Submission Type: Initial Date: 11-6-2024

IRB #: IRB-FY_____
Title: K-12 Teacher Professional Learning: Experiences of Early, Mid and Late Career Teachers Enrolled in a Cohort-Based M.Ed. Program
Creation Date: 10-2-2023
Status: Review Complete
Principal Investigator: Name.....

1- Getting Started

About West Chester University IRB Process

WCU is guided by the ethical principles regarding all research involving human subjects as set forth in the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research entitled, "Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research: The Belmont Report".

In addition, the requirements set forth in Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations will be followed for all applicable Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) funded research and for all other research without regard to source of funding.

Initial review of your application will take place within three weeks of when the IRB reviewer receives your application. Your IRB reviewer may request edits and changes to your application, this can take an additional two to three weeks to complete. *Please plan ahead and allow at least one month for the entire review, revision, and approval process to be completed.*

The IRB does not provide retroactive approvals and cannot honor requests for a "quick turnaround" or reviews completed by a certain date

Getting Started

Throughout the submission, you will be required to provide the following:

- Detailed Study Information
- Informed Consent Forms
- Study Recruitment Materials
- Questionnaires, Surveys, Data Collection Tools

West Chester University IRB

- **You cannot begin data collection until a formal approval letter from the chair of the IRB has been received.**
- The IRB meets as needed during the regular academic year. Please submit the application as soon as possible.

Monitoring Application Status

- You can monitor the status of the application through your Cayuse Dashboard.
- *Please see the "My Studies" or "Submissions" tab to see where your application is in the review process.*
- If you cannot find it or have questions, please contact irb@wcupa.edu

Investigator Responsilibities:

I certify that I have read the West Chester University Human Subjects Research Policy and to the best of my knowledge the information presented herein is an accurate reflection of the proposed research project.

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the West Chester University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with West Chester University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all West Chester policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following: a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol; b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the IRB; c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form; d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the IRB in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise the IRB, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by West Chester University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the IRB before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the West Chester University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final Closure Form upon completion of this research project.

Faculty Sponsor/Mentor Responsibilities:

1. As faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
2. I certify that the project will be performed by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol using conventional or experimental methodology.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
4. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
5. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant adverse events and/or effects to the IRB in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
6. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the IRB by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.
7. I will have read the application in its entirety and affirm the content accuracy, clarity, and methodology.
8. I accept the responsibility for the conduct of this research, the supervision of human subjects, and maintenance of informed consent documentation as required by the IRB.
9. I understand that I should have full access to the data and be able to produce the data in the case of an audit

*required

I have read the information above and I am ready to begin my submission.

✓ Yes

Any questions regarding this application can be directed to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at irb@wcupa.edu or (610)436-3557

2- Submission Information

*required

Please select a submission review category for your application

- [x] Exempt
- [ ] Expedited
- [ ] Full Board

*required

What type of activity is this submission for?

- [x] Research Study
- [ ] Clinical Trial
- [ ] Activities Without a Plan to Conduct Research (Case Report or Quality Improvement project)

*required

Is this a multi-institutional study?

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

3- Study Information

*required

What is your status at West Chester University?

- ✓ Faculty
- Student
- Staff
- Other

Study Personnel

Note: If you cannot find a person in the people finder, please contact the IRB Office immediately at irb@wcupa.edu to possibly get them added to the system.

WCU Faculty & Staff must have WCU affiliation for their CITI certifications (Same email address) & will have their CITI certifications/expiration dates integrated.

Any non-WCU study personnel should have their CITI certificates uploaded at the end of this section.

*required

Principal Investigator

Provide the name of the Principal Investigator of this study.
Name: Name of Investigator
Organization: Department
Address: 700 S High St , West Chester, PA 19383-0002
Phone:
Email: University email

*required

Primary Contact

Provide the name of the Primary Contact of this study.

Name: Name of Investigator
Organization: Department
Address: 700 S High St , West Chester, PA 19383-0002
Phone:
Email: WCU Email

Co-Principal Investigator(s)

Provide the name(s) of Investigator(s) for this study.

Research Team Members / Other Personnel

Provide the name(s) of other personnel for this study.

List any Non-WCU Affiliated Personnel & their role

Upload any NON-WCU Affiliated Personnel CITI Certificates

Upload any non-WCU study personnel CITI certificates here.

*required

Study Site

Please select the location(s) of the study.

✓ West Chester University Campus

Please provide the names of the West Chester University locations.

If conducting study online (ie. zoom, qualtrics, etc.) please state that here.
Qualtrics Surveys

External Site (non-West Chester University)

Please provide the names of the external collaborating sites.

Letter(s) of acknowledgment

Please upload a letter from each external site (MUST BE on their official letterhead with an original signature)

Study Dates

Please provide the anticipated study start and end dates.

- ***NOTE**: A study may not start PRIOR to official IRB approval.*

*required

Start Date

No research can start prior to IRB approval. Please choose a start date that is a minimum of one month from the date of submission.

01-15-2023

*required

End Date

The protocol must remain open during data collection and analysis.

07-01-2026

*required

Has a grant/proposal for funding been submitted for this project?

Yes

If sponsor cannot be found.

Sponsor could not be found above

✓ No

4- Conflict of Interest

*required

Do you or any investigator(s) participating in this study have a financial interest related to this research project?

Yes

✓ No

5- Study Selection

Participant Enrollment

Please provide a range participants that will be enrolled in this study. For example "we plan to recruit 50-75 participants."

*required

Where will the research occur?

(Check all that apply)

- In-person on WCU campus
- In-person at non-WCU site
- ✓ Online (e.g., Zoom, Qualtrics)

*required

Enrollment at West Chester University

*Please enter the number of participants that will be enrolled at **West Chester University**. If you are conducting research at an external site and not recruiting at West Chester, the response will be "0."*

20-30

*required

Total Study Enrollment

Please enter the total number of participants to be enrolled at ALL study sites.

20-30

*required

Ages

Select the age range of subjects that will be enrolled in this study. Check all that apply.

✓ 18 years and older

12 years old and less than 18 years old

1 month to less than 12 years old

*required

Vulnerable Populations

Please check the population(s) that will be enrolled. Check all that apply.

For more information about conducting research with vulnerable populations, please reference the Federal Office for Human Research Protections website.

Non-English Speaking

Fetuses

Pregnant Women

Minors with Parental Consent

Minors Who can Consent Themselves (Emancipated Minors)

Prisoners

Persons with Acute and/or Severe Mental or Physical Illness

Other

✓ None of the Above

6- Study Design

Is this study a clinical trial?

Yes

✓ No

*required

Study Background

Provide a brief summary of the proposed research in lay terms. Include brief background (with citations) and rationale for why the study is needed.

Teacher professional learning occurs in various formal and informal settings including graduate education. School district professional development remains 'one size fits all' and typically does not meet the needs of all K-12 teachers within the district. Teachers often pursue professional learning independently, through informal means (colleagues, social media) or through graduate education which may offer more opportunities for teachers to study topics and fields that are better aligned with each teacher's discipline and needs. The need to improve PK-12 teachers' professional development experiences is well-established (Atay, 2008; Schwartz, 2019; Szabo, 2019; Zeichner, 2003).

In Pennsylvania, public school teachers are required to obtain 24 graduate credits to advance to Level 2 (permanent) certification). M.Ed. programs offer opportunities for teachers to grow professionally while meeting these certification requirements. Many teachers enroll in graduate programs during the early career stage in order to meet requirements for permanent certification, advance on the salary schedule, and to continue their professional learning and development. The M.Ed. in Applied Studies in Teaching & Learning program at WCU attracts early career teachers who are pursuing a master's degree while teaching full-time in area schools. This university campus-based program graduates approximately 20 teachers per year. While teachers move through the program at their own pace, influenced by their timeline necessary for Level 2 certification, their district's tuition reimbursement schedule, and their own personal needs/circumstances, most complete their degrees within 3 years. The majority of the teachers enrolled in the M.Ed. program can be categorized as early career stage teachers during their entire program.

In contrast, this same M.Ed. program which has been offered through a school district cohort model in various local school districts, attracts numerous mid-career and late-career teachers. The cohort programs offer the same M.Ed. program, however, classes are housed at the school district and include only teachers from that school district. Interestingly, the off-campus cohorts are far more diverse by career stage. Mid and late career stage teachers in these instances, are seeking salary scale advancement, have

already completed an initial master's degree, and typically, have not been in formal teacher education (undergraduate or graduate level) in many years. The convenience and camaraderie offered by the cohort programs appeals to many mid to late career stage teachers. The cohorts begin with a rich mixture of very early career stage teachers and those firmly situated in mid or late career. Their experience as teachers and as learners varies greatly, as does their comfort engaging in graduate education as learners and as colleagues. Off campus programs also include more high school and related arts teachers than does our campus based program, affording an opportunity to examine how the program meets the needs of these teachers.

Career stage literature and research can provide insight into teachers' professional and personal needs as they progress in their careers. Foundational teacher career stage models (Burke, Fessler, Christensen, 1984; Huberman, 1989; Steffy, 1989) establish complex frameworks for teachers' common experiences at different ages and periods in traditional career timelines. Since their early work, numerous others have examined teachers' experiences at different career stages related to: teaching discipline, job satisfaction, resilience, teacher retention, and advocacy within the profession, among other areas.

It is my intention to explore teachers' professional learning experiences in the M.Ed. in Applied Studies program and to examine a. the experiences of early, mid, and late career teachers ; b. which learning experiences teachers see as effective/ineffective and how, if at all, that varies by teacher career stage; c. how teachers describe their experience and benefits/limitations of a cohort-based M.Ed. program.

Findings from this study may inform future directions for the M.Ed. program on campus, and with off-campus cohorts, and offer opportunities for program revision. In addition to program assessment, findings may offer insights into professional learning needs of teachers at various stages of their careers that could be relevant to those providing professional development to in-service teachers.

References

Atay, D. (2008). Teacher research for professional development. *English Language Teaching (ELT) Journal, 62*(2), 139-147.

Burke, P. , Fessler, R., adn Christensen, J. (1984). Teacher career stages: Implications for staff development. Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Huberman, M. (1989). The professional life cycle of teachers. *Teacher College Record, 9*1, 31-57.

Steffy, B. (1989). Career stages of classroom teachers. Technomic.

Schwartz, S. (2019). What do teachers really want from professional development? Respect. *Education Week, 39*(33), 3-4.

Szabo, S. (2022). Fostering more equitable teacher professional development at all stages using the systematic approach to teacher effective development (SATED) tool*. Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, *89*(1), 24-35.

Zeichner, K.M. (2003). Teacher research as professional development for P-12 educators in the USA. *Educational Action Research*, *11*(2), 301-326.

*required

Research Design

Please provide the research design you are utilizing for your study (e.g., Prospective Cohort, Case-Control, Observational)

Action research

*required

Research Question(s) and/or Hypotheses

Provide the research question guiding this research project as well as any hypotheses (if applicable).

1. What is the experience of early, mid, and late career stage teachers engaged in graduate education as part of a cohort-model?
2. Which professional learning experiences do teachers at various career stages identify as effective?
3. Which professional learning experiences do teachers at various career stages identify as ineffective?
4. What are the experiences of teachers enrolled in a cohort-based M.Ed. program?
5. What do teachers see as benefits and limitations of a cohort-based M.Ed. program?
6. How should cohort-based programs be structured to better support teacher professional learning experiences?

*required

Source of Participants

Graduate students completing the M.Ed. in Applied Studies in Teaching and Learning program who were completed cohort-based programs in 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026.

*required

Inclusion Criteria

List and describe the inclusion criteria.

All teachers who completed the cohort programs will be invited to participate.

*required

Exclusion Criteria

List and describe the exclusion criteria.

Teachers in each cohort who did not complete their M.Ed. program.

7- Study Procedures

*required

Describe your recruitment procedures and any compensation given for participation.

Cash payments are not permitted for any research participation. West Chester University Faculty and Staff may NOT be compensated at all for research participation (eg: gift cards, check). Please review the WCU Policy on Payments for Research Participants for more information.
(https://www.wcupa.edu/policies/documents/Payments%...

Recruitment:
1. At the conclusion of each cohort program, teachers will be emailed an invitation to participate.

2. The email invitation will be sent via the PIs WCU email account to the teachers' publicly available school district email accounts.

I am graduate coordinator for this program, and teach the final course in the M.Ed.
Recruitment will occur after grades are posted for each group so that there is no perception or experience of coercion.

Compensation:
There is no compensation for participation.

Study Documents

If applicable, this includes flyers used for recruitment as well as letters of acknowledgement (ex. external group letter of acknowledgement, coach's letter, etc.).

All recruitment materials must include the statement "This study has been approved by the West Chester University Institutional Review Board, protocol IRB-FYxx-xx (complete with your study protocol)"
Recruitment_docx

*required

Describe all study procedures.

Provide a step-by-step description of each procedure.

1. Recruit participants (as described in recruitment section).
2. Consent participants (via Qualtrics link from recruitment letter as described in Consent section).
3. After providing consent in Qualtrics, research participants will be directed to a Qualtrics survey (25-40 minutes).
4. If interested in participating in an interview, participants will select a link to a second Qualtrics form where participants may enter their contact information.
5. Qualitative data from surveys will be analyzed for emergent themes. Quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using basic descriptive statistics.

*required

Describe the duration of study participation, the time commitment for study participants, and the timetable for study completion.

Duration/Time Commitment:
Electronic Qualtrics surveys: 25-40 minutes

Timetable:
Survey administration:
Groups 1 and 2: January 2024
Groups 3 and 4: May 2025 and 2026.

Data Analysis: February 2024 (Groups 1 and 2) through June 2026 (Groups 3 and 4)

*required

Describe the information to be gathered and the means for collecting, recording, and analysis of data.

Information to be gathered via surveys and interviews:
1. Participants' experiences, perceptions of effective and less-effective learning opportunities while engaged in graduate study during the M.Ed. in Applied Studies in Teaching and Learning program.
2. Participants' experiences as part of a cohort-based master's program.

Data Collection & Analysis:
Survey data will be collected via Qualtrics and analyzed for emergent themes.

Data Collection Forms

Attach any data collection forms that you might be be using in the study. Attachments must be excel, word, .pdf (links are not accepted).
Survey.docx

*required

Survey, Questionnaire, or Interview

Will the study utilize surveys, questionnaires, or interviews?

✓ Yes

*required

Attach all copies of surveys, questionnaires, or interviews. Attachments must be word or .pdf (links are not accepted).

Survey.docx

No

*required

Will the survey, questionnaire, or interview record any information that can identify the participants?

If using any sort of recording device (audio, video), check the "yes" button. If recording on zoom (audio, video, both) check "yes" button.

- Yes
- ✓ No

*required

Genetic Testing

Will this study involve genetic testing?

- Yes
- ✓ No

*required

Drugs, Devices, Biologics

Will the study involve administering any of the following? Check all that apply.

- Drug
- Biologic
- Device
- ✓ None of the above

*required

Participant Data, Specimens, and Records

Does this project involve the collection or use of materials (data, video or specimens) recorded in a manner that could identify the individuals who provided the materials, either directly or through identifiers linked to these individuals?

- Yes
- ✓ No

8- Risks & Benefits

*required

Do you anticipate study participants will be subject to minimal or greater than minimal risk?

Minimal Risk to participants means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical and psychological examinations or tests and that confidentiality is adequately protected.

Greater than Minimal Risk to participants means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research risks are more than minimal risk, but not significantly greater. Studies that fall under this category will range in their probability of a moderate-severity event occurring as a result of study participation (and the level of safety monitoring will depend on that probability) but there are adequate surveillance and protections in place to identify adverse events promptly and to minimize harm.

- ✓ Minimal
- Greater than Minimal

What are the Potential Risks related to your research?

All research poses potential risk to participants or others. In many cases, these risks are clearly identifiable. But even in relatively simple data collection there may be less obvious risks. Please check all that apply

- ✓ Privacy Risks

  *required

  Describe any and all privacy risks:

  Provide detail regarding the frequency, severity, and duration of each risk.
  Survey responses may include information that could lead to identification by PI or others who are familiar with the cohort members and their teaching positions.

  *required

How will you minimize these risks?

Identifying information will be removed; no identifying information will be reported including school name; potential for identification has been noted on survey and in consent docs. Reports will include participants from more than one cohort.

Social or Psychological Risks

Physical Risks

Risks to third parties (institutions, community, researchers, or non-consented individuals)

Other:

*required

Expected Benefits

Describe the anticipated benefits to participants (if any). If there are none, please state that there is no direct benefit to the participant. Also, please state the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result from this research study.

There is no direct benefit to research participants.

Findings from this study may inform future directions for the M.Ed. program on campus, and with off-campus cohorts.

Findings may also offer insights into professional learning needs of teachers at various stages of their careers that could be relevant to those providing professional development to in-service teachers.

*required

Are you seeking a waiver of informed consent?

A Waiver of Documentation of Consent is used when:

- *You are providing an Informed Consent Document to participants, but will not be obtaining their written signatures.*

- *Reading an Informed Consent script verbally, or over the phone, to participants when conducting a screening conversation and sharing study information requesting verbal consent.*

✓ No

Yes

*required

Informed Consent

Describe the procedures for obtaining informed consent. This should include information about the individual consenting the potential participants, meetings with potential participants, who the potential participants can contact with questions related to the study, and any other information to be conveyed to potential participants.

1. Potential participants will receive an email invitation (from PIs WCU email to publicly available school district email).
2. The recruitment email will contain a link to Qualtrics where potential participants may review the informed consent document and indicate consent electronically via Qualtrics.
3. Questions may be directed to the PI via email at hleaman@wcupa.edu
4. The consent process will be conducted by the PI.

*required

Informed Consent Form

The attachment must be in a .doc or .pdf - links will **not** be accepted.

We recommend using the informed consent generator to create a document that is fully editable and contains the nine required sections of information as per the federal guidelines; please click here: https://www.wcupa.edu/_admin/research/forms/confidentiality/

Please note - that if having a parent/guardian consenting - the consent form language will need to be modified to include "MY CHILD" instead of " I "

Informed Consent

Child Assent Form(s) if applicable

For examples of assent forms - please see the ASSENT SAMPLES documents/examples on our IRB website.

Will your research involve any of the following?

Check all that apply.

- Deception
- Investigation Drugs or Dietary Supplements
- Investigational Devices
- Retaining Data or Biological Samples for Future Research
- ✓ None of the Above

9- Confidentiality

*required

What technological and physical safeguards will you use to protect data from inappropriate use or disclosure?

Check all that apply.

- ✓ De-identifying data at point of collection (e.g., using Qualtrics to anonymize data)
- Locked room or cabinet
- Behind a double lock (e.g. locked cabinet in a locked room)
- ✓ Restricted access to authorized research team members
- ✓ Password-protected computer or device
- ✓ Password-protected folder or storage
- Destruction of source data immediately after processing
- Destruction of audio or visual data immediately after transcription
- Modification of audio or visual data to eliminate identifiers
- Other:

What will you do with data or specimens at the conclusion of the study?

Check all that apply:

- ✓ I am not collecting any identifiers. I will retain data for the required retention period (3 years, or longer as required by other agencies) and then destroy it.
- I will deidentify data or specimen logs and erase or destroy any related codes. I will retain data for the required retention period (3 years, or longer as required by other agencies) and then destroy it.
- I will keep identifiable data for the required retention period (3 years, or longer as required by

other agencies) and then destroy it.

I will destroy any leftover specimens.

I will retain data and specimens for future use.

Other:

Safeguarding Participants' Identity

*required

How will data confidentiality be maintained?

1. Survey responses recorded in Qualtrics will not collect participant names.
2. Reports will not include identifying information or the name of the school/district.
3. Survey data will be be saved on the PIs password protected laptop (password protected folder) and in Qualtrics (password protected).
4. Participants may choose to not answer questions that could unintentionally identify them to others who know them well.

*required

Provide exact location (e.g., Building & Office Number) of where informed consent forms and/or study data will be stored (physical or electronic).

All data will be stored in Qualtrics or electronically in a password protected folder on the PIs password protected laptop. The laptop is housed at the PI's work address (list exact address).

*required

Provide the names and titles of individuals having access to the consent documents and data.

Examples: Dr. Jane Doe, PhD, principal investigator, faculty advisor
Joe Smith, graduate student, research team member
Also include the West Chester University Institutional Review Board in this section
Name of PI and any research team members who will have access to data.
WCU IRB

*required

Specify the date for destruction of data (surveys, disks, etc.). This must be a minimum of 3 years AFTER the close of the study. For example, if the study closes on July 1, 2024 the earliest this date could be is July 1, 2027.

07-01-2029

10- Attachments

The documents/attachments listed here have been previously uploaded throughout the application. **No new uploads should be required here**. *Please double check that all appropriate files have been uploaded.*

Outside IRB of Record

This is required when engaging in multi-institutional research.

Study Protocol

Attach the protocol for this study that was reviewed by the Outside IRB.

Outside IRB Approval

Attach the IRB Approval from the Outside IRB.

Outside IRB Review Meeting Minutes

Attach the minutes from the outside IRB meeting(s) for the review of this study.

Outside IRB Correspondence

Attach all correspondence concerning the review of this study by the Outside IRB.

Study Procedures

Study Documents

If applicable, this includes flyers used for recruitment.
Recruitment_

Study Instruments

Attach all instruments (i.e. personality scales, questionnaires, evaluation blanks, etc) to be used in the study.
Survey.docx

FDA Letter

Participant Protection

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent_12.1.23.docx

Child Assent Form(s)