contribution of the contextual elements of teaching resources available and verbal persuasion (i.e., interpersonal support provided by administrators, colleagues, and the community) to the development of efficacy ratings. Experienced teachers reported having higher efficacy beliefs than novice teachers in two of the three areas of efficacy; efficacy for instructional strategies and for classroom management. There were no differences between novice and experienced teachers’ efficacy for student engagement ratings. The availability of teaching resources made a significant contribution to
explaining the variance in teachers’ sense of efficacy for novice but not experienced teachers. Verbal persuasion was more pertinent for beginning versus experienced teachers in their efficacy beliefs. Experiences and supports provided by colleagues and the community and resources available to the teacher were more influential in the development of efficacy for ECTs versus experienced teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Next, Klassen and colleagues (2010) reviewed 218 empirical articles published on the topic of teacher self-efficacy and collective efficacy published between 1998 through 2009. The authors indicated the necessity of more research exploring the contributions of experiences to efficacy beliefs.

Although efficacy is better developed in experienced teachers, providing ECTs with opportunities to collaborate with their colleagues and receive supportive feedback from administrators contributes to the development of teacher efficacy beliefs. It is evident that time to collaborate with colleagues and administrators is important to ECT efficacy development, yet less is known about the specific collaborative and supportive experiences and interactions ECTs have with their colleagues and their administrators that positively contribute to the development of efficacy (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Although Hoy and Spero (2005) found a strong positive correlation between the support index and efficacy development, the term “support” remains ambiguous. Furthermore, Chester and Beaudin (1996) reported a relationship between support by administrators and collaboration with colleagues and higher efficacy ratings. Yet these findings do not describe the types of experiences and interactions that influence ECTs to perceive the school context to be supportive. These findings lack description from the ECT’s perspective regarding the structures and experiences that contribute to positive collaborative
experiences that influence teacher efficacy perceptions. Higher levels of support and more opportunities to collaborate with colleagues is positively related to teacher efficacy development. This concept remains statistically validated but vaguely described in the literature. More research is needed to understand from ECTs’ voices the specific experiences and interactions that lead ECTs to feel supported in their schools and connected to their colleagues. This study explored this empirical need.

What Is School Context?

School Context – Ambiguously Defined Based on Prior Research

Given that efficacy development is context specific and does not occur in a vacuum (Bandura, 1997), more research is needed to understand how school context influences teacher efficacy development (Labone, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). There is a plethora of studies on school context and turnover which are all reviewed in detail below in this study, yet there is little consistency on the definition of and theoretical framework to use when studying school context and its relation to ECT turnover, making it difficult to determine what researchers mean when they refer to school context.

In Ingersoll’s (2001) groundbreaking study framing teacher turnover as a “revolving door,” the problem was analyzed using an organizational framework based on three main premises: understanding employee turnover is important because of its impact on the organization, fully understanding turnover requires understanding it at the organizational
level, and understanding turnover requires exploring the conditions and character of the organization in which the employee works.

While studying the influence of school administrators on teachers’ career decisions, Boyd et al. (2011) examined the relationship between teacher turnover and the school context without using a specific framework but by using prior research to define school context as including the following variables: teachers’ influence over school policy, administrative support, staff relations, student behavior, facilities, and school safety. Similarly, while exploring the impact of teaching conditions on turnover, Loeb et al. (2005) did not specifically identify a conceptual framework used in their study of teacher turnover in California schools. However, the authors do refer to understanding “labor market conditions” to study the association of teacher, student, and organization factors with turnover. In their reviews of the literature on teacher recruitment and retention in the United States, Guarino et al. (2006) and Borman and Dowling (2008) utilized the theoretical framework derived from the economic labor market theory of supply and demand. Guarino et al. (2006) used this framework given that a goal of the study was to make policy recommendations about teacher recruitment and retention. Borman and Dowling (2008) framed their study using this theory as they were trying to identify attributes of the school organization and culture that influenced attrition. In 2011, Tickle et al. explored the mediating effect of administrative support on teacher job satisfaction and intention to remain teaching. In the theoretical framework, the authors identified two strands of research in the area of attrition with one focusing on teacher factors (teacher demographics, teacher characteristics, and salary) and the other environmental factors (school characteristics, governance, and working conditions).
All of these studies examine specific facets of school context and turnover. However, in order to understand what is meant by school context for each specific study, each article must be reviewed to identify the authors’ definition. The goals of each study drive the theoretical framework chosen and also drive the authors’ definition of school context. Therefore, a similar method was used for this study in defining school context. When analyzing school contextual factors and turnover, the following factors are repeatedly predictive of a teacher’s future employment plans: perceived levels of support, teacher influence over schoolwide decisions, connectedness to colleagues, school safety, and student discipline problems (Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Tickle et al., 2011). The interdependence of these factors make up the working conditions that a teacher experiences. Teachers who feel supported, effective, and connected want to stay in their school buildings. Creation of school environments that support teachers to become effective instructors who are connected to their colleagues is key to addressing the problem of ECT turnover. In order to better understand what support, connectedness, and effectiveness mean from the view of urban ECTs, the specific interactions and experiences that contribute to perceptions of these factors was explored in this study. Therefore, the aspects of the school context related to supportiveness, connectedness, and effectiveness are included in this study’s definition and framework of school context.
School Context – Social and Concrete Elements

Johnson et al.’s (2012) framework is presented to provide a lens and definition for school context for this study. Johnson et al. (2012) sought to explore the effects of teachers’ working conditions in Massachusetts schools on teachers’ professional satisfaction, job intention, and student achievement. The Massachusetts Teaching, Learning, and Leading Survey (MassTeLLS) was used to examine three outcomes: teacher satisfaction, student achievement, and job intention, which serves as a strong predictor of actual turnover (Ladd, 2011). In Johnson et al. (2012), survey questions were grouped into nine predictor elements called working condition elements: facilities, governance, colleagues, community support, principal, professional expertise, resources, school culture, and time. For purposes of discussion, the authors discuss these elements in two school/work contextual categories: social (principal leadership, colleagues, school culture, community support, professional expertise, governance) and concrete/conventional (resources, time use, facilities). Johnson et al. (2012) found that working conditions explain a substantially greater proportion of the variance in job satisfaction and career plans than do student, teacher, and school demographic data. The context of work was a much stronger predictor (predicting 29% of the variance) of satisfaction compared to a combined set of student, school, and teacher demographics, only explaining 6% of the variance in satisfaction. Similar findings are reported between teachers’ stated career intentions and their perception of working conditions.

All of the elements of working conditions had a strong, positive correlation with satisfaction and job intentions; however, three of the social elements were most important to
teachers’ job satisfaction and job intentions. First, *relationships with colleagues* emerged as a strong predictor. Those teachers who reported having positive working relationships with their co-workers were also more satisfied and more likely to remain committed to teaching in that school. Second, *principal leadership* was found to have strong predictive power in the empirical model. Those teachers who reported that they had supportive principals and whose leadership demonstrated a desire to create a school environment conducive to learning were more likely to stay. Third, having a *positive school culture* described as one of openness, respect, trust, and joined commitment to student achievement served to be a strong predictor. The magnitudes of the effects of these three social factors on job satisfaction and intention to remain teaching were almost twice as large as the magnitudes of the effects of school resources and facilities on job satisfaction and job intention. The three social factors were also strong determinants of student academic growth. In summary, principal leadership, collegial connectedness, and positive school culture are all interdependent elements of the school context that were most predictive of satisfaction, job intention, and student growth (Johnson et al., 2012).

In the current study, I sought to strengthen the understanding of urban ECTs’ experiences related to the social nature of the school context. While factors of the social context are empirically predictive of job intention (Johnson et al., 2012), the terms “supportive” and “connected” are ambiguously defined. I sought to understand the specific interactions and experiences urban ECTs have with their colleagues and administrators related to building a sense of connectedness, support, and effectiveness. This study author aimed to
understand urban ECTs perceptions of their school buildings as being supportive or unsupportive of their emotional and instructional needs.

School Context and Turnover

Multiple studies that control for concrete school contextual factors reveal that teachers’ perceptions of the social aspects of working conditions are the most significant predictor of teachers’ satisfaction with teaching and commitment to continue teaching. Therefore, it is the social factors rather than the concrete factors that are more predictive of turnover (Johnson et al., 2012; Shen, 1997; Tickle et al., 2011; Weiss, 1999). Similar to Johnson et al. (2012) using survey data, Boyd et al. (2011) and Ladd (2011) found that in addition to salaries and benefits, working conditions served as important predictors of teachers’ decisions to leave teaching or move buildings. By combining longitudinal survey data and administrative files from over 4,000 first-year teachers, Boyd et al. (2011) explored the relationship between teachers’ retention decisions and school contextual factors (e.g., teacher influence, effectiveness of school administration, staff relationships, student behavior, facilities, and school safety). Boyd et al. (2011) identified teachers’ perceptions of school administrators as the strongest school contextual factor influencing retention decisions. Notably, similar patterns with administrative support and turnover were identified among different studies conducted across three different states: New York, North Carolina, and Massachusetts (Boyd et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011). Therefore, ECTs who feel connected to other teachers in their building, who feel supported by their administrators, and who work in a school culture of shared decision making demonstrate superior perceptions
of their working environment and more commitment to remain teaching. Research is lacking in the analysis of novice teachers’ perspectives regarding these factors as told in their own words. This study attempts to partially fulfill this empirical need.

**Formal Structures to Support ECTs - Induction/Mentoring Programs and Turnover**

One way that schools are trying to support ECTs and create connectedness among colleagues and build teacher efficacy is through the implementation of induction and mentoring programs. Induction, including mentoring programs, has become a commonly proposed solution to address teacher turnover. At the beginning of the 1990-1991 school year, 50% of first-year teachers reported participating in induction activities and being assigned a mentor or master teacher. Fifteen years later, this number had increased to 91% (Ingersoll, 2012), indicating that induction and mentoring have become widespread practices in U.S. education systems. Furthermore, in the 2010-2011 school year, 27 states required a form of induction program for new teachers (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012).

With an increased focus on educational reform and highly qualified teachers, induction and mentoring programs are at the forefront of discussion in educational policy and reform (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Commonality exists in that the targeted goals of induction and mentoring programs are to increase rates of teacher retention, improve student academic achievement, improve teacher efficacy, and build a sense of connectedness to colleagues (White & Mason, 2014). However, a variety of differences in both induction and mentoring programs exist. Specifically, differences in the length of time offered for induction activities,
types of training for mentors, government-mandated versus unmandated programs, and the matching process of mentor to mentee exist making systematic study of these programs challenging (Long et al., 2012).

To systematically and quantitatively determine the influence of mentoring and induction activities on teacher turnover after the first year of teaching, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) utilized the 1999-2000 SASS and Teacher Follow-Up Survey data through the Institute of Educational Sciences to provide descriptive information about ECT attrition and induction and mentoring programs. Eighty percent of first-year teachers reported being assigned a mentor. Having a mentor in the same field reduced the risk of leaving at the end of the first year by about 30%, compared to 18% of those assigned a mentor from a different field. Furthermore, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) analyzed the joint impact of participation in multiple induction activities on turnover. The additive effect of three induction packages, each involving progressively more components, was discussed. The packages included common planning time or communication with other teachers, supportive communication with administrators, mentor in the same field, and participation in a seminar for beginning teachers. As components of induction programs were added to the packages, teacher attrition rates decreased suggesting a beneficial additive effect of differing components of induction programs, mentoring being one of those components. Furthermore, these findings highlight the importance of structured time to communicate and connect with colleagues and administrators (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) conducted an analysis of what is known and unknown about mentoring and induction. Fifteen empirical studies met their research standards and
were included in the review. The authors found that overall, induction had a positive effect on teacher satisfaction, job commitment, retention, teacher quality, and student achievement.

Long et al. (2012) conducted a literature review on induction and mentoring specifically related to ECT turnover. Quantitative and qualitative literature was included in the review. The findings suggest a wide range of support from mentors may assist in the retention of ECTs. Mentorship was found to be more effective in retaining beginning teachers in the following cases: if the choice of mentor and mentee was up to the participants, mentees perceived their mentor to be effective teachers, and mentorship relationships were matched by grade level and in the same building. Based on the review, it was recommended that induction programs move beyond just teaching novice teachers “the ropes” towards involving ECTs in collaborative school environments, valuing the knowledge of beginning teachers, and including them as full members in the school programs to foster a sense of belonging and ownership. Through creating a positive school culture and organizational climate of teamwork and collaboration, creating a whole-school approach to learning, and creating opportunities for professional growth, principals played a pivotal role in setting the tone for connectedness among staff and for the success of induction programs. A link demonstrating that the quality of teaching was impacted by induction, including mentoring, was evident (Long et al., 2012).

Wechsler et al. (2010) examined the effects of 39 new teacher induction programs. The authors analyzed the influence of school context, mentoring intensity, induction activities, and the focus on instruction during induction/mentoring on student achievement, reported teacher growth, teacher efficacy, and retention. Please see Table 1 for a review of
the results. In summary, Wechsler et al. (2010) found that induction activities made significant contributions to teachers’ reported growth in professional development and in teacher efficacy ratings. The authors did not find a link between induction and mentoring and retention. Furthermore, there was not a statistically significant difference in student achievement between ECTs who participated in induction versus those who did not participate in induction activities. School context (measured by teachers’ ratings on surveys of principal support, collegial relationships, and access to necessary teaching materials) significantly predicted all four outcomes. Weschsler et al. (2010) surmise that context matters and should be considered in “any equation of induction inputs” (p. 18).

Table 1

Summary of Significant Predictors by Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant Predictors</th>
<th>Teacher Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Reported Growth</th>
<th>District Retention</th>
<th>School Retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School context</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity of mentoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on instruction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other induction</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Student achievement was not included in the summary table because the student achievement analysis was conducted using a secondary database and could not be tied to the input variables summarized in the table.

There is value in offering teachers comprehensive induction packages. Teacher quality is positively impacted by mentoring and induction. However, influences of induction and mentoring on retention vary across studies (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll,
Furthermore, researchers must consider including school context within predictive equations of induction programs given its influence on teacher efficacy, retention, and teacher professional growth (Wechsler et al., 2010). The current literature sheds little light on the facilitators and barriers of supportive structures on efficacy development from the perspective of urban ECTs. In addition, less is known about the experiences and interactions that mentees have as a part of mentorship that contribute positively to teacher efficacy development and a sense of working in a supportive environment. Hearing the experiences from the voices of those receiving the supports can provide insight onto the parts of these packages that support teachers in becoming more effective, developing relationships with their colleagues, and feeling that they work in supportive schools where they want to remain teaching. While I did not seek to specifically analyze mentoring programs, I did seek to explore urban ECTs’ experiences with supports received and offer insights into how school supports can enhance teacher efficacy development and create a sense of support and connectedness.

**Collegial Connectedness with Administrators: Impact on Turnover**

Administrators shape the working environment in schools. The personal support provided by administrators to teachers and the structures created by administrators to support teachers both influence teachers’ perceptions of administrators. Allensworth et al. (2009) found that teachers who reported high levels of trust with their administration and who viewed their administrator as a strong instructional leader reported higher rates of retention. Furthermore, principals who coordinated instruction and programming with teachers in a
sustained, ongoing fashion created schools where teachers were more likely to stay teaching. Guarino et al. (2006) conducted a literature review on teacher recruitment and retention. The study examined the characteristics of teachers that enter and stay in the field, characteristics of school districts that are more successful at recruiting and retaining teachers, and the types of policies that show evidence of successful recruitment and retention of teachers. Of particular interest to this study, schools that provided teachers with autonomy and increased administrative support were more likely to keep teachers within the school.

In 2011 using the 2003-2004 SASS database, Tickle et al. analyzed the mediating effect of administrative support on teacher job satisfaction and intent to stay within the teaching profession. They found that administrative support was a significant predictor of job satisfaction and of a teacher’s intent to stay in the field. In addition, administrative support was a stronger predictor of job satisfaction than teaching experience, satisfaction with salaries, and student behavior. Furthermore, other studies have revealed that lack of administrative support is one of the key predictors of teachers’ intent to stay in the profession (Weiss, 1999) and actual turnover (Loeb et al., 2005; Luekens, 2004).

Creating supporting working environments begins with the administrator. Teachers who trust their principals and who report feeling supported by them are more likely to stay in their buildings (Allensworth et al., 2009). However, the research is lacking in describing exactly what constitutes administrative support from the teachers’ view. The feeling of being supported is created through experience and interaction, yet few studies have asked teachers about these experiences and interactions that lead ECTs to feel supported (Rumley, 2010). By hearing from those urban ECTs in the trenches, I sought to come to a better understanding of
those specific experiences and interactions that lead ECTs to feeling connected to and supported by their administrators.

**Collegial Connectedness with Other Teachers: Impact on Turnover**

There is a clear connection between commitment to remain teaching and teachers’ relationships with their colleagues. Teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they trust their colleagues, report that their colleagues are innovative, and report having shared goals and missions with their colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). In a study analyzing one-year retention rates within Chicago Public Schools, retention rates were 5 percentage points higher in schools where teachers reported sharing collective responsibility for student success with colleagues compared to other schools with lower rates of collective responsibility servicing similar student populations (Allensworth et al., 2009). Furthermore, when analyzing multiple facets of the school context, collegial relationships proved to be one of the most important facets of the social context that was predictive of turnover and of student achievement growth. Specifically, higher ratings of collegial relationships were defined as teachers who reported higher levels of collective problem solving with colleagues, structured time to interact and learn from their colleagues was planned, and an effective process for making group decisions when problem solving was in place. Not only was it necessary to create structured time to collaborate but also it was essential to have effective problem-solving and decision-making processes in place to support the collaboration process (Johnson et al., 2012). When studying the impact of a professional development program targeting retention and teacher efficacy development with 130 teachers in an urban setting,
teachers reported that the most valuable component of the program was their increased opportunity to share experiences and network with colleagues (Gaikhorst, Beishuizen, Korstjens, & Volman, 2014). All of the studies reviewed use quantitative methodologies and survey data collection to demonstrate relationships between collegial connectedness and outcome variables. While the findings offer valuable insights into the relationships between collegial connectedness and turnover, I sought to extend the understanding of collegial connectedness and relationships by hearing from the voices of urban ECTs.

It is conceivable to hypothesize that teachers in high-poverty, high-needs schools rely on one another more than teachers in other schools (Johnson et al., 2012). Given the unique student needs urban ECTs are presented with, building strong connections to colleagues may be even be more important to a teacher’s desire to remain teaching compared to teachers in suburban and rural communities. The research is clear that collegial relationships are important. Specifically, structured time and structured decision-making processes foster strong connections to colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012) and also enhance teacher efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004). Administrators can create formal supportive structures to promote interactions between colleagues, yet commitment to be productive and collaborative is required by teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to learn what experiences foster and inhibit this commitment to ensure that the efforts to build supportive working environments do not go wasted. Learning from the specific experiences of urban ECTs regarding the formal and informal supportive structures that foster positive working relationships and connections with colleagues will allow schools to create the needed supports and experiences to retain urban ECTs in their school buildings.
In summary, teachers who work in supportive environments where they feel connected to colleagues and feel successful at teaching their students and managing behaviors are more likely to remain teaching (Bryk et al., 2010; Durham-Barnes, 2011; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Loeb et al., 2005; Simon & Johnson, 2015), yet, less is known about the specific interactions and experiences that make teachers feel connected, supported, and effective. Research exploring the experiences and perceptions of urban ECTs is warranted in order to understand that types of experiences that foster positive relationships with colleagues and make teachers feel supported in their work environments.

**School Contextual Influences on Teacher Efficacy**

Several school contextual features are related to a greater sense of teacher efficacy: a school culture focused on academic success, administrators who are responsive and encourage risk taking, and an environment where teachers encourage and support each other (Goddard et al., 2004). Teacher efficacy is context specific and influenced by the school environment (Bandura 1977). Therefore, the environmental factors and experiences that influence the development of a teacher’s efficacy beliefs must be considered.

Considering teacher efficacy is a belief system that is developed and influenced by the social environment, it is important to understand the sources that teachers tap into when making judgments about their own teacher efficacy. Yet, little is known about the sources and experiences that contribute to the development of a teacher’s efficacy (Klassen et al., 2010; Labone, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) explored two of the four sources of efficacy experiences, mastery experiences and verbal
persuasion, across beginning (three or fewer years of experience) and experienced teachers. In relation to efficacy and school context, the authors sought to explore how verbal persuasion experiences (interactions regarding the teacher’s performance with colleagues, community members, and administrators) contribute to a teacher’s development of efficacy beliefs. Verbal persuasion was more pertinent for beginning versus experienced teachers in their efficacy beliefs. These experiences with their colleagues, administrators, and the community significantly contributed to explaining the variance in novice teachers’ efficacy ratings but did not for experienced teachers. The authors hypothesized that experienced teachers are more engaged in working in isolation and therefore rely less on other sources to make judgments about their own efficacy. The authors recommended more qualitative studies exploring the influence of the four experiential sources on a teacher’s development of efficacy beliefs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). If the sources of teacher efficacy beliefs can be identified, then opportunities within the working environment can be created and molded to support a greater sense of teacher efficacy.

Johnson and Birkeland (2003) explored experiences of ECTs via qualitative analysis. Although the authors did not use self-efficacy theory as a conceptual framework, the authors discuss the importance of teacher efficacy in an ECT’s decision to stay or leave. The findings provide insight into teacher experiences and the importance of the relationship between feeling a “sense of success” and commitment to teaching. Based on longitudinal interviews with 50 novice teachers, teachers who felt successful with their students and whose schools were organized to support them were more likely to remain teaching in their schools. Of the 11 teachers who left public education (leavers) at the end of the three-year study, a common
theme in the drive for leaving was feeling a lack of success in the classroom. While teachers reported that feeling effective with their students was important, they also reported several school factors as being important to contributing to their efficacy beliefs. The school-related factors that contributed to efficacy development were support and contributions provided by the principal and colleagues, appropriate workload, and the availability of curriculum and resources (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

The leavers repeatedly listed the same school factors as the impetus for leaving: principals who were illogical, neglectful, or abusive and colleagues who failed to support them as they learned the art of teaching. One leaver stated that she repeatedly asked administrators and her mentor for support with classroom management and materials with little response. She discussed how this negatively impacted her efficacy development by stating that she could not handle this level of failure again. Leavers described inappropriate workloads as excessive workloads or teaching courses or subjects that they were not prepared to teach, which led to feelings of frustration and failure. Lack of curriculum and resources was described as not having textbooks, teaching supplies, and missing or lack of science lab materials (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

The accounts of the movers (moved schools or districts but stayed in education) in the study echoed those of the leavers. However, movers viewed the problems as fixable given the appropriate “fit” of school and job to their qualifications. Movers were looking for new schools where they could feel successful in the classroom. They were looking for schools where there was organized support for new teachers and built-in collegial interaction time. They left schools where student disrespect and disruption was a part of the norm to go to
schools where there were well-established norms for student discipline (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). One mover described finding the support she needed in her new building to be an effective and successful teacher. This consisted of weekly meetings with her supervisor at the beginning of the year and then every other week. She felt that this kept her on track and feeling successful with the students. “I feel like the way the school is structured, I can successfully teach. I’m not always successful, but I’m mostly successful, versus being successful 10% of the time” (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003, p. 601).

The stayers who were described as “settled” in their school buildings described principals who understood the importance of continuous teacher improvement and colleagues who supported and encouraged new teachers to set reasonable goals for themselves. The settled stayers reported school environments where parents, teachers, and administrators worked together to set clear and consistent behavioral expectations to maintain an orderly and respectful learning environment. The importance of professional culture was evident in stayers’ accounts. They described an “integrated” professional culture where school leaders arranged schedules that accommodated team planning time and structured opportunities for collegial interaction. Teachers of all experience levels, novice to experienced, were involved in collegial interactions. ECTs in these integrated professional cultures were more likely to stay versus those who described teaching in “novice-oriented” cultures (geared towards mostly new teachers who were inexperienced yet idealistic) or “veteran-oriented” cultures (geared towards veteran teachers honoring professional autonomy and privacy). In summary of this study, it was important for ECTs to feel successful and vital that the school supported them in their pursuit of success.
The relationship between teacher efficacy and school-level variables is apparent (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Goddard et al., 2004; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Structured interaction time with supervisors and colleagues is vital to ECTs’ perceptions of support, efficacy development, and decision to stay. Yet the types of interactions that occur during these experiences that elicit a positive sense of teacher efficacy need to be further explored. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) describe the necessity for administrators to build in time to connect with colleagues but do not describe the types of interactions and specific experiences that occurred during scheduled times that led teachers to feeling effective. Stayers continually described this concept of a “school structured for support” but obscurity remains in what support means and the specific interactions and experiences that occur that drive teachers to perceive their colleagues, administrators, and schools as supportive. In addition, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) did not focus on urban ECTs. Given that efficacy development is context specific, more research is needed to understand urban ECTs experiences. Furthermore, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) found that verbal persuasion experiences are important to an ECT’s efficacy development. The authors quantitatively found this relationship but recommend follow-up qualitative research to further describe the collegial experiences and interactions that occur between other teachers and administrators and that lead to enhanced teacher efficacy development. In order to better define what a “school structured for support” means, I sought to explore from the voices of urban ECTs those specific interactions and experiences with colleagues that led ECTs to feel effective and supported.
Summary of School Context and Turnover

Teacher’s perceptions of their working conditions have major implications on the decision to stay, move, or leave. The working environment is dynamic and has many concrete and social elements that teachers experience (Johnson et al., 2012). It is evident that specific social elements (perceptions of support and connectedness to colleagues) related to working conditions are predictive of turnover, yet less is known from the view of urban ECTs about the supportive experiences and positive collegial interactions that lead to a stronger perception of support and connectedness. Furthermore, teachers who report higher levels of efficacy show stronger commitment to their jobs and their students perform better academically. Systematic supports are being put into place, such as mentoring and induction, at high rates which do have positive impacts on turnover and teacher efficacy, yet we have heard little from the urban ECT’s perspective as to what supports and inhibits the development of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), what makes them feel connected to colleagues, and what systematic supports meet the emotional and instructional needs of urban ECTs (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Rumley, 2010). Johnson et al. (2012) add to the mounting evidence that school context matters a whole lot in a teacher’s intention to remain teaching. However, most of this research relies on large-scale, quantitative databases that analyze survey data to demonstrate links between working conditions and turnover. Johnson et al. (2012) recommend combined research methodologies and additional measures of social conditions in the workplace through interviews and observational data to further
understand the social conditions that survey data cannot capture. This study addressed the need for analysis of interview data.

Conceptual Framework

School context refers to a number of social and concrete elements that make up the environment and working conditions experienced by teachers. Collegial relationships and a supportive school culture/environment are important to teacher efficacy development and turnover. Perceptions of the school culture/environment are molded, in part, by the specific interactions and experiences urban ECTs have with their colleagues and the supports that are provided to ECTs. Structured supports can decrease turnover rates (Gray & Taie, 2015), enhance teacher efficacy ratings (Chester & Beaudin, 1996), and improve perceptions of the working environment (Johnson et al., 2012). ECTs who perceive the working environment and colleagues to be supportive develop a better sense of teacher efficacy. ECTs want to remain working in environments that support them to be successful teachers in buildings where they have meaningful and productive relationships with colleagues.

Figure 1 visually represents the conceptual framework guiding this study. The main focal point of this study was to qualitatively explore the influence of (gray-shaded box in Figure 1) school context (box 1) on teacher efficacy (box 2) in urban ECTs. Given the greater weight that teachers place on the social factors of the working environment when it comes to job satisfaction and intention to remain teaching, I sought to further explore and understand urban ECTs’ experiences with the social contextual elements that are highly predictive of job intention and satisfaction. I sought to explore the specific interactions and experiences that
lead urban ECTs to develop positive relationships with colleagues and a strong sense of teacher efficacy in a supportive work environment. Given that efficacy development is context specific, I planned to discover the specific experiences that hinder and bolster urban ECTs’ sense of efficacy.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of study.

Focus and Necessity of Study

It is vital to understand the reasons underlying ECT turnover in urban, high-poverty areas. Once the reasons are better understood, school systems can refine, develop, and implement professional development programs and systematic changes to create supportive school contexts and address the origin of the problem. Large-scale quantitative studies similar to SASS and BTLS and the studies by Ingersoll (2001) and Ingersoll and Smith (2003)
provide an overview of patterns and insight into the impact of perceived working conditions and teacher efficacy on teacher turnover. Yet little qualitative research has been conducted to develop a deeper understanding of teachers’ perceptions and experiences (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Klassen et al., 2010, Rumley, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). In an attempt to capture the voices of ECTs’ experiences, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) followed 50 novice teachers in Massachusetts through their first three years of teaching and employed qualitative analysis to learn about the problem of turnover. In this qualitative study, the authors reported that the conditions of a school, conditions related to providing teachers with support, the ability to connect with colleagues, and a teacher’s “sense of success” were highly influential in a teacher’s decision to stay, leave the profession, or move schools. However, their sample did not address novice teachers in urban settings.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) used survey data to explore the impact of teachers’ experiences on the development of their efficacy. Given that a survey limits the ability for one to express personal experiences, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) recommend qualitative analysis as a follow-up to describe teachers’ experiences in greater depth. Rumley (2010) used qualitative analysis to explore teachers’ perceptions of support provided by their administrators. However, the study did not focus specifically on ECTs in urban areas.

Coming to a better understanding of ECTs’ perceptions and experiences of the school context and efficacy development will offer information that can serve as the building blocks to developing more supportive school systems. Furthermore, exploring the relationship between perceptions of school social contextual elements and urban ECT efficacy development is necessary and lacking in the research. Utilizing the conceptual framework in
Figure 1, I sought to describe urban ECTs’ specific experiences and interactions with colleagues and administrators that lead to a sense of connectedness, support, and effectiveness. Through hearing from the voices of urban ECTs, the author explored urban ECTs’ specific experiences that contribute to the development of effective teaching capabilities and skills at managing student behavior problems. Considering efficacy development is context specific, this study strives to better understand urban ECTs’ perceptions of the structures in place and collegial interactions that occur that support their efficacy development. The information yielded from analyzing teachers’ experiences could be used to guide and develop professional development models and supportive experiences within a school as a means to better meet the needs of ECTs in urban, high-poverty schools. However, in order to build these types of schools that teachers strive to work in, a better understanding of what ECTs are experiencing in relation to feeling supported in their work environment, their connections to their colleagues, and what experiences bolster the development of teacher efficacy is needed.

Background on Methods

Urban ECTs in high-poverty areas were selected as participants for this study as they are most susceptible to turnover. Much research has been conducted to solidify the quantitative predictors of teacher turnover. Using qualitative analysis, I developed a better understanding of the specific interactions and experiences that contributed to an urban ECTs’ sense of connectedness, support, and effectiveness. I applied thematic analysis (Braun &
Clarke, 2006) to previously collected semi-structured interview data with approximately 15 urban ECTs (teachers with four or fewer years of experience).

While few have employed qualitative analysis to explore the phenomena of ECT turnover, the handful of studies employing similar analysis that are relevant to this study are discussed. First, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) utilized an analysis technique similar to the one proposed for this study. The purpose of the study was to explore through qualitative analysis ECTs’ career decisions to learn why teachers stay, leave, or move school buildings. In the analysis phase, Johnson and Birkeland (2003) do not cite a specific source when discussing the analysis technique employed. However, the authors describe the use of an iterative process in which coding schemes were developed based on thematic summaries from each transcript. While Johnson and Birkeland (2003) provide a foundation for analysis, I attempted to answer research questions that apply to a more specific school context, urban ECTs in high-poverty schools. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) classify teachers as urban (e.g., 60% of sample) or suburban (40% of sample), but they do not classify teachers based on the poverty level of the school. Therefore, conclusions cannot be drawn from Johnson and Birkeland (2003) about those ECTs in urban, high-poverty settings who are most susceptible to turnover. I sought to specifically explore and come to a deeper understanding of empirical predictors of turnover of urban ECTs in high-poverty settings.

While attempting to “render the social world of teachers intelligible” (Webb & Ashton, 1986, p. 45) and explore teacher efficacy development and the conditions of teaching, Webb and Ashton (1986) utilized data that combined interviews and observational data. Using analysis techniques described in Spradley (1980), Webb and Ashton (1986) applied the
following thematic technique to observational and interview data to find patterns of thought and action in teachers across the data: data analyzed line by line for domains or categories domains were turned into broader themes patterns of thought or action were identified from the themes across the interviews and observational data. Findings rendered seven patterns in the “ecological threats to teacher efficacy” (Webb & Ashton, 1986, p. 46): excessive role demands, inadequate salaries and low status, lack of recognition and professional isolation, uncertainty, a sense of powerlessness, alienation, and the decline in teacher morale. The methodology employed by Webb and Ashton (1986) provides another example of the application of a thematic analysis technique to interview data. Furthermore, the study also explores teacher efficacy development while taking into account the social context of the school, providing an example of how to employ thematic analysis to similar research questions to this study. However, Webb and Ashton (1986) did not focus on the experiences of ECTs or those teachers in urban, high-poverty areas.

Given that I conducted a secondary analysis of data, it is relevant to review the theoretical framework used to guide the original study, assumptions assumed in the original study, and the results from the research conducted with the data. The semi-structured interview data that was analyzed in this study was collected as a part of the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban Schools study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (R305A090085, Principal Investigator: Dr. Elisa Shernoff). The purpose of this three-year grant starting in 2009 was to iteratively develop a professional development/intervention model to bolster connections to colleagues and a strong sense of teacher efficacy in urban ECTs (Shernoff et al., 2016).
assumption of the original study is that trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) and connections with colleagues are essential for all teachers, particularly ECTs, as this serves as a “conduit” (Shernoff et al., 2016, p. 468) to building teacher efficacy and provides a sense of belonging to the school which is vital for teacher retention. The original study proposes that building teacher efficacy and connections to colleagues is essential to a teacher’s commitment to teaching.

Three theoretical frameworks were used to guide the original study. First, social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) emphasizes the development of beliefs and skills through modeling, observing, and interacting with others. Second, Johnson and Birkeland’s (2003) work, which is described in detail above, exploring the reasons why ECTs stay, leave, or move buildings (i.e., sense of success or lack of success), was used to guide the development of the intervention model. Third, the original study was guided by Bryk and Schneider’s (2002) work proposing that relationships are founded on trust. In order to design and organize schools for improvement, leaders must consider how to best organize the work of adults to meet the needs of students. Social trust is the foundation of these successful working relationships; therefore, leaders must consider how to structure and support teachers in the development of building trusting relationships with colleagues (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Theoretical overlap exists between the original and this study. Specifically, both studies propose that teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and collegial relationships (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Johnson et al., 2012) are essential to teacher retention. However, this study proposes that social elements of the school context (Johnson et al., 2012), particularly principal leadership, collegial relationships, and school culture, influence teacher’s
perceptions of the supportiveness of the school environment. Perceptions of the working
environment influence a teacher’s sense of efficacy, which contributes to a teacher’s decision
to stay or leave a school building. This study assumes that ECTs have experiences (positive
or negative) within the school context and interactions with colleagues (positive or negative)
that contribute to their sense of success as teachers.

The primary target of the intervention model from the original study was to enhance
teacher efficacy at engaging learners and classroom management skills while also building
their relationships with colleagues (Shernoff et al., 2016). The intervention model was
comprised of three components: coaching, professional learning communities, and group
seminars. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently throughout the three-
year study to determine implementation feasibility and to continually refine and develop the
intervention model. Three studies (Shernoff et al., 2011; Shernoff et al., 2015; Shernoff et al.,
2016) have been published using the data collected through the original grant. However, only
two of those studies analyzed the data that were used for this study. Therefore, these two
studies are reviewed below.

Shernoff and her colleagues (2015) conducted a mixed-methods study analyzing the
coaching experiences of ECTs in urban, high-poverty schools. Shernoff and her colleagues
(2015) analyzed some of the semi-structured interview data that I used for this study.
Therefore, although they used a mixed methodology, it is relevant to discuss the findings and
how I planned to add novel empirical findings to the ECT literature base. The coaching
model was one component of the multi-facted intervention implemented with urban ECTs.
Coaching was described as “job-embedded, sustained, classroom-based support to enhance
their instructional skills and use of evidence-based practices” (Shernoff et al., 2015, p.7). The purpose of the original study was to examine the extent to which the coaching model was implemented with integrity, to describe the confines and facilitators to implementing the coaching model, and to examine the extent to which supervision was implemented as prescribed. Semi-structured interview data was collected at three time points. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis phase process was utilized to analyze the interview data. Quantitatively, three adherence measures, which included coach logs, ECT checklists, and supervision logs, were used for analysis. The measures were designed to assess intervention implementation and feasibility of the intervention.

When applying thematic analysis to the ECT and mentor interviews in regards to coaching experiences, several themes emerged. First, consistency in coaching was critical from the perspective of ECTs and coaches. For ECTs, having a consistent time when a coach planned to observe forced teachers to be prepared. It also gave a sense of predictability in a somewhat unpredictable work environment (Shernoff et al., 2015). Second, time barriers due to scheduling conflicts and other job responsibilities were a hindrance from both the ECTs’ and mentors’ perspectives. Third, the use of evidence-based practices provided structure to coaching conversations, according to coaches. Fourth, having the opportunity to receive non-evaluative observation feedback from coaches offered opportunities for ECTs to discuss their teaching in a nonjudgmental and unbiased fashion. Lastly, the importance of instrumental and emotional support was expressed by both ECTs and mentors through interview data. Coaching opportunities provided ECTs with not only coaching and modeling on evidenced-
based strategies but also provided ECTs with the emotional support of having a person there to listen, reassure, and validate their teaching experiences.

Shernoff and her colleagues (2015) aimed to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of one component of the intervention model, coaching, implemented as a part of the grant study. Findings from Shernoff and colleagues (2015) do shed light on those coaching experiences that make teachers feel supported in their working environment. However, my study explored supportive experiences generally and examined those interactions and experiences beyond just those that occurred during coaching sessions. In addition, I explored what experiences led ECTs to feel connected or disconnected from their colleagues and also how these experiences related to the development of a sense of efficacy.

Shernoff and her colleagues (2016) also employed a mixed-methodology study to inform and guide school psychologists in their role as consultants with ECTs. The study aimed to determine if the intervention model was implemented with integrity, discover if there were trends in effectiveness and connectedness supported by the intervention model, and determine what parts of the intervention model supported or hindered the development of effectiveness and connectedness. Quantitative measures included rating scales to measure teacher effectiveness and teacher connectedness, direct observations of teacher effectiveness, and a survey of intervention implementation integrity. Qualitative measures included 43 semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 ECTs across three points in time (baseline, end of Year 1, and end of Year 2). Results across quantitative and qualitative measures were used to answer the research questions. In the area of teacher efficacy, coaching was found to provide urban ECTs with the on-the-job training and experience they needed to become more
effective at engaging learners and managing student behavior. Furthermore, the on-the-job training through coaching experiences provided ECTs with the opportunities to implement and practice evidenced-based strategies that were introduced during the group seminar and PLC portions of the intervention model. Barriers to developing teacher efficacy included organizational barriers (disorganized, unstructured school day; a noisy school environment; and inconsistent administrative response to severe behavior problems) and a sense of lack of preparation particularly in classroom management skills to manage student behavior. In relation to connections to colleagues, Shernoff and her colleagues (2016) found that the intervention components of PLCs and group seminars provided not only time to connect with colleagues but also time to discuss and share instructional and behavioral strategies and norms. Analysis also revealed the importance of the individual relationships that were developed between coaches and ECTs. ECTs reported that these relationships provided much-needed emotional and instructional support. Organizational structures (layout of the school, dissatisfaction with school building-level meetings, and frequent shifting or changing of positions) and limited time served as obstacles to teachers developing a sense of connectedness to other colleagues.

Again, the current study explored supportive experiences and interactions generally to come to a better understanding of how urban ECTs interpret and experience their school context (Johnson et al., 2012) as supportive or not supportive and to explore the relationship this has on teacher efficacy. By using the semi-structured interview data collected prior to intervention implementation in the original study, this study explored how urban ECTs experience and interpret the social elements of the school context (Johnson et al., 2012), the
influence of these experiences on perceptions of supportiveness, and the relationship with developing teaching efficacy.

Shernoff and her colleagues (2016) explored efficacy and connectedness in relation to the impact of the intervention model. I examined those interactions and experiences without the confounding variables of the intervention model implemented as a part of the original study. Therefore, I used semi-structured interview data collected with 14 urban ECTs at one point in time, prior to intervention implementation in the original study, to answer the research questions posed in this study. I propose that this will allow for a better understanding of what urban ECTs are experiencing in school buildings that have not had the supportive structures in place provided by the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban Schools study.

Chapter 2 Summary

ECT turnover is a problem of global concern significantly impacting schools in urban, high-poverty areas educating mostly minority students. Early explanations of ECT turnover focused on the individuals within the system and their contributions to teachers fleeing the education field or moving buildings. However, more recent discourse has focused on the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of the school’s social context and perceptions of teacher efficacy development on turnover. Teachers who report being connected to colleagues, supported in their work environment, and successful at engaging learners are more likely to remain teaching in their buildings. Large-scale quantitative studies have identified teacher efficacy and the social aspects of the environment that are important to teacher
turnover. Yet the research is lacking in describing teachers’ specific experiences and interactions that lead them to feel successful, connected, and supported. Using a conceptual framework that is grounded in Johnson et al.’s (2012) presentation of school context and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), I strived to come to a better understanding regarding how experiences and interactions led to better teacher efficacy development, strong relationships with colleagues, and an enhanced sense of being supported to be successful.
The goal of social science is not typically to definitively explain phenomena as the truth. Social science attempts to describe phenomena to be as true as possible given the environment, situation, and historical context. Hence, educational recommendations tend to change over time as new information is discovered (Shavelson & Towne, 2002). The positivist paradigm attempts to seek understanding via control, measurement, and objectivity. The interpretive paradigm seeks understanding through the lens of the people who are being studied. When the positivist and interpretive paradigms are combined in educational research, critical educational research is employed (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). It is through the combination of both positivist and interpretive paradigms that a truer explanation of phenomena can be understood.

While a solid understanding from the positivist paradigm of the quantitative predictors of teacher turnover exists, ambiguity still remains regarding how urban ECTs interpret these predictors related to efficacy development, connectedness to colleagues, and supportive environments. Furthermore, even less is known about the influence of perceptions of school context on teacher efficacy development. For this study, self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) and research on the social elements of school context (Johnson et al., 2012) provide a framework for understanding and studying how teachers interpret their working environment.
and develop a positive sense of teacher efficacy. I sought to better understand the components of support that urban ECTs received that bolstered teacher efficacy and led to interpretations of working in a supportive school environment. Second, I sought to better understand urban ECTs’ experiences related to interactions with colleagues that encouraged connectedness to colleagues. Third, I strived to investigate the experiences and aspects of the social context that fostered a positive sense of teacher efficacy. A qualitative methodology was used to explore the following research questions:

1. What elements of the school context do urban ECTs reference when describing their experiences with support?
2. What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being effective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?
3. What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being ineffective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?
4. What do urban ECTs describe as the facilitators and barriers to developing their teaching efficacy?

Setting and Participants

I conducted a secondary analysis of semi-structured interview data collected through the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban Schools study funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (R305A090085, Principal Investigator: Dr. Elisa Shernoff, 2009). The purpose of the original study was to iteratively
develop a professional development model to bolster connectedness to colleagues and a strong sense of efficacy in urban ECTs.

### Setting

Three elementary schools, servicing students aged pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, in a large, midwestern school district participated in the study (Shernoff et al., 2015). The three schools for the study were selected from a pool of 75 schools that previously participated in a mental health services reform project (Atkins, Hoagwood, Kutash, & Seidman, 2010). For the mental health reform project, all 325 of the K-8 schools in the district were screened. Seventy-five schools met specific criteria for the project: 85% or greater low income, average reading scores on statewide testing below the 30th percentile ($M = 28, SD = 3.8$), and school population within one standard deviation of the district mean ($M = 702, SD = 306$); (Shernoff et al., 2015). From this pool of 75, three schools participated in the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban Schools study. The first school was recruited during Year 1 of the study. Following the end of the mental health reform project, the principal of the first school had expressed interest in ongoing projects with the research team. The professional development model was created with close partnership with the first school in Year 1. In Year 2, two other schools were randomly selected from the list of 75 school and were recruited to participate. The second and third schools also provided extensive feedback to help develop and refine the professional development model. Schools were 94% African American (district mean = 47%), 97% free and reduced lunch (district mean = 87%), and 25% teacher mobility rate (district mean =
19% at the time of recruitment to the study (Shernoff et al., 2015). All teachers across the three schools with five or fewer years of experience were contacted to participate in the study.

**Participants**

There were a total of 14 ECTs included in this study. The vast majority, 85.7%, of ECTs were female. The average age of ECTs was 30 years old with a range of ages between 23 to 42 years of age. Fifty percent of the population of ECTs in this study were White, 42.9% were African American, and 7.1% were Asian. The ECTs in this study reported having the following years of experience: one year teaching or no prior experience ($n = 3$), two years experience ($n = 4$), three years ($n = 5$), and four years ($n = 2$). Teachers reported teaching the following grade levels or areas: early elementary (preschool to second grade, $n = 3$), middle elementary (third to fifth, $n = 3$), middle school (sixth to eighth, $n = 3$), special education ($n = 2$), and art and physical education ($n = 3$). Of the 14 ECTs included in the study, six of the ECTs obtained their teaching degrees and certifications through an alternative certification program.

**Measures**

Given that this study seeks to learn about specific experiences of urban ECTs related to support, connectedness, and teacher efficacy, analysis of interview data provides an avenue to discover ECTs’ perceptions and experiences that are difficult to explore through other forms of research (Stake, 2010). For each of the three schools, interview data was collected at three points of time: baseline or before intervention implementation, end of Year 1 of
intervention implementation, and end of Year 2 of intervention implementation. Semi-structured interview data collected prior to intervention implementation was used for this study. These data were collected in November of 2009 and September of 2010. Later interviews (i.e., end of Year 1 and Year 2 interview data) were used to assess the impact of the intervention model. Given this study seeks to explore general supportive experiences without the confounding variable of the implementation of the professional development intervention model, interview data collected prior to intervention implementation was analyzed.

Semi-structured interview guides were developed as a part of the Enhancing Effectiveness and Connectedness Among Early Career Teachers in Urban Schools study using the literature base from professional development with ECTs (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Please refer to Appendix A for the interview guide.

Based on the conceptual framework of the original study, the interview guide targeted the following areas: general teaching experiences, preparation for teaching, expectation for teaching, classroom experiences, supports provided, connectedness to colleagues, and professional culture of school. The interview protocol served as a guide and was not read verbatim during interviews. The interviews consisted of open-ended prompts (e.g., tell me about your teaching experiences thus far) followed by probes with more specific questions (e.g., how often do you interact with other teachers in your building) to gain more detailed information. Probes were only used if the teacher did not provide enough detail after response to the open-ended question. All semi-structured interviews were conducted by the lead investigator of the original study, Dr. Elisa Shernoff, with teachers at their respective
schools either before or after school. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. After interview data was collected, a research team transcribed the interviews verbatim (Shernoff et al., 2016).

Analysis

Given that this study strives to answer research questions that are exploratory in nature while also planning to examine patterns across interviewees, thematic analysis best suits the goals of this study. Thematic analysis is a qualitative methodology that can be used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within and across data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was applied to the interview data to explore urban ECTs’ experiences and to discover patterns across experiences with the hopes of being able to provide valuable feedback to schools and administrators when considering how to support urban ECTs in the challenging first years in the field.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a “recipe” for conducting thematic analysis that allows for flexibility while also providing a common vocabulary and structure to allow researchers to “undertake thematic analysis in a way that is theoretically and methodologically sound” (p. 78). Before conducting the analysis, several questions were considered. First, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that determining what counts as a “theme” should be considered. They recommend flexibility around theme determination, as rigid rules do not work. The question should be considered within each data item and for prevalence across the entire data set. For this study, themes were developed based on the relevance to the conceptual framework and research questions. Second, given that the semi-
structured interview data was collected prior to this study, parts of the data set may not be relevant to this study. Therefore, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), all of the data in each interview was reviewed, but more detailed accounts of particular aspects of the data set that were relevant to the conceptual framework and research questions were analyzed and coded.

Next, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend using either a theoretical or inductive theoretical thematic analysis approach. An inductive approach is recommended when the researcher is using the analysis to continually shape the research questions. In this study, the data were used to answer rather than shape the research questions; therefore, a theoretical thematic analysis approach was used. I used the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 to guide the analysis and to use as a starting place in the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Last, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that the researcher must consider if the research will be conducted from an essentialist/realist versus constructionist viewpoint. Within a realist viewpoint, the researcher can theorize motivations and meaning in a straightforward, simple way because of the belief that the meaning between experience and language is unidirectional. In other words, direct interpretation of experience can be made based on the answer or language that participants use. On the other hand, the constructivist perspective considers that meaning and experience are socially produced rather than resting solely within the individual. In a constructivist framework, the researcher does not plan to focus solely on the individual psyches of the participants but seeks to understand the social and structural conditions that foster the accounts provided. Given that the current study focuses on the
relationship between the individual’s development of teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and each one’s account of the social school context (Johnson et al., 2012), I used a constructionist viewpoint while analyzing the data.

**Step-by-Step Thematic Analysis**

Figure 2 represents the six-phase process of thematic analysis used in this study.

![Figure 2. Thematic analysis – six-phase process.](image)

Phase 1: Becoming familiar with the data – The interview data for this study was already collected, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. In the initial step, I read the entire data set before coding. I read through the entire transcription while noting any initial ideas with the purpose of becoming familiar with the data. I generated an initial list of ideas about what was remarkable within the data set guided by the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes - I read through the transcripts again and began identifying salient pieces of text to be coded. Text was considered a salient idea for coding if
it was a complete thought that could be understood in isolation (Saldana, 2009). Furthermore, I searched for salient pieces of text based on the author began assigning codes to the salient pieces of text. A directive coding approach was used. This approach is recommended when there is existing theory and research on a topic, but the phenomena would benefit from further exploration through qualitative analysis, which is the case in this study (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I used Fonteyn, Vettese, Lancaster, and Baur-Wu’s (2008) recommendations for developing a codebook. The codebook was developed with specific definitions of codes and subcodes, exclusionary and inclusionary criteria, and examples from the text to ensure consistency within and across coding of interviews (Fonteyn et al., 2008). Codes were more specific than themes and were categorized into broader themes later in the data analysis process. The coding process assisted with organizing the data into more meaningful groups or themes in the next step of analysis. The following considerations by Braun and Clarke (2006) were considered in this phase: code for as many potential themes as possible, code pieces of data inclusively while keeping in mind the context, and be aware that individual pieces of data may fit into many different themes. Furthermore, at this stage I kept in mind that all data sets involve contradiction. These contradictions were considered and not ignored (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I began by hand coding onto printed interview transcripts. After a base of a codebook was developed, I uploaded interview transcripts to the software program Dedoose. All identified excerpts were highlighted and coded in Dedoose. Each interview was reviewed three times throughout the coding process while iteratively updating the codebook and re-coding previously coded interviews.
Validity threats were addressed during the coding process. Bracketing is a method used to mitigate the effects of the researcher’s preconceptions related to the research topic. Bracketing requires the researcher to engage in deep reflection at different stages of the research process to enhance acuity and a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the data (Tufford & Newman, 2012). The goal is not necessarily to provide objectivity but to provide a context of the researcher’s experiences, assumptions, and vested interests in the research project. Bracketing does not serve the purpose of eliminating bias but provides a perspective for readers in which to understand the researcher’s conclusions. In other words, the bracketing process involves mindful awareness of the researcher’s biases while continually checking these against the data with the consideration that interpretations may change as the researcher applies the bracketing process to the data.

Bracketing involves the researcher to continually identify and record their assumptions and interests on a topic. This supports the researcher in specifying one’s perspective to provide a framework from which meaning and conclusions can be understood. Second, bracketing requires the researcher to examine data using an ongoing “reflexive and hermeneutic reading of the data” (Fischer, 2009). Reflexive readings require the researcher to continually look back at the data while checking to see if the researcher is imposing meaning on the data and to consider other interpretations that might emerge. Hermeneutic reading requires the researcher to engage in an iterative process of continually examining assumptions and then checking them against findings and conclusions (Fischer, 2009).

To engage in the bracketing process and meet the recommendations proposed by Fischer (2009), I used two approaches during data analysis. First, I used a reflexive journal
(Northway, 2000) to record and document information regarding personal thoughts, decisions, and insights. Before data analysis, I recorded beliefs, thoughts, and past experiences related to the research topic while also considering preconceived notions regarding predictions about research findings. In alignment with the proposed data analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the reflexive journal was used in an iterative fashion to promote mindfulness during all stages of data analysis. As ideas and thoughts arose during data analysis, I bracketed these in the reflexive journal and used these reflections to continually provide perspective and context to conclusions (Northway, 2000). Second, I used the strategy of dialogue with a critical friend (Richardson, 1997) to engage in reflexive thinking. The role of the critical friend was to challenge the researcher to reveal motivations and actions which remain unseen by the researcher. I enlisted the support of a doctoral student who was not related to the research project. The critical friend and I met three times throughout the analysis process and discussed my biases and their impact on coded data, reviewed the descriptions and inclusionary and exclusionary criteria for codes in the codebook, and checked application of codes to segmented interview texts. The critical friend also reviewed my reflexive journal to help unveil biases I may not have foreseen. As a result of discussion with the critical friend, the codebook was updated and already-coded interviews were coded again with the new coding scheme. The completed codebook that was developed can be found in Appendix B.

Phase 3: Searching for themes – After all the data was coded, I began to analyze at the broader theme level. I used a variety of analysis features in the Dedoose software program to analyze data by research topic (efficacy development) and between research topic (e.g.,
supportive experiences and colleague connectedness, positive school context and colleagues’ interactions).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes – At this stage, themes were reviewed and refined. I produced reports in Dedoose to analyze excerpts by research topic and between research topics. Themes that did not have enough data to support them were eliminated or collapsed with other themes. I used this litmus test proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to refine themes: “Data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes” (p. 91). In this phase, I reviewed all of the data by research topic, and the phase was completed in two steps. First, I reviewed all the coded data extracts that related to a theme and ensured that they fit into a coherent pattern. For data that did not fit the pattern, I re-evaluated the theme, created a new theme, or moved the data into another more suitable theme. Next, I considered the validity of the individual themes to the overall data set and research questions. Once refinements and coding were not adding anything substantial to the overall thematic map, I ceased the re-coding and refining process. At the end of this phase, I had a firm idea of what the main themes were, the connection between themes, and the overall story that the data was telling. A final thematic map in outline form was created. When the map was completed, I moved onto the next step.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes – In this phase, I “defined and refined” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) the themes. I identified the core of what each theme meant and identified what specific aspects of the data capture each theme best. This was done by going back to the data and organizing data extracts into coherent and consistent accounts of what the data was capturing. I identified from the data what is of specific interest and why. For each
theme, the author wrote an analysis while also considering how each theme fit into the research questions posed. By the end of this phase, I felt confident in my ability to describe what the themes were and what they were not and could describe each theme in several sentences.

Phase 6: Producing the report – Lastly, a report that is representative of all the data, descriptive yet concise, and representative of all themes was developed and is presented in the next chapter.

Procedures

Given that the data was already collected and all data was de-identified, the Office of Research and Compliance at Northern Illinois University deemed that this study did not require oversight by the Institutional Review Board as the project did not meet the definition of human subjects research. I used the coding analysis software program Dedoose to support with organization and analysis of the data.

Chapter 3 Summary

Much is known about the quantitative predictors of ECT turnover. I attempted to provide more clarity and definition from the perspective of urban ECTs to those empirical terms that have been used to quantitatively predict turnover. Through application of thematic analysis to semi-structured interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I explored the experiences of ECTs teaching in one of three urban, high-poverty elementary schools in a large, urban midwestern school district. I engaged in thematic analysis to discover themes that emerged
across ECTs’ specific experiences and interactions related to perceptions of supports and facilitators and barriers to teacher efficacy development.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

First, an overall description of the participants is provided. Next, findings are presented by research question. In Research Question 1, I explored how teachers from this study described the three elements of the school’s social context (Johnson et al., 2012). In Research Questions 2 and 3, I explored urban ECTs descriptions of effective and ineffective supports. In Research Question 4, I discovered the teachers’ explanations of those experiences that served as facilitators and barriers to teacher efficacy beliefs.

Participants

Demographic information for participants in the study is presented in Table 2. Pseudonyms have been used for confidentiality purposes. Participants were interviewed in the beginning of the school year. Therefore, the number five in the “Year(s) Teaching” column for Ms. Strong indicates that she had completed four years of teaching and was starting her fifth year at the time of the interview.

Research Question 1 – Elements of School Context

What elements of the school’s context do urban ECTs reference when describing their experiences with support?
### Table 2

**Teacher Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Year(s) Teaching</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Alternative Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Strong</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Parker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gonzalez</td>
<td>5–8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lee</td>
<td>K-8 (Art)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Henning</td>
<td>K-3 (Special Education)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Wacyk</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Smith</td>
<td>6–8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Keifer</td>
<td>K-8 (P.E.)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School C</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jennings</td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bayer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jones</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Muller</td>
<td>7–8 (Special Education)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sminov</td>
<td>K-8 (Art)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Hernandez</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given that there has been limited research exploring the experiences of urban ECTs’ perceptions and experiences with the schools’ social context, the purpose of the first research question was to gain a better understanding of the frequency of teachers’ positive and negative experiences with the three social elements of the school’s context (principal leadership, colleague relationships, and school culture) explored in this study. Table 3 lists the total number of positive or negative references to each of the three elements of social context along with the number of teachers that referenced the element. The data in Table 3 give a general indication of how much urban ECTs in this study were referring to their positive and negative experiences with the three elements of the social context explored in this study.

Table 3
Teacher References to Elements of the School’s Social Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Element</th>
<th>+ or - Reference</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Total References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Leadership</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague Relationships</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Culture</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal Leadership

Principal leadership is defined as the administrator’s ability/inability to support and respond to teachers’ concerns within the school, provide instructional leadership, and create a
safe and orderly working environment (Johnson et al., 2012). While urban ECTs in this sample were not specifically asked about their perceptions of their principals, comments related to principal leadership were made by all but one of the ECTs during the interviews. Sixty-four percent of the participants reported positive and supportive experiences with their principal or assistant principal, yet there were only a total of 14 references describing supportive experiences, comprising 10.9% of the positive comments across all three social elements. Therefore, positive comments regarding administrators were less common in comparison to the other two social elements. Urban ECTs in this study described how their principals supported them by actively taking a role in supporting teachers within the classroom. Ms. Gonzalez shared how her administrators supported her: “I’ve even gone to the principal and the assistant principal. They have given me aid. They have been in the classroom with me and assisting me.”

In addition to support provided at the individual level, teachers in this study described principal leadership that promoted a positive working environment for the school as a whole. Illustrating this idea, Ms. Wacyk expressed that the new principal changed the tone of the school through hard work and dedication. In Ms. Wacyk’s opinion, the new principal’s actions demonstrated that she wanted the school to be successful, which in turn led to a more positive view of the school and working environment for Ms. Wacyk:

The new principal has changed the tone of the school. She has shown through her hard work and through what she’s done that she really cares not only about the children physically when they’re in the building, but outside of school hours… I’m like, this is a principal who cares. She wants to be here. She wants the school to be successful.
On the other hand, eight of the teachers in this study (57.1%) collectively referenced negative experiences 33 times in their interviews. While 10.9% of the positive references across the social elements referenced educational leaders, negative references to leadership comprised 41.8% of the negative comments across the three social elements. Principal leadership was the only social element in which teachers more frequently referenced the negative compared to the positive. This disparity suggests that urban ECTs in this study were more likely to reference negative experiences or feelings regarding their administrators compared to the other two elements of the context. Particularly, many negative principal leadership references were related to support with student behavior. Ms. Muller stated, “We don’t feel like we have a lot of support from administration as far as suspensions and detentions, and certain students get preferential treatment and I think that’s pretty much shared all through the school.” This theme in participants’ stories is described in greater detail in Research Question 3. Furthermore, teachers in this study reported that they hesitated to seek support from their administrators. Ms. Lee expressed that she did not want to ask her administrators for help because in doing so she may get on their “bad side.”

I feel like here I really try not to ask the administration for help because I don’t want to overstep my boundaries and ask too many times. I also kind of want to keep them on my good side all the time. And I don’t like to have to play games like that but after being here the first year, that’s the only way that really it works.

Colleague Relationships

Colleague relationships, as defined in this study, are a teacher’s perception of one’s relationships with other teachers and one’s ability to work together to solve school-related
problems (Johnson et al., 2012). Teachers commonly reference how important colleague relationships are to their perceptions of support and of the school culture (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). All of the urban ECTs in this study detailed positive experiences or connections with their colleagues. Of all positive references made across the three social elements of the school context, 59.4% were related to colleague relationships. Therefore, the majority of positive references across the social elements were regarding colleagues.

Urban ECTs in this study expressed how teachers were all learning together and supportive of each other’s growth. They supported each other by readily being available to help. Ms. Gonzalez expressed that all teachers in her building support each other when it comes to instructional planning: “We’re all learning together…We talk in our meetings and then the teachers who’ve been around for a while, they offer their advice. So, we get help. We do the best that we can to assist each other.” The teachers in this study also talked about how they worked together to share their knowledge and the workload. Ms. Hernandez described how she worked with her grade-level peers to support each other:

There’s three of us. We get together to talk about what we’re doing for the week, sort of share ideas…Today, Teacher X…told me that she was going to introduce the rhyming, and she actually gave me the worksheet that she made up. She let me make copies and use that, so that actually turned out pretty well.

Contrariwise, nine participants in this study (64.3%) reported having negative and unsupportive experiences with colleagues. However, more than half of these negative collegial experiences occurred in school buildings where they had been employed previously. Negative collegial relationships comprised 40.5% of the negative references across the three social elements. Teachers in this study described frustration with the ineffectiveness of
structured time with their fellow colleagues. Ms. Bayer shared her opinion regarding unsupportive collegial experiences during professional development days. She shared that these interactions turn into “tangents” rather than a time for teachers to reflect positively together on their teaching.

It’s like a tangent. It’s like when we’re supposed to be doing something else but then teachers end up kind of griping about, “Well the kids always do this,’ or it’s “We can’t do it because of this text book” or whatever it is that comes up, so I think it’s more of a gripe than it is a reflection.

School Culture

School culture is “the extent to which the school environment is characterized by mutual trust, respect, openness, and commitment to student achievement,” (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 14). In this study, statements regarding the feel of the school as one of openness/isolation, respect/disrespect, trust/mistrust, or a joint commitment to student achievement were coded as school culture. Twelve of the urban ECTs in this study (85.7%) made reference to positive experiences with school culture. There were a total of 38 positive references to school culture across all participants. Across all three social elements, positive references to the school culture comprised 29.7% of the references. Teachers in this study described positive school cultures in which teachers were jointly committed to helping all students, not just those in their class. This joint commitment led teachers to be more willing to work above and beyond the work day to support students. Ms. Bayer described a shared responsibility between students and teachers impacting the feel of the school which she interpreted as a “positive one”: 
It felt like at my first school it was more like teachers versus students and that was the attitude…here it’s teachers with the kids are working to help them and so there are more teachers who are willing to do after-school programs and things like that. I think just the attitude of the teachers at this school versus the others [referring to her first school] is a more positive one.

Five urban ECTs in this study (35.7%) described negative experiences with school culture. Of the total 14 references describing negative experiences with school culture, 10 of these references refer to schools of previous employment. When talking about schools of previous employment, urban ECTs made exclusively negative comments related to the school culture. In other words, they did not have anything positive to say about the school culture in buildings they previously worked in, nor did they remain teaching in those schools where they recalled only negative experiences with school culture. When talking about negative experiences with the school culture, urban ECTs in this study described environments where they felt unwelcomed and ignored. Ms. Jones recounted such a view of the school culture in the building she worked in her first year as a teacher:

It was very negative. A lot of things were very negative or punitive, and I struggled with that a lot. It just wasn’t positive enough for me…at that school particularly, each year they had gotten a grant to bring teachers in. So it’d be teachers come in, teachers leave. So I think the rest of the staff was just like we know you’re leaving, I’m not investing any time.

All four excerpts describing current negative experiences with school culture came from two teachers in the same school building. Therefore, descriptions of negative experiences in current school buildings were rare in this sample. Both teachers described a lack of cohesion among staff. Ms. Henning described a lack of cohesion among teachers regarding shared norms and beliefs about instruction: “I don’t think that I see anything consistent. Each teacher does it her way or his way.” Similarly, Ms. Lee described a lack of
cohesion among staff which manifested itself when some novice teachers were released due to budget cuts and when specific staff were in need of personal support from colleagues.

Everyone went to different sides. It was very weird. Our librarian, I felt that she did a lot for our school. There was no one that was pulling together to try to help her move out or do anything. We had a teacher last year that had a medical condition. No one did anything for her.

Research Question 2 – Effective Supports

What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being effective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?

For this study, effective supports have been defined as those experiences that lead teachers to describe positive experiences and which the ECTs described in interviews as creating a supportive environment. Furthermore, statements were coded as effective supports if the teacher reported that the experience supported them in the development of their teaching abilities or provided them with emotional support. There were a total of 114 excerpts that met the coding criteria for support and could be rated for quality of support. When looking at the quality of these experiences, the majority, 66.7%, of these experiences were coded as being positive or effective supportive experiences. Table 4 provides a frequency count of all the references, positive or negative, described as supportive by the person or activity providing support. Furthermore, the table lists the percentage of excerpts by support provider that were coded as effective supports.
Table 4

References to Effective Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Total Effective References</th>
<th>% of References* Coded as Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>84.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep Program</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friend</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The effectiveness of references were coded as positive, negative, or a mixed. These calculations include all three types of statements in the total/denominator.

In this study, teachers were more likely to refer to the people they worked with rather than programmatic supports, such as professional development or mentorship. All teachers in this study made references to their fellow teachers or administrators as sources of effective support. The most frequently cited source of support was other colleagues, with 84.6% of the experiences being rated as effective. All but one of the teachers in this study referenced fellow colleagues when discussing supports in their building. Eight of the urban ECTs in this study referenced supportive experiences with administrators, with 73.9% of experiences with administrators being described as effective supports.

Table 5 provides an overview of the themes that emerged across all effective supportive experiences. Given that the majority of experiences rated as effective supports come from personal interaction rather than programmatic supports, the themes in this research question all relate to experiences with people. Two themes emerged in response to describing
participants experiences with effective supports: *It’s the Little Things* and *Connections Going Beyond*. Each theme is described in detail in the following sections.

Table 5

Themes Related to Effective Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of References*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It’s the Little Things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Always Available</em></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections Going Beyond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beyond the Professional Self</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Beyond the School Building</em></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of references for subthemes are included in the total count of references for each theme. For example, 13 of 28 *It’s the Little Things* references fall in the subtheme of *Always Available*.  

**Theme 1 - It’s the Little Things**

Based on responses from the teachers in this study, “it’s the little things” that people do that make urban ECTs feel supported or isolated in their working environment. National data shows that more ECTs are being provided with mentors than ever before. In 2008 at the time the teachers were interviewed for this study, Ingersoll (2012) reported that 91% percent of ECTs reported participating in mentorship programs. Yet in this study, only six of the urban ECTs (42.9%) spontaneously referenced participating in mentoring activities provided through the school district or their alternative certification program. ECTs in this sample were much more likely to refer to “the little things” that colleagues and administrators did as their vehicles of support.
The little things as described by urban ECTs were small gestures and verbal exchanges that did not necessarily require formal training to be able to implement. Collegial actions categorized as *Little Things* were perceptions of others being helpful and welcoming, introducing themselves and saying hello, taking the time to provide advice and tips, and helping locate necessary resources. Of the total 76 references coded as effective support, 28 of these met the criteria of *It’s the Little Things*. Furthermore, ten of the urban ECTs in this study (71.4%) cited experiencing “little things” that made them feel supported in their school. Table 6 provides examples of references that meet the criteria for *It’s the Little Things*.

**Table 6**

References to Theme *It’s the Little Things*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Parker</td>
<td>Teachers at my school and the principal- <em>they really work with you</em>… They [colleagues] were very experienced so <em>they would tell me, you know, little tips here and tips there</em>. Because they were already teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Wacyk</td>
<td>I think that help is always there when you need it and I was really lucky, like at this school, <em>a lot of people would just come into my room and say “Hey, how’s it going?”</em> Sometimes I would just hide in here because I’d be trying to disguise the chaos… <em>but I had a lot of people come in and just ask how I’m doing.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Hernandez</td>
<td><em>It’s welcoming</em>, umm, nobody’s really been mean or turn their nose up at me, they’ll say “Oh, ok, you’re the new teacher in room X, ok, in second grade, ok, welcome.” <em>I’ve got a lot of “Welcome to School X.”</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The “little thing” of being friendly and welcoming novice teachers to a school building provides a sense of support to urban ECTs in this study. At the time of her interview, Ms.
Bayer was in her second year at School C teaching third grade. In her first year of teaching, she taught at another urban school in the same district; however, she had a rather negative experience there. Ms. Bayer described School C as a much more supportive environment where people recognized her as novice and were welcoming:

So the staff here is much nicer. People came up to me when I started here and they introduced themselves to me. I was like, “Okay that’s nice,” and they’d like, they recognize me as a new person, as a new teacher and they were just all very kind and welcoming and my last school, people just kind of ignored us the whole time and no one really associated with us so.

The act of being welcoming and friendly was also described by Ms. Sminiov. She has felt supported and welcomed into the school community by her colleague’s small gesture of reaching out to her to celebrate a birthday. This small friendly gesture of inviting her to a birthday celebration enhanced her view of being a part of her school community.

Here we have a lot of really friendly people, um, and a lot of people who are not stabby [sic] and will have your back. I just had a woman—the woman across the hall. She came in and said, “Come on down, we’re gonna have birthday cake for me, come on down in five minutes.” She’s one of the nicest teachers I’ve met there. She’s been so helpful with me. And so you do have teachers that are really great like that.

Another little thing, openly and willingly offering advice, provided a sense of support to urban ECTs in this study. Ms. Wacyk developed a professional relationship with a reading coach. The reading coach readily offered advice and resources to Ms. Wacyk, which she labeled as a helpful and supportive gesture. “She came in and did a read aloud with the kids and she helped. She gave me a lot of things like, ‘Here, use this,’ or ‘You should be doing this, try this.’”
Ms. Bayer also described how having nice teachers who were willing to share past experiences of success and validate that Ms. Bayer was doing a good job with students enhanced perceptions of a supportive working environment.

Just other teachers in the school, like there’s some that I talk to frequently and even just being nice, it’s nice having nice teachers next door to me or around the building who are always like, “Ok, yeah, like had that kid and you know what, he is a tough kid and so like it’s not just you don’t worry, like you’re doing a good job,” or teachers who say like, “No, that kid, his mom is going to go off on you if you try to call her so just like work on him instead of working on the mom.” So it’s nice having those people.

Similarly, Ms. Parker expressed that having more experienced teachers available to offer “advice” to novice teachers is a little thing that she viewed as supportive.

There are a lot of new teachers in the building now. So, we’re all learning together, and we’re like, “I don’t know, what should we do?” We talk in our meetings and then the teachers who’ve been around for a while, they offer their advice. So, we get help. We do the best that we can to assist each other.

According to teachers in this study, the little thing of going above and beyond the call of duty was described as a supportive action displayed by fellow colleagues and administrators. When asked about how she was supported in her school, Ms. Wacyk described her experience with one specific teacher that set the stage for experiencing a positive and supportive working environment. Ms. Wacyk described the teacher’s small gestures of helping to clean her classroom as going above and beyond her job responsibilities.

She was, I’m trying to think of the word, very meticulous…with the cleaning of her room. So when she saw me cleaning, that kind of like sparked a dialogue for her to be like, “Why are you cleaning and what are you doing?” and she was like impressed with the fact that I was cleaning this room when I first moved into it ’cause it was filthy and the desks and tables were really dirty and I was scrubbing them with the scrubber and so she was like, “We’re gonna clean this room.” She’s like, “I’m going to help you,” and it was crazy and all she said was like, “Just remember when you see somebody who’s where you are now, remember that I helped you and I don’t want
you to do anything for me but help another person. Help somebody else ‘cause at some point, someone’s gonna, you’re gonna see somebody struggling or you’re gonna see somebody who’s, you know, and just pass it on and remember that somebody helped you.” And I was like, “Done.”

Ms. Parker also shared an experience in which her colleagues went above and beyond their call of duty. She described that when she first started teaching, teachers would support her after school hours to answer questions, which made her feel supported: “When I first started here there was a lot of the teachers and more teachers, and they would stick around and help. They would.”

Little things displayed by administrators were also shared by teachers in this study. Mr. Smith recounted an experience when his principal went above and beyond to support him. When discussing the structures of supports that Mr. Smith received, he referenced that his principal was helpful and detailed a specific example of how she helped him understand the benefits offered to Mr. Smith which she was not obligated to do:

I had trouble trying to get my benefits…When I went into human resource, [they] like, “Go online to get your, get your benefits.” I’m just like, “okay.” I had no idea, no clue where to go online…I was like let me ask the principal. She’s like, “Come in my office at one o’clock and we’ll get ’em.” Sure enough, I came into the office and went through ’em…she’s giving me that advice like as me being a beginning professional because that’s something that you need help to learn…So she helped me out a lot with that.

It was the principal’s gesture of going above and beyond the principal’s primary responsibilities and helping Mr. Smith figure out his benefit options that bolstered a sense of supportiveness in the working environment. The principal’s gesture of taking the time to explain a non-instructional yet relevant aspect of his job was a small gesture that was
perceived as going above and beyond and supportive to Mr. Smith. The principal’s gesture extended beyond the classroom to support Mr. Smith with a personal, job-related task.

**Subtheme 1 – Always Available**

A subtheme of *Always Available* emerged within the theme of *The Little Things.*

When describing supportive experiences, urban ECTs in this study described interactions with colleagues promoting a sense that any time is an okay time to seek support and ask questions. Having colleagues and administrators who were always available with an “open door” provided teachers in this study with a perception of supportiveness. Eight of the urban ECTs in this study (57.1%) described support as having a sense that teachers or administrators were always available to listen to them.

Urban ECTs in this study commonly referenced their administrators’ open-door policies as supportive. Ms. Strong described her experiences with administrators and colleagues who were always available with an open door to listen and to support:

I like teaching here. I feel like if I had a question or if I had a problem, I feel like I could go to any of the teachers, or even the principal or assistant principal. I could go to them and get support…The principal has an open door policy. If you wanted to talk to her about your lesson and how it went, she's always willing to listen.

Similar to Ms. Strong, when describing the supports that she receives in her building, Ms. Gonzalez first referenced her principal:

If I need help with something, I’ll go to my principal. She will help. She’ll say, “Look, let me get this for you, what do you.” She’s stresses it a lot…She will sit there and make sure, “Okay, what else? What else?” She’ll make sure if you’re in her office, that she’s covered all the bases.
The principal is the first person that she goes to for support as Ms. Gonzalez expressed that the principal is always willing to be there to help. The principal does this by communicating to teachers that she is always willing to listen, echoing the experiences of other teachers in this study.

Mr. Keifer reported that his principal and assistant principal were always available and responsive to bids for help. “I mean any time that I need anything I can go ask the principal, and she’ll immediately try to help me. The same thing with the assistant principal. So, um, it’s good.” Mr. Smith, who was at the same building as Mr. Keifer, also described the administrators as always available for support: “The principal, she’s really helpful. If you need her, she’s available. She’s there to help you and she made that clear.”

Similar to administrators who presented as always being available, colleagues who were always there to support ECTs in this study were perceived as supportive. Mr. Keifer expressed that having other P.E. teachers always available to help him out facilitated a sense of support. He stated that sharing offices with his colleagues promoted a sense of the door always being open for support and help.

I basically had the other P.E. guys at my previous school help me out. I mean, it would be like the first ten minutes where they would come out and observe. And then, like, we’d be in and out cause our coach’s office or the P.E. office was connected to the gym so it was right there. The door’s always open.

In discussing how she learned the ropes as a new teacher, Ms. Jennings shared that colleagues were “always kind of available” to support her by talking and answering questions. “By talking to the other colleagues other teachers, they can kind of see how it’s done or if
they have any questions, just talking to other colleagues. I think they’re always kind of available.”

In summary of this theme and subtheme, the little things and always being available ensure that urban ECTs in this sample feel supported by their colleagues and administrators. It is the small gestures of helping after school hours, providing advice, supporting with non-instructional yet job-relevant tasks, and being welcoming and friendly by introducing oneself and by saying hi that lead to a sense of a supportive working environment. The little things are small gestures and verbal exchanges that go a long way in making urban ECTs feel supported and welcome within their school context. Promoting a sense of always being available to listen and help when urban ECTs need it makes teachers in this study feel supported. Urban ECTs in this study referenced their colleagues simple yet impactful actions, gestures, and verbal exchanges as sources of effective support.

**Theme 2 - Connections Going Beyond**

Colleague relationships are foundational to a teacher’s perceptions of the working environment and school context (Johnson et al., 2012). Eleven of the urban ECTs in this study (78.6%) described that the connections to their colleagues contributed to perceptions of a positive working environment. Connections to colleagues were described as being friends with other colleagues, describing that other colleagues had their back, and descriptions that they were always by their side to provide emotional support and listen to them vent. When interacting with and connecting to their colleagues, urban ECTs in this study reported that their topics of conversation reached beyond the school context, with some conversations
occurring outside of school hours and boundaries. Urban ECTs in this study described these connections as extending beyond their professional selves delving into personal connections and a sense of friendship. Furthermore, urban ECTs in this sample who described being connected to colleagues were comfortable enough to be vulnerable and discuss what was hard for them or what was not going well with their teaching, which is vital to do in order to build teaching effectiveness.

While some colleagues may do little things to make connections with colleagues, *Connections Going Beyond* is distinct from *It’s the Little Things* theme. References were included in the *Connections Going Beyond* theme if they described actions not only as supportive but also facilitating a sense of friendship and personal connection to fellow colleagues. Two subthemes emerged within the *Connections Going Beyond* theme. First, *Beyond the Professional Self* is described by teachers in this study as the importance of having a relationship that extends beyond a professional connection. Second, *Beyond the School Building* captures references in which urban ECTs in this study described the importance of connecting with colleagues outside of school hours and/or the school building.

Urban ECTs in this study described informal interactions as the main vehicle to building these connections with colleagues. Informal interactions are those interactions that occur outside of structured teaming times. Informal interactions included conversations or interactions that occurred before or after school hours. Formal interactions occurred during structured teaming times or professional development time. Urban ECTs in this study reported more satisfaction from those interactions that occurred outside of structured
interaction time, with 50% of the informal interactions and 25% of the formal interactions described as positive in nature. Next, the two subthemes will be described in greater detail.

Subtheme 1 – Beyond the Professional Self

Half of the urban ECTs in this study described the importance of personal relationships that extended beyond a professional relationship as a vehicle to develop connections with colleagues. Table 7 provides shorter references that illustrate this subtheme. References were included in this subtheme if they described supportive collegial relationships as friendships. These personal connections allowed for the colleagues to be vulnerable enough to show weaknesses and problem solve together to overcome these challenges. Connecting beyond the professional self made “venting” permissible, which provided the emotional support that is needed especially in the early years of the teaching career.

Table 7

References to Subtheme Beyond the Professional Self

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Keifer</td>
<td>And especially being close to the gym, um the kindergarten and then the first and second grade teacher which are right next to the gym basically, I go into their classroom every single day. So, I mean we’re, we’re pretty close. When I’m up here with [teacher], I mean I go in there and I can talk with her about whatever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jennings</td>
<td>Everyone seems to be pretty close and help each other out if someone has a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bayer</td>
<td>She’s [colleague] my support. She actually just moved to my neighborhood so now we’re neighbors. So we talk all the time and we vent to each other all the time and we try to problem solve together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers in this study reported informal interactions as a vehicle to engaging with colleagues to develop friendships and supportive connections that extended beyond their professional selves. Based on reports from urban ECTs in this study, personal connections allowed for vulnerability and the willingness to share collaboratively the parts of their teaching that were challenging. Through developing personal connections, Ms. Lee developed a sense of being supported.

The first year I was here there were a couple other teachers that were a little bit younger and so we actually became really good friends. And so that was, I should have said that when we were talking about help...I always talk to Ms. X. I’m in her room in the morning, too. So, we talk a little bit more about personal stuff.

Ms. Lee looked to her colleagues as a source of emotional support. These connections that go beyond a professional connection steered Ms. Lee to feeling a sense of supportiveness from her colleagues which is also described by other participants in this study.

Ms. Jones has been a source of a support to Ms. Bayer. Their relationship began during their teacher preparation program. They received their teaching certificates through the same alternative certification program, taught at the same school their first year, and now both teach at School C. Both Ms. Bayer and Ms. Jones described negative experiences in their first building related to other teachers and the administration. Ms. Bayer expressed that it was her personal connections and ability to informally interact with several of her colleagues that kept her “sane” in her first school of employment:

I mean if I didn’t have my coworkers, I don’t know what I would have done. The three of us or the four of us, we kept each other sane. Just being there to talk to each other and give each other a look like, “Yeah this is crazy, why is this going on?”
Ms. Bayer went on to describe the importance, in her opinion, of schools focusing on building personal connections between teachers rather than just always keeping dialogue professional.

I think sometimes the schools focus too much on, “We need to do this, this, and this,” instead of like, “So, tell me about yourself.” I just think there’s less dialogue between teachers about their personal, you know, what they want to do, their goals and what they enjoy doing in their free time. It’s so often like work, work, work, got to get to the gym, got to get to the library, we have to go here, here, and here, give this test, so there’s not like time for teachers to talk to teachers about things, just like people who are nice to each other.

In Ms. Bayer’s words, schools need to focus more on allowing teachers to connect on a personal level echoing the experiences of a number of ECTs in the study. She stated that it is important for teachers to talk about topics other than work to promote personal connections that extend beyond their professional selves.

**Subtheme 2 – Beyond the School Building**

When describing their ability to connect with other colleagues, urban ECTs in this study referenced how connecting beyond the school building, specifically after school hours and outside of school boundaries, facilitated positive relationships with colleagues. Four teachers (26.7%) in this study referenced this subtheme when describing their perceptions of supports and connections to colleagues. Connecting beyond the school building allows for teachers in this study to have conversations and experiences around topics other than school. In addition, it facilitates the development of friendships and serves as a means to provide emotional support for teachers in this study.

When describing personal relationships with colleagues, talking outside of the school building and outside of school hours fostered personal connections according to teachers in
this study. When recounting how colleagues developed relationships and supported each other, Ms. Parker described how she and her colleagues formed connections by spending time to talk on the phone after school hours through informal interactions. Furthermore, on occasion, she reported that they would get together on the weekends. They also had non-work-related conversations during these times of connecting beyond the school building which also promoted personal connections.

We converse on the phone. And sometimes some of us may go out on a Saturday or something every once in awhile, not often, but we may do it. Sometimes, most [topics of discussions] are related to the class. And other times, not. It may just be about something funny that happened to somebody or you know we kinda try not to make it all work. But sometimes, you know you need to talk and that’s the place you could do it…we talk about like what girls would talk about.

While it can take time for people to form personal connections, teachers in this study described how observation of other teachers connecting beyond the school building facilitated a sense of support and connectedness for them. In other words, even if the experience did not happen specifically to the urban ECT reporting it, observations of other colleagues connecting beyond the school building fostered perceptions of working in an environment where colleagues were close and supported each other. Ms. Wacyk described her observations of how teachers connected to each other:

There’s teachers that give each other rides to school. They commute together. There’s parents of the teachers have passed away or even sometimes some of the teachers’ relatives have passed away and the teachers go to the funerals and things like that. So there’s that sense of connections, and some teachers even attend the same church.

In Ms. Wacyk’s experience, these gestures from one colleague to another foster a sense of community and a sense of support in their school. It is through the informal interactions that
occur outside of the school building and school hours between colleagues that create a sense of support within the school context for Ms. Wacyk. In her experience, which is also expressed by other teachers in this study, it is through observed experiences of colleagues where she witnesses connectedness that contributes to a sense of supportiveness even for her.

Similar to Ms. Wacyk, Mr. Smith described his observations of how other teachers connected beyond the school building to support each other with instructional needs which fostered friendships. Even though these are not Mr. Smith’s direct experiences connecting with colleagues, he shared how these observations promoted a sense of connectedness among teachers and facilitated a supportive working environment:

They were talking about a story last year. They all [are] older than me, so they’re not really great with technology and they were talking about how they would be over at each other house till eleven, twelve o’clock at night trying [to] put together the lesson plans to get it in time. So, I mean I know that they’re friends. They’re friends outside of, it’s not like they come in then, “Oh, I’m gone! It’s 1:45, nobody talk to me anymore!” I know that they do talk to each other on weekends and outside of school.

In summary of the theme Connecting Beyond, urban ECTs in this study described informal interactions with colleagues leading to personal relationships which created a sense of support. Personal connections that extend beyond the professional self serve to be just as important as professional relationships in building connections to colleagues. It is important to these urban ECTs that they see each other beyond their professional selves. By connecting beyond the school building, urban ECTs in this study reported that acts of being there for other teachers in times of personal turmoil, riding to and from work together, and connecting in places such as church contributed to a positive view of the working environment.
In summary of Research Question 2, it is small gestures and verbal exchanges along with connections to colleagues that lead to a sense of working in a supportive environment. Urban ECTs in this study cited effective supportive experiences as personal interactions with colleagues and administrators as their sense of support. Effective supportive experiences are described as small gestures such as being welcoming by saying hi and being always available in supporting ECTs with instructional and emotional needs. Next, urban ECTs in this study described the informal interactions that occurred beyond the school building with their colleagues that led to a sense of connectedness in getting to know their fellow teachers beyond their professional selves. According to teachers in this study, cultivation of a sense of support is fostered through little things and building personal connections to colleagues.

Research Question 3 – Ineffective Supports

What specific types of experiences do urban ECTs perceive as being ineffective when describing supports provided to them within their school context?

The majority of support that has been cited by urban ECTs in this study was viewed by them as effective at supporting their needs. However, it also important to explore what types of supports were viewed as ineffective and even burdensome. In this study, 21.9% of support experiences were coded as ineffective while 11.4% of these experiences were described as a mix between effective and ineffective. Three main themes emerged from Research Question 3: Mismatched Supports, Administrative Frustrations, and Not Enough Time. Table 8 provides an outline of the themes and subthemes from this research question.
along with the number of excerpts and percentage of participants who referenced the theme.

Each theme and subtheme is described in detail in the sections below.

Table 8
Themes Related to Ineffective Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of References*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mismatched Supports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not What I Needed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just Didn’t Click</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Frustrations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unresponsive to Student Misconduct</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Follow-Through</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of references for subthemes are included in the total count of references for each theme.

Theme 1 - Mismatched Supports

When describing unsupportive experiences and structures, urban ECTs commonly described how the supports that were provided to them did not meet their professional needs related to being a novice teacher. Ten of the teachers in this study (71.4%) described a mismatch that existed between supports that were provided and what was needed. Some of the supports provided were “just not what I needed.” Others who were provided with a mentor or expert teacher for support described how the colleague and urban ECT “just didn’t click” because of philosophical differences between the pair or because the mentor did not have the necessary experience to advise the ECT. Table 9 provides examples of shorter references that describe mismatched supports by subtheme. The following subsections describe the subthemes.
According to half of the urban ECTs in this study, they found some support ineffective because the support provided was “just not what I needed.” Five of the urban ECTs in this study (35.7%) were hired as a late hire their first year and started teaching after the school year began. Being a late hire was described by participants as stressful in part because teachers missed out on beginning-of-the-year trainings and did not get the proper supports that
they needed. Ms. Wacyk described the beginning of her first year as a late hire in the next reference:

I was running around Thanksgiving so I spent about a good week here trying to get the room cleaned, trying to get it set up. I got that going but I never really felt like instructionally I understood what to do. Because I wasn’t hired at the beginning of the year, I didn’t have the training on the teacher’s editions and different reading series that they were doing. I didn’t have any kind of trainings ’cause a lot of them go on at the beginning of the year for the reading series.

Given that she was hired after the school year started, Ms. Wacyk did not receive any of the trainings that novice teachers typically receive. This led to a sense of confusion around what she should be teaching and isolation when it came to implementing instruction. Other teachers in this study mirrored these types of frustrations related to being a late hire.

Furthermore, teachers in this study described that the supports needed for novice teachers differed from those of experienced teachers. Ms. Henning described the stressors that came along with this facet of her experiences as an urban ECT and how it impacted the supports available to novice teachers:

There’s less people like you, less new teachers…with older teachers, what you need is not necessarily what they need. So the PDs [professional developments], it’s probably going to be geared more towards them when it’s done in the school and that’s good for me to know, too. But right now that’s not what I need.

Urban ECTs in this study commonly described how their mentor and mentorship programs did not provide them with the individualized supports that they needed. Ms. Muller expressed that the mentorship program that was offered did not meet her needs. She described that most mentorship programs focused on classroom management with novice teachers. Since her classroom management was “stellar,” she reported that the support was not what she needed. While she was provided with a mentor, this support did not meet her
specific needs as a novice teacher in an urban setting, which was an expressed frustration by other participants in this study.

Well the problem with it was that most times when they mentor you at your first year they're coming in for classroom management and things like that but because my classroom management was so stellar then they would just be like, “Ok I have other teachers who need help way more than you and so I’ll check in on you next month.” So they wouldn’t really help.

Teachers in this study also described the importance of being assigned a mentor who understood their specific area of teaching in order to meet their individual needs. Ms. Sminov, an art teacher, expressed that she was the recipient of a mentor, but due to their differences in teaching experiences, the experience was more stressful than supportive.

There’s this mentoring program that was going on here. It was more stressful than anything. My mentor was a sixth-grade teacher who’s about to retire. She knew nothing about art. Admitted it. She’d just make up the logs. There were no suggestions.

Subtheme 2 - Just Didn’t Click

Six of the teachers in this study (42.9%) expressed that professional and personal differences with mentors or other colleagues impeded their ability to receive effective supports. Just not clicking with other people affected the effectiveness of these supportive relationships. Urban ECTs in this study described just not clicking for purposes ranging from professional to personal differences.

Similar to other teachers in this study who were late hires their first year, Ms. Jones described the impact of being a late hire on her perceptions of the supports that she received. In the previous theme, Ms. Wacyk stated that she did not receive the necessary trainings to
implement instruction due to being a late hire. In the reference below, Ms. Jones highlighted another negative facet of being a late hire. She shared that being a late hire caused a delay in being assigned to and forming a supportive relationship with the person who served in a mentorship role.

Because we started later, everything was delayed. So it just took longer to get going, I guess. So that relationship was never really built between us. So that was difficult, too, sharing the struggles that you had with someone that you didn’t feel a connection with.

Ms. Jones highlighted the importance of building a trusting just didn’t click with this person personally and this impacted her ability to receive the supports that she viewed as necessary. The importance of establishing a relationship with a mentor as a means to build a personal connection was also expressed by other teachers in this study.

While the little things are important to urban ECTs in this study, they are not always enough to make a teacher feel supported. Ms. Bayer described a relationship with a colleague that was friendly but not necessarily supportive in nature:

I mean she was a nice, that woman, she was a nice woman [colleague]. She’d come in in the morning and say, “Hi, how you doing?” or come in on her break and chat, but she just like, her classroom and my classroom were so different.

While Ms. Bayer’s colleague was friendly and frequently checked in with Ms. Bayer, their classrooms were “so different,” which impeded Ms. Bayer’s ability to view this relationship as supportive of her professional needs. Ms. Bayer discussed how her colleague engaged in the little things, but this was not enough for Ms. Bayer to then view this colleague as someone whom she would go to for support. According to Ms. Bayer and other teachers in this study, philosophical differences between the pair can impact the ability to click with one’s mentor.
Similarly, Ms. Muller also described how philosophical differences impacted her views of a fellow special education teacher:

The other teacher is crazy and I don’t deal with her because she’s crazy. I had to tell her, “Listen up, if you talk to me crazy like this again then I may hurt you. So stay away from me and don’t speak to me.” She says things that are inappropriate. She talks down to me because I’m young, and she feels like she knows the whole books about special ed when a lot of her theories are old, you know they’re old-school theories and they don’t work anymore and she doesn’t have academic rigor. After she has her students I normally get them next and they’re coming to me not knowing a whole lot of anything and so I have no respect for her, so I don’t speak to her.

Ms. Muller and this colleague just didn’t click on a personal or professional level. Ms. Muller described herself as new-school and her colleague as “old-school.” Therefore, Ms. Muller’s perception of this philosophical difference impeded her ability to see this experienced teacher as a source of support. Furthermore, Ms. Muller reported that this colleague was disrespectful towards Ms. Muller, which caused a rift in their ability to have a personal relationship or even be on talking terms.

In summary of the theme *Mismatched Supports*, ten of the urban ECTs in this study (71.4%) described being provided with support that did not meet their personal or professional needs. Given that each ECT has unique learning needs that are different from other ECTs and veteran teachers, urban ECTs in this study described the importance for individualized supportive experiences to match their unique professional development needs. Being provided with supports that were not what they needed and being paired with colleagues with whom they just didn’t click proved to be barriers to receiving the necessary supports. While Theme 1 primarily relates to experiences with colleagues, urban ECTs in this
study also referred to their negative and unsupportive experiences with their administrators, which is described in greater detail next.

**Theme 2 – Administrative Frustrations**

Half of the urban ECTs in this study described the negative experiences with their administrators leading to a sense of unsupportiveness. These negative dealings with their building leaders ranged in topic from procedural issues (e.g., scheduling, payroll), projection of low expectations of staff, to unresponsiveness to teacher needs. Common across references, urban ECTs in this study detailed their frustration with an unresponsiveness to student misconduct and a lack of follow-through from administrators on tasks viewed as important to them. Table 10 provides shorter references from urban ECTs in this study regarding this theme.

**Subtheme 1 - Unresponsive to Student Misconduct**

A complaint described by five of the teachers in this study (35.7%) were frustrations with delivery of consequences from administrators for significant student behavior problems such as swearing at a teacher, fighting with other students, or leaving a classroom without permission. Urban ECTs in this study described a sense of helplessness to successfully disrupt this cycle of negative behavior. The teachers in this study reported that positive reinforcement systems and having schoolwide rules can only go so far in influencing student behavior. They also looked for their administrators to be responsive by delivering consequences in a timely fashion to students who were violating school rules. Urban ECTs in
this study described seeking more punitive measures (e.g., suspensions, detention, consequences) to deal with verbally and physically aggressive and unsafe student behavior.

Table 10

References to Theme Administrative Frustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bayer</td>
<td>At the end [of the year] our principal told us at a whole-school meeting “To the newbie’s, I didn’t think you were going to make it,” and we were all like, “Yeah we felt that all year.” All year we felt like she was like looking down on us and like she didn’t expect us to do anything, like we were just there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Muller</td>
<td>Everyone knows this but everyone is scared to say it which is sad because our administration sometimes takes things really personal when it’s not at all personal. It’s just business, you know? It’s business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Sminov</td>
<td>It’s like spanking a puppy two weeks after he peed on a rug. He doesn’t understand what that means. If you don’t service them that day, it doesn’t seem like a consequence…They’re like, “Why I [sic] get suspended?” It’s like they don’t remember last week. So, it’s not effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Jones</td>
<td>I enjoy working with the kids, but at times it gets really frustrating, too. Not necessarily just with the kids, but just kind of policies of schools or things that aren’t followed through on. I think that’s what frustrates me more than anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lee</td>
<td>I constantly am getting interrupted by the… as you saw, the intercom system. And, of course, they always contact me at really inappropriate times and I’m always contacting them at appropriate times, and they never answer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers in this study commonly referred to their desire to have administrators deliver punitive consequences for repeated bad behavior. In general, Ms. Strong reported that she can
go to her administrators as they have an “open door policy.” However, she indicated that due to administrators’ lack of consequence delivery, student behavior problems were perpetuated.

I think they [colleagues] wish sometimes there was more discipline. Maybe like Saturday detention. They [colleagues] think the students don't have any consequences for their actions. I don't deal with that as much in kindergarten but I know when I had third grade that was like the issue, was like the bad behavior wouldn't change.

Similar to Ms. Strong, Ms. Jones reported a problem with the consistent enforcement of school wide behavior expectations. She described how a handful of students just leave class and wander the halls and have been doing so for several school years. However, due to lack of consequence delivery by administrators, the behaviors were just continually repeated.

There is [sic] no consequences for these students on a schoolwide level. Even if they get written up, there’s no specific consequence for them. So the behaviors are repeated, repeated, repeated and repeated…As a schoolwide administrative level, there is not a lot of consistency, and I don’t know the reason behind that.

Ms. Jones referred to a lack of follow-through at the administrative level which is frustrating to her and other teachers in this study. This sense of frustration leads teachers in this study to feel unsupported.

Ms. Muller expressed that in her opinion there are schoolwide rules in place but these rules are not consistently enforced.

We [she and colleagues] don’t feel like we have a lot of support from administration as far as suspensions and detentions and certain students get preferential treatment. I think that’s pretty much shared all through the school. If a student disrespects us by cursing, or any type of blatant disrespect, especially in front of a classroom, they should be suspended. One time, it should take one time to suspend them and let them get it right that this is unacceptable. But, that’s not what happens here. If the same thing happens to an administrator, ten days, fifteen days.

The disparity that existed if the behavior was directed towards a teacher versus an administrator was unacceptable and frustrating, according to Ms. Muller. This lack of
consistency in enforcing punitive consequences for behavior led Ms. Muller to describe a feeling of lack of support from administrators. When administrators did not respond with consequences to student misconduct, urban ECTs in this study felt unsupported.

Ms. Jones recalled an experience in which she tried to take responsibility for discussing a student behavior problem with a parent. However, Ms. Jones was unsuccessful in contacting the parent. She then enlisted the support from her assistant principal.

I wrote him up and I talked to the assistant principal, I cannot get a hold of this parent. And then they say okay, well, we’ll send someone out to try and find them. It never happened…There’s just not a lot of consistency in things. And it’s very frustrating as a teacher.

According to Ms. Jones, there are two facets of this experience that were frustrating to her. First, she asked for help from her assistant principal, but the help that was promised to her was not delivered. Second, she reported a lack of consequences for verbally and physical aggressive behaviors which she described as frustrating and undermining to the expectations that she tries to enforce in her classroom. This frustration towards administrators leading to a sense of unsupportiveness was continually echoed by teachers in this study.

**Subtheme 2 - Lack of Follow-Through**

Urban ECTs in this study expressed concern with administrative lack of follow-through on a variety of tasks. Whether it be lack of implementation of schoolwide rules that were created by staff or lack of consequences for fellow colleagues who come unprepared to meetings, teachers in this study expressed frustration with the administrators’ lack of follow-
through with policies and rules. Five of the urban ECTs in this study (35.7%) referenced this subtheme when discussing their struggles and challenges as novice teachers.

Ms. Jones described frustrations with lack of administrative follow-through with colleague issues:

I think the most challenging for me is follow-through at the administrative level...So I think that’s what I struggle with the most. It’s schoolwide, too. Just enforcement of policies isn’t done, and that’s frustrating to me because I always try to be a person who gets everything done that I need to. And then like when you show up at a meeting there’s only a few people that have done what they need to have done, and then nothing is done. No consequences for the people. That’s really frustrating to see.

Ms. Jones described frustration with administrators’ lack of follow-through with teachers who are not doing their jobs. Ms. Jones recalled that there are “no consequences” for her colleagues who are unprepared for meetings, making it frustrating that meeting expectations are not enforced at the administrative level. Lack of follow-through with collegial expectations is just one example of how inaction at the administrative level frustrates urban ECTs in this study.

When discussing general challenges as an ECT in an urban setting, Ms. Lee described frustration with the lack of administrative follow-through with implementation of ideas and policies. While she reported there is good intention and thought behind ideas, they are not implemented consistently. Similar to experiences of other teachers in this study, it is the lack of follow-through with implementation of ideas that frustrates Ms. Jones.

I think also another really challenging thing is the system itself is really hard sometimes. They [administration] have a lot of good ideas but they don’t implement them correctly and so it seems like there is not a lot of consistency and it’s really disorganized. And that’s really frustrating.
In addition to seeking administrative support for instructional, collegial, and student issues, teachers look to administrators for support with procedural issues. Ms. Jennings expressed that she is overall very happy teaching at her school. One of her only complaints was related to ongoing payroll issues that she was facing. Even though she kept reminding her administrators about the problem, the problem was not being resolved. She described that this lack of follow-through was frustrating:

You have to remind them [administration] about things and like, especially like as pertains to like your pay because sometimes when I’m out of the building, if I’m at another school, and I clock in there then like there’s always a form you have to fill out here. Even though I fill out the forms, there’s several days where I haven’t gotten paid and you have to keep reminding them that, yeah, that’s frustrating.

In summary of the theme Administrative Frustrations as illustrated through these reported experiences, urban ECTs look to their administrators to be sources of support. Yet there are a variety of things administrators are doing or not doing that are frustrating to the teachers in this study. Lack of follow-through on personal and systematic issues leads to feelings of frustration. Urban ECTs in this study reported that lack of responsiveness from administrators related to procedural, instructional, and individual needs leads to a sense of frustration and lack of support. Furthermore, teachers in this study commonly described frustrations with administrative unresponsiveness to student misconduct. They reported a high level of frustration with lack of enforcement of school rules from administrators in delivering consequences to students who exhibit aggressive, unsafe, and disrespectful behavior. Furthermore, this leads to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness in some teacher’s beliefs about their abilities to influence student behavior and learning.
Theme 3 – Lack of Time

According to urban ECTs in this study, lack of time to meet and connect with experienced teachers serves as a barrier to having more supportive experiences and developing personal connections with colleagues. Eight of teachers in this study (57.1%) referenced this theme. Urban ECTs in the study described that opportunities to co-plan rarely exist, and teachers are reliant on each other to meet before or after school to engage in collaboration and receive instructional support. Urban ECTs described that they are willing to and need to put their time in to develop effective skills. However, urban ECTs in this study reported feeling that they would be burdening experienced teachers by asking them to meet before or after school for support. Furthermore, lack of time also impacts teachers’ ability to engage in conversation extending beyond their professional selves, inhibiting their ability to form personal connections to colleagues.

Ms. Lee described how the lack of time impacted her ability to develop connections with her colleagues, whom she has known for two full school years:

I don’t feel very, like, tight-knit with them. I think a lot of that is that our day is so short, so we never have time during the day to talk to each other, ever. I mean, we don’t have a lunch time. I would love to have a forty-minute time where we could all sit and eat lunch together. That would be amazing. I think the communication between like, “well, this student’s having a bad day,” or “this student is doing this,” that would be even really valuable. We just don’t have the time.

Lack of time impacts participants’ ability to engage in instructional planning and their ability to develop personal connections that go beyond the professional self. Ms. Lee expressed that having a common lunch time to connect regarding student-specific issues and other personal issues could build connections with her colleagues.
Ms. Bayer expressed that she does have colleagues that are willing to help and support her. However, the barrier to receiving that support is finding the time. Similar to other teachers in this study, Ms. Bayer expressed that ECTs in her building are required to elicit support from experienced teachers after school because there is not time during the day to receive this support.

There are people here who are willing to help; it’s just a matter of really finding the time for it, and finding the time to have someone either help me level my library or have me like, teach me how to do a new center for reading. It’s just finding the time after school or whatever it is ’cause preps don’t exist.

Teachers in this study commonly reported that it is up to them to try and elicit support from more experienced teachers. Urban ECTs reported feeling burdensome when asking more experienced teachers to meet before or after school for support. Ms. Henning questioned the meaningfulness of before/after school meetings for experienced teachers:

I think they [experienced teachers] may be less willing to give up an after-school time to work with you and get you kind of up to date. I would definitely learn more from that than they probably would. So, I think that’s the hard part because during the school time there’s really no time and so the only time is before and after school and, again, you know, before school time is really hard because everyone’s just trying to get ready for the day. And then after school, will they be available to you? Which is not the case, for the most part.

While Ms. Henning stated that experienced teachers could also benefit from co-planning with ECTs, finding the time to do so and building that time into the schedule are barriers. Ms. Henning described how it is at the whim of experienced teachers to give up their time to be available to ECTs for co-planning opportunities at her building. However, urban ECTs in this study commonly reported feeling like a burden when asking more experienced teachers to do this.
Ms. Gonzalez described how once a month, all teachers participated in a day of professional development. There was time built in on those days to work with colleagues to plan instruction and collaborate. Follow-up to those monthly meetings was required to continue the lack of time and other tasks taking priority. Ms. Gonzalez described how the other tasks of teaching take precedence over collaboration time with teachers.

When we have professional development with our team, they [administration] expect for us to plan some things together. To me that doesn’t work very well, ’cause you’re only that one day. Then they want us to meet to plan, but we have so many other issues that come up, that we need to plan for. We have this committee. We have that committee. Ahhh! Some of us are on two and three committees. Then you need to meet with the parents in the morning. It’s just a lot. It’s too much.

In summary of the subtheme Lack of Time, urban ECTs in this study described lack of collaboration and co-planning time as a barrier to developing relationships with colleagues and also a hindrance to having supportive experiences. Urban ECTs in this study are eager to put their time in but reported that meeting after school with experienced teachers would be more beneficial to the ECTs.

In summary of Research Question Three, three main themes emerged when urban ECTs in this study described unsupportive 3: Mismatched Supports, Administrative Frustrations, and Not Enough Time. First, teachers in this study described how some supports provided to them did not meet their specific and individualized learning needs. These experiences were described as useless and even burdensome to some. Next, administrative action or inaction was a common grievance reported by teachers in this study. Specifically, administrator lack of follow-through on tasks that are valued as important by urban ECTs in this study emerged as a subtheme. Participants reported a lack of support by
administrators who did not enforce schoolwide rules or responsibilities with fellow colleagues and students. Furthermore, administration unresponsiveness to student misconduct served to be a common complaint of urban ECTs in this study, leading to feelings of frustration and lack of support. Last, lack of time to engage in collaboration with fellow experienced colleagues served as a barrier to developing personal connections with colleagues and to receiving instructional support.

Research Question 4 – Facilitators and Barriers to Teacher Efficacy

What do urban ECTs describe as the facilitators and barriers to developing their teaching efficacy?

This research question explores the experiences of teachers in this study that serve to bolster or hinder teacher efficacy beliefs. Experiences provide the foundation to the development of teacher efficacy. Yet little research exists examining the experiences of ECTs across the four sources (i.e., mastery, vicarious, verbal persuasion, physiological) of efficacy development (Klassen et al., 2010, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). Table 11 lists the four sources of efficacy development, number and percentage of teachers who referenced each category, and total number of references by category. Figure 3 shows the percentage of references that fell into each category of efficacy development.

While it has been hypothesized that ECTs rely more heavily on sources other than mastery experiences for efficacy development, given ECTs minimal experience with teaching (Bandura, 1997), the data from this study show otherwise. When it came to discussion of experiences and beliefs about teaching capabilities, mastery experiences were referenced by
Table 11

Number of References and Teachers by Source of Efficacy Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Efficacy Development</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Total References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Percentage of references by source of efficacy development.
all of the teachers. Mastery experiences were also referenced most frequently, 48 times, and comprised almost half of the total references across all four sources of efficacy development.

Of the total 21 physiological experiences related by teachers in this study, 27.7% of these experiences were cross coded with mastery experience. Given this overlap, distinct themes related to physiological experiences did not emerge. Rather, themes related to physiological experiences were incorporated into themes related to mastery experiences.

Eighteen vicarious experiences were reported by nine of the teachers (64.3%) in this study. A theme related to this source of experience emerged that was distinct from the other three sources of efficacy development.

Verbal persuasion experiences were the most infrequently referenced source, 12 references, and referenced by the fewest number of teachers, seven participants. While teachers in this study frequently talked about interactions with their colleagues, these interactions rarely resulted in changes in efficacy beliefs but rather were more likely to increase perceptions of support. Therefore, pertinent themes to verbal persuasion did not emerge in the thematic analysis in this study. This is discussed in Chapter 5 in the directions for future research section. Thematic analysis was applied to determine the themes that emerged across the sources of efficacy development. Specific experiences as related by urban ECTs in this study by source of efficacy development are included in the description of each theme and subtheme below. Table 12 provides an outline of the themes and subthemes that emerged related to Research Question 4. Each theme and subtheme is described in the subsequent sections.
Table 12

Themes Related to Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>% of Teachers</th>
<th>Number of References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hands-On Experience Matters</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing Good Teaching Helps</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Code</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding the Cultural Code</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cracking the Cultural Code</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1 – Hands-On Experience Matters

While 12 of the teachers in this study (85.7%) described being ill-prepared and somewhat shocked during their initial teaching days, having experience, specifically hands-on experience, ameliorates this unpreparedness. A total of 16 references made by eight of the teachers in this study (57.1%) met the criteria for the theme *Hands-On Experience Matters*. Urban ECTs in this study commonly referenced the vital influence of hands-on experiences on their own sense of efficacy development. They described how they believed the job got easier and their skills improved with experience. Teachers in this study expressed how much of their learning as teachers had occurred through on-the-job hands-on experiences. It is through the experience of doing it and being successful that they developed positive efficacy beliefs. Hands-on experiences equate to mastery experiences in Bandura’s (1997) representation of the four sources of efficacy beliefs. Table 13 provides shorter references that describe this theme.
Table 13

References to Theme *Hands-On Experience Matters*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Strong</td>
<td><strong>Now this is my fifth year. It’s a lot easier.</strong> I’ve learned how to manage it better and I’ve learned how to anticipate the children's behavior and talk to them about, talk to them about it before they do it, <strong>so experience does help.</strong> …Everything I learned, I learned through experience I would say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Parker</td>
<td>I don’t think I could of [been] prepared for like how or what to do when they do this. <strong>It’s just pretty much basically you have to go in and do it.</strong> It’s like a quick thinking on your feet thing when they do that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Lee</td>
<td>Overall, <strong>it’s been getting better every year.</strong> I’m becoming less naïve as the years go on. <strong>But it’s been getting better and this year I feel, like, very, very strong, like I’m a very strong teacher.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. Gonzalez described the complexity that comes along with being a general education teacher. She described that her own learning and beliefs in her ability to be a successful teacher developed through having hands-on experience with different students who required her to develop different skills.

You have to deal with different types of children. Maybe you’re not a special ed teacher. Maybe you’re not a behavioral specialist. But you know the English. You know the math. You have to deal with all of those things….Until you had a hands-on experience, and some years, of different kids, you don’t know. You’re like, “Oh my God, I, I didn’t know this!”

While Ms. Gonzalez described knowing the content part of teaching when referring to knowing the English and math, she described how she was not prepared to deal with certain behaviors. However, it was through “hands-on experience” that she learned new skills and built her beliefs in her ability to be a successful and effective teacher. The importance of
these hands-on experiences over time fostered positive efficacy beliefs in other teachers in this study as well.

On the other hand, Ms. Muller was less confident in her content knowledge as a beginning teacher but reported that each year her skills grew. Her ability to successfully connect with students also influenced her beliefs about her teaching abilities.

As far as academics, I was a little like, shaky, but now that every year I teach I get better…that’s what really made me think, “You know what? I can be a teacher and I can be a good teacher.”

Ms. Muller’s hands-on experience of teaching year after year was what influenced her beliefs in her ability to “be a good teacher.” Having mastery experiences guided teachers in this study to believe that they could and would be good teachers.

Ms. Sminov vividly remembered her first day of teaching art in an urban, high-poverty school:

I still remember my first class on Monday. I’d come in, “Hi Ms. Sminov,” and then they’re all wanting to ask me like, “Can I go to the bathroom? Can I go to the bathroom, can I sit—I mean can I go over here?” And I’m just like sure and that’s the wrong reaction. You have to be like, “No, no, no, go sit down.” But no one had told me. And I’m like what? I didn’t even know to expect that. And then it’s like you start tellin’ ’em the rules of how we’re gonna do art. “You cannot tell us what to do. This is my classroom. This ain’t your classroom.” And then of course they eventual call you a bitch, or in my case maybe even a White bitch. They used to call me a fat bitch so I must be losing weight [laughter]. I said, “Well if I can make it here, I guess I can make it anywhere.” Because if I can get something done here, I will have grown ten years in teaching just by being here.

Ms. Sminov recounted her feelings of unpreparedness. However, instead of fleeing the situation, she recognized the impact that these teaching experiences could have on her teacher efficacy. She expressed how she believed that these experiences would help her grow at a faster rate compared to her growth teaching in another school context. While Ms. Sminov
stated that it was challenging and she was not prepared regarding how to set up rules for art class, it was through these hands-on experiences that her beliefs in her teaching capabilities grew. Despite the majority of teachers in this study (85.7%) reported feeling ill-prepared to teach similar to Ms. Sminov, they stuck with it and were still teaching at the time of the interviews. Therefore, the participants in this study viewed these experiences and themselves not as failing/failures but as learning opportunities which boosted efficacy beliefs.

Ms. Jones illustrated how she experienced a very challenging first year of teaching. However, she maintained the belief that she could still teach if she moved school buildings and had a more supportive context. Even though her first year was more negative in nature, she did feel more confident in her teaching capabilities given the successful teaching experiences that she brought with her to School C.

So coming to School C it was just—I felt more relaxed about things, I felt more confident. I just felt like I knew what I was doing more so because I had experienced all those things with third grade in a benchmark year and just knew what to expect more.

While most teachers in this study did not report feeling extremely confident in their teaching capabilities, they commonly reported that with experience they would be more effective and have stronger beliefs in their abilities. Ms. Hernandez described her beliefs about her ability to manage student behavior. When asked how successful she felt with managing student behavior, she used a ten-point scale to rate herself:

I think right now it’s kind of like, on a scale of one to ten, I’m about a five, six. I’m like half-way there. I think that once I continue to do my own research, meaning do my own trial and error and use different strategies, then, whatever works, I’m more, I stick to it.
Ms. Hernandez reported by having hands-on experience through doing “research, …[her]own trial and error,” she is more likely to stick with tasks which in turn impacts her beliefs about her capabilities as a teacher. After having successful hands-on experiences with managing student behavior, she may be able to rate herself higher on that ten-point scale of efficacy beliefs.

In summary of the theme *Hands-On Experience Matters*, having successful teaching experiences or overcoming challenging experiences bolsters the development of positive efficacy beliefs in urban ECTs in this study. While many teachers in this study did not feel prepared for many aspects of teaching in urban-high poverty settings, having hands-on experience has built their confidence and positive sense of efficacy development. With time and experience, teachers in this study described how their beliefs in their teaching capabilities grew stronger.

**Theme 2 – Observing Good Teaching Helps**

Vicarious learning occurs by seeing people of similar capabilities sustain and put forth the effort to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1997). This theme equates to vicarious experiences within Bandura’s (1997) presentation of sources of efficacy beliefs. Eight of the urban ECTs in this study (57.1%) cited experiences in which watching other teachers supported their own efficacy beliefs. Teachers in this study reported that watching teachers teaching in similar contexts with familiar students benefited their sense of teacher efficacy. When asked what learning opportunities built her beliefs about her teaching abilities, Ms. Wacyk reported that opportunities to watch fellow colleagues teach was beneficial.
I think one of the things that’s been extremely helpful to me is seeing good teachers, going into a classroom, and you know my principal actually recommended ‘cause at the beginning of this year I said, “I don’t know what the hell I’m doing.” She looked at me ‘cause I was kind of like, well scared, and she’s like, “Go see so and so…” and I did it and [saw] what good teaching is.

Ms. Wacyk expressed that she felt comfortable enough to be vulnerable and tell her principal that she was unsure of what to do as a teacher. The importance of being able to demonstrate vulnerability was echoed by urban ECTs in this study when referring to supportive experiences as well. In her willingness to be vulnerable, Ms. Wacyk created learning opportunities that fostered her efficacy beliefs. Not only did this observation reduce her fear and negative feelings regarding her own teaching capabilities, but it also gave her ideas on classroom management and classroom environment strategies.

Ms. Jones mirrored Ms. Wacyk’s and other participants’ experiences regarding the benefits of observing other teachers. Ms. Jones reported that seeing teachers within her school or watching videos of teachers is beneficial. However, if videos are used, Ms. Jones stated that it is important that they reflect a school context similar to the one where she teaches in order for her to reap the learning benefits that will have an impact on her beliefs about her own teaching capabilities:

What has always helped me is observation. So observing good teachers and the environments that they’re in. Whether it’s videos, whether it’s actually going into a classroom. I’ve got the most out of when I go into a classroom and observe another teacher who teaches something similar to me, just to see what they’re doing. What I can improve on, watching others, I think that for me is the best way…So if you actually see a teacher who’s in a similar school to you are with similar kids being effective, that’s really helpful to see what works for them.

While Mr. Smith was in his first year of teaching at the time of the interview, he referred to how helpful it was to observe his supervising teacher during student teaching,
particularly to observe how she managed and ran a classroom. Mr. Smith described how it was helpful to observe how she was able to engage her students and earn their respect:

It’s helpful when I’ve seen teachers, like with one of my teachers I was student teaching with, she was on her twentieth year teaching, so she had it down to a science like it was, when she spoke they, I mean, like it was in place.

Similar to other teachers in the study, Mr. Smith’s experiences during student teaching of observing experienced teachers facilitated positive efficacy beliefs. Therefore, these vicarious learning opportunities facilitated their feeling of preparedness and that they could do it.

In summary of this theme, teachers in this study referred to how beneficial observing good teaching had been on their beliefs about their own teaching capabilities. They also shared their beliefs regarding the benefit of observing in person or via video modeling and that both of these styles would be beneficial to efficacy development. Urban ECTs in this study highlighted the importance of observing good teaching in a similar context to the school in which they were teaching.

**Theme 3 - Cultural Code**

Seven of the urban ECTs in this study (50%) discussed how knowing and understanding the culture of the school and students can serve as a facilitator or barrier to building student relationships, in turn impacting efficacy beliefs. Four urban ECTs in this study (28.6%) described how understanding the culture served as a facilitator to efficacy beliefs. Three teachers in the study (21.4%) discussed how a lack of understanding of and experience in the culture impeded abilities to develop student relationships, negatively influencing their beliefs about their ability to reach and teach students. This, in turn,
influenced their ability to have successful teaching experiences or mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997) with their students. All three of the urban ECTs reporting a lack of understanding of the cultural code were White. All four of the urban ECTs reporting that they understood the cultural code were Black. Therefore, in this study, there is a distinction based on teacher’s identified race between those understanding the culture and those needing to come to a better understanding of the culture so they can relate to students and develop positive beliefs about their teaching capabilities.

Subtheme 1 – Understanding the Cultural Code

Urban ECTs in this study who came from backgrounds, neighborhoods, and schools similar to their students reported that they were able to connect with their students and earned their students’ respect which in turn impacted their beliefs regarding efficacy of classroom management and engagement skills. Furthermore, some of the urban ECTs in this study still lived in the neighborhoods or areas surrounding the schools where they worked at the time of the interviews. These teachers reported that they understood what students were going through outside of school, which served as a bridge to help support teacher-to-student connections. Mr. Smith grew up in the area of his current school and lived in the area at the time of the interview. He described how this served as a springboard to be able to relate to his students:

I live in the area that they live in, you know what I mean. I still live in the same area that I went to grammar school at, you know what I mean. So I still see a lot of my friends. I’m out there doing the things that they’re seeing, you know what I mean. When they go home, selling drugs, you know what I mean, doing the things that they shouldn’t be doing, you know what I mean, so I still live in that area so I can relate
more to the kids. Yes, I relate to the kids more. But it’s just like I don’t want to sit there be talking to the kid like, “Aw yeah, I went home, my friend was doing X, Y, and Z,” then all of a sudden, “Okay, we gunna talk about characterization,” ’cause now, they’re looking at me like, like, “You can’t switch it.”

Mr. Smith experienced and saw the same things that his students did, which allowed him to relate to students. He understood that students couldn’t just switch from talking about seeing someone selling drugs to learning about characterization. His ability to relate to his students given similar environmental conditions facilitated positive teaching experiences and efficacy beliefs that are also described by the other teachers in this subtheme.

When talking about her feeling of preparedness to teach in an urban, high-poverty school, Ms. Gonzalez also asserted that her background helped her connect with students and understand how to teach and reach her students:

I think that my background coming from an urban setting and an urban school, that’s what best prepared me. Having the knowledge on the skills and strategies that’s, that helped me too, you need that in order to be a teacher, but I think with the urban setting being a, being able to, ah communicate on their level and have a calming effect and have them respond to you in a positive way and try to. That’s what got me prepared, my background.

While Ms. Gonzalez reported that her teaching preparation program did prepare her, it was her own background and experiences that allowed her to be able to connect to students by “communicating on their level.” Mirroring Mr. Smith’s comments, it was her own upbringing that allowed her to communicate with students in an effective and positive manner, thus building her beliefs about her capabilities to be a successful teacher.

In addition, Ms. Muller also related her experiences of growing up in the housing projects and being a child of parents with addiction issues to her ability to relate to her students. She expressed that she wanted to serve as a role model for these students, showing
them that they can make a different choice for their future than some of the examples that were shown to them on a daily basis.

I come from an urban area. I come from Housing Project X in City X. I grew up there till I was eight then I went to the projects in City Y. Then we moved to the Housing Project Z in City Z. So I grew up in rough neighborhoods consistently but yet, and I had, you know, my mom was in my life but she was an alcoholic. My dad was a drug addict. So I came up in a really rough environment you know. I didn’t always have the shot to be who I am, you know, and so I just felt like coming in and being able to tell the students like, “Yo, I come from where you come from and look at me,” you know would help them realize like, “Oh, I don’t have to be like everyone else in my family. I can be someone different,” you know?

While Ms. Parker grew up in an urban, high-poverty context, she indicated that her experiences working with children at her church had influenced her beliefs about her abilities to effectively teach students. She attributed her feeling of preparedness and her ability to teach students to her experiences working with students in a similar context to her current school building.

I felt prepared enough to know, um, as far as their background, where they came from, that I would be able to teach them something because I had experience relating with the children, like I said, at my church.

**Subtheme 2 – Cracking the Cultural Code**

While having similar experiences to students can facilitate student relationships, having vastly different upbringings and experiences can hinder urban ECTs’ ability to understand and connect with their students, according to participants in this study. Teachers in this study described how their experiences as minority White teachers and not having an understanding of the community impeded their ability to connect with and communicate with students. Ms. Lee described her experiences with cracking into the cultural code:
I was not really prepared. There was no course you could take on teaching in a school where you are in the minority in terms of race because that’s a huge difference. I wasn’t prepared for that. I wish I could have taken a class on community living in terms of like being in these little neighborhoods that are in City X and what that is like and how to crack into that code and be into that system. Now that I feel like I’m in that more, it’s becoming easier to communicate. Like I said, breaking into the community code. Like, when I realized things about what they were eating, why the kids were crazy after lunch because they didn’t eat their lunches. They bring snacks from home or whatever. And those snacks are always the same things because there’s not a grocery store around here. Like, when I started realizing things like that and learning that from reading books about the Housing Project X and what they used to be and learning about the culture of this sort of community, I mean that was really helpful.

Once she had some experience and did some learning about living in a housing project, Ms. Lee reported being better prepared to understand and relate to her students. In addition, having a better understanding of other factors, such as nutrition, that could be causing hyperactive and off-task behavior reportedly helped her better understand her students.

Rather than students just choosing to be hyper after lunch, Ms. Lee came to learn that the food they were eating and food options available to them in the community could also be impacting behavior. This understanding influenced her beliefs about her classroom management skills.

Ms. Jones described how she was in “culture shock” during her first year of teaching. Similar to Ms. Lee, student behavior surprised her. She described how the behavior of students was shocking to her and that she did not understand and could not relate to the students regarding some of these behaviors:

I think, in general, it was more culture shock than anything for me, ’cause a lot of times like I cannot believe you are doing that right now. I cannot believe you just did that. You’re sitting on top of your desk like acting like a wild animal. I don’t understand that.
Mr. Keifer described how his experiences of growing up in the suburbs was a different cultural experience compared to his teaching experiences in urban, high-poverty schools”

I grew up in the suburbs and I mean just the two different cultures. It was pretty weird walking in there and kids are just runnin’ around doin’ whatever they want. And a lot of ’em didn’t have respect for the teachers, or the other kids, or anyone at all. And, when I was growing up, I mean, if we didn’t respect someone, our mom and dad would make us, make us respect them. So, I don’t know. It was just, it was a different culture. But it took a couple weeks to get used to it, actually probably more like a couple months to get used to it, the culture and I mean, the second year I was at School X. I started to get a vibe of what to do to, like, interact with the kids a little bit better.

Similar to the other teachers in this subtheme, Mr. Keifer described how he was surprised by the level of disrespect and noncompliant behavior of students. However, once he got used to the culture and had more experience, he was able to connect with the students “a little better,” in his words, enhancing his beliefs regarding his ability to teach his students. Teachers in this study reported being able to better connect with students once they understood their culture and had a reference to their life experiences.

In summary of the theme Cultural Code, urban ECTs’ own upbringing, experiences, and race can facilitate or serve as a barrier to building relationships with students, in turn influencing efficacy beliefs. Teachers who came from similar upbringings, all who happened to be Black, reported that as an ECT they could relate to students’ experiences and understand how to communicate with students. Teachers who came from different backgrounds, all who happened to be White, reported the lack of cultural experience and understanding as a hindrance on their ability to connect with students and earn their respect, leading to negative beliefs regarding their teaching capabilities.
Chapter 4 Summary

Considering there is little research exploring the experiences of urban ECTs’ perceptions and experiences with the school’s social context, first interviews were explored to discover how often urban ECTs were talking about the three elements of the school’s social context in the semi-structured interview setting. Urban ECTs in this study most commonly talked about relationships and connections with colleagues, with all teachers referencing positive experiences and nine teachers in the study (64.2%) reporting negative experiences. However, more than half of these negative collegial experiences described occurred in previous school contexts. Next, urban ECTs in this study discussed school culture, with 12 of urban ECTs (85.7%) referencing positive experiences with school culture while five (35.7%) described negative experiences. However, 71.4% of the negative references to school culture occurred in schools of previous employment. Last, urban ECTs discussed experiences with their building administration with nine (64.2%) teachers expressing positive experiences and eight (57.1%) teachers expressing negative experiences. Principal leadership was the only element in which there were more negative stories versus positive stories shared about administrators.

When describing support experiences, it was the little things done by colleagues and administrators that made urban ECTs feel supported in their school context. Second, participants also felt supported in their school when they were connected to their colleagues. Connections to colleagues are described as perceptions of being friends with colleagues, describing that colleagues have their back, and are always by their side to provide emotional
support and listen to them vent. These connections go beyond the professional self with interactions occurring beyond the school building. Connections with colleagues assist in developing a sense of working in a supportive school environment.

When describing unsupportive experiences, participants described a mismatch between the supports that they needed and the supports that were provided to them. These supports did not meet the professional or personal needs of urban ECTs in this study, in some cases, the teacher just didn’t click with the person providing the supports. Furthermore, urban ECTs in this study reported feeling unsupported by administrative frustrations. These negative dealings with their building leaders ranged from procedural issues to unresponsiveness to teacher needs. Urban ECTs felt unsupported by their administrators’ passivity when it came to managing student behavior. In addition, lack of time served as an obstacle in being able to have supportive experiences and interactions with colleagues.

Finally, urban ECTs in this study described the facilitators and barriers to efficacy development. First, participants commonly reported that having hands-on experience built their sense of positive efficacy. Observing good teaching of teachers in similar contexts with similar students built a positive sense of teacher efficacy in the teachers in this study. Furthermore, understanding the students’ culture served as a barrier and a facilitator to teacher efficacy beliefs. Teachers who came from and understood the culture of their students could relate and connect with students and believed that they could be successful teaching their students. Teachers who were raised in and lived in cultures different from their students described connecting with their students as trying, which impeded their beliefs about their teaching abilities. These teachers also described a learning curve in which they had to inquire
about the culture in order to better communicate and foster positive connections with their students.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to discuss the findings from this study in light of past research and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. This study explored the experiences of 14 urban ECTs with social elements of the school context and teacher efficacy development. Findings are organized by research question and are presented through the lens of the conceptual framework first presented in Figure 1. Next, practical recommendations and research implications are discussed.

Findings

Quantitative studies have identified teacher efficacy (Caprara et al., 2003; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) and the social aspects of the environment that are important to teacher turnover (Flores, 2010; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Simon & Johnson, 2015; Tickle et al., 2011). Yet, research is lacking in describing teachers’ specific experiences and interactions that lead them to feel successful, connected, and supported (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Rumley, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The research in this area is overwhelmingly quantitative in nature in which specific variables are identified in their relation to their predictability of outcome variables, such as turnover or level of job satisfaction. In this study, I attempted to begin filling in the
holes in the current literature base by coming to a better understanding of the nature of those predictive variables through the urban ECTs’ eye view. The main findings from this study are discussed below.

Research Question 1 Findings

Findings related to the social elements of colleague relationships and principal leadership are interwoven into the findings from Research Questions 2 through 4. Findings related to school culture are described below.

Interpretation of School Culture Based on Relationships

When urban ECTs in this study described how they interpreted the school culture, they referred to the specific interactions and experiences that they had with administrators and colleagues which served as the foundation to their perceptions of the working environment. These were interactions that occurred in informal settings that influenced perceptions of colleagues and administrators, in turn affecting views of the school culture. In this study, it was informal interactions, versus formal, that had the greatest influence on participants’ interpretations of their colleagues, principals, and the school culture. In schools where ECTs reported being supported, teachers in this study felt welcomed, listened to, and cohesive with colleagues. They described schools in which there was a shared commitment to student success across all employees. Again, these interpretations were driven by interactions with people in their schools. These interactions were “little things” that colleagues did to make urban ECTs feel welcomed and supported. Furthermore, colleagues in these buildings
extended their conversation beyond the school building and attempted to support the personal and emotional needs of ECTs in this study. In schools where ECTs felt unsupported, ECTs perceived that staff did not rally together to support their colleagues in times of personal need. Nor did ECTs in this study perceive staff to work collaboratively to support students’ needs. Urban ECTs in this study described how schools with a negative feel did not meet their professional or personal needs.

Johnson et al. (2012) presented the social elements of the school context (school culture, principal leadership, and colleague relationships) in three district categories based on survey results from their study. However, findings from this study suggest that it is the informal interactions with colleagues and administrators that serve as the channel to interpreting the school culture as supportive or unsupportive. It is the relationships with fellow teachers and administrators which serve as the foundation to viewing a supportive school culture of openness, trust, and cohesion. Therefore, when considering how to build a strong school culture, evaluation of how to foster positive informal interactions that cultivate positive relationships should be at the forefront of the discussion.

**Research Question 2 Findings**

**Importance of Informal Interactions**

The importance of informal interactions is apparent throughout participants’ responses in interviews. When looking at the supportive nature of teachers’ reported interactions with colleagues, 50% of informal interactions and 25% of formal interactions were reported as
positive and supportive. So while lack of time was a barrier (as will be discussed more below) to allowing teachers to engage in formal supportive interactions, teachers in this study reported more satisfaction and support from informal interactions. In other words, when urban ECTs in this study were given structured time to formally interact, these interactions did not appear to be as impactful to new teachers’ perceptions of support as compared to informal interactions.

More specifically, the small gestures and verbal exchanges captured in the themes *It’s the Little Things* and *Connections Going Beyond* typically occurred in an informal manner. Colleagues made urban ECTs in this study feel welcomed and supported by stopping by before or after school to say hi and by recognizing them as novice teachers to the building. Urban ECTs felt supported by their fellow teachers and administrators whom they reported to have an open door policy that was communicated via informal means. They built personal connections with their colleagues through informal interactions that occurred outside of school hours and outside of the school building. In all of these examples, it was through informal interactions that urban ECTs built a sense of working in a supportive environment. Therefore in this study, informal interactions served as the vehicle for urban ECTs to build connections to colleagues and a positive view of their schools.

Previous research has found that structured interaction time with supervisors and colleagues is vital to ECTs’ perceptions of support, efficacy development, and decision to stay (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Goddard et al., 2004; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Yet the finding regarding the importance of informal interaction in this study suggests that researchers must also be looking beyond formal
structured time and professional development time when exploring how to create school contexts in which teachers will be happy and thrive. In this study, interactions that occurred during structured times did lead to a sense of satisfaction but not as frequently as the level of satisfaction that was reported during informal interaction. Furthermore, the quality of the interactions that led to a sense of support, such as small gestures and verbal exchanges that were welcoming and helpful, does not take formal training to be able to implement. Rather, these are interactions that are elicited by a positive school culture in which teachers feel happy and are freely willing to support one another. This finding is not to suggest that structured supports and interactions are not important to urban ECTs’ perceptions of support. Rather, this finding suggests that researchers need to further explore how structured and unstructured interaction time can work simultaneously to build supportive working environments. Furthermore, more research is needed to explore ways to support opportunities for informal interactions to occur and to learn under what conditions experienced teachers demonstrate the little things that elicit feelings of support and a positive view of the school culture.

**Experienced Teachers’ Role in Supporting ECTs’ Personal and Professional Needs**

When describing working in a supportive school, urban ECTs in this study commonly referenced the importance that their personal relationships with colleagues played in their perceptions of support. Findings from this study support previous research reports in which teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction in buildings where they reported strong relationships with their colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). In this
study, I attempted to delve into describing what constitutes a strong collegial relationship from the perspective of teachers working in an urban, high-poverty context.

Teachers in this study described how their positive colleague relationships extended beyond professional boundaries and into personal relationships. As reported by urban ECTs in this study, strong collegial relationships were those relationships in which teachers could count on each other for not simply instructional but more importantly emotional support. They described these colleagues as having their backs and being available to support them when needed. Colleagues who were connected were those who knew about each other’s personal lives.

Urban ECTs in this study reported that even observing fellow colleagues having personal connections with one another enhanced their sense of working in a supportive school environment. Teachers in this study shared that hearing stories of other teachers connecting outside of the school built a sense within them of being a part of a school with strong colleague relationships and a cohesive school culture. Therefore, observation of strong connections between colleagues fostered a sense of working in a supportive school for ECTs. This is an important finding given that building strong relationships can take time. Given the nature of their status, novice teachers have not had a lot of time to build connections. Yet even observation of strong connections between colleagues built a sense of working in a supportive school environment for teachers in this study. Additionally, three of the teachers in this study described similar experiences in how a personal connection was fostered with a veteran colleague. All of these teachers described situations in which the veteran teacher saw the urban ECT needing support with classroom clean-up/set-up and the experienced teacher
stepped in to support them. They went on to describe how those teachers became friends and sources of personal and professional support to them. It was through the gesture of seeing a teacher in need and supporting him or her on one’s own time that fostered new connections with colleagues and made the ECTs feel supported. This finding aligns with previously discussed findings from this study in that these gestures and exchanges did not require formal training to be able to implement.

Having trusting relationships in which colleagues always have their back was also important to urban ECTs who described close relationships with their colleagues. This aligns with past research finding teachers to be more likely to stay in schools and report higher levels of satisfaction in schools where they trust their colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). The influence of trust on teacher burnout has been extensively studied. Teachers who have more trust in colleagues show more motivation to continue teaching and report lower levels of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). This study extends previous findings on trust. In this study, it was important for urban ECTs to have a trusting relationship with colleagues as this allowed them to be vulnerable to admit their shortcomings and be willing to seek the necessary supports. Trust allowed for vulnerability which promoted positive interactions that not only built relationships but also offered opportunities for teachers to build their skills.

Rather than viewing trust as a factor that only ameliorates feelings of burnout, findings from this study suggest that trust serves as the foundation to forming positive connections with colleagues. In other words, trust should be further researched in its relation to building protective factors, such as strong collegial relationships, against burnout and turnover.
While personal relationships emerged as a common theme when analyzing connections with colleagues, professional relationships also contributed to a positive sense of support. Urban ECTs in this study reported that they felt supported when working in an environment where all colleagues promoted the belief that we are all in this together, which aligns with past research finding connections between colleagues who shared a sense of mission and purpose with their work (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012). Furthermore, strong collegial relationships served as a channel to more effective mentoring experiences. While teachers in this study did not frequently cite formal mentoring as a source of support to them, there were five (35.7%) teachers who talked about supportive aspects of their mentoring experiences. Urban ECTs described mentorship relationships as supportive when they had a good personal match with their mentor or had a mentor who understood the specifics of their job and content area. They also described the relationships as beneficial if they had choice in selecting their mentor. Past research has found that mentorship was more effective in retaining beginning teachers in the following cases: if the choice of mentor and mentee was up to the participants, mentees perceived their mentor to be an effective teacher, and mentorship relationships were matched by grade level and in the same building (Long et al., 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). This study supports past research on mentoring, specifically in that teachers in this study reported that match and choice of mentor facilitated a more positive experience.

Based on findings from this study, in order for supports to be viewed as effective, it is important for teachers to feel that they have a relationship with those who are providing the support. This is true whether it is an informal colleague relationship or a formal mentoring
relationship. A strong relationship allowed urban ECTs in this study to be vulnerable and open to discussing the parts of teaching that were stressful and hard with their mentor in a formal setting or in an informal setting. However, the established effective components of mentorship programs in the current literature base do not specifically highlight the quality or strength of the mentor/mentee relationship. This is an area lacking in the current empirical literature base on mentoring.

In summary of findings from Research Question 2 when discussing effective supports, urban ECTs in this study commonly referred to feeling supported as opposed to being provided support, yet much research on supporting teachers refers to teachers being provided formal supports. Personal and emotional needs were just as important as the professional needs of urban ECTs in this study. Urban ECTs in this study indicated that much of their support came through informal interactions and positive connections with their colleagues. Based on reports from teachers in this study, it appears that both of these factors, a relationship and informal interactions including small gestures and verbal exchanges of support, are important to teachers’ perceptions of the working environment. One without the other may not be as helpful or supportive.

**Research Question 3 Findings**

**Formal Does Not Equate to More Effective**

In this study, formal supports were framed as supports that were created and structured to support teachers and build teacher effectiveness and efficacy. These included mentorship
programs, collaborative teaming opportunities, and planned professional development. When analyzing collegial interactions that occurred in formal versus informal settings, urban ECTs in this study reported satisfaction with the support provided, with 50% of the referenced informal interactions compared to 25% of the referenced interactions that occurred in formal settings. Therefore in this study, formal did not equate to more supportive or effective. Teachers in this study were more likely to cite informal interactions as supportive.

**Structured meeting times.** In this study with data that was collected in 2009 through 2010, teachers from all three buildings reported that there was a co-planning time in the schedule in which they could participate in collaboration with fellow colleagues. In 2003 when Johnson and Birkeland interviewed teachers working in urban, high-poverty schools, teachers rarely mentioned working collaboratively in a formal setting with other teachers. When Charner-Laird and colleagues (2017) asked teachers working in urban contexts about their experiences working in collaborative teams, all teachers referred to interactions that occurred in formal, collaborative settings. Therefore, structured collaborative times with colleagues has become more common over the past 15 years. However, when discussing ineffective formal supports in this study, teachers referenced how planned, structured meeting times that were provided did not meet their needs of being a novice teacher in an urban, high-poverty environment. Charner-Laird and colleagues (2017) studied the teaming process across six different schools in high-poverty urban areas. While all teachers reported that they viewed collaboration with colleagues as essential to their job success, teams were assessed favorably across only half of the schools. While these collaborative teaming processes are
becoming more common, this does not necessarily equate to effectively supporting teachers and improving educational outcomes.

There appears to be two barriers that are impeding reports of providing effective supports through formal interaction time in this study. First, interaction time was not treated as sacred and therefore other issues that came up took priority over collaboration times. Second, teachers in this study did not report a common approach to collaborating and problem solving, which research suggests is needed to make structured times worth their while (Johnson, Reinhorn, & Simon, 2016). Therefore, having a common plan time that actually happens and is structured to support positive formal interactions could help foster positive formal interactions that enhance a teacher’s perception of support. Charner-Laird and colleagues (2017) found in schools with effective teaming processes that the principal set a tone with a structure and meaningful purpose and provided instructional expertise to teams. Second, teachers felt safe during these times to engage in opportunities that allowed them to grow, which is also reflected in the findings of this study. Strong and trusting relationships, in formal and informal settings, allowed for teachers in this study to let their walls down, show vulnerability, and experience effective support.

The findings from this study do not discount past research demonstrating the positive effects of formal supports (Chester & Beaudin, 1996; Goddard et al., 2004; Hoy & Spero, 2005). Previous research has found that structured time and structured decision-making processes foster strong connections to colleagues (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012) and build teacher efficacy skills (Goddard et al., 2004). Yet the findings from this study support more recent literature demonstrating that it is not only about having the time
and structures in place but also ensuring colleagues have strong and trusting relationships to make the time worthwhile (Charner-Laird et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2016). Findings from this study highlight the necessity of having common decision-making processes and meetings with set purpose to enhance the effectiveness of structured time in building connections between colleagues and supporting ECTs. Furthermore, findings from this study support the importance of interactions that occur outside of structured time in the development of a teacher’s perception of the working environment as supportive or unsupportive.

Mentoring. Ingersoll (2012) found that from national data collected in 2008 around the same time as the data from this study was collected, 91% of early career teachers reported participating in induction and mentoring, yet little is known about the experiences and interactions that mentees have as a part of mentorship that contribute positively to teacher efficacy development and a sense of working in a supportive environment. In this study, six of the teachers (42.8%) referred to mentorship experiences when discussing supports, which is lower than what was reported nationally by Ingersoll (2012). Of the total references to mentorship provided by the school district or the alternative certification program, 52.9% of these references were coded as ineffective supports.

Of the five urban ECTs in this study who described ineffective experiences with mentorship, three teachers of them (21.4%) described how their mentors did not provide them with the individualized support that they needed. All five of the teachers in this study (35.7%) describing ineffective parts of their mentoring experience cited an inability to relate to their mentor and they “just didn’t click.” Urban ECTs in this study who could not relate to their mentors described their experiences as unsupportive. This finding suggests effective
mentor/mentee relationships are based on the mentees’ perception that they can relate to and connect with their mentors further supporting the role that relationships play in formal and informal avenues of support. More research is needed to determine how to cultivate positive mentor/mentee relationships. However, findings from this study suggest a strong relationship is more dependent on the interactions that occur and the level of trust between the pair than whether the relationship occurs in a formal or informal setting. In other words, colleagues can build strong relationships similarly regardless of the setting.

In summary, based on findings from this study, in order for supports to be viewed as effective, it is important for teachers to feel that they have a relationship with those who are supporting them. Simply putting the formal supports in place does not lead to effectively supporting urban ECTs. Formal does not necessarily equate to more effective. In order for the formal supports to be effective, strong relationships must exist between colleagues. Teachers in this study reported more effectiveness from formal supports if they could connect with and relate to those who were providing the support.

**Idle Administrators**

Past research shows that teachers who trust their principals and who report feeling supported by them are more likely to stay in their buildings (Allensworth et al., 2009). Furthermore, studies have revealed that lack of administrative support is one of the key predictors of teachers’ intent to stay in the profession (Weiss, 1999) and actual turnover (Loeb et al., 2005; Luekens, 2004). However, research is lacking in describing exactly what constitutes administrative support from the teachers’ view. The feeling of being supported is
created through experience and interaction, yet few studies have asked teachers about these experiences and interactions that lead ECTs to feeling supported (Rumley, 2010). I sought to explore how urban ECTs developed perceptions of administrators as supportive or unsupportive based on their experiences and interactions with their administrators.

Urban ECTs in this study had a lot to say about their administrators. Although interview questions did not specifically ask about principals and assistant principals, nine teachers (64.2%) reported positive and supportive interactions with their administrators while eight teachers (57.1%) referenced negative and unsupportive experiences. While 10.9% of the positive references across the social elements referenced educational leaders, negative references to leadership comprised 41.8% of the negative comments across the three social elements of the school context. Principal leadership was the only social element in which teachers had more negative or unsupportive versus positive experiences to report. Therefore, urban ECTs in this study spontaneously referenced unsupportive experiences with their administrators more often than unsupportive references to other social elements. In addition, they less frequently referenced supportive experiences with their administrators compared to the other social elements. In other words, teachers in this study had more negative than positive things to say about their administrators.

While there was more negative to say than positive about administrators, administrators who were viewed as supportive engaged in the little things to support and build connections with urban ECTs. Their actions communicated to teachers in this study that they were always available to help and support. Their support extended beyond the obligations of their professional role in supporting ECTs personal and emotional needs. When describing
positive and supportive experiences with administrators, the same facets of what constituted a supportive teacher-to-teacher relationship also fostered a positive sense of support from administrators. This was described above in the section titled “Importance of Informal Interactions.” Therefore, this section will focus on experiences that led urban ECTs in this study to feel unsupported.

Based on participants’ responses in interviews, it was discovered that a lack of support by administrators came down to administrators being idle in their responsibilities. Primarily, teachers in this study reported being frustrated with their administrators’ lack of responsiveness to student discipline problems, unresponsive to teachers’ pleas for help, and lack of follow-through on tasks. These feelings of frustration led to feelings of not being supported.

Urban ECTs in this study relayed their desires to work in schools with established behavior norms with administrators who enforce norms for student discipline. Administrators who were idle in this responsibility were a common source of complaint. When describing frustrations with administrators related to student discipline, teachers in this study commonly described frustration with the lack of consequences (e.g., suspensions, detentions, etc.) for student disruptive and disrespectful behavior. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) found that ECTs left schools where student disrespect and disruption were a part of the norm and went to schools where there were well-established norms for student discipline. While teacher turnover is a variable beyond the scope of this current study, this study supports Johnson and Birkeland’s (2003) findings in that teachers reported dissatisfaction in schools where student behavior problems are the norm.
Urban ECTs in this study described how administrators’ inactions served as a source of frustration. Some examples of inactions that frustrated teachers in this study were related to lack of enforcing the time schedule, not implementing schoolwide rules that were created by a committee, and not following up with a teacher’s plea for help with a parent. In essence, urban ECTs in this study took issue with administrators who did not do what they promised they would do.

While these negative examples of how to effectively support, the contraposition of these examples can shed light on positive examples of what administrators can do to make ECTs feel supported. First, it is likely that urban ECTs in this study would feel supported if administrators helped teachers deal with disruptive and violent student behavior by creating and enforcing consistent consequences. Second, when teachers ask for help, administrators who listen, empathize, and support the teacher with creation and implementation of an action plan could help their teachers feel supported. Findings from this study support past research in which teachers’ perceptions of their administrators have a strong influence on their perceptions of support (Allensworth et al., 2009; Loeb et al., 2005; Luekens, 2004; Weiss, 1999).

Research Question 4 Findings

There has been limited research looking at the process that teachers engage in while developing efficacy beliefs. Furthermore, minimal research exists examining the four sources of efficacy experience and their contribution to teacher efficacy development early in the teaching career (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). While Bandura (1997) hypothesized that
ECTs rely more heavily on sources other than mastery experiences when developing their efficacy beliefs, urban ECTs in this study reported greatly relying on mastery experiences. Specifically, teachers discussed that by having their own successful teaching experiences, they believed that they could continue to be successful and overcome challenges that came their way. They reported that having experience was necessary to becoming a successful teacher. This mirrors Milner and Hoy’s (2003) findings outlining the significance of mastery experiences on the development of efficacy beliefs with a novice teacher in a qualitative case study.

Seeing and Doing Fosters Efficacy Beliefs

Next, teachers in this study expressed the importance of seeing other teachers in action and how these experiences positively impacted their own efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1994) stated that the impact of modeling on efficacy development is strongly influenced by the person’s beliefs that she or he is are similar to the social model observed. Findings from this study support this part of Bandura’s theory. In this study, teachers discussed that observing fellow colleagues who were teaching in a context similar to them was a powerful contributor to efficacy beliefs.

This finding further supports the modeling aspect of self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1994). Specifically, the teacher must observe a similar social model put forth effort and be successful in order to have a positive effect on the observer’s efficacy beliefs. Given the limited research done exploring the four sources of efficacy development, much more
research is needed to empirically validate Bandura’s (1997) model outlining the influence of specific sources of experience on the development of efficacy.

Culture as a Channel

ECTs in this study discussed how understanding the culture of the school and students either served as a facilitator or barrier to building student relationships, in turn impacting efficacy beliefs. Four urban ECTs in this study (28.6%) described how understanding the culture served as a facilitator, and three teachers in the study (21.4%) discussed culture as a barrier. These differences were divided across racial lines, with all teachers reporting culture as a facilitator identifying as Black and those referring to culture as a barrier being White. When looking closer at the participants’ stories, the teachers did not describe their race as being the variable influencing their efficacy beliefs. Rather, teachers in this study reported that it was their similarity or dissimilarity to their students’ experiences that allowed them to connect with students. While teachers did not explicitly talk about race, it is important to discuss how race could influence teachers’ abilities to connect with their students.

Teachers who saw culture as a facilitator described their students as human beings within an urban, high-poverty community experiencing adverse experiences that are commonly reported by impoverished students. On the other hand, teachers who saw culture as a barrier described their students at first as “unrelatable” beings. Particularly, they reported that they were not able to understand their students’ problematic behaviors. However, the teachers also described that their ability to communicate and relate to students did improve over time and with effort to understand the culture of the community. The teachers reported
that their relatability with their students improved with experience and by engaging in learning about their students’ communities and the impacts of poverty.

While teachers did not explicitly cite their own race as a factor in the theme Cultural Code, ignoring the racial divide would be of disservice to the teachers in this study and the students they serve. Race most likely does play a role here. Teachers most likely did not talk about race due to naivety or apprehension. Based on White teachers’ accounts shared, it appears that the construct of “othering” is playing a part in White urban ECTs’ abilities to relate with their students and develop their own efficacy beliefs. Othering is a process of distancing oneself from those viewed as different (Magee & Frasier, 2014). By categorizing people in a binary way (race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, disability status), an “us versus them” mentality is created. While some have hypothesized that this served humans well from a survival standpoint, we now live in a world where we need to all band together to strive as a human race. In the present day, these binary relationships diminish the importance of one group compared to another leading to differences in social capital, specifically resources and opportunities (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda, 2012). The othering process is apparent in White urban ECTs stories in their descriptions of the students as being different from them, specifically unrelatable, disrespectful, and “acting like animals.” Yet after having experience, developing relationships with their students, and educating themselves, the White urban ECTs in this study described an improved ability to relate to their students in turn influencing efficacy beliefs.
The impact of a teacher’s own upbringing and experience was not included in this study’s framework presented in Chapter 2 as this topic was not evident in the research of teacher turnover or in the research on teacher efficacy development. There continues to be minimal research looking at factors of a teacher’s personal upbringing or informal experiences and their relation to efficacy beliefs. Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) explored the role of three different informal experiences (youth advisor, camp counselor, and child care provider) on the development of teacher efficacy in 315 teachers teaching in Jewish day schools in the United States. They explored the influence of these informal experiences compared to more formal, teacher preparatory experiences on efficacy beliefs. Formal experiences were related to ratings of efficacy for instructional strategies while informal experiences were related to ratings of efficacy for student engagement and management. Urban ECTs in this study also reported positive efficacy beliefs for student engagement and management if their informal experiences, specifically their upbringing, matched their students. However, the specific types of informal experiences between this study and Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) are different.

While Burke-Spero and Woolfolk Hoy (2003) did not specifically examine the influence of personal experience on efficacy beliefs, the authors recommended using a socio-cultural lens to understand how teachers interpret efficacy sources. Given that there is fluctuation in efficacy beliefs based on school context, Burke-Spero and Woolfolk Hoy (2003) argue that a teacher’s personal experiences, beliefs, and attitudes alter efficacy beliefs depending on the context. Findings from this study support Burke-Spero and Woolfolk Hoy’s (2003) hypothesized claims regarding the socio-cultural lens. Teachers from this study did
have differing views on their ability to be successful based on their own personal experiences. Given this finding and the limited research exploring the influence of the teacher’s upbringing on one’s efficacy beliefs (Burke-Spero & Woolfolk Hoy, 2003; Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011), much more research is needed in this area.

Recommendations for Practice

Findings from this study do not point to simple or quick solutions to the educational problems posed. However, if there were easy answers, these problems would have already been resolved. Based on findings from this study, trusting and caring relationships between colleagues (teachers and administrators) is the underpinning factor common across all practical recommendations. Strong relationships allow for urban ECTs to feel supported and set the stage for a supportive school culture based on a sense of care and belonging. Urban ECTs in this study expressed a desire to belong to the larger school context, and strong collegial relationships facilitated this sense of belonging. Findings point to the need for supporting not just a teacher’s professional needs but also their personal and emotional needs. Teachers who felt like their interpersonal needs were being met felt supported. Their personal needs were most effectively met through informal interactions with fellow colleagues. Lastly, findings from this study point to the need to focus not only on teachers being provided supports but also feeling supported. If teachers do not feel supported, then provided supports should not be deemed effective.

The quantitative research presented throughout this study has highlighted the school contextual variables that are related to teacher efficacy and turnover. Programs have been
developed to enhance these variables. However, findings from this study demonstrate that something is missing from this approach given that teachers are reporting more effectiveness with supports delivered in an informal versus a formal fashion. Based on the findings from this study, Figure 4 provides recommendations for how to practically support ECTs personal and professional needs within a supportive school culture. Urban ECTs who feel supported and successful work in school cultures founded on strong and trusting collegial relationships. These relationships support the personal needs of the ECT and facilitate the development of the professional self. In addition, collegial relationships enhance the effectiveness of formal and informal supports. Time is needed to engage in all practical recommendations suggested in Figure 4. While it is unlikely that administrators will be able to influence the time available in the school day, administrators must be cognizant of how formal interaction time is structured to ensure the best use of the time. Furthermore, administrators should ensure that supportive informal interactions occur in their schools. More specific practical recommendations for how to best utilize the time available in the school day are described in more detail below.

The first recommendation of this study relates to the most prominent finding across the research questions, specifically the importance of strong relationships and connections with colleagues as the foundation to viewing a school culture as supportive. Supportive relationships were described as being founded on trust, which allowed for vulnerability and growth. Having trusting relationships allowed for ECTs to admit and address their misgivings as novice teachers. Therefore, in practice, the relationship and building relationships (ECT to experienced teachers, ECTs and administrators, and mentor and mentee) should be a focus in
Figure 4. Supporting ECTs: Practical recommendations from this study.
any school wanting to support teachers. Urban ECTs in this study described informal interactions as more prominent in supporting the development of strong relationships with colleagues. Therefore, opportunities for these informal interactions must be available to teachers. It was in these times of teachers just talking to each other that they formed strong, trusting connections that turned into relationships that provided both emotional and professional support. Some examples of these opportunities could be occasions for teachers to talk and connect before and after school, outside of school hours through social events, or some time devoted during professional development for informal interactions. While schools must continue to focus on getting the job done related to student success, schools are being injudicious if they ignore the needs of those who are expected to get the job done. Building strong collegial relationships should be a focus of schools wanting to keep teachers and ensure student success.

The second and third recommendations relate to the people, fellow teachers and administrators, who are responsible for and set the tone for fostering positive, trusting relationships with ECTs. The second recommendation of this study relates to the role that experienced teachers play in supporting ECTs. Much research has focused on how people, such as mentors who may be external to the novice teacher’s context, formally support them within their context. Yet findings from this study suggest that teachers are turning to colleagues who work side by side with them each day for support. Strong collegial relationships (Allensworth et al., 2009; Gaikhorst, et al. 2014; Johnson et al., 2012) founded on a basis of trust (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015) foster a sense of support. Therefore, when considering how to support
ECTs, the experienced colleagues whom ECTs encounter on a daily basis should be viewed as the most viable source of support. In order to ensure that teachers feel supported, fellow colleagues must be on board and aware of how to support novice teachers within their buildings. Findings from this study suggest that experienced teachers who say hi to novice teachers, stop by their rooms to introduce themselves, engage in small talk during informal times, and offer to be of assistance anytime would be effective ways to build relationships between the experienced and novice ensuring that ECTs feel supported. The findings from this study begin to lay the groundwork to understand how we can support the personal side of a teacher. Supporting ECTs takes development of a positive school environment, rather than specific training (Hanson & Hoyos, 2015), in which informal interactions that support ECTs naturally occur. Willingness on the part of experienced teachers and administrators to engage in these interactions is imperative. By attending social functions that occur after school hours and outside of school boundaries, experienced teachers can provide opportunities for informal interactions to occur with ECTs. These informal interactions can serve as precursors to the development of strong collegial relationships. Schools with strong positive cultures promote the idea that all teachers are there to support all students. The same vision should be applied to teachers in that all teaches are there to support each other, with a specific emphasis on experienced to novice.

The third recommendation of this study relates to the administrator’s responsibility in ensuring that teachers feel supported with personal and professional needs. Administrators must be aware of their own actions and how these directly impact their teachers’ perceptions of support and the school culture. It is by their interactions with others that they set the tone
for connectedness and a positive school culture. Past research shows that through creating a positive school culture and organizational climate of teamwork and collaboration, creating a whole-school approach to learning, and creating opportunities for professional growth, principals played a pivotal role in setting the tone for connectedness among staff (Long et al., 2012). Findings from this study support the importance of the principal’s role in creating a positive school culture and organizational climate of teamwork and collaboration. According to urban ECTs in this study, administrators laid the foundation for a collaborative and positive culture by modeling the use of informal interactions as a means to show their desire to effectively support ECTs. Administrators should have an open door policy, ensure they respond to or follow up to pleas for help from their teachers, and ensure their building has a systematic way to support student social emotional growth and a plan to respond when student behavior problems occurs. It would benefit administrators to know if informal interactions between experienced and novice teachers were occurring in their buildings. If not, administrators would need to figure out why not so that they can begin to facilitate a school culture where informal, supportive experiences are the norm. Next, administrators should ensure that a social committee exists in their building with involvement from a wide range of staff. The focus of this committee would be in creating social opportunities for more informal interactions to occur and for teachers to get to know each other as people beyond their professional role. Furthermore, it is recommended that a specific experienced teacher who is a part of the social committee have the role to continually check in with ECTs on an informal, ongoing basis to engage in informal interactions, provide emotional support, and foster trusting relationships. Lastly, administrators should incorporate time for informal
interaction to occur during formal meetings. The purpose of this is to allow opportunities for
teachers to connect with each other on a personal level to set the stage for positive
relationships to develop.

The fourth recommendation of this study relates to the target of current models of
support for novice teachers. Models of support must not only consider how to support a
teacher in learning specific teaching behaviors but also in supporting personal and emotional
needs as well. Findings from this study suggest that supporting the personal needs of ECTs
is just as or even more important than professional needs. Urban ECTs from this study cite
their colleagues when referring to supporting their personal and professional needs. They also
commonly refer to the sense of feeling supported rather than just being provided supports.
Therefore, when considering how to support urban ECTs, programs should target the
professional and personal selves of the teacher. Simply having the supportive structures or
formal experiences in place was not enough for urban ECTs in this study. Urban ECTs in this
study required the sense of emotional support in order for the formal support to be effective.
Models of support must be created to support the professional and personal needs of novice
teachers. Findings from this study open the door to having different conversations about how
to support ECTs.

The fifth recommendation of this study relates to ensuring formal supports,
specifically scheduled collaboration time and mentoring, are effective. While the findings
from this study highlight the necessity of supporting teachers in informal avenues, formal
supports should also be a part of a successful model ensuring to meet the professional and
personal needs of ECTs. The author is not recommending removing formal avenues of
support. Based on findings from this study, the following recommendations are important for administrators to consider in order to ensure formal supports are viewed as effective by ECTs: relationships between colleagues must exist, the focus of the support must meet the specific needs of ECTs, and the formal time must actually occur and be treated as sacred. In relation to collaborative teaming, time must be scheduled and treated as sacred, which primarily is an administrator’s responsibility. Based on teachers’ stories in this study, professional development time was viewed as a waste of time because of a lack of focus/purpose and the time not meeting the individual needs of ECTs.

More recent research highlights the importance of the principal’s role in being an integral part of collaborative teaming by setting the structure and tone (Charner-Laird et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2016). In teams that assessed their collaboration process favorably, they described the teaming environment to be a safe place for job-embedded growth (Charner-Lair et al., 2017). Findings from this study and Charner-Lair and colleagues (2017) demonstrate that trusting relationships allow for formal avenues to be viewed as safe places for vulnerability and learning to occur, and the principal must play a key role in setting the tone and ensuring the effectiveness of teams.

Based on teachers’ experiences from this study, the PA system was a common distraction during instructional and teaming times. Schools should have designated times for PA announcements so as to reduce distraction during instructional and teaming times as both of these times should be treated as sacred. In relation to mentoring as a formal support, mentees should have choice in selecting their mentor as this can lead to stronger and more trusting relationships between mentor and mentee. This could mean that the mentee’s choice
may not be a formally trained mentor. However, findings from this study and past studies (Long et al., 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) suggests that having a trusting relationship that is viewed as a good match is of utmost importance to the effectiveness of the support. Matching pairs by grade level or content area enhances chances of the support being viewed as effective. Furthermore, attempting to match teachers by philosophical alignment could enhance the effectiveness of mentoring. However, this is a more complicated arrangement to make.

The sixth recommendation relates to staff and administrator roles and responsibilities in managing student disruptive and aggressive behaviors. Findings from this study indicate that administrators’ lack of enforcement of school rules or lack of delivery of consequences for student behavior problems was a source of frustration for urban ECTs. When they felt like they had exhausted all other options, teachers from this study described that they would feel more supported if administrators responded by delivering consequences. There are two practical recommendations for this concern expressed by urban ECTs in this study. First, administrators should create a safe avenue in which teachers can share comments and concerns. With the use of technology and anonymous surveys, administrators can gather information regarding staff concerns without staff fear of retaliation. The responsibility to address staff concerns then falls on the administrator. Teachers will only feel supported if the administrator does something to address the concern. Second, based on research suggesting the ineffectiveness and counterproductive effect of consequences (i.e., suspensions, detentions, expulsions); (Warren et al., 2003), it is suggested that administrators foster positive school cultures in which a clear, systematic approach to student behavior exists.
ECTs from this study and other studies (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) described supportive work environments as those in which clear expectations for students existed and where all people in the system understand what the expectation is and the consequence for breaking that rule. The process of creating a school culture like this starts with the administrator. Systematic changes can be made to enhance more positive school cultures for teachers and students through the implementation of positive behavior supports (Anderson & Kincaid, 2005; Warren et al., 2006). Administrators should consider implementation of positive behavior support systems to not only reduce behavior problems but also to promote a positive school culture founded on the basis of strong, trusting relationships between staff and students. A systematic way to support students in making positive choices and also promote consistency in delivering consequences can enhance a sense of working in a supportive school culture. Again, the responsibility to carry out the system with integrity falls on the administrator. If this is not done, teachers will continue to feel unsupported.

The seventh practical recommendation relates to building efficacy beliefs of ECTs. First, schools looking to promote the efficacy beliefs of their teachers should embed opportunities for teachers to see good teaching within their own school or in a school that services similar students. Afterwards, teachers should have a time set up to discuss observations. Second, teachers who report strong efficacy beliefs build their beliefs by having successful teaching experiences. While informal supports made teachers feel supported, they did not necessarily enhance efficacy beliefs of teachers in this study. Therefore, schools can promote teachers having successful experiences by providing the necessary formal supports that target the teacher’s individualized needs. Furthermore, a trusting and strong relationship
between ECT and experienced teacher will enhance the perceptions of effectiveness of these supports targeting the professional needs of the teacher. These practical recommendations related to efficacy are based on findings from this study and are also supported by past research.

The last practical recommendation points to a new finding related to efficacy from this study. Given the impact of culture on efficacy beliefs in teachers in this study, schools must promote cultural proficiency of those working in schools. While schools cannot control the upbringing and the past experiences of their teachers, schools can promote cultural proficiency among their staff. “Cultural proficiency is a way of being that enables both individuals and organizations to respond effectively to people who differ from them” (Lindsey, Robins & Terrell, 2003, p. 5). Cultural proficiency encompasses one being aware of one’s cultural biases. Striving for cultural proficiency is an ongoing journey that can alleviate the influence of a teacher’s biases on the students whom they serve (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2007). Cultural proficiency is an ongoing process in which individuals learn to work effectively with those who are different from them. Findings from this study highlight the importance of colleague relationships when it comes to meeting the teacher’s personal and professional needs. Therefore, when considering the process of cultural proficiency, teachers should find support in their fellow colleagues with whom they have trusting relationships. In this study, there were teachers who grew up in urban, high-poverty schools and those who did not. Therefore, encouraging conversations between colleagues regarding race and culture can open lines of communication on a taboo topic in a safe, trusting environment. Urban ECTs who do not understand the culture may feel unsafe
and unsure of who to go to or how to deal with questions related to race and culture leading to a sense of frustration. If done in a safe and nonjudgmental approach, opening lines of communication between those who understand and those who don’t can lead to a sense of support for urban ECTs. Given the taboo nature of the topic of race and culture, guidelines should be considered when engaging in uncomfortable conversations. In the book *Courageous Conversations About Race*, Glenn Singleton (2015) provides tools and a process for educators to engage in to identify their own racial and cultural biography and then discuss it in a productive manner with colleagues. In the book *Dreamkeepers* (2009), Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings analyzes successful teachers of African American students. Through interview and observational research, Dr. Ladson-Billings presents findings highlighting what makes teachers successful in these contexts with African American students. She presents three central findings regarding successful teachers: a strong focus on student learning, focus on building teacher cultural proficiency, and cultivating sociopolitical awareness in students. ECTs could build their own cultural proficiency by conducting a book study with fellow colleagues and discussing how teachers could practically enact recommendations from *Dreamkeepers* (2009). By building culturally proficiency, urban ECTs will be building their skills in being able to relate to and engage their students. Furthermore, these interactions offer more opportunities to build strong, trusting relationships with their fellow colleagues.
Directions for Future Research

Paradigm Shift

In 2001, Ingersoll’s groundbreaking study on teacher turnover challenged the paradigms that were used at the time to study and understand teacher turnover. Ingersoll (2001) recommended that turnover should be studied at the organizational rather than the individual level. Similar to Ingersoll’s recommendation in 2001, the lens through which we look at and analyze teacher turnover must be reframed, or rather extended. Prior to 2001, most of the research on teacher attrition focused on the individual teacher. Then there was a shift analyzing the problem through an organization standpoint, which did not always include considering the individual teacher. Based on findings from this study and others (Johnson et al., 2012; Weschler et al., 2010), research frameworks analyzing teacher attrition must incorporate the individual teacher, the school context, and the interactions that occur which shape the individual teachers’ views of the context and themselves as individuals. A paradigm shift is needed moving beyond simply providing teachers supports to making teachers feel supported by building a school culture rich in trusting collegial relationships. This paradigm shift includes a shift in the way that support is operationalized and defined. Currently, supports are most often described as programs, people, or activities that are provided to teachers, such as coaching, mentoring, induction, or specific professional development targeting ECTs. Findings from this study highlight the necessity for teachers to feel that the support is effective. Therefore, support should be viewed as a perception or a feeling beyond just a program or person providing support.
Findings from this study support past research (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Johnson et al., 2012; Weschsler et al., 2010) surmising that teachers’ interpretations of the social elements of the school context make contributions to their perceptions of the working environment as being positive or negative. Conceptual frameworks must move beyond linear models, as presented in Figure 1 of this study, in which one factor influences the other without considering the interaction of factors. Given that the teacher is a part of that school context, one’s personal and professional selves in turn impact aspects of the school’s social context. New paradigms analyzing teacher turnover that focus on supporting ECTs must outline the synergy that exists between the teacher, the school context, and the types of formal and informal supports and interactions that influence both the individual teacher and the social elements of the school culture.

**Proposals for Future Research**

Based on findings from this study, future research is necessary across a variety of areas. This section is organized by research topic with a discussion of the future research needed in that area and proposed research questions for that specific topic.

**Social Elements of the School Culture**

Findings from this study have shed light on and opened many doors for new conversations regarding the relationship between social elements of the school context and teachers’ perceptions of support. Future research is needed to better understand how strong collegial relationships foster a sense of trust and belonging for ECTs. In addition, interview
questions for this study did not specifically target urban ECTs’ experiences with and perceptions of administrators, yet teachers in this study did spontaneously reference their administrators. More research is needed that specifically targets urban ECTs’ experiences and interactions with their administrators to better understand administrators’ actions that foster a sense of support. In addition, more research is needed to understand how administrators can foster a culture in which teachers spontaneously support each other, engage in supportive informal interactions, and are motivated to develop personal relationships. While the educational problem posed in this study addressed teacher turnover, the research goals of this study did not specifically target turnover. Given findings from this study, more research is needed directly looking at the link between schools that are designed to ensure the support and success of ECTs, as presented in Figure 4, and turnover. The following are a list of potential areas for future research.

- What is the association between the level of trust and level of connectedness between colleagues?
- How does trust serve to facilitate positive relationships between colleagues?
- What specific relationship factors (e.g., trust, philosophical alignment, etc.) cultivate a positive colleague-to-colleague relationship?
- How do school leaders promote school cultures in which teachers spontaneously engage in informal interactions to support one another?
- Under what conditions within a school do colleagues spontaneously engage in small gestures and actions to show their support for one another?

Formal Supports

Findings from this study point to the importance that connections and relationships serve in not only fostering a sense of working in a supportive school culture but also in making formal and given supports more effective. Yet much of the research on supporting
ECTs that focuses on formalized, programmatic supports does not incorporate an understanding of the role that relationship factors (i.e., trust, level of connectedness, etc.) and the avenues in which relationships are developed (formal versus informal) play in ensuring the effectiveness of these supports. Therefore, more research is needed in this area. Findings from this study do not discount previous research supporting the effectiveness of structured, formal collaboration time. Interview questions asked of teachers in this study did not specifically inquire about the process, structure, or expectations of structured collaboration time, yet teachers across all buildings did spontaneously reference times that were designated at least on a weekly basis for teachers to work with grade-level colleagues. Therefore, more research is needed to understand how structures, processes, and relationships incorporated in formal supports can be developed to enhance the effectiveness of this method of support.

Furthermore, we need to look beyond only providing these formalized supports to ensure that urban ECTs also feel supported. The following are a list of potential areas for future research.

- What is the relationship between the quality of the mentor/mentee relationship and the effectiveness of mentoring on the ECTs’ skill development and efficacy beliefs?
- What specific relationship factors (e.g., trust, philosophical alignment, etc.) cultivate a positive mentor/mentee relationship?
- What are the barriers to implementing best and effective practices during structured times that are created for teachers to interact?
- What types of interactions that occur during formal meeting time foster a sense of connection to colleagues?

**Sources of Efficacy Development**

Findings from this study support Bandura’s concept of teacher efficacy. However, much more research is needed to understand the process that teachers go through to develop
efficacy beliefs. More quantitative research is needed to provide clarity to and distinction between the four sources of efficacy development. Specifically based on findings from this study, more research is needed to delineate between verbal persuasion and verbal interactions that are supportive. Also in the current literature base, most research assumes that efficacy beliefs begin with a teacher during teacher preparation programs. However, findings from this study highlight the importance of the teacher’s personal history and how this influences efficacy beliefs specifically related to engaging and relating to students. More research is needed to better understand how teachers’ past experiences influence efficacy beliefs.

This study along with most research on teacher turnover looks at teachers who were hopeful and continued teaching. While the majority of teachers in this study reported feeling ill-prepared to teach, they were hopeful that they could be successful. This skews the data on efficacy beliefs of novice teachers as most research focuses on those who believed they could do it and stayed. More research is needed analyzing the experiences and beliefs that led novice teachers to leave the field. Next, teachers in this study reported the benefit of observing teachers in similar contexts to them. However, research is needed to understand what types of observation experiences and observation of what types of teachers (e.g., experienced or novice, content specific, etc.) are most beneficial to efficacy beliefs.

While many of the teachers in this study reported participating in many verbal exchanges that were perceived to be supportive, few of these exchanges were described as verbally persuasive comments that would be expected to boost a teacher’s confidence in one’s capabilities. This contradicts findings by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007) that verbal persuasion is a pertinent source of efficacy development for novice teachers. More research
is needed to better distinguish between interactions that support the personal versus the professional needs of the teacher and which types of interactions support both personal and professional needs. Of interest to this study is that when analyzing the few experiences that were coded as verbal persuasion, strong collegial relationships in which the ECT could be vulnerable to admit his or her faults facilitated supportive verbal persuasion experiences. Lastly, technology has changed dramatically over the past 10 years, which also changes the ways in which people interact with each other. More research is needed to understand how technology-related experiences contribute to efficacy beliefs. The following are a list of potential areas for future research specifically related to the four sources of efficacy development.

- What level of importance do each of the four sources of efficacy development play in the formation of ECTs’ efficacy beliefs?
- What efficacy-activated processes (cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection) do urban ECTs engage in when developing their efficacy beliefs?
- How does ill-preparedness for the job impact the development of efficacy beliefs in those teachers who leave the field?
- What components (content area, instructional modality, experienced versus novice teacher) of observations are most beneficial to efficacy beliefs?
- What components of verbal interactions between colleague/ECT or administrator/ECT extend beyond support and actually influence efficacy beliefs?
- How do informal and personal experiences that occur prior to teacher preparation contribute to teacher efficacy beliefs?
- How do technology-related experiences (e.g., email, video modeling) influence a teacher’s sense of support and efficacy beliefs?

Limitations

Considering this is a qualitative study, the first limitation to this study is the researcher’s own biases which could impact the interpretation of interview data. This is my
eleventh year as a school psychologist in a public school setting. I have lived what the data says on why ECTs leave or move buildings. It has been the lack of support and guidance from administration and colleagues serving as the guiding force that has led me to move schools or to be dissatisfied with a job. Furthermore, I have worked in four different school districts, all with differing school contexts and supports provided to new employees. Therefore, I have bias from my own professional and personal experiences. I used the bracketing method (Fischer, 2009; Tufford & Newman, 2012) to mitigate the effects of my preconceived notions and ideas about the research topic. The purpose of applying the bracketing method was to promote transparency throughout the data analysis process. This process is discussed in detail in the methodology section of this study.

Second, the semi-structured interview data was previously collected. I completed a secondary analysis of the semi-structured interview data. Therefore, I did not meet face to face with the ECTs interviewed for this study and am not able to comment on their affect and emotions when discussing topics. However, in the first step of my data analysis process, getting to know the data, I read through all the transcripts before beginning to understand and analyze the data. Audiotapes or videotapes were not available to review.

Third, I was a research assistant for two semesters on a research team that developed the codebook for the primary analysis of the semi-structured interview data that was used in this study. Therefore, I have experience with the data and do have biases since I have applied a similar research methodology with a different set of research questions. From my involvement with the semi-structured interview data in the original study, I learned that urban ECTs have many experiences with colleagues and with the social elements of the school
context (Johnson et al., 2012) that lead them to feel supported or frustrated. These experiences and interactions seemed to contribute to their sense of success as teachers. These experiences were independent of the intervention model. The analysis of the original study focused on understanding urban ECTs’ responses to the intervention model. However, I focused on the specific experiences and interactions that contributed to a sense of support, connectedness, and effectiveness. Throughout the analysis, I maintained awareness of the focus of this study guided by the conceptual framework and research questions to alleviate this limitation. Furthermore, I used the bracketing method (Fisher, 2009; Tufford & Newman, 2012), specifically a reflexive journal (Northway, 2000) and dialogue with a critical friend (Richardson, 1997), in order to address validity threats.

Fourth, the data were collected in November of 2009 and September of 2010. Given that the landscape in education has changed over the past eight years given shifts in the economy, changes in policy and law (i.e., No Child Left Behind and the Every Student Succeeds Act), involvement of student achievement in teacher performance, and changes to standards and expectations in mentoring and induction programs, the experiences of teachers eight years ago are going to be different given how time has changed the context of schools. Therefore, within the discussion section, I considered the findings of the study within the historical context and changes since the data was collected. Furthermore, this study explored urban ECTs’ experiences with perceptions of support, interactions with colleagues, and teacher efficacy development within the school context. Teachers have always had experiences with these factors; therefore, I projected that experiences would be evident in the data. In the discussion section, I did consider these findings within the context of the time
when the data were collected. While the age of the data is a limitation, the findings related to
the influence of relationships on perceptions of support and re-operationalizing support as a
perception or feeling rather than a program or activity still are facets lacking from the most
current models of support. Therefore, the findings from this study do provide relevant
recommendations despite the age of the data.

Last, this study consisted of one semi-structured interview from a small sample size of
14 ECTs (i.e., total of 14 semi-structured interviews in analysis). Therefore, generalizability
to even other similar settings is cautioned. However, the purpose of this study is not
necessarily to generalize to other schools but to begin to understand those experiences of
ECTs that lead to reports of working in a school environment that supports them to be
successful and supports the development of strong and productive connections to their
colleagues.

Concluding Comments

Overwhelmingly, 12 of the urban ECTs in this study (85.7%) did not feel prepared for
their job and described being shocked by some of their early experiences. Yet teachers in this
study remained hopeful that they could grow and become more effective teachers with the
right supports in the right context. While much research has focused on providing support to
teachers, findings from this study point to the importance of teachers feeling supported.
While most formal supports target professional needs, teachers’ experiences from this study
suggest that meeting personal and emotional needs are just as or more important. In this
study, teachers felt supported when other colleagues engaged in small gestures and verbal
exchanges to show their support. Perceptions of support were enhanced when teachers perceived to have strong personal connections and relationships with their colleagues, yet one without the other was not as impactful. Specifically, small gestures by those with whom the teacher did not feel bonded were not as impactful in supporting teachers. Strong relationships also enhanced the perception of formal supports as being more effective. When referring to ineffective supports, teachers in this study commonly referenced ineffective programs that weren’t working and frustration with lack of implementation and follow-through with systematic features of the school, such as supports with students’ social-emotional states and behavior.

Findings from this study imply that when schools are considering how to ensure teachers feel supported and effective with their students, meeting the personal and professional needs of the teacher through formal and informal avenues must be considered. Schools must be cognizant of creating opportunities for supportive, informal interactions to occur while having effective, formal supports in place. Strong relationships, in formal and informal avenues, founded on a basis of trust serve as the underpinning for supports to be viewed as effective and the school culture to be viewed as a positive one in which teachers want to work. Findings from this study point to the importance of supporting the personal and emotional needs of the teacher and understanding how the personal experiences of the teacher influence efficacy beliefs. Despite all the challenges faced by urban ECTs, these teachers are hopeful that they can be effective. There are ways to ensure that ECTs are supported and successful; they start with trusting collegial relationships and a supportive school culture.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EARLY CAREER TEACHERS – TIME 1: ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS AND CONNECTEDNESS AMONG EARLY CAREER TEACHERS IN URBAN SCHOOLS
Background

1. So, tell me about your experiences teaching so far. I would like to get a general sense of how things are going and what your experience has been so far.

Probes:
   a) How many years have you been teaching?
   b) Have you taught at the same school? If not, what other schools have you taught at and what was that experience like?

2. How did you decide to teach? What other career options did you consider?

Probes:
   a) If teaching is not first career, what did you do before you decided to teach? Why did you decide to leave that field?
   b) What led you to teaching?
   c) How did you end up in an urban school?

3. What were your expectations of being a teacher prior to becoming one?

Probes:
   a) Did your expectations match your reality? Why? Why not?
   b) What parts of teaching have been most rewarding?
   c) What parts of teaching have been most challenging?

4. What type of teacher preparation did you have? Do you feel sufficiently prepared to teach?

Probes:
   a) Are you certified by the state?
   b) Do you have alternate certification, such as Teach for America? Emergency certification?

5. How prepared do you feel to teach in an urban setting?

Probes:
   a) What parts of teaching in an urban school do you feel you were better prepared for?
   b) What parts of teaching in an urban school have you felt less prepared for?
**Experiences in the Classroom**

So, in thinking about what you just shared with me about how prepared you have felt as a new teacher, I would like to know about your experiences with your classroom on a day to day basis.

1. What have your experiences been like running your classroom so far?

   Probes:
   
   a) As a new teacher, what parts of running your classroom have come easily to you? Why do you think that is?
   b) What kinds of skills do you think you brought with you that made running your classroom go well?
   c) What parts of running your classroom have been more challenging? Why do you think that is?

2. How much control do you feel you have in your classroom?

   Probes:
   
   a) How much do you believe you can control students’ disruptive behavior? How much do you believe that you can get students to follow the rules of your classroom?
   b) How much do you believe that you can get students engaged in learning?
   c) How are you feeling about your ability to manage future challenges that come up in your classroom?

**Help Seeking**

Now I’m interested in learning more about who you go to for help and support inside and outside of your school.

1. During your first few years of teaching, can you describe the types of support you received?

   Probes:
   
   a) Was the support that you received what you needed? Why? Why not?
   b) If it was a person who provided you with support, what was their role (in school, out of school)?
   c) Did you find that support helpful? In what ways was it helpful and not helpful?
   d) Was that support enough and when you needed it? Could you have used more?
e) If you obtained support from other sources (Internet, books, others), in what ways was support from other sources helpful and not helpful?

**Connectedness**

1. What is it like to teach at [Name of School]?

   **Probes:**
   
   a) How would you describe the feel of the school, especially for a new teacher?
   b) What type of contact do you have with other teachers at your school?
   c) How often do you talk to other teachers? What do you tend to talk about?

2. Do you feel close to some or all of your colleagues?

   **Probes:**
   
   a) How emotionally close do you feel to your colleagues? Is it a tight knit group of teachers? How are newcomers welcomed?
   b) How much cohesion and trust is there among faculty at [Name of School]?
   c) Do people pull together when needed?
   d) How much can you count on your colleagues?

**Professional Community**

1. Are there specific norms and expectations at [Name of School] for teaching?

   **Probes:**
   
   a) What types of norms and values exist regarding strategies for managing disruptive behaviors? Can you describe those norms/values?
   b) What types of norms and values exist regarding strategies for motivating learners? Can you describe those norms/values?
   c) How did you learn about how things are typically done at your school as a new teacher? How were they communicated to you?
   d) Do teachers agree on those norms and values?

2. How comfortable are teachers with reflecting (thinking carefully and seriously) and sharing their beliefs about their practices as a teacher?

   **Probes:**
   
   a) What opportunities are there for teachers to plan lessons together?
b) What opportunities are there for teachers to reflect on how a lesson/instructional strategy was implemented in their classroom?

c) What opportunities are there for teachers to reflect on challenges they experienced implementing a lesson/instructional strategy?

d) What opportunities are there for teachers to work together to improve their instruction?

e) How comfortable are teachers sharing the parts of teaching that are hard?
APPENDIX B

CODEBOOK
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MASTERCODES</th>
<th>Subcodes</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHALL – challenges/stressors related to teaching</td>
<td>CHALL/instruct – developing instructional plans and/or delivering instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers reports of current or perceived future challenges and or difficulties related to their job</td>
<td>CHALL/mang – manage student behavior related to consequences that are out of the teachers control or consequences that are decided upon by someone else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary criteria – challenges that a teacher reports in the school</td>
<td>➔ CHALL/mang/retention – challenges related to student behavior regarding students who have been retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary criteria – statements related to a teachers perceptions of the capabilities and or skills to handle challenges (this would be coded as efficacy); descriptions of specific interactions or satisfaction with specific supports (coded as either COLLCONN or SUPP)</td>
<td>CHALL/workload – reports or excessive workload, working late, more work due to being a late hire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALL/adm – challenges working with administrators</td>
<td>CHALL/fam – challenges working with parents/guardians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALL/day – challenges related to short school day/lack of time with students, lack of planning time with other teachers, lack of organization with schedules</td>
<td>CHALL/role – challenges related to ambiguity around role at school (being asked to do things that teacher doesn’t think should be their role)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALL/resources – lack of curriculum, teaching (books, paper, pencils), or other school resources (toilet paper, chalkboards, air conditioning, physical size of classroom)</td>
<td>CHALL/jobsec – fear of losing job due to budget cuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALL/assessmet – challenges related to amount of assessment and testing</td>
<td>CHALL/latehire – being hired after the school year starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALL/studlevel – challenges related to students have low level academic skills</td>
<td>CHALL/fearnew – not reaching out for help because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFENG – efficacy at engaging learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the teacher’s current or further capabilities/skills at engaging and motivating learners</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding the teacher’s ability to differentiate and meet the needs of diverse learners through flexible grouping, developing lessons relevant to specific student interests, promoting student autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding past efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFENG/pos – positive beliefs related to engaging/motivating learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFENG/neg - negative beliefs related to engaging/motivating learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFENG/mix – mixed beliefs related to engaging/motivating learners</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFMANG – efficacy at managing student behavior</th>
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<td>Statements regarding the teacher’s current or further capabilities/skills managing student behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding the teacher’s ability to manage and prevent students’ behaviors; connect with students on a personal level; set up classroom routines and procedures</td>
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<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding past efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<th>EFFINSTR – efficacy with creating and delivering instruction</th>
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<td>Statements regarding the teacher’s current or further capabilities/skills at implementing instructional strategies</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding the teacher’s ability to develop and deliver instruction; prepare, organize, plan, and execute instructional plans</td>
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<tr>
<th>EFFOTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the teacher’s current or future capabilities/skills regarding efficacy that do not fit in other EFF categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFOTHER/pos – positive beliefs</td>
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<td>EFFOTHER/neg – negative beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFOTHER/mix – mixed beliefs</td>
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**Inclusionary criteria** – statements that do not fit into other EFF categories

**Exclusionary criteria** – statements regarding past efficacy

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<th>EFFENG PAST – engaging learners; past beliefs</th>
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<th>EFFMANG PAST – managing behaviors; past beliefs</th>
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<td>Statements regarding the teacher’s past capabilities/skills managing student behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> – statements regarding the teacher’s past ability to manage and prevent students behaviors; connect with students</td>
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<tr>
<th>EFFINSTR PAST – instructional efficacy, past</th>
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<tr>
<th>EFFSOURM AS – efficacy source; mastery experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Statements related to the sources of efficacy development; teaching or life experiences that have facilitated the</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EFFSOURM AS/pos</strong> – reports of successful teaching experiences</td>
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<td>EFFSOURMAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFSOURMAS/neg – reports of unsuccessful experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFSOURMAS/neut – neutral statements regarding influence of experience on teaching capabilities, “it’s different learning the tips and actually doing them in the classroom.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFFSOURMAS/mix – mixed (positive and negative)</td>
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**Inclusionary criteria** – experience must be related to or has impacted the teacher’s current or future beliefs regarding their ability to influence student learning/behavior; beliefs regarding the influence of experience on efficacy development

“Behavior is addressed (referencing training programs). I just don’t think until you see it and experience it, it’s not quite the same.”

**Exclusionary criteria** – statements related to support without reference to how it has impacted teaching capabilities

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<tr>
<th>EFFSOURVERB</th>
<th>efficacy source verbal persuasion</th>
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<td>EFFSOURVERB/pos – interactions that had positive influence on efficacy development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFSOURVERB/neg – interactions that had a negative influence on efficacy development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFSOURVERB/neut – neutral comments regarding interactions that had a influence on efficacy development</td>
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**Inclusionary criteria** – experience must be related to or has impacted the teachers current or future beliefs regarding their ability to influence student learning, behavior, and/or instruction delivery

**Exclusionary criteria** - statements related to support without reference to how it has impacted teaching capabilities

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<th>EFFSOURVIC</th>
<th>efficacy source vicarious learning</th>
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<td>EFFSOURVIC/pos – reports of modeling experiences that positively influence efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFFSOURVIC/neg – reports of modeling experiences that negatively influence efficacy</td>
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<th><strong>behavior</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> – statements related to learning by watching without reference to how it has impacted teaching capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>EFFSOURPHYS – efficacy source physiological arousal/emotional state</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Statements related to experiences with teaching that provide a teacher with positive (joy, satisfaction) or negative (anger, anxiety, sadness) feelings</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> – experience must be related to or has impacted the teachers current or future beliefs regarding their ability to influence student learning, behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> – general statements about what is challenging about teaching without reference to how experience has impacted teaching abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFSOURPHYS/pos</strong> – reports of teaching experiences that elicit joy, satisfaction or other happy emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFSOURPHYS/neg</strong> – reports of teaching experiences that elicit anger, anxiety, sadness, frustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFSOURPHYS/neut</strong> – neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EFFSOURPHYS/mix</strong> – mixed (positive and negative)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FIT – finding the right fit between position and person which influences efficacy</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> - Statements regarding the importance of finding the write “fit” or “niche” for a teacher which influences efficacy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIT/gradelevel</strong> – being assigned to the appropriate grade level per teacher preference and skill set</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>SUPP – focus of support</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher descriptions of current resources and/or supports designed to support teachers or interpreted by teachers as something that provides support with professional and emotional needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> – support designed to meet the needs of ECT through induction or mentoring programs; supports provided through alternate certification program but occur in current school; support provided via other colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> – descriptions of specific interactions with colleges or</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPP/mang</strong> – resources or supports targeting behavior management</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPP/intruc</strong> – resources/supports targeting developing and delivery of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPP/new</strong> – resources/supports designed to acclimate ECT into the school building and the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPP/resources</strong> – support getting or obtaining resources necessary to teach (technology, copies)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
administrators without mention of supportive component to interaction (code COLLINTER); supports that occurred during teacher preparation before becoming a teacher (code SUPPPAST); descriptions of being close too or feeling connected to colleagues (code COLCON)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SUPPWHO – the person providing support</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher descriptions of people designed to support teachers with professional and emotional needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> - statements related to support provided by colleagues or other mediums; descriptions of who supported ECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> - general interactions with colleges or administrators without mention of interaction being supportive (code COLLINTER); supports that occurred during teacher preparation before becoming a teacher (code SUPPPAST); descriptions of being close too or feeling connected to colleagues (code COLCON)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/admin: Assistance from administration, including principal, assistant principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/mentor: Personalized support from a teacher designated as mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/coll: support from other teachers in the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/friend: non-relative, non-colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/family: relative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/PD format: Professional development in addition to induction activities designed for new teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/prepprog – support provided from teacher preparation program</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPWHO/other</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SUPPQUAL – quality of support</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description with the quality of current supports in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> – statements regarding the utility of available supports, teachers reporting that other teachers are there to support them, descriptions of what would be supportive to ECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> – same as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPQUAL/sat: Satisfaction with current support</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPQUAL/dissat: Dissatisfaction with current support, lacking of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPQUAL/mix: Mixture with current support</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPQUAL/preferred: Teachers description of what they would like with regards to current support</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>SUPPPAST – focus of support provided in past</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher descriptions of past resources and/or supports designed to support teachers with professional and emotional needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPAST/mang – resources or supports targeting behavior management</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPPAST/intruc – resources/supports targeting developing and delivery of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> — past support designed to meet the needs of ECT through induction or mentoring programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> — general interactions with colleges or administrators without supportive tone (code COLLINTER); supports that are current (code SUPP); descriptions of being close too or feeling connected to colleagues (code COLCON)</td>
</tr>
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**SUPPPASTWHO — the person providing support; past supports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher descriptions of people designed to support teachers with professional and emotional needs from previous school buildings or years</th>
<th><strong>SUPPPASTWHO/admin:</strong> Assistance from administration, including principal, assistant principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary criteria</strong> - same as SUPPWHO but past experiences</td>
<td><strong>SUPPPASTWHO/mentor:</strong> Personalized support from a teacher designated as mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary criteria</strong> — same as above</td>
<td><strong>SUPPPASTWHO/coll:</strong> support from other teachers in the building</td>
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<td><strong>SUPPPASTWHO/prepprog</strong> — support provided from teacher prep program</td>
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<td><strong>SUPPPASTWHO/other</strong></td>
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**SUPPPASTQUAL — quality of support; past supports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptions of level of satisfaction with past supports provided at a school or as a part of a training program or comments regarding what would have been helpful</th>
<th><strong>SUPPPASTQUAL/sat:</strong> Satisfaction with past support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> — statements regarding the utility of past supports</td>
<td><strong>SUPPPASTQUAL/dissat:</strong> Dissatisfaction with past support, lacking of support</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> — statements regarding the quality of current supports in place</td>
<td><strong>SUPPPASTQUAL/mix:</strong> Mixture with past support</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>SUPPPASTQUAL/pref:</strong> preference for support that would have been helpful</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCHCUL – school culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the feel of being a teacher in a specific school context</td>
<td>SCHCUL/pos – positive statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary – statements regarding the feel of the school as one of openness/isolation, respect/disrespect, trust/mistrust, and/or joined commitment to student achievement; teachers openly sharing the work necessary to have a student succeed</td>
<td>SCHCUL/neg - negative statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“you can send em here, you can bring em over here because they may have the relationship with the kid so.” “we’re all trying to help each other out.”</td>
<td>SCHCUL/mix - mixed statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary – statements regarding culture of schools of previous employment</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHCULPAST – past reports of school culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the feel of being a teacher in a specific school context at a previous school building</td>
<td>SCHCULPAST/pos – positive statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary – same as SCHCUL but experiences from the past</td>
<td>SCHCULPAST/neg - negative statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary – statements regarding culture of schools of current employment</td>
<td>SCHCULPAST/mix - mixed statements regarding the feel of the school and what it is like to be a teacher in that building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLCONWHO – connectedness with colleagues</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements related to the people who the teacher feels connected/disconnected to. Connected refers to a teacher’s feeling like colleagues are friends and there for emotional support</td>
<td>COLCONWHO/admin: connectedness with administrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusionary – statements regarding how close and connected the teacher feels to colleagues</td>
<td>COLCONWHO/coll: connectedness with other teachers in the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I knew she/he was on my side.” “I could always count on her.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Exclusionary** – statement regarding support and the quality of support specifically designed to build efficacy and skills – this would be coded as SUPP, SUPPQUAL, SUPPWHO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLCONQUAL – quality of connections with colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> – descriptions of the quality of connections to colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> - feel of being supported by colleague or that ECT could go to that person for support (coded SUPP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the quality of connections with colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLCONQUAL/sat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLCONQUAL/dissat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLCONQUAL/mix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLCONQUAL/pref - preferred methods or suggested ways to build connections to colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLCONQUAL/barrier – barriers to forming connections with colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLINTERTYPE – type of interaction that occurs when developing connections to colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> – descriptions of interactions or conversations that happen between colleagues; descriptions of working relationships with other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> – general descriptions of supports received through professional development that do not describe specific interactions with colleagues (code SUPPWHO/PD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the type or format of interaction that occurs between colleagues related to connectedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTYPE/inf – informal ways of interacting with colleagues (hallway conversations, parking lot conversations, phone calls/meetings outside of school hours), stopping by to talk with a teacher or administration at an unscheduled time, emails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTYPE/formal – structured time for colleagues to connect (professional development, staff meetings, weekly planning meetings, mentor meetings, induction meetings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTYPE/pref – preferred methods to connect with colleagues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLINTERTOP – topic of interaction with colleague</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusionary</strong> – descriptions of what is discussed with other colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exclusionary</strong> – general descriptions of supports received through professional development that do not describe specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements regarding the topic of interactions that occur between colleagues during formal and informal interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTOP/instr – interactions regarding delivering instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTOP/manag – interactions regarding managing behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLINTERTOP/new – interactions regarding acclimating to their new school environment regarding policies, procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| interactions with colleagues (code SUPPWHO/PD) | COLINTERTOP/stud – interactions driven by needs of specific students  
| | COLINTERTOP/adm – interactions regarding administration/administrators; policies or procedures of the district  
| **COLINTERQUAL** – satisfaction level of interaction with colleague |  
| Teacher statements regarding their level of satisfaction with interactions with colleagues  
| Inclusionary – description of positive of negative feelings regarding a specific colleague interaction  
| Exclusionary – descriptions of quality of supports in place or received (code SUPPQUAL) | COLINTERQUAL/sat – satisfied  
| | COLINTERQUAL/dissat – dissatisfied  
| | COLINTERQUAL/neut – neutral  
| | COLINTERQUAL/mix – mixed level of satisfaction  
| | COLINTERQUAL/barrier – barrier to interacting with colleagues |