A Study on the Experiences of Beginning Classroom Teachers on Teacher Induction Practices in Rural Areas in Turkey

Necla Ekinci[1]

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine how teacher induction practices operate in Turkey based on the experiences of beginning classroom teachers appointed to schools in rural areas. The study was designed and conducted as a case study. The study group consists of eight beginning classroom teachers working in rural settlements specified through criterion and snowball sampling methods. The research data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. Descriptive content analysis method was employed in data analysis. Findings showed that the teacher induction program for beginning teachers working in rural settlements is not effective and that the beginning teachers had problem-focused experiences regarding the induction practices. Inadequate mentoring support, procedural conduct of performance evaluations, procedural approaches to teacher induction requirements are among the prominent problem-oriented experiences of the teachers.

Key Words: Teacher induction, teacher induction programs, teacher induction practices in rural schools, beginning classroom teachers

Introduction

As student achievement is very much dependent on teacher quality, teacher qualifications matter for all education systems. Studies show that teacher qualifications have a greater effect on student performance than other components of education systems such as curriculum, instructional methods, materials, equipment, school buildings and parents (Hattie, 2009; Barber & Mourshed, 2007). The most fundamental factor determining teacher quality is teacher education. Teacher education has three stages that are pre-service education, induction period education and in-service education. All teachers go through these three stages. There is a strong correlation between the quality of their development and the quality of support that is given to them at each stage. Thus, it is important for policymakers working on improving education systems to develop policies supporting the professional development of teachers (European Commission, 2010). Of these three stages, the teacher induction period can be considered as a critical period in terms of embracing and adapting to the teaching profession. Although courses such as school practicum and teaching practice are offered during undergraduate education, the beginning teachers encounter their first experiences of the realities of the teaching during the induction period. The first years in the profession include the

---

[1] Mugla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, nekinci@mu.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-9953-5862

first independent steps towards becoming a teacher in a school. The purpose of the current study is to examine how the teacher induction program as the second stage of teacher education operates in Turkey based on the experiences of beginning classroom teachers appointed to schools in rural areas.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

In this part of the study, first teacher induction will be discussed in theory and practice within the context of the relevant literature, and then teacher recruitment and teacher induction program in the Turkish education system will briefly be introduced.

Teacher Induction Programs

The experiences lived in the first years of the teaching career are very important in the formation of the perceptions and attitudes towards the teaching profession. The way this process is structured and the way it is experienced can affect the beginning teachers' perception of the profession. Teacher induction programs aim to provide systematic and continuous support for teachers in the first year of their career and contribute to their socialization in such a way to ensure their adaptation to the school and the environment they are in (Serpell, 2000). The main goal of these support programs is to increase the performance and retention of beginning teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011)

For this reason, the induction process of beginning teachers is an important issue. The basic assumption behind such programs is that teaching is a complex process, and pre-service education cannot be entirely sufficient in providing pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills required for successful teaching. Most of this knowledge and skills can only be acquired on the job. Thus, beginning teachers should be provided with an environment in which they can learn how to perform teaching, how to survive and how to be successful. These programs aim to improve performance, increase the retention of beginning teachers, and develop beginning teachers' skills required to maximize student learning (Ingersoll, 2012). The first years in the profession are defined as an important and problematic period for teachers (Odell & Schwille, 2008), and it is stated that their experiences in these years have a strong effect on the development of their self-efficacy perception (Hoy & Spero, 2005). It is emphasized that even if beginning teachers have received a qualified pre-service teacher training, they will have difficulties in teaching or classroom management when they cannot receive an effective induction program support (Kaufman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu & Peske, 2002). The induction period, which is important in teacher training and can be expressed as a critical period, is a process that has practical value in preparing the beginning teachers for the profession and introduces them to practice in the most intensive way, and is an important stage for teachers' adoption of the profession and socialization (Ekinci, 2010). Ingersoll and Strong (2011) evaluated 15 studies on teacher

induction programs, and found that support and assistance given to beginning teachers have positive effects in three dimensions. These are teacher commitment and increase of the rate of retention, teaching practices and student success. Positive results have been demonstrated in various dimensions of teaching practices such as ensuring student participation in teaching practices, using effective questioning practices, organizing activities considering student interests, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, and being successful in classroom management. In addition, with regard to student achievement, it was observed that the students of the beginning teachers who participated in beginning teacher induction programs got higher scores in academic achievement tests.

It is not possible to talk about an ideal teacher induction program for all countries. Due to country-specific conditions and contextual differences of the schools, the program contents may vary (Celik & Atik, 2020). But well-designed and conducted teacher induction programs have been proved to have strong effects on the professional development of beginning teachers, their attitude towards the profession and student achievement (European Commission, 2010).

Kearney (2014) identified the components of good practices from the studies on the teacher induction programs of the seven countries which are accepted to apply successful and effective teacher induction programs (Germany, China, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden, France, Canada) and two states of America (California, Connecticut) as follows: Structured observations, opportunities for cooperation with other new and experienced teachers, mentoring support, reduced course load and/or more time for the teacher, professional discussion environments and presence of opportunities for communication, compulsory one or two-year program focused on teacher learning and evaluation and continuous professional development. In their study, Hu ling -Austin, (1990) and Robinson, (1998) identified the most common components of teacher induction programs as follows: General orientation meeting prior to the beginning of school year (usually summer before), provision of printed materials regarding all aspects of school functioning, training on curriculum, effective teaching practices and an opportunity to observe and to be observed, mentorship, release time and/or reduction in teaching load (Serpell, 2000).

When these components given above are taken together, it can be argued that the teacher induction program functions as a comprehensive structure that provides support to beginning teachers during the induction process. The common basic functions of this structure can be explained as follows: Technical support training offered to beginning teachers ensures that they acquire the necessary competencies to be ready for teaching. It contributes to the socialization of beginning teachers to adapt to the school and the culture they are in and strengthens their development. This strengthening provides support for teachers about the issues needed to be better mastered by them (Arends, 1998; Hu ling-Austin, 1990, as cited in Serpell, 2000).

Examination of beginning teacher induction programs shows that mentoring comes to the fore as one of the prominent components of many programs. Although there is no consensus on the way of implementation of mentoring, it is emphasized that mentoring is the most important component of teacher induction programs by researchers and particularly by teachers and that it should be in harmony with the vision, mission and structure of the beginning teacher induction program (Danielson, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Wong, 2004). In beginning teacher induction programs, mentoring is perceived to be the assignment of the responsibility to experienced teachers to help beginning teachers by providing personal, emotional, social (introduction of organizational and school norms) and professional support for them. It is stated that the focus of the mentoring system should be to support professional learning by using various approaches such as coaching, training, discussion, guidance and so on (European Commission, 2010).

Research has shown that mentoring beginning teachers makes them more effective in the early years of teaching. This is because teachers learn from guided practices rather than trial and error. It has been observed that teachers who have received this type of mentoring focus on the learning process of the learner in a shorter time and perform the teaching profession longer (Weiss & Weis, 1999). Daniselson (1999) found that mentoring strengthened the professional development of both beginning teachers and mentors themselves, while Evertson and Smithey (2000) reported that the beginner teachers working with trained mentors have better teaching skills than the beginning teachers working with untrained mentors. A mentor teacher is expected to be competent enough to provide this help and support to the beginning teacher, which is the main requirement for teacher induction programs to achieve their goals. Pala (2017) determined that when mentors are perceived to be incompetent by beginning teachers, they may lose their interest in the profession and cannot offer the contribution expected from them. Therefore, prospective mentors should participate in professional development studies to learn about the mentoring process and be informed about what is expected of them (Kyle, Moore & Sanders, 1999) is gaining importance.

Teacher Induction Programs in Turkey

In Turkey, teachers to be appointed to state schools are selected from among the graduates of education faculties or graduates of other faculties holding a teaching certificate according to the results of a two-stage central exam. In the first stage, pre-service teachers take the Public Personnel Selection Exam and Teacher Field Knowledge Test. In the second stage, the pre-service teachers who get at least the minimum score determined for their relevant fields they will be appointed to, take the oral exam. It is compulsory to get a score of 60 and above from the oral exam. After these stages, pre-service teachers are appointed as beginning teachers according to the average score superiority. Teachers who are appointed must participate in a one-year (school year)

beginning teacher induction program. Teachers who have successfully completed this program are accepted to have completed their induction period.

The beginning teacher induction program, which had been implemented in different ways in Turkey, was revised in 2016. The framework of the beginning teacher induction program on which the current study is based was determined by a directive issued by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in March 2016. The beginning teacher induction program has positive features such as having components similar to those of the induction programs implemented in other countries, having a systematic structure, and having a mentoring component, called the advisory component in the MoNE regulation.

The current beginning teacher induction program has four pillars: (1) *Classroom and in-school activities* (Lesson planning/preparation/evaluation, lesson delivery, lesson observation, in-school observations and practices); (2) *Out-of-school activities* (getting to know the identity of the city, organizational functioning, school next to us, voluntary and entrepreneurship activities, professional development and career); (3) *Reading educational books and watching educational films* and (4) *In-service training* (various professional development seminars). The activities carried out within the scope of these components are documented by beginning teachers, school administrators, advisor teachers as mentors and inspectors by filling out various forms and a candidacy file is created. Advisor teachers are not professional mentors, but they are teachers with ten years or more experience performing the roles expected from the professional mentors. Hereafter, the term "mentor" has been used instead of the term "advisor teacher".

According to the directive, it is mandatory to appoint a mentor for each beginning teacher. There are some certain criteria to be considered in the appointment of the mentor. These criteria include having a professional experience of at least ten years, being a mentor before, being socially and culturally sophisticated, having reached a distinguished level in the profession, having strong communication skills and being from the same branch with the beginning teacher. In the directive, the duties of the mentor teacher are defined as follows: Planning the program of the beginning teacher with the school principal, providing the necessary support to the beginning teacher during the program, being a role model in all processes in order for the beginning teacher to be trained in accordance with the planned program and fulfilling the duties assigned by administrators in the process.

The directive stipulates that the beginning teacher's working program will be prepared jointly by the school principal and mentor. In addition, school administrators are required to follow this process and take necessary precautions for the implementation of the studies in the desired quality. Beginning teachers are subjected to at least three performance evaluations during the program. Performance evaluations are made by school principals, mentors and inspectors. As the last stage, beginning teachers are

given written and oral exams. Moreover, it is compulsory for beginning teachers to deliver classes independently, like other teachers, in the schools where they are appointed (MEB, 2016a, 2016b; MEB, 2017). Classroom teachers may have to deliver classes of some other branches (for example, foreign language classes) in addition to subject lesson in their own classes.

The 2016 Beginning Teacher Induction Program has been investigated by different researchers. In their study examining 14 studies, Çelik & Atik (2020) stated that although the program was generally evaluated positively in terms of content and structure, there were problems in the implementation, mentoring, seminar, evaluation, form filling processes. In a comprehensive study conducted across Turkey, İlyas, Coşkun & Toklucu (2017) reported that more than half of the teachers positively evaluated this training in terms of preparing for the profession and professional development; however, they stated that all of the teachers thought it would be necessary to make some improvements on the mentoring process and form filling process. The results of the studies by Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) revealed that the beginning teachers reported that the program could not equip the beginning teachers with the targeted competences. Findings showed that there are problems such as not providing enough information about the program, filling too many and similar forms, selection and training of mentor teachers. In their study, Kozikoğlu and Soyalp (2018) concluded that, although they contributed to the issues such as getting to know the institutional culture, conducting administrative affairs and operations, communication with parents; there were problems experienced in filling forms, mentoring process, informing. Moreover, although everything was good in theory, there were problems in practice.

Other studies have reported positive and negative aspects of the beginning teacher induction program (Akyıldız, Altun & Kasım, 2020; Çakmak, Kaçar & Arıkan, 2018; Gül, Türkmen & Aksel, 2017; Kılıç, Babayiğit & Erkuş, 2016; Kozikoğlu & Çökük, 2017; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018; Köse & Atalmış, 2017; Nayır & Çetin, 2017; Önder, 2018; Sarikaya, Samancı & Yılar, 2017; Topsakal & Duysak, 2017). Most of these studies are about the practices conducted by beginning teachers in the period when they were not responsible for conducting the lessons independently, and it was mostly conducted with beginning teachers participating in the program in urban areas. The current study differs from the others because it was conducted with the beginning classroom teachers working in schools located in rural areas and responsible for teaching the lessons independently. In this respect, the purpose of the current study is to determine how the teacher induction program as the second stage of teacher training operates in Turkey based on the experiences of beginning classroom teachers appointed to schools in rural areas.

Methodology

Research Model

The current study was designed and conducted as a case study, one of the qualitative research methods. The case study design was preferred as the current study aimed to conduct a detailed investigation of the experiences of the beginning teachers who were in their first year of their career and assigned to schools located in rural areas. The case addressed in the current study is the experiences of the beginning classroom teachers in the teacher induction program.

Study Group

The study group of the current research consisted of eight beginning classroom teachers (six females and two males) having graduated from the elementary education departments of education faculties and working in rural settlements. These teachers started teaching at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, and they were still in their induction process which was about to end in a month at the time of the study. The rural areas where the teachers are working are located in the East and South East Anatolian Regions of Turkey, which are relatively less developed. In specifying the study group, the criterion sampling method, one of the purposive sampling methods, and the snowball sampling method were employed. Criterion sampling is to review and use all situations that meet predetermined criteria (Patton, 2018). The basic criterion used in determining the participants is that they are teachers who are in their first year and are subject to the beginning teacher induction program prepared in accordance with the "Directive for Beginning Teacher Induction", which the Ministry of National Education (MEB) started to implement in 2016. Snowball sampling is used to reach people who can provide rich information on the subject (Patton, 2018). First, a contact was established with a beginning teacher working in a rural area who was in teacher induction program and continued with another teacher who met the criteria, suggested by the first teacher and accepted to participate on a volunteer basis. In this way, with the suggestion of the last teacher contacted, the next teacher was determined.

With the additional regulation made in 2017 by the Ministry of National Education, beginning teachers, who are subject to the Beginning Teacher Induction Program, have been obliged to deliver classes independently in the schools where they have been appointed (MEB, 2017). Thus, the beginning teachers making up the study group of the current study were teachers who were responsible for the delivery of lessons in their induction process. Demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1.
Participant information

Participant	Gender	The city and district where they work	
P1	Female	Batman	Village
P2.	Female	Ağrı/Hamur	Village
P3.	Female	Kars/Digor	Village
P4.	Female	Şırnak	Village
P5.	Female	Urfa/Halfeti	Village
P6.	Female	Van/Özerk	Village
P7.	Male	Urfa/Viranşehir	Village
P8.	Male	Adıyaman /	Village

Data Collection

The data of the current study were collected with a semi-structured interview form. In the development process of the semi-structured interview form, the researcher examined the Beginning Teacher Induction Program Directive (MEB, 2016a). Later, an interview reminiscent to a friendly conversation was conducted with a beginning teacher who was subject to this program on the phone. After these preliminary steps, the researcher decided on the scope and questions of the study and prepared a semi-structured interview form. The prepared data collection tool was then submitted to expert review and revised based on the feedback received from the experts. The piloting of the interview form was conducted with a beginning teacher by phone, and thus the final form of the data collection tool was reached. The opinions expressed by this teacher in the pilot study were not included in the data analysis process. '*How did your induction process start? (first place appointed, appointment process, introduction, etc.) How did you meet with your mentor? How was your interaction with your mentor?'* are some sample questions from the interview form.

Data collection was carried out towards the end of May 2018, one month before the end of the induction period. During the induction process, performance evaluation is made by the school principal, the mentor teacher and finally by the inspector. In this process, only two of the beginning teachers passed through the inspector evaluation stage, the others had not yet experienced this stage. Since face-to-face interviews with the participants were not possible due to the distance and transportation difficulties, the interviews were carried out by phone. First appointments were made with the participants in advance, and the interviews with the participants were conducted usually on Friday evening and Saturday. After it was repeated that the interviews would be audio-recorded, the interviews were completed between 30 and 45 minutes.

Data Analysis

Voice recordings of eight beginning teachers interviewed within the scope of the current study were transferred to the computer environment and each interviewee was

coded as P1 ... P8. Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. The content analysis process of the study was carried out as follows: After the data were deciphered, the main thematic frameworks were determined with a deductive approach based on this program, as the researcher initially aimed to reveal the experiences of the beginning teachers regarding the beginning teacher induction process on the basis of the 2016 beginning teacher induction program. The themes determined are teacher *classroom practices, mentoring, observation process, documentation of the induction process, seminars and performance evaluation.* Later, all the deciphered texts were started to be encoded after they were read from beginning to end. When the coding was finished, the deductive and inductive approaches were put to work together, and the data were tried to be presented as a meaningful whole by grouping them into sub-themes placed under the initial main thematic framework by combining, simplifying on the basis of some points such as similarity, inclusiveness and repetition in the coding process. The new themes emerging at the end of the coding process were called *first days on the job* and *emotional reflections* and they were added to the main thematic framework. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2016) explain this process as "coding made in a general framework made up of the combination of coding made according to the previously determined concepts and coding according to the concepts extracted from the data". Accordingly, before the analysis of the data, a conceptual structure is formed, while coding is made according to this conceptual structure, changes are made by adding the new codes emerging with an inductive approach. The opinions of the beginning teachers were arranged according to the emerging themes and codes, and the findings were presented by supporting with direct descriptive quotations from the participants and discussed within frame of the related literature.

In order to increase the credibility of the study, first of all, the process followed in the determination of the study group, data collection and analysis processes were described in detail. Then, an expert on the research topic checked the themes and codes in terms of relevance, coverage, being explanatory and understandable and integrity. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that field notes and analysis and interpretation of these notes should be checked by an outsider in order to increase credibility (Glesne, 2015). In addition, participant views supporting the themes and codes emerging during the content analysis process were included as descriptive expressions in the presentation of the findings.

Findings

The findings of the study are arranged as the general theme, main themes and sub-themes obtained from the opinions of the participants, as shown in Figure 1. Then, the findings are presented by making detailed explanations of the codes that make up each sub-theme and by being supported with the opinions of the participants.

The main themes revealed within the scope of the current study were determined

as *first days on the job, teacher classroom practices, mentoring, observation, documentation of the induction process, seminars* and *performance evaluations,* and *emotional reflections* that reveal how the beginning teachers are affected by this process, as shown in Figure 1.
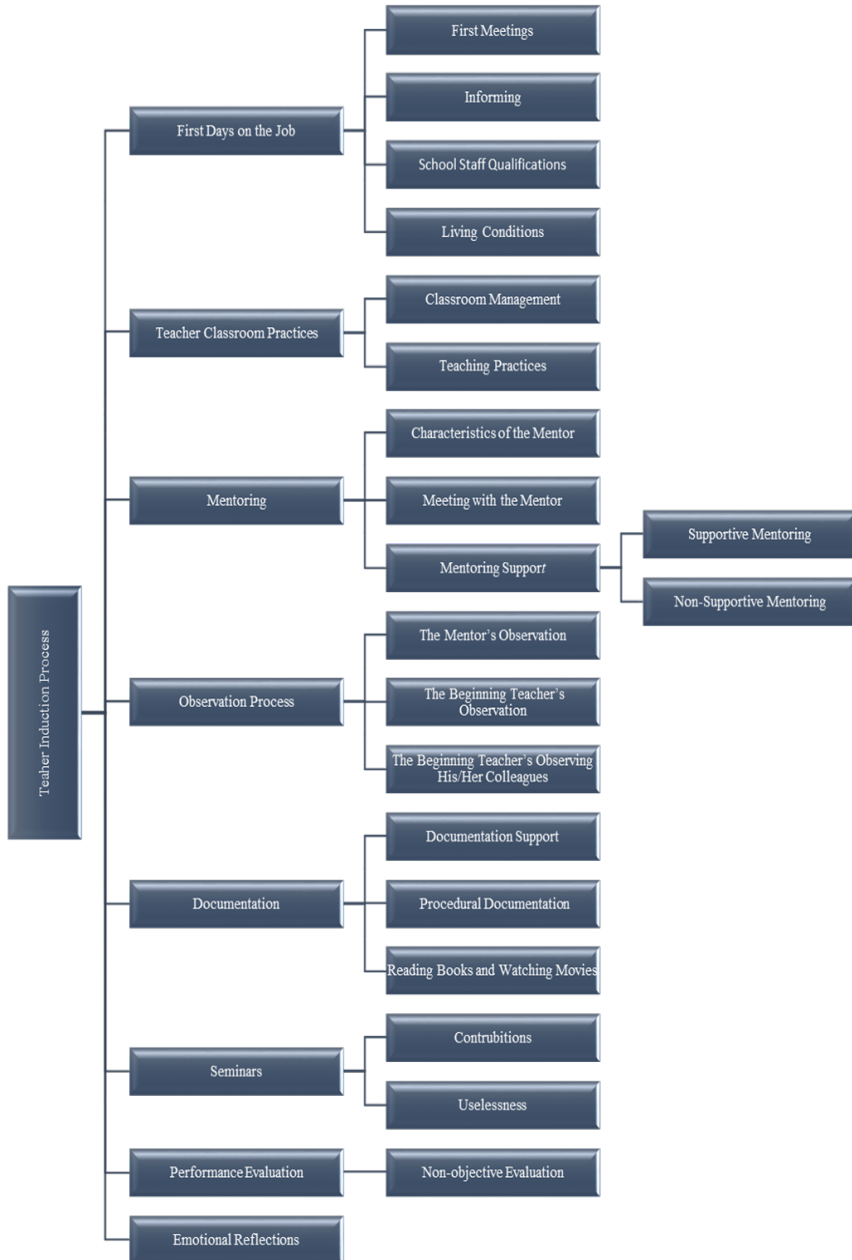

Figure 1: Main and Sub Themes of the Study

First Days on the Job

The experiences lived by the beginner teachers in the first days of their careers are gathered under the following sub-themes: *first introduction, informing, qualifications of the school appointed (structure of the staff) and living conditions.*

First Meetings

The beginning teachers reported negative experiences regarding how they were met by their colleagues, administrators or mentors when they arrived at their schools. The teachers stated that they were not welcomed very warmly, they felt lonely about getting support and help, and that only a few teachers introduced themselves by saying "welcome". These findings found reflections in the statements of some beginning teachers as follows:

> *'... When I first came here, it was quite surprising; only few teachers said "welcome"...' (P7)*

> *'... I cannot tell that I was welcomed very warmly. Everyone was very formal; there were just few people saying "welcome"; in general, just few people greeted me; I could not establish communication anybody else ...' (P1)*

> *'I was extremely bored as there were a few teachers and I could not communicate with them during the breaks. Thus, I did not like the school much. There was no one who wanted to talk to me or asked me "how is it going?' (P5)*

Only one teacher reported having a positive experience about being met by his/her colleagues, administrators and mentor. The teacher having positive experience seems to have been positively affected by this experience.

> *"... When I came here, I met with them; they welcomed me quite well, they helped me a lot... they were really interested; I was very lucky...' (P4)*

Informing

All but one of the beginning teachers stated that they were not informed and guided systematically about the induction process, their duties and responsibilities and the tasks and works they need to do after they had started their job. They also stated that the administrators, mentors and other teachers in the school acted as if the beginning teachers knew everything. Thus, the beginning teachers obtained information about the induction process and what they should do haphazardly on their own. They reported that they did not do or delayed some of the tasks they had to do (for example, filling in the class book). Opinions of some participants on this issue are given below:

> *'... Nobody helped much; I even had to ask the school principal to learn about many things. Although I was new to the school, nobody told me what*

to do. I had to always ask questions such as "How should I fill in the class book? How should I do this? I myself always strived. ... with my own efforts I learned many things and I still have to learn myself.' (P6)

'... I had trouble at first, about paperwork etc...in the beginning, for example, I did not use the class book for two weeks or so, then I learned that I should have taken the book to the class.' (P7)

On the other hand, a beginning teacher stated that she was informed in writing and verbally about the induction process by the school principal when she started her job and that she was introduced to her mentor. It is understood that this teacher started to fulfil her duty in line with the information given to him/her.

"... Yeah, as I said, our principal was disciplined about that. He called us, "the forms need to be filled in like this, ... these are your duty, the beginning teacher will do them" ... we were given papers, namely the file, the same was given to the mentor, I entered my classes in an informed way...' (P1)

School Staff Qualifications

The factors such as the number of teachers working in the school, their positions (contracted teacher, tenured teacher) and the lack of teachers can affect the first days of beginning teachers who have just started their job in many ways. For example, a teacher who was appointed as the only teacher in a village school had to do some managerial work without any experience. Beginning teachers reported that they started to work at different grade levels (intermediate classes), had to deal with several classes due to lack of teachers, the school consisted of mostly contracted teachers and some of them started their first duties as principal teachers. Some teachers expressed their opinions in this regard as follows:

'... I was the only classroom teacher, there was a need for teachers. In the first week, or in the first month, no teacher was appointed to the school. I had to teach three different classes. Then, a contracted teacher was assigned' (P2).

'... I started as the teacher of fourth graders.' (P7)

Living Conditions

In the first days of their professional lives, the beginning teachers stated that they experienced problems mostly related to accommodation and heating, such as finding a place, paying high rents, accommodation in bad conditions, problems with heating at school, having problems with burning stoves, and children's being cold in class. These problems are frequently encountered in rural settlements due to housing conditions and poor school conditions. Only one teacher stated that she did not have any problems in terms of accommodation as she was able to stay in the school housing.

'When I got here I couldn't find a house to rent. I stayed in the teacher's house. Conditions in the teacher's house were very bad. We three people were staying in the same room and it was not good in terms of hygiene. Twelve people or something were using one kitchen, the cleaning was very bad.' (P3)

Teacher Classroom Practices

The experiences of the beginning teachers related to classroom practices are grouped under the classroom management and teaching process sub-themes.

Classroom Management

Findings revealed that the beginning teachers' experiences regarding classroom management were problem-focused. While some of their problems were due to lack of experience and classroom management skills, others seem to have arisen as problems related to physical and social conditions. The beginning teachers stated that they were not able to control the classroom, had a lot of difficulty in the first days, panicked in the face of problems, were not able to communicate because some students could not speak Turkish, encountered various unwanted behaviours (fighting, abusive speech, older children in the classroom, etc.), had difficulties because of inclusive education and had other problems such as not being able to cooperate with the family. These findings show that the teachers had great difficulties in creating a proper classroom order and teaching environment. Some teachers' experiences on this issue are as follows.

'... The point where I have a problem is that there is almost no parent support... for example, some of my students were really bad; they even did not know how to read and write. I was teaching how to read and write with one-to-one tutorial, but since there was no parental support, because it was one-sided, they learned reading a little late.' (P3)

"... In the beginning, I had more difficulties in classroom management ... They didn't know Turkish enough, know me well enough, I didn't know them either, it was a problem."(P4)

'... I had an extremely difficult time in classroom management. ... It was fourth grade, but I saw that I crossed some lines. The students challenged me, they tried to make me passive, I couldn't get the exact balance for a few months, I mean, I had pharyngitis, shouting in class because I did not know how to silence them, at that time, I had a hard time.' (P7)

"... My five students were not referred to inclusive education; they were not sent to RAM (Counselling Research Centre). If they were sent to RAM, they would be referred to inclusive education. I had a lot of trouble with those five students, it was very difficult for me to educate them without separating them from other students.' (P1)

'... Children did not know which teacher's rules to obey as teachers were changed constantly…' (P8)

Teaching Practices

Findings regarding the teaching process were also problem-focused, and the teachers encountered some difficulties with their teaching practices. The beginning teachers stated that they experienced problems such as not being able to progress properly in teaching reading and writing (not being able to read and write despite being a second grade, not knowing how long it would take to teach letters), students' not knowing Turkish, lack of technology in the classroom, being unable to implement the plans they prepared, having to find the correct method through trial and error and having difficulty in involving students in classroom activities. As a result, the beginning teachers thought that they started the profession unprepared and felt inefficient. Some teacher opinions on this issue are given below:

'My student profile is very heterogeneous; I have students who are very good and also students who do not know even how to read at all, even though they are second graders.' (P8)

'...teaching reading and writing involves a very troublesome process… For example, there were some words I did not understand, after all, they know Turkish but they cannot explain exactly what they want to say. … At first, I had a problem in arranging time, for example, I could not figure out how long I should devote to teaching a letter.' (P4)

'... So I was making plans, but sometimes I was noticing it just did not fit. I realized that some things like learning by doing and living are not possible here.' (P7)

'... I could talk to my mentor several times on the phone, and it was all about filling in forms'…I might have learned wrong. I wish my mentor had attended my lessons and helped me to improve myself but it did not happen. My erroneous learning may continue in this way.' (P6)

'... I find it very difficult to involve my unsuccessful students in the lesson, I shared this problem with my mentor, I asked for help, but I could not find a solution anyway…' (P5)

Mentoring

The experiences of the beginning teachers related to the mentoring process are grouped under three sub-themes: Characteristics of the mentor, meeting with the mentor and mentor support.

Characteristics of the Mentor

A mentor has to be assigned to each beginning teacher by the school principal when they have started their job. Following conditions must be met for a teacher to be

assigned as a mentor according to the directive for beginning teacher induction program: He/she must have at least ten years of experience as a teacher, he/she has had to work as a mentor before, one mentor must work only with one beginning teacher, he/she must be from the same branch with the beginning teacher and he/she must work in the same school with the beginning teacher. However, there may be some exceptions, especially in village schools where the school size is not sufficient. On the basis of the opinions of the beginning teachers, it was determined that besides mentor teachers working in the same school with the beginning teachers, there were also mentors from different schools, that the mentors had a teaching experience varying between three and six years while only one of the mentors had a teaching experience of 20 years and that the number of the beginning teachers they were responsible for varied between one and four. Some of the beginning teachers expressed their opinions on the issue as follows:

> *'... We are not in the same school with my mentor; he is in another school. ...'* **(P6)**

> *'... Since there was not a teacher to be a mentor in my school, a teacher from a nearby school was assigned as a mentor for me but both of the schools are village schools, they are not very close to each other ...'* **(P2)**

> *'My mentor is responsible for two more beginning teachers besides me; he is not very experienced; he was just appointed three years ago as a teacher ... He was assigned as a mentor to us without knowing much.'* **(P3)**

> *'...I have a mentor from the same school. My mentor is in the same school with me but he had another beginning teacher besides me, and this second beginning teacher is in a different village, they have never met...'* **(P7)**

> *'... There is no other beginning teacher for whom my mentor was responsible; he was a six-year teacher and was appointed to this school just one year earlier than me.'* **(P1)**

Meeting with the Mentor

According to the Directive for Beginning Teacher Induction, the induction process must be initiated by assigning a mentor to them by their school principals when they have started their job. However, it was determined that the process of assigning a mentor to the beginning teachers and informing them about it was not officially initiated, and that the process progressed informally. When the relevant experiences of the beginning teachers were examined, it was determined that the beginning teachers were not formally introduced to their mentors assigned to them when they started their job, some of them did not know that they had mentors and they learned that they were assigned a mentor in different ways (such as learning in seminars, learning from MEBBİS - Ministry of National Education Information Systems), and they met with

their mentors late (meeting with the mentor in the same school one month later, two weeks after being appointed, in another village school one month later, etc.). Some of the beginning teachers expressed their opinions on this issue as follows:

> *'... After the seminar period started, my colleagues started to talk about mentors, I did not know who he/she was before...'* **(P3)**
>
> *'... We were in the same school but I didn't know that he was my mentor. ... I learned after seeing it at MEBBİS (Ministry of National Education Information System). I cannot remember exactly now, but I think it was one month later.'... (P8)*
>
> *'... He was assigned two weeks later...' (P6)*
>
> *'I met my mentor through the District Directorate of National Education. He also learned in this way, normally as he was in a school close to mine, we had already met… I think it was one month later; but we call him so-called mentor ...' (P2)*

Mentoring Support

Effective mentoring support is the most prominent element in the success of the beginning teacher induction program. However, the views of the participating teachers revealed that there was no planned, systematic and professional mentoring process in schools in rural areas, with or without mentoring support. Details on this key finding are presented under two main themes: Supportive mentoring and non-supportive mentoring.

Supportive Mentoring

While some of the beginning teachers stated that they received mentoring support in various forms, only one beginning teacher stated that she received partially comprehensive mentoring support. Some positive examples of mentoring support are given by the beginning teachers as follows: informing them about the induction process, providing guidance on how to communicate with children who do not speak Turkish, providing guidance on literacy teaching and material use, and informing about village life and parent profile. However, the beginning teachers reported that they were not observed in their classrooms by their mentors. P4 explained her opinions on this issue as follows:

> *'... My mentor teacher really tried to help me a lot with his experience. You know, I went and got his advice on the issues for which I needed help. He helped me on many issues related to the delivery of lessons and the induction process and he informed me about the routines of the school and the environment… When evaluated as a whole, I can say that my mentor really explained enough and tried to support me. He really shared his opinions and experiences.' (P4)*

The experiences of this teacher, who was understood to have received partially comprehensive but not planned and systematic mentoring support, revealed that the mentoring offered included the issues aimed at improving classroom practices and adapting to the school and environment.

The fact that some of the beginning teachers' mentors work in schools other than the schools they work appears to be a factor that makes it difficult to provide comprehensive mentoring support. An example of this is that a beginning teacher, whose is also the principal of the school, receives support from her mentor working in another school by phone.

Some beginning teachers stated that, although their mentors are willing to provide mentoring support, they are not competent enough to provide such mentoring. Some opinions of the beginning teachers on the issue are given below:

> *'... He did not have much experience, but was willing and motivated to support and convey what he knew. ...'* **(P8)**

> *'Frankly, I was lucky with the mentor teacher. I would go directly to him when I had difficulty, I could talk but he was also inexperienced; yet he tried to do his best. ...'* **(P3)**

It was determined that some forms of support provided by the mentors are simple topics that cannot be considered within the scope of mentoring and that any teacher could do it. Simple mentoring such showing how to use the Education Information Network (EBA), how to write petitions, how to write reports and documents can be given as examples of this kind of mentoring support.

Non-Supportive Mentoring

The beginning teachers associated their not being able to receive supportive mentoring with conditions of the mentor such as the mentor's not knowing how to provide guidance, his/her inexperience, being mentor for more than a beginning teacher and the mentor's being recruited in another school. The beginning teachers explained their experiences regarding non-supportive mentoring behaviours as follows: Not being able to communicate with the mentor due to his/her indifference, the mentor's only being interested in the bureaucratic works such as the completion of induction file, talking about filling in forms on the phone, lack of importance attached to mentoring, not getting support in planning, lack of support related to parents, limited suggestions and not providing guidance unless asked. Some beginning teachers expressed their opinions on this issue as follows:

> *'...We can call him the so-called mentor teacher... So I barely met him anyway. We communicated little and it was on the phone. I found my own way; I did not receive any support.'* **(P2)**

> *'...My mentor was appointed after two weeks, but he did not help me in any way... He is giving mentoring to the two other teachers ....'* **(P6)**

'...or rather a mentor who does not say unless I ask ... not supportive or guiding at all…' (P5)

'We talked a few times when we had trouble keeping the kids quiet. But he said, 'You need to get their attention' or something, but then I thought that experience was also needed to attract attention. ..., I used to go to our vice-principal rather than my mentor.' (P7)

Observation Process

The experiences of the beginning teachers regarding the observation process included the sub-themes of *the mentor's observing the beginning teacher, the beginning teacher's observing the mentor, the beginning teacher's observing his/her colleagues.* When the experiences of the teachers in these dimensions are examined in general, it is seen that obstacles to the observations come to the fore rather than the content and quality of the observations. Sub-findings related to this main finding are presented under each observation sub-theme.

The Mentor's Observation

Only one of the beginning teachers was regularly observed by her mentor throughout the semester. The other teachers were either not observed regularly or not observed at all by their mentors. The beginning teachers stated that the reason for this is that the mentor was in a different school, and the mentor had more than one beginning teacher to be mentored. In addition, the beginning teachers reported that they could not receive any feedback from their mentors after the observation. Some participant opinions in relation to these findings are as follows:

'... we started in November, he observed until May. ... But he generally did not give feedback, that is, he was just saying 'there is a lot of difference between when you came here first and now', rather than providing specific feedback. Just general feedbacks ... not any specific guidance or direction.'(P1)

'... He came and observed three or four times, he did not give any feedback, just watched it.'(P5)

'... I can't say an exact number, but as I said he did his best and the existing conditions allowed him just to do what he already did. As he could not be in three different classes at the same time, he visited my classes from time to time and sometimes the classes of the other teacher but he could not stay for a whole class hour....' (P3)

The Beginning Teacher's Observation

Although only one of the beginning teachers reported that she regularly observed her mentor, others observed occasionally. Some other beginning teachers, on the other hand, were found to have no time to observe their mentors as they were teaching all

the time. Some beginning teachers who could not observe their mentors expressed the need to observe their mentors in order to see sample practices and improve their classroom practices. The basic view that emerged regarding the inability of observation to be carried out by the mentor and the beginning teacher properly is that observation was not feasible because everyone had a workload that made it impossible. Some of the participating teachers expressed their opinions on this issue as follows:

'It was beneficial for me because our classes were at the same level, and it was my first year, so it was useful for me to handle both students and subjects better. ...I learned not to expect the same ability from all students when I observed his class, so he helped me in this way.' **(P1)**

'...No, I could not observe my mentor, because we were in different village schools, and we had classes at the same time ...' **(P2)**

*'...The observation process did not occur. I was teaching the first graders, I sometimes went to the class of my mentor to exchange ideas, I observed his class but it was not much effective as I was teaching the first graders, he could not observe me'... **(P4)***

The Beginning Teacher's Observing His/her Colleagues

Only one of the beginning teachers observed her colleagues regularly, while the other beginning teachers could not observe their colleagues. The beginning teacher having observed her colleagues talked about negative experiences about the process rather than the benefits obtained from such observation. This teacher talked about negative aspects such as the observed teacher's feeling as if he/she was inspected, the tense atmosphere created, and the observed teacher's closing himself/herself to communication. The opinions of P1, who experienced the observation process and the opinions of P6, who did not experience the observation process, are given below:

*'... I cannot observe them either, because if I observe them, I will not be in my class, so nobody will teach my students'... I wish I were able to observe them, because I need it and I need to see what they are doing in the class. I might like the methods they use and I can use the same method but I cannot observe anybody's lesson and nobody observes my lesson and gives me some advice such as 'do it like this, do it like that' **(P6)***

*'... I go to different classes to make observations and I am not much welcomed. They think as if we were evaluating them and thus, they adopt negative attitudes towards us. There occurs lack of communication between us. ... They do not even say "Hello" or "Welcome" or "Please take a seat" there is no dialogue. They treat us as if we came to inspect them... In fact, what I want is to learn something which can be useful in my classrooms. I observe to learn something. I had some problems with teachers.' **(P1)***

Documentation

The experiences of the beginning teachers related to the documentation of induction process are gathered under the sub-themes of *documentation support, procedural documentation, and reading books and watching movies.*

Documentation Support and Procedural Documentation

In the beginning teacher induction program, beginning teachers are required to document the activities they are involved in. This documentation is performed in a way that various forms (candidacy forms, observation forms, evaluation forms, etc.) are filled in and that the activities carried out are reported. As a result of all these documentation activities, an evaluation form for the beginning teacher has been created. It was determined that the beginning teachers see the process of documenting the activities done as a waste of time on the grounds that the filled forums are not examined by anyone, everyone is fooling each other, the paper is wasted, the forms do not reflect the truth, the things that are not done are shown as if they had been done, etc. The beginning teachers stated that they carried out the documentation process by capitalizing on the examples on the internet, meeting with the local village school administrators, getting support from their mentors, getting support from the school principal, getting support from colleagues and benefiting from seminars. Some participant opinions related to these findings are given below:

'… I filled in the induction forms by finding them on the internet rather than seeking the support of my mentor. I did them by looking at the examples found in the web pages such as Eğitimhane. My mentor did not care much about such documentation work and said 'You can do it', 'Nobody reads them anyway'. First I filled in the forms and then he filled in the form 2; actually he should have filled in the form and given it to me; thus, I somehow did his work.' **(P6)**

'… There were ready forms. I looked at them and adapted them to myself. … For example, there is a section for out-of-school activities in the form and although we did not do any out-of-school activities we filled this section as if we had done some out-of-school activities… You make up some information but it is difficult in this way because you cannot find something to write as you have not done any of these activities…' **(P5)**

'I think that the forms filled in about me are not very accurate because they did not observe me in the class and therefore, they just wrote their impressions about me. … I filled in the forms by copying from my friends…' **(P4)**

'… another mentor teacher offered me this; 'give me the file your mentor has prepared; the subjects are the same' and 'I will copy it for my beginning teacher' of course I did not give. I said 'my mentor filled in the form with his own effort'; 'You can do the same' so I did not give it.' **(P1)**

Reading Books and Watching Movies

In the beginning teacher induction program, beginning teachers are expected to read books and watch films about education to develop themselves professionally. These books and movies are given to them as a list. The beginning teachers reported that this activity did not take place as foreseen, but mostly reported as if books had been read and movies had been watched. It was stated by the beginning teachers that this reporting process was mostly done in the form of copy and paste from the internet. Some participant opinions about this finding are given below.

> *'... We find the summary of the book in the internet and then write it. ... It is also true for the movies and administrators also know this, everything is just a formality, everybody has the same form. ... Just for the sake of giving a form.'* **(P6)**

> *'... For example, whether it's reading a book or watching a movie, beginning teachers try to cheat a little on this subject, they don't read books, they don't watch movies, just cut and paste from the internet.'* **(P8)**

Seminars

The experiences of the beginning teachers related to seminar activities are collected under the subthemes of contributions and uselessness.

Contributions and Uselessness

Beginning teacher training seminar programs that are prepared by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) to support the professional development of beginning teachers are carried out in predetermined centres. The experiences of the beginning teachers regarding seminar programs revealed that, with a few exceptions, the intended benefits could not be attained from seminars. There are some teachers who stated that seminars mostly contribute by bringing beginner teachers together, providing insights into the environment, and offering few informative sessions. Participants explain the reasons for the failure of the seminars in achieving their goals as their being heavily theoretical, their lasting long, their being intense, their being perceived as formality, their not contributing to professional development, their not being carried out by competent people, their repeating each other, their being considered as waste of time, and as a results participants start to believe that they are useless and they become indifferent. Some participant opinions related to these findings are given below:

> *'... An environment for meeting other beginning teachers was created as it was given to all newly appointed teachers at the same time. This was its benefit. Moreover, we were given information about the education and instructional environment yet little information was given about student profile. That is, we learned little about what we would encounter in the seminars ... It was unnecessary long; it could have been shorter yet I attained some benefits.'* **(P2)**

>   *'... There is no smart board here at the moment, but I learned what to do
>   with the smart board ... I also learned something about how to communicate
>   with the public, how to communicate with students. ..' (P1)*
>
>   *'We go to seminars just to sign in general, just out of formality. In fact,
>   trainers in seminars say 'you are not happy, we aren't happy either...' (P6)*
>
>   *'It was mostly theoretical, so it didn't contribute much to me.' (P4)*
>
>   *'If the seminars were shorter but more effective ... If we had more com-
>   petent trainers giving concrete examples about what we should do in the
>   class, making us develop materials, then it would be much better'. (P8)*

Performance Evaluation

The experiences of the beginning teachers regarding the performance evaluation
process are gathered under the non-objective evaluation sub-theme.

The Directive for Beginning Teacher Induction stipulates that the performance of
the teachers participating in the induction program should be evaluated by mentors,
school principals and inspectors during and at the end of the program. These evalua-
tions are carried out by using predetermined forms.

Non-objective Evaluation

The opinion that comes to the fore in relation to the performance evaluation ex-
periences of the beginning teachers is that the evaluation process does not function
properly. This finding applies to school principals, mentors and inspectors who have to
evaluate the beginning teacher. The experiences behind the formation of this percep-
tion can be explained as follows: The observation process does not work properly, the
beginning teacher's mentor works in another school, evaluators try to get to know the
beginning teacher through conversations in the meetings they come together in order
to develop an opinion about the beginning teacher, they evaluate the beginning teacher
by asking other teachers, the principal evaluates the beginning teacher on the basis of
his/her general condition (determination to work, according to his character) and the
scores are given within the range determined by the principal. Likewise, the two begin-
ning teachers who underwent the inspector's evaluation stated that the inspector did
not give any feedback, did not examine the files prepared, and left after staying for one
class hour. Some participant opinions on this issue are given below:

>   *'... Honestly, I don't think that the evaluation is very healthy. There were
>   four classes in our school. I did not have much chance to observe my men-
>   tor; my mentor did not have much chance to observe me, either. Because we
>   all have one class, there are four classroom teachers, there are four separate
>   classes, the mentor teacher is alone and there are three beginning teachers
>   ... It was not as in the form, obviously, because in the form there is classroom
>   observation every week, there were things that the mentor could not have
>   done even if he had wanted to, as I said....' (P3)*

'My mentor, consciously or unconsciously, said, "The principal gave a score range, we chose it from that score range, and we gave it"... I wish my mentor had given those scores as a result of his own observation, and then we wouldn't be upset or hurt.' (P1)

'... I met with the school principal and my mentor in meetings and when we met, they asked me questions particularly about the educational environment ...' (P2)

'... As my school principal was on duty, he could not evaluate me; instead, the principal of another school evaluated me ...'(P3)

'... They assign scores just enough to pass; that is it... Just for the sake of completing the procedures.... In fact, we did not care much about this filling or scoring system...'(P6)

Some participant opinions about the inspector evaluation are given below:

'He sat down at my desk, opened the class book and looked through it. I did not fill in the section allocated to the Turkish course and he just asked me why I did not fill in this part. I said I had not taught it yet then he said "Ok" and asked me questions like 'How is it going? Did you get used to? Where are you staying?'. Then he asked me "Did you complete your file?' I said 'Yes', 'I can bring it'. He said "No, it is not necessary". Then he asked me 'do you want anything?' and then left the class.' (P5)

'... The inspector came and looked through the files and asked questions to the school principal 'Do you have any problem?', 'How is he working?' and then assigned a score....' (P1)

Emotional Reflections

When the effects of the interactions and experiences of the beginning teachers during their induction period on them were examined, it was seen that the feelings they felt about the process they underwent since they started are dominantly defined with negative statements. The reasons behind their negative feelings include lack of informing, weak interaction between colleagues, lack of strong mentor support, feeling lonely, limited social life, problems arising from the absence of an interactive environment, obligation to find solutions to the problems they have encountered on their own. In addition, there is a beginning teacher who loves her environment and job. The striking point is that this beginning teacher, who expressed positive feelings, is the person who stated that she was in a helpful and communicative environment from the first days. Some participant opinions related to these findings are given below:

'... I love this place, I found a more beautiful place than I wanted. I mean, the people in the village, my school administration, other teachers in my school; they really helped me overcome this difficult process easily. I love my students and I love my job...' (P4)

'... I came here with great hopes, but when I got such reactions from colleagues, I felt disappointed ... When I came here, the first questions asked me were "Are you a contracted teacher? How long will you work here?' so on; they thought that as I am a contracted teacher, but they are tenured, there is no need to communicate with me because I will leave but they will stay.' **(P1)**

'... I'm still struggling so hard, like I can't get used to it. There is nothing social, I am always at home, I try to spend time reading book at home, but after a certain time, I feel like disconnected from real life'... **(P3)**

'... You have just arrived at school, you are far from your family, a village school, a remote place, and the trouble is already big. If you are welcomed warmly, you can adopt more easily, but there is no warm welcome, nobody says what I should do; they do not ask "Have you found a house? Do you have any problems? How are you?"; in the first month, I was like in depression...' **(P6)**

'...There was not even an environment to discuss how to overcome this issue. As a result, over time, I became more introverts. ...' **(P7)**

Results and Discussion

In this subsection, first the results obtained from the findings related to the experiences of the beginning teachers who were appointed to rural settlements in the beginning teacher induction program and the discussion of these results are presented.

One of the main results obtained from the research findings is that the beginning teachers did not encounter a positive and supportive environment in the first days of their teaching career in the induction program. It was determined that the beginning teachers except for one were not informed or guided systematically about the induction process, their duties and responsibilities, and the tasks and procedures they should be engaged in, and that the teachers experienced a more problem-focused process. The beginning teachers tried to overcome the problems they faced through their own efforts and through trial and error, and in some cases they did not do or overlooked some of the tasks they were supposed to do. These problems are not only related to education and school environment, but also living conditions (not being able to find a place to stay, heating, etc.).

A teacher who had a positive experience of being welcomed developed a positive perception as expected. This might indicate that how they were welcomed affects the formation of positive and negative perception in teachers. The negative experiences of beginning teachers in the first days of their professional lives may cause them to develop a negative perception of the profession, decrease their motivation and make them feel disappointed. Given that the beginning teachers participating in the current study work in rural settlements where school and environmental opportunities are quite limited, it can be predicted that it will be even more difficult to overcome the

problems encountered. Başar and Doğan (2015) stated that beginning teachers who have problems in the first year of their professional lives lose their faith in their profession and motivation, become inefficient and cannot find solutions to the problems they encounter. As it is known, the experiences of teachers in the first days of their professional lives are not limited to their interactions with administrators and mentors, especially the way they are met by their colleagues is also an important factor. In the current study, the experiences of being greeted by colleagues were also defined with negative statements. Ingersoll (2012) likewise considers the isolation of the newly appointed teacher by his/her colleagues as an important problem in his/her first days in the profession and states that beginning teachers are often left to succeed or fail –sink or swim- on their own within the confines of their class. Pearce and Morrison (2011) also concluded that isolation in teaching causes beginning teachers to leave their jobs in the first years of their career. In the current study, it is seen that the beginning teachers were faced with partial isolation. It is understood from the experiences of the beginning teachers that this isolation might have been caused by the indifference of the school administrators, mentors and other teachers, and the fact that there were no experienced teachers or administrators other than the beginning teacher at school or that the mentor appointed was in another school. In the literature, there are some studies reporting similar results. For example, Gül, Türkmen and Aksel (2017), Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) Akyıldız, Altun and Kasım (2020) and Kozikoğlu and Soyalp (2018) found that beginning teachers experienced some problems due to lack of orientation and informing.

Another basic result obtained from the study findings is that the beginning teachers experienced significant problems in terms of classroom management and teaching practices. The problems experienced in relation to classroom management include the management of behaviours (inability of establishing the control in the class, having great difficulties in the first days, getting panicked in the face of problems, some students' being older than other students, etc.), lack of communication as some of the students could not speak Turkish, having difficulties due to inclusive education and not being able to cooperate with the parents. The problems related to teaching practices include not being able to progress in literacy teaching, not knowing how to teach, having difficulties in teaching students who did not know enough Turkish, not being able to implement the plans he/she prepared, not being able to perform effective lesson delivery, and trying to find the correct method through trial and error. In this regard, it can be argued that lack of strong mentor support, when faced with problems related to classroom practices, caused the problems to gain continuity and led the beginning teachers to find solutions through trial and error.

The mentor support was also found to be an important factor in the study by Kaufman et al. (2002). The researchers determined that the beginning teachers want to discuss the practices of the program, get an idea about how to meet the needs of

students with special needs, and learn about the perspectives of colleagues who have experience in their subject areas. When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is seen that beginning teachers experience problems in managing disruptive behaviours, establishing communication with students, using suitable methods for students having learning difficulties and working in cooperation with parents (Başar & Doğan, 2015; Veenman, 1984; Solak, 1999; Toker-Gökçe, 2013; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018). In addition, based on the opinions of the beginning teachers, it was concluded that the beginning teachers restricted the diversity of activities due to the inadequacy of physical conditions and the lack of materials, and they could not implement the activities they planned properly and perceived themselves as unsuccessful and inefficient. These findings concur with the findings reported in similar studies (Gökçe, 2010; Kozikoğlu & Soyalp, 2018; Veenman, 1984; Kozikoğlu & Senemoğlu, 2018).

The success of the mentoring process, which is seen as the most important variable of the beginning teacher induction program (Danielson, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Serpell, 2000; Wong, 2004), depends on the personal and pedagogical competences of the mentor, its having a formal structure, and the quality of the mentoring support provided. In the current study, results concerning each of these dimensions were obtained.

The mentors determined for the beginning teachers participating in the current study do not sufficiently meet the criteria required to be assigned as a mentor. According to the directive for beginning teacher induction, the mentor should have at least ten years of professional experience, have been a mentor before, be a mentor to only one beginning teacher, and work at the same school with the beginning teacher. However, findings of the current study showed that many of these criteria were not met. This naturally deteriorates the function of mentoring. As stated by Köse (2016), it seems difficult for a process that starts with the wrong mentor selection to yield successful results even if it is well designed. Similarly, Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) determined that there are problems with the selection and training of mentor teachers. Evertson and Smithey (2000) found that the beginning teachers working with trained mentors have higher levels of teaching skills than the beginning teachers working with untrained mentors.

One of the results found about mentoring is that the process of assigning mentors to the beginning teachers and informing them about their mentors was not formally initiated. It was determined that the beginning teachers were not formally introduced to their mentors assigned for them when they started their job, that some of them did not even know that they had a mentor, that they learned that they had a mentor in various ways, and that they met with their mentors late. Thus, it can be said that the beginning teachers were left to encounter the known and unknown facts of teaching by chance. However, the literature reveals that mentoring is supportive of new teachers in facing difficulties and strengthens the professional development of both new teachers and

mentors themselves (Daniselson, 1999).

Another result regarding mentoring is that a comprehensive, systematic and professional mentoring service could not be provided to beginning teachers in schools located in rural areas. Only one beginning teacher received mentor support to improve his/her classroom practices, albeit not planned. It should be noted that the observation process was not operated for this beginning teacher.

The beginning teachers mentioned some simple activities such as 'showing how to use the Education Information Network (EBA), how to write petitions, how to create reports and documents as positive examples of mentoring support. However, it is clear that even if performing such works and procedures are beneficial in terms of administrative functioning, it will not contribute to improving classroom practices, which is the main function of mentoring. These results can be evaluated as that the mentoring component, which can be considered as the main pillar of the beginning teacher induction program, remained largely on paper. The fact that all stages of the induction process were documented as if they had been really carried out confirms this conception.

In terms of mentoring support, the results reported by Kozikoğlu and Senemoğlu (2018) concur with the results of the current study. In the current study, the beginning teachers could not get the necessary professional support from their mentors, and they received simple support, which was not related to classroom practices, mostly in subjects such as writing petitions, creating reports and documents and filling in forms.

The reasons proposed by the beginning teachers for ineffective mentoring services were determined to be as follows: The beginning teacher and his/her mentor work in different schools, mentors do not have enough experience and competence to provide effective mentoring support, mentors are responsible for more than one beginning teacher, mentors are interested in only bureaucratic processes (filling in forms and preparing reports). In the literature, similar results have been reported by Akyıldız, Altun and Kasım, (2020), Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız, (2019), Gökulu, (2017), Gül, Türkmen and Aksel, (2017), Köse, (2016), Kozikoğlu and Soyalp, (2016) and Sarıkaya, Samancı and Yılar (2017).

Studies have shown that mentoring support provided to beginning teachers enables them to be more effective in the first years of the profession and focus on the learner's learning process in a shorter time. Moreover, teachers learn more from guided practices rather than trial and error and that when they are guided, they tend to stay longer in their profession (Weiss & Weis, 1999). Beginning teachers who have longer interactions with their mentors are more successful than those who have more limited interaction (Fletcher & Strong, 2009; Rockoff, 2008). Sarı-Altun (2015) concluded that if there is no one to professionally help beginning teachers in correcting their incomplete or erroneous behaviours and practices, it means that beginning teachers gain professional professionalism through trial and error with their own experiences.

In this context, Kyle, Moore and Sanders (1999) state that mentors should participate in professional development studies in order to learn the mentoring process and be informed about what is expected of them. It is understood that the participants of the current study working in rural areas do not attain the positive benefits of mentoring mentioned above.

Another important dimension of the beginning teacher induction program is that the mentor regularly observes the beginning teacher and gives feedback to him/her about classroom practices, and the beginning teacher can have the opportunity to see exemplary classroom practices by observing his/her mentor. However, the findings of the current study regarding the observation processes revealed that the observation processes could not be carried out effectively. Only one beginning teacher among the participants experienced this observation process regularly and achieved some gains. However, the mentor of this beginning teacher did not give corrective or improving feedback in the process.

Another aspect of the observation process is that beginning teachers observe other colleagues and the school environment. The fact that this process was experienced by only one beginning teacher among the participants shows that there are problems in terms of the implementation of the program in line with the intended purpose. In addition, the fact that the beginning teacher making observations in the classes of other teachers stated that she experienced some tension in these classes indicates that other teachers are not very willing to be observed.

The reason why the beginning teachers could not make regular observations might be because they had classes whose whole responsibility was on the shoulder of the beginning teachers. The fact that the beginning teachers had to do both the activities related to the induction process and the teaching activities together appears to be one of the most important obstacles to the induction program in rural areas.

Another component of the teacher induction program is the documentation of the induction process. The directive for beginning teacher induction program stipulates that the activities carried out during the induction process (books read by beginning teachers, movies watched, observations made, forms filled by mentors regarding the observation process, forms filled by the school principal regarding the beginning teacher, evaluation forms, etc.) are to be documented. The file resulting from this documentation process is important in terms of both monitoring the induction process and determining whether the process has been carried out in accordance with the directive. However, the findings of the current study revealed that the documentation process was done formally in accordance with the directive, but what was written in the documents did not reflect the actual experiences. In other words, the process works towards fulfilling the formalities.

Both the findings of the current study and those of the studies by Gül, Türkmen and Aksel (2017), Köse (2016), Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019), Kozikoğlu and Soy-

alp (2016) and İlyas, Coşkun and Toklucu (2017) show that the documentation process is not carried out effectively. In these studies, it has been revealed that the forms to be filled in and the documents to be prepared about the beginning teacher induction are too many, that they create a remarkable workload for beginning teachers, mentors and school principals, and that their contribution to the induction process is limited. This seems to be true for the induction process in both rural and urban schools.

Another important component of the beginning teacher induction program is the seminars in which participation is mandatory to support beginning teachers' professional orientation and development. Although there are teachers who stated that they were (partially) beneficial for them, seminars are mostly considered as ineffective by teachers. This result shows that seminars should be normally seen as an opportunity for teachers, yet they have become a problem due to inadequate practices. The beginning teachers explained the reasons for the failure of the seminars in achieving their goals as their being heavily theoretical, their lasting long, their being intense, their being perceived as formality, their not contributing to professional development, their not being carried out by competent people and their repeating each other. Similar reasons were found in the meta-analysis study conducted by Çelik and Atik (2020) on the beginning teacher induction program and in the study conducted by Sıcak & Parmaksız (2016). The fact that teachers from different branches have to attend the same seminar programs may also be an obstacle to the effective implementation of the seminars.

Another component of the beginning teacher induction program is the evaluation of the beginning teacher's performance during and at the end of the induction process by mentors, school principals and inspectors. These evaluations are important in terms of determination of the current state, correction and improvement and as part of the final evaluation to be carried out at the end of the school year. However, the findings of the current study revealed that performance evaluations are not performed properly and some of the opinions about the beginning teacher at the end of the teacher induction program do not reflect the truth. Findings reported by Gül, Türkmen and Aksel (2017) support these findings. In addition, as stated in this study, it can be said that the lack of supervision is effective in these results and this is an important problem.

The reasons why evaluations could not be done properly were stated to be as follows by the beginning teachers: The beginning teacher's mentor works in another school, evaluators try to get to know the beginning teacher through conversations in the meetings they come together in order to develop an opinion about the beginning teacher, they evaluate the beginning teacher by asking other teachers and the principal evaluates the beginning teacher on the basis of his/her general condition (determination to work, according to his character).

It was determined that the experiences during the induction process caused some emotional situations in the beginning teachers. When the content of these emotional situations is examined, it can be concluded that the beginning teachers experienced

some sort of isolation. The negative feelings seem to have developed as a result of loneliness, spending too much time at home, limited interaction, other teachers' staying distant, learned helplessness, being more introvert and trying to learn through trial and error. It is understood that there are in-school factors such as administrators, colleagues and mentors contributing to the development of these negative feelings, as well as out-of-school factors stemming from the characteristics of the social and cultural environment in rural areas. These results concur with the results of many other studies. (Akbaşlı & Meydan, 2009; Başar & Doğan, 2015; Gökçe, 2013; Pala, 2017; Yıldız, 2011). Sarı-Altun (2015) states that the lack of someone to provide professional support to beginning teachers lead them to accept the current situation. Veenman (1984) states that the transition into the teaching profession after receiving teacher education can be dramatic and traumatic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, in light of the results of the current study, it can be said that the beginning teacher induction program for teachers working in rural settlements is not effective and that the beginning teachers had problem-focused experiences regarding the induction practices. In addition, it can be said that a beginning teacher induction program, which seems to be functioning properly on paper, has turned into an attempt to fulfil the bureaucratic formalities.

The following recommendations can be made based on the results of the study in order to eliminate the inadequacies of the beginning teacher induction program: (a) Offering a continuous, planned and systematic mentoring support for beginning teachers from the first day; (b) Selection of mentors from among the teachers having required experiences and competences; not implementing the beginning teacher induction program in schools where such mentors are not available; (c) Organization of professional development seminars in line with the needs of beginning teachers, presentation of seminars by competent people and more emphasis on practice.

Finally, it should be stated that the results of the study are limited to data obtained only from the beginning classroom teachers, but to see the whole picture of beginning teachers' induction, studies on the opinions of other shareholders such as school principals, inspectors, teachers out of induction process, and executives should be carried out.

References

Akyıldız, S., Altun, T., & Kasım, Ş. (2020). Adaylık eğitimi uygulama sürecinin aday öğretmenlerin görüşlerine göre incelenmesi. *IBAD Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 6*, 117-131.

Akbaşlı, S., & Meydan, A. (2009). Birleştirilmiş sınıf öğretmenlerinin okul-aile-toplum ilişkileri sürecinde karşılaştığı güçlükler. *VIII. Ulusal Sınıf Öğretmenliği Eğitimi Sempozyumu*, 21-23.

Barber, M. & Mourshed, M. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top, Report*, McKinsey and Company. Retrieved from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/how-the-worlds-best-performing-school-systems-come-out-on-top

Başar, M., & Doğan, Z. G. (2015). Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin yaşadığı sosyal-kültürel mesleki sorunlar. *Route Educational and Social Science Journal, 2*(4), 375-398.

Çakmak, Z., Kaçar, T., & Arıkan, İ. (2018). Sosyal Bilgiler aday öğretmenlerinin aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecine ilişkin görüşleri. *Turkish Journal of Educational Studies, 5*(1), 58-82.

Çelik, O. T., & Atik, S. Prospective Teacher Training Program in Turkey: A Meta Synthesis Study. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi, 8*(2), 539-564.

Danielson, C. (1999). Mentoring beginning teachers: The case for mentoring. *Teaching and Change, 6*(3), 251-57.

Ekinci, A. (2010). Aday öğretmenlerin iş başında yetiştirilmesinde okul müdürlerinin rolü. *Dicle University Journal of Ziya Gökalp Education Faculty, 15*, 63-77.

Ekinci, A., Bozan, S., & Sakız, H. (2019). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme programının etkililiğine ilişkin aday ve danışman öğretmen görüşlerinin değerlendirilmesi. *Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi Dergisi, 52*(3), 801-836.

European Commission. (2010). Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: a handbook for policymakers. *European Commission Staff Working Document 538*. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/policy/school/doc/handbook0410_en.pdf

Evertson, C. M., & Smithey, M. W. (2000). Mentoring effects on proteges' classroom practice: An experimental field study. *The Journal of Educational Research, 93*(5), 294-304.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1996). Teacher Mentoring: A Critical Review. ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education Washington DC. 1-6. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED397060.pdf

Fletcher, S. H., & Strong, M. (2009). Full-release and site-based mentoring of elementary grade new teachers: An analysis of changes in student achievement. *New Educator, 5*, 329–341.

Glesne, C. (2015). *Nitel araştırmalara giriş.* (Çeviri edt. A. Ersoy ve P. Yalçınoğlu). Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.

Gökçe, A. T. (2013). Aday öğretmenlerin öğretme ve öğrenmeye yönelik yeterliklerine ilişkin yaşadıkları sorunlar. *Eğitim Bilimleri ve Uygulama, 12*(23), 23-42.

Gökulu, A. (2017). Prospective teachers' views about the prospective teacher training

process in Turkey. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research, 3*(1), 111-123.

Gül, I., Türkmen, F., & Aksel, N. (2017). Evaluation of the candidate teacher training course according to candidate teacher opinions. *Hitit University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, 10*(1), 365-388.

Hattie, J. (2009). Visible Learning. A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement. London: Routledge.

Hoy, A. W., & Spero, R. B. (2005). Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. T*eaching and Teacher Education, 21*(4), 343-356.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2012). Beginning teacher induction what the data tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan, 93*(8), 47-51.

Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The impact of induction and mentoring programs for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(2), 201-233.

İlyas, İ. E., Coşkun, İ., & Toklucu, D. (2017). Türkiye'de aday öğretmen yetiştirme modeli: İzleme ve değerlendirme. *İstanbul: SETA Yayınları.* Retrieved from https://setav.org/assets/uploads/2017/04/AdayOgretmenler.pdf

Kaufmann, D., Johnson, S. M., Kardos, S. M., Liu, E., & Peske, H. G. (2002). 'Lost at Sea': New Teachers' Experiences with Curriculum and Assessment." *Teachers College Record, 104*(2), 273-300.

Kearney, S. (2014). Understanding beginning teacher induction: A contextualized examination of best practice. *Cogent Education, 1*(1), 967477.

Kılıç, D., Babayiğit, Ö., & Erkuş, B. (2016). Aday öğretmenlerin adaylık eğitimine ilişkin görüşleri. *Ekev Akademi Dergisi*, (68), 81-91.

Kozikoğlu, I., & Çökük, K. (2017). Beginning teachers' completion of induction program in a different province: Opinions and experiences of beginning teachers. *Ankara University, Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences, 50*(2), 167-200.

Kozikoğlu, İ., & Senemoğlu, N. (2018). Mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları güçlükler: Nitel bir çözümleme. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi, 6*(3), 341-371.

Kozikoğlu, İ., & Soyalp, H. (2018). Aday öğretmenlerin, danışman öğretmenlerin ve okul yöneticilerinin aday öğretmen yetiştirme programına yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 33*(4), 934-952.

Köse, A. (2016). Okul yöneticilerinin görüşlerine göre aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecinin değerlendirilmesi. *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 16*(3), 924-944.

Köse, A., & Atalmış, E. H. (2017). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecinde alınan eğitimlerin öğretmenlik uygulamalarına katkısı: Sorunlar ve Çözüm Önerileri. *Electronic Turkish Studies, 12*(25), 491-512.

Kyle, D. W., Moore, G. H., & Sanders, J. L. (1999). The role of the mentor teacher: Insights, challenges, and implications. *Peabody Journal of Education, 74*(3-4), 109-122.

MEB. (2017). Aday Öğretmenlerin Yetiştirme Programı. Retrieved from http://oygm. meb.gov.tr/www/19072017-tarihinde-atamasi-yapilan-sozlesmeli-aday-ogretmen lerin-yetistirme-programi/icerik/433MEB

MEB. (2016a). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecine ilişkin yönerge. Sayı: 2456947. Retrieved from oygm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2016_03/02052358_ynerge. docx

MEB. (2016b). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme programı. Retrieved from http://oygm.meb. gov.tr/www/aday-ogretmenyetistirme-programi-17102016/icerik/358

Nayır, F., & Çetin, K. S. (2017). Opinions of teacher candidates on mentor teacher program (Example of Muğla). *Journal of Education, 12*, 137-155.

Önder, E. (2018). Prospective teacher training program according to prospective teachers' opinions. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Yönetimi, 24*(1), 143-189.

Pala, A. (2017). *MEB ilkokul ve ortaokul eğitim kurumlarına atanan aday öğretmenlere uygulanan mentorlük süreci* (Unpublished master's thesis). Gaziantep Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimler Enstitüsü.

Patton, M. Q. (2018). *Nitel araştırma ve değerlendirme yöntemleri* (2. Baskı). (Çev. Ed. M. Bütün, S. B. Demir). Ankara: Pegem Akademi.

Pearce, J., & Morrison, C. (2011). Teacher identity and early career resilience: Exploring the links. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(1), 47-59.

Rockoff, J. E. (2008). *Does mentoring reduce turnover and improve skills of new employees? Evidence from teachers in New York City* (No. w13868). National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/papers/w13868.pdf

Sarı, M. H., & Altun, Y. (2015). Göreve yeni başlayan sınıf öğretmenlerinin karşılaştıkları sorunlar. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 30*(1): 213-226.

Sarikaya, İ., Samancı, O., & Yılar, Ö. (2017). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecinin aday ve danışman sınıf öğretmenlerinin görüşleri kapsamında değerlendirilmesi: Bir karma yöntem çalışması. *Gazi University Journal of Gazi Educational Faculty (GUJGEF), 37*(3), 137-155.

Serpell, Z. (2000). Beginning Teacher Induction: A Review of the Literature. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED443783.pdf

Sıcak, A. & Parmaksız, R. Ş. (2016). An evaluation of efficacy of in-service training in primary schools, *The Inonu University Journal of the Faculty of Education, 17*(1), 17-33.

Solak, İ. (1999). *Aday öğretmenlerin yetiştirilmelerine ilişkin yönetmelikte öngörülen uygulamalı eğitimin değerlendirilmesi* (Malatya Örneği), (Unpublished master's thesis). İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Malatya.

Toker-Gökçe, A. (2013). Eğitim fakültesi mezunu sınıf öğretmenlerinin adaylık dö-

nemlerinde yaşadıkları mesleki sorunlar. *Dicle Üniversitesi Ziya Gökalp Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi,* (21), 137-156.

Topsakal, C., & Duysak, A. (2017). Aday öğretmen yetiştirme sürecine ilişkin aday öğretmenler ve diğer paydaşların görüşleri. *Sakarya University Journal of Education, 7*(3), 625-638.

Wang, J., Odell, S. J., & Schwille, S. A. (2008). Effects of teacher induction on beginning teachers' teaching: A critical review of the literature. *Journal of Teacher Education, 59*(2), 132-152.

Weiss, E. M., & Weiss, S. G. (1999). Beginning Teacher Induction. *ERIC Digest.* Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED436487.pdf.

Wong, H. K. (2004). Induction programs that keep new teachers teaching and improving. *NASSP Bulletin, 88*(638), 41-58. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019263650408863804

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri.* Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yıldız, Ş. (2011). *Öğretmenlerin, öğretmen adaylarının ve öğrencilerin sürdürülebilir çevre ile ilgili kavramsal anlamaları ve tutumları* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü.