INDIVIDUAL NOVICE TEACHER NEEDS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN EVALUATION OF A WELL-RESPECTED INDUCTION PROGRAM

A Thesis in
Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to gain an understanding of how one well-respected school district met the individual needs of their novice teachers, this thesis examined, from multiple perspectives, the experiences of thirty-seven beginning and mentor teachers, site-level administrators, and curriculum specialists who took part in the new teacher induction program. Participating novice teachers reported 25 different needs and discussed receiving support at various levels. Because novices experience induction and teaching differently, based on their own understandings, experiences, abilities, and needs, meeting individual novice teacher needs became an informal process within induction. Individual new teacher needs were mainly met through mentoring and curriculum teacher support; whereas, the formal induction program, moving toward a standardized process of support, served to meet the common needs of beginning teachers. The implications associated with this study note that support, survival, consistency, and agency were key features to meeting and differentiating support for novice teacher needs within new teacher induction.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

*The important thing in science is not so much to obtain new facts as to discover new ways of thinking about them.* — Sir William Bragg

Forward

Formal teacher induction is a relatively new concept in the teaching profession. Having gained prominence in the last 20 years, induction was thought to provide new teachers with the much needed support during their initial years in their profession. In the past, and in some cases today, new teachers have been given some of the hardest assignments, heavy extra-curricular activity schedules, little to no support in the classroom, little to no prep time, and essentially, little to no induction. *Sink or swim* was the method of choice for induction. That particular method, though it is no longer as pervasive in schools and school districts today, provides for a stressful entrance into the teaching profession and more than likely, entails a quick exit. Formal induction programs, as developed in the 1980s, were designed to combat the *sink or swim* notion of induction, providing novice teachers with an easier, gradual, more supported and structured beginning to their careers.

However, current induction programs vary widely and do not yet have one clear format or design, causing a difference in how novice teachers receive support. Ranging from trial by fire to basic orientation to mentoring to a comprehensive induction program, induction plans all differ in when, how, and why new teachers receive assistance. What research has told the education community is that “proper” induction does reduce the
attrition rate by as much as fifty percent and increases teacher job satisfaction rates (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). If new teachers are provided with time, support, professional development opportunities, and notions of collegial, inquiry-based, and informal supervision (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002), they are more likely to remain in the teaching profession. Though induction is now believed to be a key ingredient in novice teacher development and is seen as a means to lowering attrition rates, several questions remain unanswered. What is left unclear are the answers to, “How is support given to new teachers?” and, “How well do induction programs serve the needs of individual novice teachers?” i.e., “How do induction program developers know what new teachers’ needs are, if there is a difference in individual needs, understanding, experience, and ability level?”

**The Purpose of the Study**

The broader educational community does contend that new teachers need support. According to Fessler (1995), new teachers are only in the second stage of the teacher career cycle (See Appendix A). The difference between the first stage, pre-service and the second stage, induction, is that they are now certified by the state to teach. It does not mean that novice teachers no longer need support or do not need to learn or refine their skills. On the contrary, induction is a time for new teachers to learn to teach in their own classrooms, to try new strategies and ideas, to discover who they are and who they want to be as a teacher. It is a time when personalized support is crucial to their development.

Moreover, research has shown that new teachers need time to collaborate and that new teachers need to reflect on their practice, instruction, and student understanding and achievement in order to better their own practice and understanding (Villiani, 2002;
Robinson, 1998; Feiman-Nemser, May 2003; Moir, July 2003'; Moir, 1990; WestEd, November 2000; and Stansbury, K. and J. Zimmerman, 2000). It has also been made evident that mentoring is a key factor in novice teacher learning. The aforementioned ideas are some of the concepts behind current induction program practices. Yet, what is not known or understood why, if new teachers receive the much needed support during their initial years, do they continue to leave? What is unclear is how the support structures become individualized as administrators and veteran teachers attempt to meet the needs of new teachers? Likewise, because induction programs vary from district to district and state to state, it becomes ever more difficult to ascertain what types of support are most influential and effective in guiding and assisting new teachers as they enter their chosen profession.

Support, as noted by Huling-Austin (1989) should be flexible. The idea or notion of flexibility is integral to induction program success. New teachers are not all the same. They do not fit into one mold called, “the new teacher”. They enter the profession having graduated from different pre-service programs, all with varying certification requirements. Furthermore, their prior life experiences are vast, and as such, inherently denote that they come to the proverbial table with different understandings, philosophies, past experiences, ability levels, and skills. It is difficult to figure out what the individual needs of new teachers are if the aforementioned understanding is true. How, then, can one induction program attempt to meet the needs of all new teachers within any given school, school district or state?

As previously mentioned, Huling-Austin (1989) noted that flexibility is necessary in order to meet individual needs. For years, it has been presumed that new teachers have
common needs that should form the base for induction programs. Gordon and Maxey (2000) contend that beginning teachers have 12 distinct needs:

- Managing the classroom.
- Acquiring information about the school system.
- Obtaining instructional resources and materials.
- Planning, organizing, and managing instruction, as well as other professional responsibilities.
- Assessing students and evaluating student progress.
- Motivating students.
- Using effective teaching methods.
- Dealing with individual students’ needs, interests, abilities, and problems.
- Communicating with colleagues, including administrators, supervisors, and other teachers.
- Communicating with parents.
- Adjusting to the teaching environment and role.
- Receiving emotional support. (pp. 6).

Although beginning teachers may have common needs, research in supervision and instruction tells us that people are unique; thus, differentiation is necessary in order to meet learner’s needs. Novice teachers are learners. They have unique needs. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of why, how, if and when the individual needs of novice teachers are met in a well-respected induction program.

The Research Questions

Overarching Question:

How are the individual needs of novice teachers met in a well-respected novice teacher induction program?

Sub-questions:

1. How do novice teachers experience induction?
2. What role, if any, do individual novice teacher needs and differences play in the induction process?
3. What role, if any does differentiation to meet individual novice teacher needs play in the induction experience from the perspective of novice teachers and other stakeholders, e.g., central office, administrators, and veteran teachers?

4. Does differentiation occur within induction strategically or informally?

5. What impact, if any, does mentoring have on individual novice teacher learning?

The Need for the Study

New teachers receive support and supervision in very different ways. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) note five different models of supervision, ranging from clinical supervision to collegial supervision, which includes mentoring, lesson study, examining student work and using protocols, to inquiry-based supervision, to self-directed supervision, and finally to informal supervision (2002, pp. 245). Each model has its strengths. Each model has a foundation for teacher growth that stems from meeting individual teacher’s needs. Each model mandates supervision in a different way and manner in accordance with the tenants of the approach. Each model has different time constraints and notions of autonomy. And, each model allows teachers and supervisors to find a way to learn how to improve teacher performance, understanding, and skill through practice, reflection, discussion, feedback, research, support, and/or coaching.

Differentiation, in the sense of meeting teachers’ unique needs, includes supervision, but also mandates changes in how novice teachers receive induction. Professional development opportunities should be aligned with each teacher’s needs, personalized plan of action, and evaluation structure. New teachers, note Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) rely on collegial and informal supervision as the basis for their learning and growth during the initial years in their profession. They also rely on
professional development as a means of growth and opportunity for individualization. However, it is unknown currently as to whether or not induction programs can individualize program components as a means of melding together aspects and models of supervision with professional development in order to meet each teacher’s needs as they enter their career.

Professional development during the initial stages of a teachers’ career typically can be categorized into one of three models of teacher induction. Though the models of induction provide the backbone for the support structure of the induction program, they also provide insight into how professional development is perceived by the school and school district. The NEA Foundation and researcher Richard M. Ingersoll (Summer 2004, adapted from Barry Sweeny, www.teachermentors.com), denote three different formats or models for induction. The Basic Orientation Model is the simplest form, providing beginning teachers with an introduction to the policies and procedures of the district and a basal understanding of teacher responsibilities and classroom management. Teachers may also participate in a mentoring program during their first year in the profession. Professional development is not the focus of this model; rather, it is viewed as a separate and unrelated function of the school.

The second model, Instructional Practice, includes the same information as the Basic Orientation Model, but also provides instructional/content standards workshops, linking theory and practice through strategies and methodologies that have been researched and proven effective. In this instance, professional development is a part of the program, but is not differentiated in order to meet individual needs, focusing only on the collective understandings of new teachers.
The final model, *School Transformation*, is unique and hard to find in the public school system. The *School Transformation Model* is structured to provide differentiated induction through school-wide systemic renewal, allowing teachers to participate in a variety of professional development in addition to the aforementioned structures in the two previous models. This model’s foundation centers on the notion of a learning community, thereby focusing on collegiality, collaboration, and reflective conversations as the means to induction and entry into the teaching profession. Professional development is at the heart of this model. Learning becomes personalized and is viewed as a reciprocal experience. Veterans and novices learn at times together, at times from one another, and at times from staff development opportunities developed to address their needs.

*Figure 1: Models of Induction*  
Ingersoll, Summer 2002, pp. 2. Adapted from Sweeny, [www.teachermentors.com](http://www.teachermentors.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning the Ropes</th>
<th>Linking Induction to Teaching Standards</th>
<th>Linking Induction to School Renewal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Basic Orientation Model" /></td>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="Instructional Practice Model" /></td>
<td><img src="image-url" alt="School Transformation Model" /></td>
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Schools and school districts alike develop a plan for induction that is roughly based on one of the aforementioned models of induction, intertwining some form of supervision and evaluation into their plan. All the while, their hope is that their efforts will prevent the loss of a new hire; thus, lowering their own attrition rate and ultimately increasing teacher satisfaction, teacher practice, and teacher quality, as well as serving
their students better. The only caveat is they cannot guarantee that their program meets their new hire’s specific needs, understandings, or abilities.

It is my hope that my study will relate how individual teacher’s needs are or are not being met through current induction efforts by examining when, how, if, and why novice teachers receive differentiated professional development during their initial years in the teaching profession. It is my hope that through this study researchers and developers of induction programs may be able to better understand how, when, and why individualized support is needed for novice teachers. The attrition rate remains between 35-50 percent, depending on where they are within the United States, regardless of current induction efforts and support systems. Novice teachers are not remaining in the classroom for many reasons. This research will enable districts, universities, and staff developers to reform, redesign, and reshape their induction program so as to better meet individual teacher needs, thereby increasing individualized support, performance, understanding, and satisfaction.

**The Significance of the Study**

This study will provide insight into how a well-respected school district attempts to meet the needs of its teachers. We know from research that no two teachers are alike and therefore one overarching induction system cannot begin to meet or address each new teacher’s needs (Robinson, 1998; Nolan and Hoover, 2004). Research is quick to point out what elements of induction are common among induction programs; it is quick to define what components are considered to be best practice in terms of induction and novice teacher learning; and it is also quick to note what types of support new teachers need during their first two-to-three years on the job (North West Regional Educational

However, research has not provided information or insight into how to meet individual teacher’s needs, only noting and detailing collective accounts of novice teacher learning and support as perceived in the beginning of their careers. It is often presumed (at least in practice if not in concept) that all new teachers have the same needs, concerns, and issues during their entrance into teaching; therefore, all growth opportunities are the same and the idea of one overarching induction program is acceptable. It is a viewpoint that I believe to be somewhat remiss. The idea that differences need not be taken into account clearly disregards what educators and researchers know to be correct and necessary for students to have optimal learning experiences. Nolan and Hoover (2004) note, “One of the hallmarks of excellent teaching is the teacher’s ability to meet the varying needs of the students in that teacher’s class” (pp. 40). In terms of induction practices, schools and school districts become the teachers and the students are the novice educators who enter their chosen profession, hoping to make a difference in a child’s life. The assumption that they, meaning new teachers, do not need or require different programs of instruction is flawed. Unfortunately, it is a practice that has gone unnoticed and uncorrected since the onset of induction in the 1980’s. It is a notion that I believe this study will help to redirect through a careful study of new teachers and the support they receive in a well-respected school district. The research is currently unclear as to
whether or not the current ideology and perspective in induction meets all novice teachers’ needs. If we were to consider the attrition rate, which ranges from 35% to 50% depending on the location and socio-economic status of the school district (Alliance for Excellent Education, June 2004), one would question whether or not research has an answer. This study will add to the research on new teacher induction, meeting new teachers’ needs, and will provide insight into how one well-respected school district strives to provide support to their beginning teachers, all the while building higher levels of teacher performance, quality, and satisfaction, and improving student achievement.

**Definitions for the Study**

1) **New Teacher Induction:** Teacher induction is a set of support systems designed to provide novice teachers with guidance during their first years in the profession. According to Ralph Fessler (1995), induction is the second stage of a teacher’s career cycle, falling between preservice and competency building (In Guskey & Huberman (Eds.), pp. 185).

2) **Mentoring:** Mentoring is a process that provides novice teachers with a support structure during their initial entrance into the teaching profession, whereby a veteran teacher is assigned to assist the beginning teacher in learning and understanding the rules, regulations, and culture of the school site and district, as well as increase teacher practice and effectiveness.

3) **Differentiated Instruction:** Differentiated instruction, according to Carol Ann Tomlinson, (1999), directs teachers to use varying strategies, methodologies, and instructional techniques to meet different student’s levels of ability, understanding, and need. Modifying instruction or adapting lessons to meet individual needs is the
4) **Differentiated Supervision:** Differentiated supervision, as noted by Nolan and Hoover (2004) and Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) mandates the use of different approaches to supervision and evaluation in accordance with teacher choice, needs, goals, and school initiatives.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Attempt the impossible in order to improve your work. – Bette Davis

Forward

In order to gain an understanding of how to meet novice teacher’s needs, I will begin this review with an understanding of what teacher induction is, followed by an analysis of induction program goals, the stages of teacher career cycle, the induction timeframe, and a discussion of current induction models. Next, I will examine the essential components as perceived by most induction plans. I will end with the notion of meeting individual teacher’s needs during the initial years of their career.

Introduction

Improvement is a process that takes time, energy, knowledge, information, support and guidance, structure, organization, and effort. Improvement in the field of teaching comes with experience, professional development, reflection, assessment, supervision, evaluation, and support. Improvement efforts for new teachers begins with a new teacher induction program whereby novice teachers receive professional development with the purpose of improving their professional and personal practice, understanding, and ways of knowing and being. Improvement for induction programs begins with an understanding of why and for whom induction programs exits. Improvement continues when program goals are identified and an evaluation system for both the program and novice teacher learning is clearly defined and developed. Gold (1996) states that,

The purpose of induction programs, mentoring, and related components is to provide assistance to beginning teachers. They are the means of
Leslie Huling-Austin (1989) discussed induction as a key structure for novice teacher learning. She identified five goals for induction programs:

1. to improve teaching performance
2. to increase the retention of promising beginning teachers during the induction years
3. to promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers
4. to satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification
5. to transmit the culture of the system to beginning teachers (pp. 16).

Induction programs are part of the improvement process for education, educators, and learners. It is a structure that enables schools, school districts, administrators, and local and state-level educational agencies to provide the much needed support for new teachers as they enter their chosen profession.

**What is teacher induction?**

Teacher induction is a set of support systems designed to provide novice teachers with guidance during their first years in the profession. It is also a period of teacher development that focuses on building novice teacher understanding. According to Ralph Fessler (1995), induction is the second stage of a teacher’s career cycle, falling in between, preservice and competency building (In Guskey & Huberman (Eds.), pp. 185).

West Regional Educational Laboratory (2000) defines induction as

“… On-the-job support. Optimal induction efforts entail the involvement of carefully selected and prepared mentor teachers, a substantial period of support (typically two years), reflective activities embedded in the novice teacher’s daily work, and opportunities to meet with experienced teachers and/or other novice teachers to examine and learn from student work” (http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/po-00-05.pdf).

Induction, as noted by the aforementioned researchers and organizations, enables
a novice teacher to gain support, a structured professional development system and time period, and to learn how to become an effective teacher.

Induction programs have been designed specifically to help beginning teachers hone their skills, become part of a community of learners by collaborating with others to examine student work and their own practice in order to improve student achievement and teacher effectiveness, and finally provides new teachers with a supportive environment, helping them through a very stressful time in their career. Hillary Clinton once said that it takes a village to raise a child. In terms of induction, it takes a community of learners to induct a new teacher into the profession.

Sharon Feiman-Nemser (May 2003) calls the idea of induction, “A Process of Enculturation”, enculturation into the profession of teaching, into their classroom and school as they “learn the ropes” (pp.27). “Understanding induction as an enculturation process means recognizing that working conditions and school culture powerfully influence the character, quality, and outcome of new teachers’ early years on the job” (Feiman-Nemser, May 2003, pp. 29).

**What are the goals of a teacher induction program?**

*Teacher Attrition*

One goal for most induction programs is to reduce attrition rates. “Nearly forty percent of teachers leave the profession within their first five years on the job… Many studies show that well designed programs reduce turnover rates and increase teacher effectiveness, which is the primary goal, during the early career” (Ingersoll, Summer 2004, pp. 1). Because there is a great deal of variance as to what, when, and how new teachers receive induction, it is imperative for schools and school districts to identify and
gain a better understanding of which type of induction is most effective in retaining new hires and enhancing effectiveness. Teachers do leave their profession for reasons other than satisfaction; however, Gold (1996) notes that, “It is necessary to know how many leave the profession; and it is essential to learn why teachers are choosing to leave a profession so early in their careers after they have spent 4 or more years preparing for it” (pp. 549). The fact the districts are continually having to hire and rehire teachers year after year, increases their budget, not to mention adds to the time spent by the human resources department and school administrators advertising, interviewing, and inducting new teachers into the profession (Richin, Banyon, Stein, & Banyon, 2003). Providing new hires with a supportive, effective, and comprehensive induction program prevents this from occurring.

**Increased Student Achievement**

Improved student achievement is also a goal of induction programs. If beginning teachers are supported, guided through their entry into the profession, and provided with strategies, techniques, and professional development, they are empowered to reflect upon their practice and apply their learning to improve their teaching. Students benefit academically, socially, and emotionally from a well prepared and well supported teacher (Gold, 1996). The American Federation of Teachers, (as cited by the Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004) noted that, “… because inducted teachers ‘move more quickly beyond issues of classroom management to focus on instruction,’ they use practices that improve student achievement” (pp.2).

**Teacher Satisfaction, Quality, and Culture of Support**

Stansbury and Zimmerman, (2000) believe that induction improves teacher
quality, defines a culture of support, and effects job satisfaction (http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/212). As well, the combination of mentoring and induction improves teacher quality as new teachers develop and hone their skills and gain confidence in their instructional methodology and understanding (http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/po-00-05.pdf; Villar, as cited by the Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004). We know from research that many beginning teachers value their relationship with their mentor teacher, as well as other staff members because of the type of support they receive. Career satisfaction, as argued by Gold (1996) determines whether or not the needs of the beginning teacher have been addressed and met. The predictors associated with teacher or job satisfaction, according to Gold are as follows: “(1) meeting teachers’ unmet psychological needs, (2) amount of education, (3) new teachers’ initial commitment to teaching, (4) teacher preparation programs, (5) professional and social integration into teaching, and (6) the role of the administrator in teacher retention” (1996, pp. 552). Meeting new teachers’ emotional, social, physical (in terms of assignment), psychological, and professional-intellectual needs during their initial years of teaching is essential to teacher retention, satisfaction, and student achievement.

Johnson and Kardos (2002) call for an “Integrated Professional Culture” whereby veteran and novice teachers learn and experience growth together. Learning in this type of culture is reciprocal. Novice teachers are not only learners, but they too serve as mentors and guides and bring new ideas, strategies, technologies, and theory into their new school.

These schools, or subunits within schools, encouraged ongoing professional exchange across experience levels and sustained support and
development for all teachers. Such schools did not endorse separate camps of veterans and novices; rather, teamwork and camaraderie distinguished these work settings. New teachers in schools with integrated professional cultures believed that their expert colleagues not only understood the importance of mentoring but also benefited from the mentoring relationship. New teachers who found themselves in such schools seemed to be better served – and, thus, more able to serve their students (Johnson and Kardos, 2002, pp. 30).

By bringing together a school as a unit, a cohesive, collective entity, where teachers learn together, regardless of their tenure, regardless of their ability levels and understanding, and regardless of their experience, administrators are better able to meet the needs of their entire staff and school. Student achievement increases as does the quality of the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom. By allowing schools to develop a culture of practice that is shared, public, and positive, new teachers benefit, not only via induction inservices or structures or support, but from the collegial relationship and collaborative environment that is pervasive at their school; thus, creating and developing the notion of a high quality teacher as one who examines their practice, student work, and values reflection in order to increase student achievement and their own abilities as a teacher and learner.

*Flexibility and Individuality*

Huling-Austin (1989) found, in addition to the five goals previously cited, that teacher induction programs must be flexible in order to meet new teachers’ needs. “Because beginning teachers are individuals, they will experience their first year of teaching and the induction process in individual, personal ways” (p. 25). Moreover, she notes that “prepackaged” or “canned” programs cannot meet the needs of new teachers because of the predetermined structure of the program. Calling for individuality, flexibility, and differentiation, induction program that provide a rigid system of
orientation, staff development, and structured mentoring are not sufficient in terms of meeting novice teacher needs.

Schools and classroom teachers have focused on differentiated instruction as a means of meeting individual student needs. Differentiation, as defined by Tomlinson (1999) directs teachers to use varying strategies, methodologies, and instructional techniques to meet different student’s levels of ability, understanding, and need. Modifying instruction or adapting lessons to meet individual needs is the goal.

**What are the Models of Induction?**

Induction models vary as much as menus do depending on the restaurant and the type of food they serve. In reality, only half of the states in the United States of America offer induction to new teachers. And, of those states that do offer induction, no two programs are alike, meaning that the support new teachers receive varies drastically.

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, the NEA Foundation and researcher Richard M. Ingersoll denote three different formats or models for induction (Summer 2004, adapted from Barry Sweeny, [www.teachermentors.com](http://www.teachermentors.com)). The Basic Orientation Model provides minimal professional development for novice teachers. Professional development is not the focus of this model; rather, it is viewed as a separate and unrelated function of the school. The second model, Instructional Practice, adds seminars and workshops based in content standards, but does so under a large umbrella system whereby every new teacher receives the same support. In this instance, professional development is a part of the program, but is not differentiated in order to meet individual needs, focusing only on the collective understandings of new teachers. The final model, School Transformation, is based on collaboration and the notion of learning communities.
Professional development is at the heart of this model. Learning becomes personalized and is viewed as a reciprocal experience. Veterans and novices learn at times together, at times from one another, and at times from staff development opportunities developed to address their needs.

WestEd provides a model of teacher induction that encompasses mentoring, coaching, study groups, networking of ideas and subject matter, seminars and workshops, school-university partnerships, and collaborative learning opportunities. Their method of induction provides new teachers with opportunities for on-going professional development 10 to 20 hours a week that are experiential, grounded in inquiry, collaborative, coached, and connected to school renewal or school reform movements (McRobbie, 2000). Critical to the success of this particular model of induction is time. If teachers are required to spend up to 20 hours a week in professional development or collaborative activities, they cannot teach full-time. That means, new teachers need time to meet with their peers, mentors, or coaches. The concept of time could be provided by allowing new teachers a common prep-time or by providing substitute teachers to release mentors or new teachers (or both) from classroom duties for part of the day. Unfortunately, this requires money, coordination of substitute teachers, professional development, schedules, and teachers, and also necessitates a supportive and understanding administrator, induction program director, and school district.

One method of induction has yet to be discussed, even though many new teachers experience this every year. The “Trial by Fire” Model of Induction is, in actuality, is not a model of induction, but rather is a method of entrance into the teaching profession whereby teachers are given their classroom and that’s it. They do not receive support
during their initial years of teaching and “quickly become disillusioned”, notes Ellen Moir, Director of the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This method of induction causes the highest levels of attrition and the lowest levels of job satisfaction for new teachers (http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.htm).

What are the Stages of Induction and the Teacher Career Cycle?

Ellen Moir (1990), Director of the New Teacher Project at the University of California at Santa Cruz, identified six stages or dimensions of learning that new teachers experience during their first year on the job. She notes that not all teachers enter one or all of these phases, but typical to most novice teachers, they begin rather excited about the school year and their impending career and move through several stages of discontent and reality-shock before beginning to see light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Through reflection, beginning teachers reach higher points and ultimately survive their first year ending up again at an anticipatory level, waiting for summer vacation and the next school year.

New teachers, according to Moir, have varying attitudes and beliefs throughout their initial year of teaching, ranging from anticipation for the current year to anticipation for the coming year. However, in between these two happy phases lies survival mode and disillusionment. New teachers need to feel emotionally, intellectually, and socially supported in order to exit the stressful stages and enter a period of rejuvenation and reflection where they begin to feel better about their career choice and effectiveness in the classroom. If teachers are provided with the much needed support during this crucial development of their career, they are more likely to remain in the profession beyond five years (www.newteachercenter.org/article3.html);
Burke, P., Fessler, R., and Christensen, J. (1984) identified eight different stages to the teacher career cycle:

1. **Pre-service**: This is the period of time when novices are preparing to become teachers or are training for a new profession.

2. **Induction**: This is the time period when recently certificated teachers enter the profession. Induction generally lasts for the first three years of a teacher’s career. Induction also happens when a teacher changes grade levels or enters a new career path.

3. **Competency Building**: Competency Building is a time when teachers begin to hone their skills. Their efforts focus on becoming an effective teacher. Professional development is key in assisting new teachers to gain new understandings; thus enabling them to develop new instructional strategies and methodologies in the hopes of increasing their effectiveness in the
(4) **Enthusiastic and Growing**: Teachers in this stage maintain high levels of competency. Teachers in this stage love their job and actively seek identify professional development opportunities that support teacher learning and increase student achievement.

(5) **Career Frustration**: This is the stage when teachers typically feel “burnout”. They experience high levels of disillusionment, stress, and discontent with their job.

(6) **Stable and Stagnant**: This stage of teaching denotes acceptable levels of job satisfaction. Teachers in the “Stable and Stagnant” are performing adequately, but are not utilizing nor do they value professional development as a means for growth.

(7) **Career Wind-Down**: Teachers, in this stage, are beginning to exit their profession.

(8) **Career Exit**: By this stage, teachers have officially left their jobs for a multitude of reasons.

An important notation should be made in that teachers can enter or exit a stage at any point in their careers. Though the Teacher Career Cycle is thought of as a linear process, whereby teachers begin at beginning and exit at the ending, it is not necessarily so. Teachers can move through and back in a recursive manner at any point in their career. For instance, a veteran teacher beginning a new grade level or subject area for the first time might re-enter the *Competency Building* Phase until they gain comfort with their new environment and curriculum. As well, personal and organizational
environmental factors can also contribute toward movement, either linearly or recursively, in a teacher’s career cycle.

It is also possible for a novice teacher to move through the eight stages in a five year time period. Though the reasons for novice teachers leaving the profession can vary, the fact remains that they do so at alarming rates. Novice teachers may not enter all eight stages; therefore, they may skip a stage or two and experience a fast-paced Teacher Career Cycle. It is crucial to remember that teacher development during all of these phases is affected by their personal lives and the organizational environment (see Figure 3 below).

![Teacher Career Cycle Diagram]

Figure 3. *A Model of the stages of the Teacher Career Cycle and the environmental factors that affect it.* (Burke, Fessler, and Christensen, 1984, as cited in Christensen, McDonell, and Price, 1988, pp. 17)
The significance of Figures 2 and 3 stems from the notion of environmental and personal factors that influence a teachers’ success or movement within their career stage or phase. Teacher efficacy, or their attitude toward their career or feeling of worth, is impacted greatly by outside factors. These factors, as detailed in Figure 3, can work to provide stability or can work to create stress, causing frustration, dissatisfaction, unhappiness, or discontent. Though these feelings are or can be contributing factors towards a non-linear movement across the career cycle; the factors are also not something that can be foreseen or foretold. As previously stated, both organizational and personal environmental factors, as well as a teacher’s emotional state, affect the ability, understanding, and career development of a novice teacher as much as they affect veteran teachers. Gold (1996) discusses the impact attitudes and outcomes have on teacher burnout, attributing a lack of respect, dissatisfaction, and disillusionment within their classrooms and understanding of teaching as contributing factors to teachers leaving their careers early.

New teachers usually demonstrate an idealism and excitement about teaching. When confronted with public criticism, low morale in their school, and little administrative support, many of these new teachers become disillusioned and begin to withdraw from others, which can result in leaving the profession (pp. 551).

Induction programs must address environmental and personal issues in order to enable beginning teachers to extend their career from induction toward competency building and throughout the remainder of their career; thus lowering the attrition rate and increasing teacher satisfaction.

**What is the Induction Timeframe?**

The timeframe for induction varies according to each district induction program,
state regulations, and mentoring systems. Though many states have no official regulation as to how long new teachers should participate in an induction program, many school districts minimally provide new teachers with an orientation to the district that consists of an introduction to policies and procedures, a review of the teacher handbook or manual, and a bus ride through the community. Orientation is the least time consuming model of induction, ranging from one day to one week. The Basic Orientation Model, as defined by Ingersoll (Summer 2004), additionally offers new teachers a year-long mentoring program, whereby all new hires are assigned a “mentor teacher” at their school site or within the school district who serves as a guide, helping to acclimate them and alleviate some of their initial stress as they enter the profession (pp. 2).

Extending the induction program from one day or one week to a year or more provides new teachers with support throughout the first phase of their career. As previously mentioned, many researchers find that between 35 and 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within three to five years. The reasons teachers leave ranges from not feeling supported in the classroom, to being fed-up with enormous amounts of paperwork that take time away from teaching, to reaching and maintaining high levels of stress, to generally feeling under-appreciated by and isolated from their peers (Renard, L., May 2003; Robinson, 1998; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Moir, http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.htm; Ingersol, Summer 2004). Moir also believes that the experiences new teachers gain through induction or simply within their first few years of teaching serve as a guide or template for how they feel, act, and teach during the remainder of their career (http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.htm).
“It is critical that we assist new teachers and ease the transition from student teacher to full-time professional. Recognizing the phases new teachers go through gives us a framework within which we can begin to design support programs to make the first year of teaching a more positive experience for our new colleagues” (Moir, www.newteachercenter.org/article3.html).

It’s essential that new teachers receive support in a timely manner, for a prolonged period of time, a minimum of two years is recommended by WestEd (2000), and have the opportunity to engage in a collaborative and collegial learning community.

Renard (May 2003) suggests that time is the most important thing new teachers need. Time to learn how to teach, regardless of their experience or whether or not they receive induction, time is what will help them become a more skilled and effective teacher (pp.63). Though I agree that time is a key component and that experience in the classroom will ultimately help a new teacher as new ideas, strategies, and techniques are tried, I disagree with the assumption that it alone is sufficient. I also disagree with the precept that trial and error and reflecting are the key features toward improvement. I believe that in conjunction with reflective conversations, coaching, mentoring, and individualized professional development, the concepts of trial and error and reflection become an avenue for teachers to experiment with teaching strategies in their classrooms (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Ingersoll, Summer 2002; and WestEd, November 2000). To this, an essential caveat must be added: to not let student achievement or learning become compromised by trial and error teaching.

**What are the Essential Components to Induction?**

*Comprehensive Induction Program*

Comprehensive induction for all new teachers, according to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2004), is a package of programs designed to meet the needs of
novice teachers. The package includes support, teacher/professional development, professional standards and standards-based assessment allowing novice teachers the opportunity to engage in reflection, as well as to analyze student work to improve teaching practice and student achievement, and runs for the first two years of their career. Susan Johnson and Susan Kardos of The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2002) believe that new teachers need to feel not only supported by their colleagues and administration, they need to receive professional development that fits their needs and wants.

Vision

A comprehensive system of induction cannot begin without a vision. A vision is an idea or in simpler terms, a goal for what you would like to accomplish and how you plan on going about it. A vision for a comprehensive system of induction commences with a belief system, a yearning to bring together a faculty to work toward a shared, common goal: helping new teachers succeed. According to Ryan (1980), contributing author of Biting the Apple, “A belief system is a cluster of ideas about the way a certain portion of reality exists and works. People have belief systems about a variety of things, from religion to politics, from human relations to education. There is also a belief system about what happens during the first year of teaching” (pp. 3).

Moir’s New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz established norms for what they believe new teachers need in order to be successful during the beginning of their career. The vision at a school site begins with the administration. However, the vision for an induction program must come from the program leaders, developers, and policy makers. The vision, in this instance, is the crux
of the foundation. “It demands program leaders who ask constantly, ‘What is our vision for teachers and students and how will this program help realize this vision?’”

(Vision is an essential ingredient, but without a strong commitment and support from the institution (school district, university, or organization), a vision cannot become a reality.

The vision for a comprehensive system of induction begins with a belief system that is shared and made public by the program director, administration, and school staff, and is the foundation or starting point from which all support efforts begin.

*Mentoring*

Smith and Ingersoll (Fall 2004) define mentoring as “… Personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools” (pp. 683). Mentoring is a strong component in the induction program, though Wong (2003) is quick to point out that mentoring is not induction, but is rather a component of an induction program (www.teachers.net/gazetter/feb03/spotlight.html). However, Smith and Ingersoll (Fall 2004) counteract Wong with the belief that mentoring and induction “are often used interchangeably” (pp. 683). So, what does that mean in terms of support new teachers?

Support from veteran educators and administrators are key for new teachers.

Gold (1996) notes that it is difficult to define mentoring because there are so many variations and notions of what mentoring is and whom mentoring serves (1996). Believing that mentor/mentee relations equate to that of skilled expert and protégé, Kay (1990) stated that, “Mentoring is a comprehensive effort directed toward helping a
protégé develop the attitudes and behaviors (skills) of self-reliance and accountability within a defined environment” (pp. 27, as cited in Gold, 1996, pp. 573). Gold (1996) also believes support comes in three forms: individual and group, instructional, and psychological. Mentoring is part of the support structure that can be found in all three forms. Mentoring not only allows new teachers to benefit from the expertise of veteran teachers, but veteran teachers also find benefit through reciprocal learning, observation of new strategies and techniques, and by examining their own practice in order to communicate what they believe to be best practice (http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.html; Richin, R., Banyon R., Stein, R. P., and F. Banyon, 2003; Jonson, K. F., 2002; Villiani, S. 2002; Hankin and Nolan, 2004). In a study Smith and Ingersoll (Fall 2004) conducted surveying new teachers hired during the 1999-2000 school-year in the United States, eighty percent received mentoring during their first year of teaching, increasing drastically from a reported forty percent during the 1990-1991 school-year.

There are four functions mentoring can provide new teachers, according to Villiani (2002). Mentoring can “(1) provide emotional support and encouragement; ... (2) provide information about the daily workings of the school and the cultural norms of the school community; … (3) promote cultural proficiency regarding students and their families; and … (4) cognitive coaching” (Villiani, 2002, pp. 9-11). In addition to mentoring, Gordon and Maxey (2000) suggest additional forms of on-going assistance to support new teachers during their early years in the profession. They propose new teachers should receive support in planning, organizing, and managing work, finding resources, coaching, conferencing, analyzing, and reflecting from their mentor teachers
and administrators (pps. 66-85). However, Hankin and Nolan (2004) add that the goals of mentoring should be aligned with the needs of each new teacher. According to The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, new teachers need mentors who have time to support them, time to observe them and discuss those observations, and time to provide counsel (Johnson and Kardos, 2002).

**Professional Standards**

In order for teachers to move through their career cycle, gaining knowledge and skill with every step, standards must be implemented and new teachers must be given ample opportunity to meet professional standards set by local education agencies and state and national departments of education. Standards help to define teacher quality. “When we help new teachers assess their progress toward standards, we induct them into professional habits of inquiry and norms of accountability” (Feiman-Nemser, May 2003). The notion of having every child be taught by a highly-qualified teacher, as defined by No Child Left Behind legislation, requires new teachers to work toward meeting and exceeding professional standards for the teaching profession. Many researchers note that professional standards and standards-based assessments are integral components needed in every induction program (Alliance for Excellent Education, June 2004; Colli, S., Summer Internship 2004; Hirsch, E., Koppich, J., and Knapp, M. S., Fall 2000; Feiman-Nemser, S., May 2003; [http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.html](http://www.newteachercenter.org/article-CCTEQInd.html); Ingersoll, 2004; and Moir, E., July 2003). For instance, California, has developed the California Standards for the Teaching Profession which provide the backbone for professional expectations that all new teachers must adhere to and meet in order to fulfill certification requirements. Additionally, Florida designed a professional development
plan for each new teacher that includes competencies and criterion by which they are evaluated and assessed. These professional standards serve as a means of assessment in terms of both formative and summative opportunities for evaluation and provide evidence for teacher growth, understanding, and progress toward meeting and achieving the designation of high quality teacher.

**Supervision**

Supervision, in terms of novice teacher learning, stems from both mentoring and from the administrator, though mentoring is not an official form of evaluation. For the purposes of this review and study, supervision and evaluation are two separate functions. Administrative supervision, as detailed by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002) has two main purposes: “(1) to provide the most effective supervision they can for teachers, and (2) to provide the conditions, help, and support teachers need to engage in the supervisory functions for themselves as a part of their daily routine” (pp. 5). According to Nolan and Hoover (2004), “… teacher supervision is an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, which in turn leads to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning” (pp. 26). The authors further explain that the purpose of teacher supervision is to enable individual teachers to move beyond their “current levels of performance” and understanding (Nolan and Hoover, 2004, pp. 28). In terms of induction, teacher supervision is a valuable tool enabling new teachers to benefit from constructive feedback in order to reflect upon their practice, instruction, and beliefs, gaining a broader insight into who they want to be as a teacher and professional.

The following table represents possible opportunities for supervision, as defined by Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002, in terms of new teachers and induction programs.
Table 1. Teacher Supervision, What would it look like for new teachers?
(Adapted from *Supervision: A Redefinition* by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002, Chapter 13, pp. 243-274)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Type</th>
<th>Function?</th>
<th>What would this look like for new teachers?</th>
<th>What could induction programs do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Supervision</td>
<td>Shared learning and supervision between new teacher and supervisor, intended to help teachers modify their practice to improve student learning</td>
<td>▪ Support by administration, mentor teacher, and/or school staff&lt;br&gt;▪ Peer or Cognitive Coaching</td>
<td>▪ Provide time for new teachers to meet with supervisor to discuss their practice and classroom.&lt;br&gt;▪ Provide time and funding for supervisor to observe/coach and conference with new teacher weekly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegial Supervision</td>
<td>Two or more teachers work together for their own professional development and growth.</td>
<td>▪ Observation in each other’s classrooms, mentoring, lesson study, use of protocols to examine both student work and teacher practice&lt;br&gt;▪ Mentoring&lt;br&gt;▪ Peer Coaching&lt;br&gt;▪ Lesson Study&lt;br&gt;▪ Protocols&lt;br&gt;▪ Examine Student Work</td>
<td>▪ Provide time, funding, and training for teachers to work collaboratively to examine their own practice and student work in a collegial environment.&lt;br&gt;▪ Provide time and funding for supervisors and new teachers to observe in each other’s classrooms. (Could also be to observe together in other teacher’s classrooms, as well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Directed Supervision</td>
<td>Teachers work alone and assume sole responsibility for their own growth and development.</td>
<td>Not appropriate for new teachers</td>
<td>Not appropriate for new teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry-Based Supervision</td>
<td>Teachers work in pairs or in groups to examine student work or teaching practice in order to solve problems.</td>
<td>▪ Inquiry projects&lt;br&gt;▪ Action Research&lt;br&gt;▪ Reflection&lt;br&gt;▪ Collegial Study Groups / Critical Friends Groups</td>
<td>Provide time, support, and funding for new teachers to develop a plan or individualized induction plan whereby they reflect, examine, question, and develop an action plan to gather data, analyze it, and create and implement an intervention plan to work on solving a particular problem of practice or need/concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Supervision</td>
<td>Formative type of supervision, where frequent, informal visits help new teachers discuss their classroom and practice (viewed as partners)</td>
<td>Observations Emotional, Psychological, and Instructional Support&lt;br&gt;**Learning is reciprocal</td>
<td>Provide time and funding for mentor teachers to be released from classroom responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inservice and Professional Development

Induction inservice programs, in general, anticipate novice teachers’ needs before they enter their classrooms for the first time. The belief is that new teachers all need support and professional development in instruction, classroom management, assessment, school policy, parent communication, and much more. Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987), purport that new teachers’ needs can be classified under the following constructs:

* Having someone to talk to/listen to
* Locating materials
* Help with clerical work related to district policies and procedures
* Lesson planning
* Classroom organization
* Discipline (As cited in Huling-Austin, 1989).

Though this list is not exhaustive, Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987) stated that these areas of support illustrated the most typical areas of need. This belief is true in some instances, but can be vastly different in others. Johnson and Kardos (2002) have noted through their research at Harvard Graduate School of Education that new teachers are different, that there are diverse paths toward teaching, making experience inherently different for new teachers, and induction programs need to provide for these differences. One new teacher, they noted upon discussing her first impression of her induction program, “… found nothing there to help her begin her work as a classroom teacher” (Johnson and Kardos, 2002, pp. 27). Huling-Austin (1988) contended that individual differences matter and as such recommended in an earlier study (1985) that induction programs, “… be structured flexibly enough to accommodate the emerging needs of participants” (pp. 26). She further explains, through a study conducted by Grant and Zeichner (1981) that the “most helpful thing that can be done with regard to induction is to personalize and individualize this support and gear it to the needs of the specific
Staff development or professional development inservice programs have not yet been completely individualized, as the cost for the school, district, and induction program would be astronomical; however, they have been developed in accordance with what they believe new teachers, in general, need to receive during their initial years of teaching in order to meet with success in their classrooms. The goal of professional development must be linked to improving teacher practice and understanding. Hoachlander, Alt, and Beltranena (2001) note that mentors and teacher expertise are needed to coach teachers and can be seen in many induction programs. Mentoring is a large part of most induction programs and serves as the backbone for the support and guidance new teachers receive during the first two years of their career (Villiani, 2002; and Feaster, Fall 2002). Moreover, veteran teacher expertise, in my opinion, should not be underutilized in terms of setting goals and objectives, training other teachers, or in creating a collegial and collaborative environment. Expert training does not come about because an “expert” is brought in from another state, organization, or university, but happens when meaningful professional development is developed, delivered, monitored, and adjusted by those with experience, knowledge, understanding, and are committed to improving student achievement. The North West Regional Educational Laboratory (2001) stresses that administrators must find out what supports are needed by the new teachers in their building before they develop a plan.

Robinson (1998) provides details of different processes that should be afforded to new teachers, such as opportunities to observe other teachers, mentor teacher collaboration and support, reduction of teaching assignments, and release time to work
and collaborate with other teachers (pp. 10). Way (2001) suggests that “High quality teacher development can provide consistent methods for helping new and experienced teachers meet the needs of students; it can foster a collegial work environment that enables all teachers to learn from one another and generate ideas that expand the educational possibilities of the school” (pp. 1). Many researchers note the importance of building a positive culture and climate at the school and within the district. “This collective focus and collaboration leads to well-coordinated activities and practices and a sense of connection, belonging, and support” (Fullan, 1999, as cited in McRel, 2003).

McRel (2003) further surmises that,

> First, professional development programs that contribute to sustained improvement are relevant to ongoing improvement initiatives. Second, they are long term and integrated into daily practice. Finally, they provide teachers with targeted, timely feedback about their use of the knowledge and skills acquired through professional development” (pp. 9).

Teachers need follow-up support to make sure professional development opportunities have been understood, utilized to the best of their ability, and have been integrated into their teaching practice in order to support and increase student achievement.

Heideman (1990) defined staff development as,

> … A process for growth to all professional educators. It is designed to influence their knowledge, attitudes, or skills, thus enabling them to create educational concepts and design instructional programs to improve student learning. These programs should be based on needs identified at the local, state, national, or global level – often the result of societal changes. The concept of strategic planning, involving both a scan of the internal educational environment as well as the external one, is a part of successful staff development (pp. 5-6, As cited in Gordon and Nicely, 1998, pp. 801)

Gordon and Nicely stress that staff development does not simply try to improve student learning through modeling and “modifying instructional strategies”, but also
strives to help teachers improve their understanding, skill, knowledge base, and practice (1998). Effective staff development looks at the whole process of improvement rather than concentrating on one part at a time. In trying to understand how to affect change or improvement in relation to novice teacher learning, professional development that centers on the needs of novice teachers is important. Successful professional development, according to Elmore (1997),

… Focuses on concrete classroom applications of general ideas; it exposes teachers to actual practice rather than to descriptions of practice; it involves opportunities for observation, critique, and reflection; it involves opportunities for group support and collaboration; and it involves deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise about good teaching” (pp. 2).

Still, in discussing the importance of meeting novice teacher needs, it is also important to remember that not all new teachers have the same needs, nor are they all prepared to teach in the same manner. Differences within their ability level, understanding, and preparation ultimately affect how staff development should be developed for induction programs. Another aspect of professional development that is unclear is what kind of learning is provided for teachers. Schmoker (1999) contends that efforts to provide teacher professional development have, thus far been great. They have centered on the specific needs of that particular moment; however, without continual monitoring and adjustment for improvement or need, he equates those professional development endeavors as “initiatives du jour” (pp. 2). As well, Hoachlander, Alt, and Beltranena (2001) state that, “Most educators view professional development as an ad hoc, disconnected series of one-time activities that have little or no impact on improving student learning or the school culture in general” (pp. 24). Novice teacher professional development cannot afford to be viewed in that manner. Educational leaders must first
combat the image that professional development only serves immediate needs, that staff
development is a forced issue, and that there is no benefit to attending professional
development in order to begin building a positive community of learners, especially in
terms of induction practices and professional development opportunities. Corcoran
(1995) further stipulates that, “…Policy makers need to be clear about the problems they
are trying to solve and about the conditions under which teachers are likely to change

Richin, Banyon, Stein, and Richin (2003) detail professional development in
terms of induction for novice teachers as having: “(1) summer orientation for educators
entering their first year … (2) district-wide monthly meetings for educators in their first
year … and (3) end-of-the-year workshops and seminars for all probationary educators”
(pp. 52). Workshops, the above authors say, can focus on any of the following topics:
Back to School Night, grading and report cards, communicating with parents and
working with colleagues, supervision, observation, and evaluation, understanding how to
use data, lesson planning, content delivery, differentiated instruction, testing protocols,
and mentoring (pp. 55). Though this list is not exhaustive, it is a sampling of the
opportunities for novice teacher learning that are common to many districts across the
United States. What the professional development listing fails to provide is opportunities
to personalize or individualize induction professional development for new teachers.

The following four school district/university partnerships provide example as to
how new teacher professional development is evidenced through an induction program.


(Information on the Pekin 108 induction program was derived from
Teacher Induction Program for Success (TIPS) is the approved new teacher support system used by an Illinois school district. The mission of TIPS is to provide new teachers with continuing support. “The framework encompasses three primary purposes:

- To encourage the concept of life-long learning
- To facilitate the transition into our district’s unique culture
- To increase the retention of highly qualified teachers”

The duration of the TIPS programs is four years, far exceeding the recommended two year time period. Novice teachers participate in a Professional Development Academy during those four years and concentrate their development on the following areas: (1) Interactive Classroom Management; (2) Engaged Learning Environment; (3) the SAI Process – Standards, Assessment, and Instruction; (4) Collaborative Leadership; (5) Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum; and (6) Linking Literacy to the Learner. New teachers also work on developing a portfolio highlighting their learning through their participation in the Professional Development Academy. The final component to the TIPS program is mentoring. Mentor teachers are highly qualified experts and apply for a mentoring position in the district and hold the position for a one year time period. TIPS participants receive a mentor during their first year in the district.

2. Georgia Southern University (GSU), (Information on the GSU Induction Program was derived from www.ourteach-georgiasouthern.edu).
Georgia Southern University conducts an induction program and has an agreement to work with several local school systems providing support for new teachers over the course of the first three years of their career. The goals of the induction program are to (1) decrease teacher attrition; (2) increase their success rate; and (3) develop high-quality teachers. Districts can opt initially for a summer orientation, a three-day institute, or a one-day orientation to help new teacher prepare for their classroom. As well, the first year of the program includes mentoring, a peer support team, and teaching seminars every six weeks. Year two continues with additional teaching seminars and also stipulates a plan for professional growth, whereby they must join a professional organization and attend their conference. The final year of the induction plan refines novice teacher teaching skills with more teaching seminars, a new professional growth plan, and will also be assigned a professional associate, someone who has also completed the first two years of the induction program to help them answer questions and provide emotional support. “The plan is a flexible one designed so that school systems may choose the components appropriate for their needs” (www.outreach-georgiasouthern.edu). This makes for a very unique and tailored program for each school district, but could be limiting for novice teachers of their school district chooses not to purchase all or many of the options.

3. Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS), (TxBESS program information was provided through: Garza, L. and L. Wurzbach. (Fall 2002). Texas plan drowns the idea of sink or swim induction. Journal of Staff Development. 23(4), 41-45).
The Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) was developed to counteract the “sink or swim” model of induction, which is synonymous for the Trial by Fire method described by Ellen Moir above. The cost for the program is $2500 per teacher and consists of training, for not only the new hire, but also the mentor, principal, central office staff, and also substitute teachers who help via release time for beginning teachers and mentors. The program centers on 22 professional standards, in four domains, known as the Teacher Activity Profile (TAP) that were developed to provide new teachers with an understanding of what they were required to learn and become proficient in over the course of two years. The four domains or clusters, as they are termed by TxBESS, encompass (1) Planning for Learning-Centered Instruction; (2) Classroom Environment that Promotes Equity, Excellence, and Learning; (3) Instruction and Communication; and (4) Professionalism. Another component to the TxBESS program is mentoring. However, what is completely different and unique to the TxBESS induction program is that fact that mentoring does not exist in a vacuum of support by one person alone. The mentoring team consists of a trained mentor teacher, the school principal, and faculty in teacher education programs. Together, the mentoring team works collegially with the new teacher to reflect, problem solve, and guide the new hire through the first two years of their career. After the team completes the TAP, a action plan is created, allowing the new teacher to either revisit a specific cluster for further training, attend a conference, or join a book study, or take a course.
Quakertown (Pa.) Community School District: New Teacher Academy (New Teacher Academy information was provided through: Beerer, K. M. (Fall 2002). District carves out time for new teachers to learn: Quakertown’s academy takes induction to class. *Journal of Staff Development.* 23(4), 46-49).

Quakertown’s New Teacher Academy has a five year plan for new teachers, well beyond the recommended timeframe. Each year, new teachers are required to participate in a certain amount of professional development days. Some of the days are specifically meant for training, while others allow for choice, enrichment or remediation, and graduate degrees. The new teachers spend an additional 15 days in school under contract in the summer. New teachers in the district believe that this is a positive change in the induction philosophy, noting that, “The additional 15 work days encourages my colleagues and me to design, tailor, and deliver our own transitional learning experience. … I view the additional 15 days as a valuable experience, for it exists in a nonthreatening, highly experiential, and supportive environment” (Bererer, Fall 2002, pp. 47).

It is easy to note that each of the induction programs have common goals. The main difference is how induction is presented and communicated to new teachers. The components, duration, and levels of assistance are all different. Not all of the programs are based in or aligned with the standards for the teaching profession. Not all of the programs covet the same components; nor do they find that their teachers need them. All, however, have noted an improved attrition rate, an increase in teacher quality, and happier teachers. Regardless of delivery format or professional development structure, the notion of induction has proven itself necessary to help teachers succeed in an ever-
increasing and demanding profession.

*Program Evaluation*

Furthering the notion of effective induction programs, Ingersoll (Summer 2004, pp. 5) suggests that the school district or state department of education (the person or entity responsible for the induction program) collect data, analyze it, make informed decisions, and restructure their program to provide continuous and rigorous training for new teachers. Data collected includes the following areas:

- Participation in induction activities
- Program quality
- Teacher retention
- Reasons for leaving the teaching profession
- Job satisfaction
- Classroom observation
- Student progress

As well, Gordon and Maxey (2000) believe that “summative evaluation is necessary to assess the overall value of the program and to make any necessary major changes” (pp. 86). Program evaluation serves as a tool to refine and redefine the terms associated with success. When teaching a lesson, a teacher must examine how she/he knows their goals have been met. In order to do that, they must ask themselves questions like, “What forms of assessment will I use to gauge student understanding?” and “What is my intended outcome of this lesson?” Teachers need to be cognizant of those questions in order to determine the effectiveness of their instruction. The same is true for induction programs. Noting several different purposes of summative evaluation, Gordon
and Maxey (2000) intend evaluation efforts to enable program developers to question their practice, use data to make informed decisions about program effectiveness, note when and how they determine a new teacher’s qualifications, and finally ascertain the overall value of the program itself. The information gathered should be used to make any necessary changes or alterations to the program structure in order to better serve the needs of new teachers and their students.

Further Suggested Components

Robinson (1998) outlines several ways to help new teachers acclimate to their careers and make their early years of teaching more positive: (1) Provide ample materials and resources; (2) Orient new teachers to the school site; (3) Allow for release time for new teachers to collaborate with and observe others; (4) Have group support meetings; (5) Provide for interactions among experienced teachers; (6) Assign mentors to new teachers; (7) Conduct seminars and workshops on relevant and different topics; and (8) Reduce their teaching load (pp. 10). Novice teachers, according to Robinson, should not be given the most difficult of assignments, nor should they have extra duties that add to, complicate, or interfere with their own development and time for professional growth.

What is the Notion of Differentiation in order to meet Individual Needs?

Induction, staff development, and professional development opportunities within a school or school district present a potential problem in the fact that professional development for novice teachers may not be delineated from that of veteran educators or from one novice teacher to another. The idea of differentiation stems from meeting individual’s needs in the classroom. Differentiated instruction, as noted by Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999), mandates looking at individual student’s needs in order to develop
instruction and assessment. The goal is to develop and use varying instructional strategies and methodologies in order to teach students according to their own learning needs, learning styles, and ability levels. In providing students with appropriate learning opportunities, they are better able to make gains and strides in understanding and performance; thus improving student achievement, the ultimate goal of differentiation.

Likewise, the idea of differentiated supervision is noted by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002). Differentiated supervision mandates giving teachers a choice in their professional development so as to better meet their own specific needs for learning, growth and understanding as they develop professionally.

“As we define it, teacher supervision is an organizational function concerned with promoting teacher growth, leading to improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning. It is not concerned with making global judgments concerning the teacher’s competence and performance. It is a function that can be carried out by multiple individuals who find themselves in multiple roles within the school system, teachers, administrators, supervisors, and so on” (Nolan and Hoover, 2004, ch.2, p. 11).

**Summary**

Induction is a concept that is perceived differently by most school districts. Though the goals for most programs may be similar in scope and sequence, the components are viewed differently. There are no clear definitions as to what components are deemed essential, nor are there clear definitions of what mentoring should resemble or how supervision should be viewed. What we do know about induction is that it is critical to the success of new teachers. New teachers need support. They need supervision. And, more importantly, they need it differently. They are inherently different; their experiences, understandings, and abilities are all unique and therefore require differentiation in order to meet their own needs as novice teachers and learners.
The concept of differentiating induction to meet the needs of individual teachers, would initially present many difficulties for school districts. First and foremost, how would districts know how to meet each new teacher’s needs before they enter the classroom? It sounds almost like an oxymoron. As I mentioned earlier, induction programs anticipate teachers’ needs before they enter the classroom. They suggest that every teacher has the same or similar needs. I propose that they don’t. Not all new teachers, per say, need support in classroom management, but they are forced to participate in workshops for an entire year developing a plan of action in their classroom. It’s not necessary for all and is in fact, wasteful funding on teachers who enter their classroom with strong managerial skills. As well, some new teachers need additional support in content instruction, while others might need strategies for differentiated instruction.

In examining the concepts of differentiated instruction and supervision, it is apparent that meeting individual needs is paramount to developing one’s ability, understanding, growth, and learning potential. I believe teachers have different needs, different understandings, and different abilities. If induction examined individual novice teacher learning, rather than collective understandings, Robinson’s (1998) notion that no induction program can meet the needs of all new teachers, may no longer hold true. My study will examine why, how, if, and when differentiation occurs in an induction program that is well-respected in order to meet individual beginning teacher’s needs.
Chapter 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and costs of comfortable inaction. – John F. Kennedy

Foreword

Denzin and Lincoln (Eds.) state that,

Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (1998, pp. 8).

According to Creswell (1998), “… the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language” (pp. 14).

This chapter details the research design and theoretical framework taken by this study. After a brief introduction, the first section of this chapter presents the theoretical framework, focusing on evaluation and case study. A concept map of the theoretical framework follows. The second section of the chapter details the researcher’s perspective and point of view coming into the study. The selection of participants and gaining access to the study site is discussed, followed by how the data in this study were collected. The final section in this chapter describes how the data were analyzed, in addition to issues of trustworthiness and study limitations.

Introduction

This study tells the story of new teacher induction from multiple viewpoints: 12
novices, 12 mentors, 12 administrators, and the director of the school district induction program. Through careful analysis of school district induction support structures, including administrative, curriculum specialist, and mentor teacher, this study provides an understanding of how one well-respected school district attempts to meet the needs of its new teachers. This study attempts to gain an understanding of the reality of new teacher induction and the effect induction has on novice teacher development, understanding, and support through a case study methodology. The story of novice teacher induction, in terms of how individual teacher’s needs are being met, is one that is unclear and not yet fully captured or detailed by research. By examining both collective and individual perspectives, experiences and support structures, this study aims to gain an understanding of how, when, if and why differentiation occurs in teacher induction in order to meet individual teacher’s needs, abilities, and understandings.

The central question posed in this study, “How are the individual needs of novice teachers met in a well-respected novice teacher induction program?” serves as the impetus for delving into the induction experiences of twelve novice teachers who have completed teacher induction. The following sub-questions provided depth for the study.

1. How do novice teachers experience induction?
2. What role, if any, do individual novice teacher needs and differences play in the induction process?
3. What role, if any, does differentiation to meet individual novice teacher needs play in the induction experience from the perspective of novice teachers and other stakeholders, e.g., central office, administrators, and veteran teachers?
4. Does differentiation occur within induction strategically or informally?
5. What role, if any, does mentoring have on individual novice teacher learning?

By investigating the experiences or phenomena each new teacher presents in concert with the analysis of teacher induction program design and the support structures
integral to the program, this study will examine the degree to which differentiation occurs based on the perspectives of the novice, mentor, and administrator. The goal of qualitative research, as noted by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), “… is to better understand human behavior and experience. They seek to grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (pp. 38). Through examining the approach one well-respected school district induction program takes in terms of supporting novice teachers as they enter the profession, in conjunction with the teacher induction experiences of new teacher hires within the district, I provides insight into the types of support beginning teachers need in order to increase teacher understanding, teacher quality, and job satisfaction.

**Theoretical Framework**

“Qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole. It is assumed that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the investigator’s own perceptions” (Merriam, 1998, p. 6). This dissertation study is presented via multiple perspectives as told through a case study of a well-respected school district induction program.

*Responsive Evaluation and Naturalistic Inquiry Approach*

According to Tyler (1950), “The process of evaluation is essentially the process of determining the extent the educational objectives are actually being realized” (As cited in Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 4). As well, the process of evaluation focused on “refinement of curricula and programs as the central thrust” (Tyler, 1950, as cited in Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 5). Stake’s Countenance Model of Evaluation (1967) noted that evaluation also focused on meeting standards or benchmarks when referencing
evaluative measures of success (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). In essence, evaluation in its initial stages examined the extent to which a program or curriculum met the intended objectives or goals, as defined by the programmatic structure.

Stake (1975) noted that an evaluation within an educational program is termed “responsive evaluation” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Responsive evaluation is informal, is concerned with audience concerns and issues, motivations, and or problems, is continuously evolving, is subjective and dependent upon interview and observational data, and is depicted in a narrative format relating the experience of study participants (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). The authors of Effective Evaluation (1981) note that “… Interacting with the audience to identify concerns and issues and negotiating portrayals of evaluation findings with them to ensure accuracy and communication” (Guba and Lincoln, p. 31) is the primary role of the evaluator, or researcher in this instance, and is detailed through a responsive evaluation via a naturalistic inquiry approach. House (1991) notes that “Responsive evaluation enables an alert reporter to capture the deep-felt opinions of those most affected by the program, a product of grassroots populism” (As cited in Patton, 2002, p. 171). House (1978), according to Patton (2002) describes responsive evaluation as a transactional model of evaluation in that it, “… Concentrates on the educational (or program) processes themselves… It uses various informal methods of investigation and has been drawn increasingly to the case study as the major methodology…, derived from a subjectivist epistemology (that) tends to be naturalistic” (p.5, as cited on p. 172), taking place in the real-world setting.

Naturalistic inquirers … focus upon the multiple realities, that, like the layers of an onion, nest within or complement one another. Each layer provides a different perspective of reality, and none can be considered more ‘true’ than any other. Phenomena do not converge into a single
form a single ‘truth,’ but diverge into many forms, multiple ‘truths.’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 57).

The naturalistic inquiry approach notes that there is a lack of pre-determined responses, allowing for the data to emerge naturally without constraining participants or manipulating the variables (Patton, 2002). As well, the voice and perspective of the participants is used to convey meaning. Authentic data is used via interviews to provide context and insight into their experience (Patton, 2002).

Evaluation, according to Guba and Lincoln, is defined “… As a process for describing an evaluand and judging its merit and worth” (1981, p. 35). Merit and worth form the basis for an evaluation study, noting both intrinsic and extrinsic value. Merit, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), “… Is estimated in two ways: (1) by determining the degree to which it conforms to certain standards upon which a group of experts agrees… and (2) by comparing the evaluand to other entities within the same class…” (p. 45). Worth, on the other hand, is described “… By comparing the entity’s impact or outcomes to some set of external requirements” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 45-46). In trying to determine how to proceed with this study, it was important to determine which, merit or worth, would be evaluated and why. Worth, based on the aforementioned definition, purports that the intent of the study would be to decide upon value, rather than merit; therefore this study aims to relate the merit of one well-respected induction program and how its participants experience induction. Scriven (1978) noted four different types of worth or value:

1. Alleged or rhetorical values – value system to which an institution publicly subscribes
2. Actual or true values – the values that may be deduced from the institution’s actual practices
3. Interest of the institution – the set of factors the promotion of
which would be actually valuable for – beneficial to the interests or welfare of the institution

4. Ideal values – the normative value system that the institution should have
   (As cited in Guba and Lincoln, 1981, 46).

Additionally, Guba and Lincoln (1981) note that there is a difference among evaluating for merit and/or worth based on formative and summative evaluation parameters, whereby formative evaluation refers to developmental evaluation and summative refers to adoptive evaluation. They contend that intent of a summative worth evaluation or summative adoption evaluation is to certify and warrant the use of the program, with the aim of trying to gain an understanding of what occurs within the program and how it is experienced by participants.

According to Guba and Lincoln (1981) as reported by Patton (2002), the design of the evaluation is also based on the “issues that emerge” from the data (p. 171) forming a basis for grounded theory or allowing for themes to emerge from the data as a means of data analysis. “Qualitative evaluations thus characteristically take the form of case studies, with respectful attention to context, and rarely, if ever, resemble surveys, quasi-experiments, or other inquiry formats… and rarely do evaluation resources enable an in-depth assessment of all possible cases in a program setting” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 388-389). However, Stake (1975) and Guba and Lincoln (1981) contend that survey data is an acceptable form of data collection, so long as interview and/or observation is the major method of data collection and context can be created and meaning derived from the survey data. As well, open-ended questions must be used on the survey so that individual responses can vary based on each participant’s experience and understanding.
Case Study Methodology

“A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 19). The major framework for research in this dissertation is case study. The case study takes a phenomenological perspective in attempting to gain an understanding of the experiences new teachers go through during their induction time period. The case study approach, as Creswell (1998) alludes, allows the researcher to situate and contextualize the phenomenon as perceived by participants through their collective eyes. He notes that a case study approach to research is “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’… over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). Merriam (1998) states that she believes, “…That research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p. 1). A case, as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) “… Is, in effect, your unit of analysis” (p. 25). For the purpose of this study, the case studied is the induction program in Valley View School District. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 25, As cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 27).

Merriam notes that “delimiting” the case is the most important aspect of this type of research. By setting a limit to the study, as a researcher, I was able to define the
context of my study. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this as defining the “bounded context” or “Bounding the Territory” as did Creswell (1998). According to Merriam, the central focus of the study is the inner circle, or the “heart” of the study, while the boundary, or the outside of the circle, provides understanding, but is not what is studied (1998).

Figure 4: *Bounding the Territory*

The figure above illustrates the basic context of this case study. The bounded territory for this case study resounds within the Valley View School District, its induction program, and its participants. Creswell adds that the, “context of the case involves situating the case within its setting, which may be a physical setting or the social, historical, and/or economic setting for the case” (p. 61). The subsequent chapter, *Differentiation and Induction: How District Administration, Mentor Teachers and Curriculum Support Staff Attempt to Meet the Needs of Individual Novice Teachers* fully details the setting, context, and boundary of this case study. Merriam contends that, “By concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case), the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon. The case study
focuses on holistic description and explanation” (1998, p. 29). As well, case study research can be defined through three separate contexts: Particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. This study, as Merriam describes, is particularistic due to its nature.

“Particularistic means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent” (1998, p. 29).

Experience is key to understanding how induction affects teacher efficacy and how support is received. The aim for this study is to examine, through a case analysis, the phenomenon of induction and differentiation of support as experienced by these new teachers and evaluate the support mechanisms in place within the Valley View School District. The experiences and the insight gained through the perspectives of the new teacher, mentor teacher, administrator, and specialist allow for exploration and discovery into the phenomenon of inducting a new teacher into the teaching profession.

This study will present three separate perspectives within the scope of new teacher induction, attempting to gain insight into how novice teachers are supported through the exploration of one individual school district induction program, its participants, and support mechanisms.
The above concept map graphically depicts the context of this responsive evaluation/case study in an attempt to gain an understanding of the types of support novice teachers in the Valley View School District experienced. Guba and Lincoln (1981) purport that the “purpose of evaluation is to determine the value – merit or worth – of some entity…” (p. 91). In this study, the worth or value of the induction program will be examined through the experiences of mentors, novices, and administrators.

**The Researcher’s Perspective**

In large part, the data collected in a qualitative study is said to be “subjective” and is therefore subject to the researcher’s interpretation (Patton, 2002). However, As Kirk and Miller (1986) assert, ‘Objectivity, though the term has been taken by some to suggest a naïve and inhuman version of vulgar positivism, is the essential basis of all good research... Objectivity is a
simultaneous realization of as much reliability and validity as possible. Reliability is the degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research, and validity is the degree to which the finding is interpreted in a correct way’ (pp. 20, as cited in Patton, 2002, pp. 93-94).

The role of this researcher is interpreter of experience, feeling, affect, and effect teacher induction has on the degree to which novice teachers believe their needs were met. The role I will take in this study is that of interviewer, interpreter, and story teller whereby I will enter the setting only to gather data and in turn will analyze, interpret, and tell the story of 37 individuals who experienced new teacher induction.

I have been an educator for fifteen years, having taught, edited, and presented multicultural curriculum immediately after high school graduation until I became an elementary classroom teacher in 1997, I was hired by an urban school district in Southern California before I had completed my initial teacher certification. Having recently adopted class sizes of 20 students per teacher in primary classrooms, due to new legislation, thousands of new teachers were hired with minimal to no preparation. I was one of those teachers. I had completed all of my coursework preparation in terms of my methods classes, but I had not yet begun student teaching. I was nervous and inexperienced in terms of implementing instructional strategies and utilizing instructional techniques that enabled students to learn, regardless of their ability. Yes, I did have experience as a presenter in a classroom, but it was as a guest, bringing in supplemental materials, instruction, and activity, and I can honestly say, was not the same as having direct classroom teaching experience. I developed and presented puppet shows to primary children focusing on bringing cultures together to look at common elements or features to our collective heritage as American’s.
As an elementary teacher, I have taught everything from second grade to fifth and have also served as a resource teacher. When I began teaching, I started in fourth grade with over 35 students in my class each year until I requested a primary grade level in 2001. My students were mostly Hispanic, Title I, and impoverished. They lived in a low socio-economic area and were second language learners. Many of their parents spoke their native language only, making communication difficult, as I was and am not fluent in Spanish, though I have learned a great deal since. Because I was not certified, I was not able to participate in the state and district approved induction program – a catch 22 – so-to-speak. I did attend a one-day orientation where we were given a district manual and were taken on a bus ride through the city. Additionally, I was provided with a mentor teacher in the district (she was not a member of my own school staff and did not teach the same grade level as I did,) but we met only twice as she left on maternity leave and did not return that year. I was left to fend for myself in my own classroom, without support. As described earlier in Chapter 2, I was inducted into teaching using the Basic Orientation Model, though I would also suggest that it was also by the *trial by fire* method.

I began taking on a lot of extra curricular responsibility during my first few years of teaching, becoming the newspaper and yearbook editor, peer mediation teacher and coach, support provider for a math program to all teachers in my school, and much more. All in all, I ended up with over ten additional responsibilities during what was to be my induction time period.

During my third year of teaching, I entered a master’s degree program in Educational Administration. For my master’s thesis and project, I decided to focus on
meeting new teacher’s needs. Having been thrown myself into teaching without a great
deal of support, I noticed that many other new teachers in my school received the same
type and amount of support. Making matters worse, the attrition rate at my school was
increasing at a very high rate. In that year alone, almost 50% of the over 100-member
teaching staff was new. I was concerned and wanted to find a way to support teachers.
During that same year, I became a Support Provider though the state approved induction
program, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA), for a new teacher that
was hired at my school. She received support because she was fully credentialed and was
able to participate in the induction program. That was my first experience with the
teacher induction program. Only two out of 34 new hires were allowed to participate,
meaning that 32 new teachers, who were not certificated, had no support system in place.

Finding a way to support new teachers quickly became my passion. I developed a
program with over 20 workshops and seminars for new teachers at my school, ranging in
topic from classroom management, to second language acquisition skills, to math, to
filling out district paperwork, to parent communication, to back-to-school night and
report cards. These were the topics that I thought they needed, regardless of their
understanding, ability level, or need. I was the one in control of the program structure.
Though for the first time my school did not have to hire any new teachers for the coming
school year, I do not consider the program to be an overwhelming success. The program,
as I defined and developed it, was teacher-centered, not student-centered (with me being
the teacher and the new hires being the students). I was caught up in the fact that they
needed support, any support for that matter, and did not even realize that they learned
differently and had varying needs, understandings, and life experiences. At the end of the
year and program, I gave the participants a survey to note program evaluation and
effectives. The program according to the survey was a success, having scored an average
of 4.9 out of a possible 5.0, scored on a Likert scale. Moreover, the school district asked
me to open up the program to the seven elementary schools in my quadrant of the district.
That next year, I was working with and mentoring over 100 novice teachers. Two years
later, I was asked to leave my classroom and become a permanent resource teacher for
new teachers in my school district.

My passion to learn about novice teacher support propelled me to apply for a
Fellowship in the Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program. I was accepted into the
program in 2002 and studied the Japanese educational system during that summer. My
goal was to investigate how the Japanese Ministry of Education prepared and supported
preservice and inservice teachers. I met with many government officials, university
faculty members and students, school district administrators, K-12 teachers and their
students. I found that their new teacher induction program and philosophy was very
similar in context to that known within the United States, all new teachers receive
mentoring and professional development during their initial years of teaching. Yes, I did
uncover types of professional development and support structures utilized through this
international comparative, but this information was not enough for me. I wanted to know
more.

The fall of 2002, I entered Penn State University and began my doctoral studies in
curriculum and supervision, hoping to gain further insight into how to meet novice
teacher’s needs. I took a multitude of coursework enabling me to gain a new
understanding of supervision, coaching, and teacher development and support. Having
worked for three years in the award-winning Professional Development School, I was able to gain further insight into preservice teacher development and support, as I taught a methods course and supervised interns (student teachers in a year-long internship experience).

Though I have had a lot of experience thus far, including three internships working with school district and county levels of education, ranging from novice teacher development to designing and implementing staff development, my learning is not over. My present job is that of Program Coach for an urban elementary school district located in central Phoenix, Arizona. Although the setting of my current school is similar in context to that of my previous school district in Southern California, my work responsibilities are vastly different. Currently, my work entails providing instructional coaching support to both novice and veteran teachers, coordinating the implementation of all curricula, developing and providing professional development for a staff of 100 classified and certificated employees, coordinating and monitoring all district and state assessments, and disaggregating data as a means of identifying areas for school improvement.

My work with new teachers has propelled me to my doctoral dissertation and my interest in broadening the context of novice teacher induction. I am interested in gaining an understanding of when, how, why, and if differentiation occurs in new teacher induction. My hope when I am finished with my doctorate is to work at the county or state department of education in staff development where I hope to be able to design, coordinate, and implement support systems necessary to ensure that the needs of all teachers are met.
**Researcher Beliefs**

In terms of my own beliefs and attitudes regarding novice teacher development and novice teacher needs, I believe all teachers are different. They have varying needs, understandings, and abilities. Induction serves as professional development for new teachers. Unfortunately, I can say that I have not experienced induction in a positive way, and in fact, have not truly participated in any induction program, as I previously mentioned. After researching the literature on teacher induction, it is my understanding that induction practices are extremely varied and because of this variance, it is difficult to ascertain what program is the “best” or “most effective” in meeting new teachers’ needs. Though I am not sure that there is one particular design that can suit all novice teacher needs, I do believe that school districts need to conduct a needs assessment before delineating program parameters. And, as such, should note that it is even possible for the program to become fluid and change to meet the specific needs of new teachers each year, as the participant needs change yearly. I believe that teacher attrition remains high because novice teachers’ needs are not being met. Though this is an assumption and it is predicated solely on my belief and personal experience, it is said because I was one of the lucky teachers who made it through my first year of teaching without support. Within my own school and school district, there were over 200 new teachers hired during the 1997-1998 school-year and over 10 at my school site alone. Within five years, I was the only teacher remaining from that year. But, this study is not meant to gain an understanding of why teachers leave their classrooms or detail how induction affects student learning.

The goal this study is to uncover how a well-respected induction program designs and delivers professional development that meets the needs of its new teachers. Research
seems clear as to what novice teachers need in order to be successful during their early years of teaching (Gordon and Maxey, 2000; and Huling-Austin, 1989.) As stated earlier, this study attempts to gain insight into how one school district meets individual novice teacher needs through interviewing individual beginning teachers after having completed induction and surveying members of support structures placed strategically to serve their needs. Their beliefs and attitudes, in conjunction with the understanding gained from the examination of their collective stories, will enable me to paint a picture of what defines a “well-respected” induction program and whether or not and how the program is differentiated in order to meet the needs of their new hires.

**Selection of Participants and Gaining Access**

**Selection of the School District**

One school district in central Pennsylvania was chosen via a reputational-case sampling of Intermediate Unit (IU) administrators and curriculum directors, (key informants) as to which school district in their region was believed to have a “well-respected” induction program. Intermediate Units, as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, are regional service units that serve the needs of the school districts located within a specific geographic area of the state. There are 29 intermediate units in Pennsylvania. Four intermediate units were selected for participation in the study due to their location or proximity to Penn State University and Centre County (i.e. within a hundred miles), to keep costs to a minimum. (They included Intermediate Units 8, 10, and 11, representing one-ninth of the IU’s in the state of Pennsylvania, and are inclusive of 49 school districts, 8 vocational high schools, one charter school, one correctional educational facility, and six non-public schools.)
Each key informant was asked to name at least one school district in his/her IU that they believed had the most effective or the “best” induction program. Key informants were used first to identify well-reputed induction programs, second as a means of locating the chosen school district, and lastly, for the name of the superintendent or contact person in the school district. In all, six key informants, two per IU, were surveyed.

Asking for their assistance, I was able to develop a list of possible study sites, based on their opinions of the “best” induction program in their region. I received the names of six school districts in central Pennsylvania. Immediately following the reputational-case sampling, a random selection was conducted yielding the chosen school district for this study. Due to the small sample size, I decided to place the name of each school district on a piece of paper and randomly pick a piece of paper until each district was placed in a potential study site order. The initial school district selected was unfortunately too small to handle the scope of the study; therefore, the district randomly selected in the second position was selected for the study.

Initial contact with the school district was made via an email and a phone call to the Assistant to the Superintendent requesting permission to conduct the study. After a lengthy description was provided both via a conference call and in writing, I was asked to present the scope of my study at a Principal’s meeting where they would collectively decide upon their participation. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to attend the Principal’s meeting. In my absence, my doctoral advisor and chair attended and received permission for my study to be conducted in their school district.
Selection of Participants within the District

The selection process began in late March, 2005. At the start of the selection process, I asked for guidance from the Assistant to the Superintendent. His secretary was able to provide me with a list of names of novice teachers, their school site and grade level or subject taught who participated in the induction program during the 2002 – 2004 school years. In total, Valley View School District hired 103 (total n = 103) new teachers during that time period. Sixteen new teachers from the 2002-2003 school year and 32 novices from the 2003-2004 school year were invited to participate in the study. The list also contained the names of each mentor teacher assigned to a participating new teacher. Participants were selected by a criterion-based, random selection of all novice teachers who had fully completed all requirements for induction as defined by the selected school districts. Novice teacher study participants were selected randomly from all those district teachers who met the following selection criteria: (1) having fully completed all requirements for induction as defined by their school districts (participants completed induction in either the 2002-2003 or 2003-2004 school year), (2) have taught in a K-12 classroom in the same school district for the duration of the induction program, and (3) were willing to participate in the study.

The sampling process to obtain novice teacher participants was extremely time consuming as many participants did not respond to the invitation. Initially, twelve email invitations were sent out to four new teachers at, elementary, middle, and high school levels. As noted earlier, the sampling process began in late March, but did not conclude until late May, 2005. After two emails and one phone call failed to produce a response from an invited participant, a new participant was contacted to take the original invitee’s
place. In total forty-eight novice teachers were contacted as potential study participants, with the goal of obtaining twelve new teacher study participants. No one was turned away from the study if they were willing to volunteer and met the selection criteria.

Upon completion of the selection, prospective participants were contacted via email, inviting them to participate in the study. (See appendix H for the email invitation). After confirming the email invitation and willingness, I made initial contact with each participant via a phone call or follow-up email to set up an initial meeting to discuss their involvement, time constraints, and study protocol. At the initial meeting, the consent form (See appendix F) was provided to and signed by each study participant. As well, a meeting time was designated for the interview.

Table 2: Selection of Novice Teacher Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name* of Beginning Teacher</th>
<th>Year Entered District</th>
<th>Years of Experience Prior to District</th>
<th>Student Taught in District</th>
<th>Level Taught in District</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paula</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandi</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karly</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasha</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilary</td>
<td>03-04</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>All – 6th grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Names of participants have been altered for anonymity purposes

In terms of meeting with the director of the induction program, I made initial contact with her via a phone call, provided her with background information regarding the study, and obtained permission to begin the sampling process. I also set up a time to conduct the director’s interview (See appendix D for interview guide). A consent form was completed at the initial meeting. A second interview time was designated upon
request of the director as she was unable to keep the initial meeting time. The director
did however complete the consent form before rescheduling her interview.

Administrative, mentor teacher, and curriculum specialists were chosen through a
purposeful sampling. Upon my initial interview with Patti, the district Director of
Induction, it came to my attention that there were specific people in the district who had
more experience in terms of supporting novice teachers than others. It was suggested that
curriculum specialists, elementary principals, and associate principals of curriculum
partake in the study. Two associate principals of curriculum, both at the middle and high
school levels; seven curriculum specialists at the elementary, middle and high school
levels, and three elementary school principals were asked to participate in the study, as
well as one elementary principal who was directly responsible for the coordination of the
elementary mentor teacher program were asked to participate in the study. Middle and
high school principals were not chosen as study participants due to the nature of their
experience with novice teachers. In this school district, middle and high school
administrators serve more in an evaluation capacity, which is not the function or purpose
of this study. An attempt was made to vary the gender of the study participants; however,
there were no new male elementary teachers hired in the district during the 2002-2003
and 2003-2004 school years. There was only one male mentor teacher at the elementary
level, and he chose not to participate in the study.

Again, the process to gain study participants was lengthy as the school year was
coming to an end. The process for designating study participants also began in late
March and concluded in September, 2005 with the identification of study participants for
the follow-up interviews. In total, twenty-seven mentor teachers were approached, nine
administrators at the elementary level and thirteen curriculum specialists in the district were invited to participate in the study. After all participants had been confirmed, a follow-up email or phone call was made to confirm their participation and set up an initial meeting time for the signing of the consent form and to answer any questions they had regarding the study or their participation in person. A paper and pencil survey was hand delivered to each participant at the initial meeting, along with a self-addressed stamped envelope for its return.

Table 3: Selection of Mentor and Administrator Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor Teacher *</th>
<th>Level Supported</th>
<th>Follow-Up Interview</th>
<th>Administrator*</th>
<th>Administrative Job</th>
<th>Follow-Up Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Dolly</td>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kara</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>High School Associate Principal of Curriculum</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nina</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kori</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Stacy</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebekkah</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Brad</td>
<td>Curriculum Support Teacher</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sean</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Don</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Lola</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhonda</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Curriculum Coordinator</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Judi</td>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanie</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Celeste</td>
<td>Elementary Principal</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patti</td>
<td>Director of Induction/Associate Principal of Curriculum</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Names of participants were altered for anonymity purposes.

The final list of participants in the study consisted of four elementary novice teachers, four middle school and four high school teachers (two male and ten female teachers), seven curriculum specialists (three male and four female), six administrators (all female), and 12 mentor teachers (four male and eight female). Seven of the middle and high school novice teacher participants worked within five different subject areas, while one taught sixth grade in a self-contained classroom and was responsible for instruction in all curricular areas. Novice teachers, mentor teachers, and administrators
were not paired during the induction process as participants were chosen randomly via a random numbers table. As well, due to the difficulty in obtaining participants, only one triad grouping of participants (mentor, mentee, and administrator/curriculum specialist from same school/assignment) chose to participate. It is important to note however that individual members of the triad were unaware of other participants as anonymity was a factor for the study.

Purposeful sampling, according to Patton (2002) suggests that “Cases for study (e.g., people, organizations, communities, cultures, events, critical incidents) are selected because they are ‘information rich’ and illuminative, that is they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon if interest” (pp. 40). Criterion-based sampling, as noted by Patton (2002), “The purpose of criterion sampling is to be sure to understand cases that are likely to be information rich because they may reveal major weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for program pr system improvement” (pp. 238). Both purposeful sampling and criterion-based sampling were used in this study as a means of seeking information, “rich in context” from people who have experienced induction from multiple viewpoints.

**Data Collection**

“Case studies are particularly valuable in program evaluation when the program is individualized, so the evaluation needs to be attentive to and capture individual differences among participants, diverse experiences of the program, or unique variations from one program to another setting” (Patton, 2002, pp. 55). Data were collected from the novice teacher participants via face-to-face interviews to attempt to gain an understanding of individual differences and experiences among study participants and
induction program structures. Survey data were collected from administrative, curriculum specialist, and mentor teacher participants. A follow-up study was conducted via the telephone with three mentor teachers and three administrative/curriculum specialists in order to clarify and provide further context to their experiences and understandings. A face-to-face follow-up interviews were unable to be conducted due to the 2,200 mile distance between the researcher and the study participants. Individual follow-up participants (mentors and administrators) were identified through their survey responses. Those participants who did not initially provide great depth or detail to their survey were asked to continue their involvement with the study through a follow-up interview.

Denzin and Lincoln (Eds., 1998) note that participants, “… must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their conscious experiences” (pp. 111). As noted earlier, interviews were the primary source of data collection involving novice teachers for this study. The novice teacher perspective was developed through a semi-structured interview format and was conducted with each participant separately. Interview questions were structured, but allowed for individualization of responses (open-ended responses) and also permitted probing the interviewee further for additional detail or to move into a new direction (Creswell, 1998). This type of interviewing allows the interviewee to express their experiences, feelings, and understandings in relation to novice teacher induction, development, and learning. The interview focused on effects and impacts of participant experiences in relation to (1) induction in general terms, (2) the culture of their school and community building, (3) the benefits of induction, (4) teacher understanding and performance/needs as a new
teacher, (5) mentoring and support, and (6) collaboration, observation, and feedback on
novice teacher development and learning. The interview for the director focused on the
structure and components of the induction program, as well as its purpose. (See appendix
B for interview guide).

Face-to-face interviews took place at each school site between the months of
March through June. The location of each interview was up to the discretion of each
participant in an attempt to find a place and time that was most conducive to their
schedule. All participants chose their school and classroom as their place of choice. The
only exception was Patti, who chose to use her office at the school site, rather than a
classroom. Interviews were conducted either before or after school or during a prep time
where students were not in the classroom and instruction time was not interrupted. A set
date and time was designated for each interview.

For the purpose of this study, surveys served as the primary source of data and
were gathered for two distinct perspectives. School-site administrators and curriculum
specialists were grouped together to present one perspective on how various
administrators in the district supported novice teachers through induction. From this
point on, the term “Administrators” refers to both members of the administrator
perspective: school-site principals and curriculum specialists, unless noted otherwise.
Mentor teachers comprised another facet and perspective. A survey with a return
envelope was provided for each participant at the initial meeting. A copy of the signed
informed consent form was mailed to them via the federal mail. As surveys were
returned, all responses were transcribed and compiled into a collective response to each
survey question. One hundred percent of participants who volunteered for the study
completed a survey. (A total of 25 surveys were handed out, completed and returned). The survey for mentor teachers contained six open-ended questions pertaining to how they supported novice teachers during induction. (See Appendix F). Administrative surveys contained the same six questions and added two questions relating to the district induction program in general. (See Appendix G). Survey data was collected as well between the months of March through June.

After initial data analysis began, follow-up interviews were conducted with a select group of mentor teacher and administrative participants addressing questions concerning their initial responses to various survey items. The initial survey responses that were either weak in context or lacked clarity and meaning were chosen as possible follow-up interview participants. The purpose of conducting follow-up interviews was to add depth, perspective and insight into their experience with new teacher induction. (See Chapter 6 for complete details). As I no longer resided in Pennsylvania (having moved to Arizona for work) and needed to conduct the follow-up interview long distance, participants were asked for permission to record their conversation. Follow-up phone interviews were conducted from my office at school or from home during August and September. In total, six out of 25 survey participants participated in a follow-up interview, (three mentor teacher and three administrative participants, with the Curriculum Support Teacher participating in an interview due to his involvement with the coordination of the elementary level induction program). Participants were contacted via an email invitation to participate in a follow-up interview. A second email invitation and consent form was sent via federal mail and was provided to each person participating in the follow-up study. One participant did not respond to the invitation, so an alternate was
chosen from the remaining nine participating mentor teachers. All six participants chose not to conduct the interview during school hours, rather opting to provide me with their cell phone, making time for an interview easier to conduct within the constraints of their daily schedule. Again, a set date and time was planned for each interview. Participants were asked as well to review their transcription via email after completing the interview. (See Appendix H for Follow-Up Interview Questions.)

Face-to-face interviews took approximately 30 – 45 minutes to conduct, while the follow-up interviews necessitated 15-20 minutes to complete. After each interview was conducted, I transcribed the content and provided each interviewee with a copy of their interview to verify the content of their interview. Each follow-up study participant was asked a set of questions (See Appendix H) based on previous data analysis. As each interview was completed, it was transcribed and analyzed for themes, issues and concerns.

Data Analysis

“Pure description and quotations are the raw data of qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 2002, pp. 26-27). Patton (2002) further explains that qualitative data takes us,

… as readers, into the time and place of the observation so that we know what it was like to have been there. They capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tells a story (pp. 47).

The story I will tell stems from the perspectives presented throughout this case study. Data were interpreted and coded according to themes and codes identified in each interview and survey, both individually and collectively for each role. Wolcott (1994) notes that, “… not all information is used in a qualitative study” (as cited in Creswell, 1998, pp. 140-141). Bogdan and Biklen (1992) explain that an analytic strategy would be
to, “… try out themes on subjects; play with metaphors, analogies, concepts; develop diagrams, continua, tables, matrices, and graphs; develop coding categories; and sort material into categories” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 141). Miles and Huberman (1994) further suggest that in addition to the preceding strategies, one should also “… count the frequency of codes and build a logical chain of evidence” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 141). As the data for each perspective were initially read and analyzed, commonalities among participant experiences were highlighted, counted for frequency of each code, and assigned a preliminary theme or code.

In addition, Stake (1995) advocates four forms of data analysis and interpretation in case study research. In **categorical aggregation**, the researcher seeks a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge. In **direct interpretation**, on the other hand, the case study researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking at multiple instances. It is a process of pulling the data apart and putting them back together in more meaningful ways. Also, the researcher establishes **patterns** and looks for a correspondence between two or more categories… Finally, the researcher develops **naturalistic generalizations** from analyzing the data, generalizations that people can learn from the case either for themselves or for applying it to a population of cases (As cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 153-154).

Themes or codes assigned early on were counted in terms of frequency among participants. As the data came together, the initial codes and themes were collapsed...
These guidelines were used to develop codes and themes as a means of delving into perspectives and understandings presented in the data. As a means of verifying researcher analysis, study participants were provided a rough draft of either chapter five or six, based on their perspective and participation, and were asked to member check the accuracy of the analysis.

How differentiation occurred within the induction program and through the supportive structures within the school district was the main focus for the survey data. Each survey question and participant response was analyzed both individually and collectively. Administrator and curriculum specialist participants were grouped together as one perspective due to the context of their position in the district and the type of support they offered to new teachers. Mentor teacher participant data were analyzed separately from other data, representing the third perspective. Coding for potential themes was more difficult for these two participant perspectives as the survey data were flat at times, providing a less rich description to their efforts. Follow-up interviews were scheduled due to this finding. Rather than initially coding for possible themes, I decided to code first for common attributes each participant believed were necessary to provide effective and quality support for novices; and then, for how differentiation occurred throughout the induction program.

**Issues of Validity, Reliability, Credibility and Trustworthiness**

According to Firestone (1987), “The qualitative study provides the reader with a depiction in enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion makes sense… the qualitative study describes people acting in events” (As cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 199). The idea of qualitative research here is to gain an understanding of the support offered in
an induction program. The context, description, and evidence provided in chapters five and six present rich detail and insight into the experiences 12 new teachers, 12 mentor teachers, and 13 administrators/specialists had in one school district.

Merriam (1998) notes that there are six facets to internal validity: (1) triangulation; (2) member checks; (3) long-term observation; (4) peer examination; (5) participatory or collaborative models of research; and (6) researcher’s biases (p. 204-205). Creswell (1998) adds that Stake, in 1995, developed a series of 20 questions to ask when “assessing a good case study report”

1. Is the report easy to read?
2. Does it fit together, each sentence contributing to the whole?
3. Does the report have a conceptual structure (i.e., themes or issues)?
4. Are its issues developed in a serious and scholarly way?
5. Is the case adequately defined?
6. Is there a sense of story to the presentation?
7. Is the reader provided some vicarious experience?
8. Have quotations been used effectively?
9. Are headings, figures, artifacts, appendixes, and indexes used effectively?
10. Was it edited well, then again with a last-minute polish?
11. Has the writer made sound assertions, neither over-nor-under interpreting?
12. Has adequate attention been paid to various contexts?
13. Were sufficient raw data presented?
14. Were data sources well chosen and in sufficient number?
15. Do observations and interpretations appear to have been triangulated?
16. Is the role and point of view of the researcher nicely apparent?
17. Is the nature of the intended audience apparent?
18. Is empathy shown for all sides?
19. Are personal intentions examined?
20. Does it appear that individuals were put at-risk? (p. 213-214)

In trying to develop a research study that yields valid and reliable or trustworthy data, it was imperative to structure the case study so that the story told would provide rich detail and heavy description from multiple perspectives within the context of one induction program. My bias and own understandings were
discussed previously within this chapter and did not taint the focus of data
collection or data analysis as the description of each perspective in this case study
is in-depth and detailed so as to provide context to the experiences of the
participants. The codes and themes were derived directly from the data, rather
than from my own understandings or ideas. The sampling process chosen for this
study was purposeful and random to help eliminate researcher bias and control.
Triangulation within this study was attempted in terms of collecting data from
multiple perspectives and through various means: (1) face-to-face interviews; (2)
survey questionnaire; (3) follow-up interviews; and (4) induction artifacts from
the school district. Triangulation, in the sense of using multiple investigators to
collect data was not possible as this study was conducted as a part of the
dissertation process and doctoral study for one person. As well, the purpose of
this study is not to be able to generalize how induction support is received across
all induction programs, but rather to paint a picture of how one well-respected
induction program attempts to meet the needs of their new hires.

As a means of getting at the truth, using multiple perspectives within
one case study allowed for various viewpoints to be considered and analyzed.
Yes, difficulty can occur when trying to remove researcher control or in terms of
having any one participant alter their story or color their experience because they
believe that is what should be heard and reported. This study focused on open-ended questions, allowing for prompting or redirecting as needed for each
participant via face-to-face interviews within the context of a semi-structured
interview format. The follow-up interview as well used open-ended questions and
was formed and guided by the initial responses yielded from the survey questionnaire given to each mentor teacher, administrator and specialist participant. The goal was to uncover the experience each participant had, be it good or bad. The questions asked within the interview protocol (for new teachers) were written by this researcher, but were reviewed and edited by committee members during the research proposal phase of this dissertation and the Office of Research at the University prior to beginning the study in order to refine and direct the questions in a manner that would elicit authentic and meaningful responses. Questions for the follow-up study with the mentor teachers and administrators/specialists were also developed by the researcher and through initial analysis of the data. The follow-up interview protocol was reviewed by the doctoral chair prior to commencing that portion of the study.

Variance within data is expected as experience is individualized and unique, but the manner in which the new teachers receive support stemmed from one district structure, induction, allowing this study to focus on how support was received and the experience detailed within this study is trustworthy.

**Study Limitations**

Limitations to this study were acknowledged throughout the process. Traditional responsive evaluation calls for prolonged time for observation; however due to researcher and school district time constraints and a lengthy study participant selection process, time for observation within the induction program was limited. Technical observation of induction meetings was not a parameter for this study as meetings had become less frequent as the second half of the school
year progressed. In addition, the focus for data collection was interview and
survey data whereby the researcher was not a participant in the study process, but
an interpreter of experience as told through a narrative perspective. Having to
rely on survey data for the administrators and mentor teachers, with six out of 24
participants included in the follow-up phone interview is a further limitation. Had
time permitted, all 37 study participants would have participated in this study
through a face-to-face interview so as to obtain richer detail.

Multiple perspectives were gained through the use of varied induction
program participants (e.g., novice teachers, mentor teachers, administrators,
curriculum specialists, and the director of induction). However, triad
relationships between the novice, mentor, and administrator or curriculum
specialist were unable to be made due to the random selection process and
voluntary nature of the study. As well, many study invitees chose not to
participate in the study, causing a break within creating successful triad
groupings. Only one such grouping developed between the novice, mentor, and
administrator. As well, because participation was anonymous and voluntary,
relationships were undisclosed. It is important to note that the perspectives
gained through this study are not based on relationships within the induction
program or similar experiences between the novice, mentor, and administrator
(triad) but on overall experience within the program based on their involvement in
new teacher induction.
Chapter 4

THE PLANNED INDUCTION PROGRAM

“New teachers benefit from schools that: offer new teachers novice status; create a supportive culture; provide curricular guidance and resources; and create schoolwide conditions that support student learning”

- Sarah Birkeland and Susan Moore Johnson (Fall 2002)

Introduction

Many school districts in the United States of America have responded to the needs of their new teachers. One school district, Valley View School District, located in the Mid-Atlantic States, has chosen to support its new hires through what they believe to be a comprehensive induction program. The induction program consists of an orientation, mentoring, support meetings, and evaluation. Support is essential and their process of supporting novice teachers is examined in this study. With six intended goals, the induction program aims to meet the needs of all new teachers to the district. The overarching research question for this study focuses on, “How are the individual needs of novice teachers met in a well-respected novice teacher induction program?” This chapter focuses exclusively on the formal induction plan that was developed by the district to support novice teacher development across the district.

I begin this chapter with a contextualization of Valley View School District¹, providing a brief analysis of their population, staff, academic structures, and surrounding area. The next section of the chapter provides background information regarding the induction program, goals and processes. Finally, the individual support structures in the Valley View School District Induction Program will be examined, including the

¹ Name of school district chosen for study was changed for anonymity purposes.
following program components: orientation, mentoring, support meetings, and evaluation.

Valley View School District

Valley View School District is a suburban, middle-class school district located in Central Pennsylvania. The district encompasses a 150 square mile radius and serves approximately 7,100 students. The district employs over 1,500 faculty and staff members and currently has 614 teachers on site at their 10 elementary schools, two middle schools, and 2,600 pupil high school. Median home prices in the area are $143,310 and the median household income is $37,814 as compared to the remainder of the state at $94,651 and $43,311 respectively, making the area somewhat expensive. Additionally, the area adult demographics hold that 94.1% of the population has a high school diploma and 56.1% has a bachelor’s degree contrasting the 81.9% of adults in the state having a high school diploma and only 22.9% having completed a bachelor’s degree. The adults in the community place a high value on education (www.schoolmatters.com, retrieved on July 6, 2005).

Table 4: Student Population Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>District</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This district is fortunate to be located near a major university and affords its faculty and staff members reduced tuition rates to further their professional development and education. As such, 83% of the district’s teaching staff has 30 or more credits
beyond their bachelor’s degree and an additional 2.4% have received their doctoral degree. (Statistical information provided by the school district website.)

Academic choice is important to the district. The high school provides over 400 academic and vocational courses and programs for students. Students in Valley View School District are viewed as high achieving. The combined average SAT score for seniors is 1099, while the U. S. and state averages are 1020 and 999 respectively. As well, third, sixth, and ninth graders continually outperform other schools and school districts in the state on the California Achievement Test (CAT). According to NCLB and the Pennsylvania AYP reporting system, the district has a 97.9% graduation rate and all targets (25:25) met AYP, as referenced by the School District Report Card, with students with an IEP and ELL students achieving AYP with a 95% confidence interval (www.paayp.com).

Attempts were made to try to define the district’s new teacher population. The following questions were asked to the Assistant to the Superintendent, the Director of Induction, and the Director of Personnel: How many new teachers are hired each year? Where do the new teachers come from and what is their demographic make-up? How many are still in the district after three or five years of teaching? What percentage of new hires are brand new to teaching? And, what type of credentialing or education program did their new teachers attend? Unfortunately, however, the district does not track this information.

The district was recently named by Standard and Poor’s as one of 47 “outperforming school districts” in Pennsylvania, a state with 501 school districts. To qualify for this honor, the district must have “…higher levels of student performance than
peers, … perform at a level that significantly exceeds statistical expectations, and must outperform consistently” for at least two consecutive years (www.schoolmatters.com).

Valley View School District Induction Program

Foreword

The current induction program for new faculty members is designed to provide maximum support during the first year of teaching for all new hires in the district, regardless of years of experience. According to the Director of the Induction program who oversees the larger induction structural system, induction begins with the hiring committee identifying a possible mentor teacher for each new hire. After potential mentor teachers are identified, the process of inducting a new employee into the teaching profession is fairly regimented, but can vary depending on the level of instruction (e.g. elementary, middle, or high school) and/or whether or not they were hired as a general education teacher, school nurse, special education teacher, school psychologist or speech therapist.

Managing the induction program at the elementary level are the site-level principals and curriculum support staff; while at the middle and high school levels, the Associate Principal of Curriculum for each level is in charge of program design and implementation. As well, there is a Professional Development Committee (PDC), comprised of members of the teaching faculty, curriculum support staff, and district and site-level administrators. The role of the PDC is to guide the district in choosing relevant and applicable staff development opportunities for faculty and staff members. The PDC focus has changed over the last 15 years from organizing staff in-service days based in ad-hoc or “potpourri” or “event-oriented” training to spending a great deal of time and
effort in the last two years reading about and analyzing research regarding best practice in staff development. Research for Valley View School District was key as was investigating how best to meet teachers’ needs. “Out of that came a need to more fully support novice teachers and to make some changes in our induction process…” (Patti, June 2005).

Valley View School District has developed four areas, based on the Understanding by Design Model by Wiggins and McTighe, that all new teachers exemplify for “… successful entry into employment” (2004-2005 Teacher Induction Plan). Though the following table of key understandings and questions were developed for the middle and high school levels, they are also applicable to elementary teachers (2004-2005 Teacher Induction Plan. School District name was changed to reflect anonymity).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Four Areas of Key Understandings and Essential Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student learning is enhanced by a nurturing learning environment.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o How can I set up my classroom to provide the best learning environment for my students?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effective classroom instruction is grounded in a solid knowledge base of discipline content and pedagogy.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o What content do I need to master?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>o How do my pedagogical choices effect my students’ learning?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of processes, procedures, and policies support effective classroom practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Which processes, procedures, and policies directly impact on my classroom practice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An effective teacher is a professional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o What does it mean to be a professional educator in the Valley View School District?</td>
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</table>
Valley View School District Goals and Purpose of Induction

“The Certified Employee Induction Plan is designed to provide a series of opportunities, activities, and experiences that will offer a successful entry into employment in the Valley View School District” (Certificated Employee Induction Handbook, September 2003). Program goals focus on the following beliefs and objectives:

1. To foster the development of strategies for instruction and assessment that will enable all students to meet or exceed the student learning outcomes.
2. To support development of the knowledge and the skills needed by beginning teachers to be successful in their initial teaching positions.
3. To integrate beginning teachers into the professional relationships within the school, school district, and community.
4. To provide an opportunity for inductees to reflect on their teaching through a mentor relationship.
5. To encourage new teachers to view themselves as lifelong learners.
6. To present the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators as the standard for professional and ethical conduct in the teaching profession. (Certificated Employee Induction Handbook, September 2003).

Valley View School District Induction Program Components

Day One: Orientation... New and Old

New teachers to the district attend an initial orientation meeting prior to the start of the school year. During the orientation meeting, they are introduced to and meet with their mentor teachers, curriculum support staff and district administration. In addition, at the middle and high school levels, new teachers are given an opportunity to meet with a member of the Pennsylvania State Educator’s Association who is there to provide assistance as they are given and complete union paperwork. After a catered lunch, new teachers are released to work in their classrooms, along with their mentor teacher, or
return to their school building for additional meetings for the remainder of the day.

Changes for the coming school year, as identified by the PDC, include additional training for new hires during the orientation period in technology. As well, the PDC outlined changes be made to the following areas: the opening session of the orientation, mentoring handbook, and professional skills checklist (Patti, May 2005).

*Mentoring*

As stated earlier, mentor teachers are assigned to all new teacher hires before the school year begins by the hiring committee. Mentor teachers are designated a master teacher because they are deemed to be a “highly skilled professional”. Choosing a mentor teacher though goes well beyond the confines of a “highly skilled professional” designation. According to the Patti, mentor teachers are carefully picked based on several factors: personality compatibility with the new teacher, instructional competence, commitment to sharing their knowledge, and whether or not they are believed to make a “good fit” with the needs of the new teacher (June 2005). Mentor teachers are expected to meet with new teachers for 30 hours a year or 15 if they are experienced teachers new to the district.

The PDC took on the responsibility of revising the mentoring handbook from one that is generic to one that is specific to each level of instruction (e.g. elementary, middle, or high school). Each mentoring handbook contains important information for each mentor teacher. Though the handbooks were developed to be grade-level specific; the only difference found in each of the mentoring books, after examination, was the grade-level *Inductee Orientation Checklist* page. All other pages, research articles, and content are identical, and are not specific to the needs of mentors or inductees at any level of
instruction. However, the information provided on the *Inductee Orientation Checklist* is grade-specific and provides mentors with a calendar of activities appropriate to their level. Beginning levels of differentiation as a means of meeting individual novice teacher needs are evidenced in the mentoring handbook.

On the opening page of each handbook reads a poem from R. D. Laing (1970) entitled, “Knots”. The poem is symbolic of the feeling of the uncertainty novices feel and experience during their initial years of teaching.

There is something that I don’t know
That I am supposed to know.
I don’t know what it is I don’t know,
And yet I am supposed to know,
And I feel I look stupid
If I seem both not to know it
And not know what it is I don’t know.
Therefore, I pretend I know it.

This is nerve-wracking since I don’t know what I must pretend to know.
Therefore, I pretend I know everything.

The district induction program attempts to soften and eliminate the “Knots” felt by novice teachers through meaningful support. The induction meetings begin at a bi-monthly rate tapering off to once a month after January. Mentoring, which is infused throughout the year, is imperative and is key to releasing the pressure new teachers feel when they first enter their chosen profession.

Charlotte Danielson asserts that mentors need proper training in order to become an effective mentor (Villani, 2002, p. xi). In the Foreword to Villani’s (2002) book, *Mentoring Programs for New Teachers*, Danielson purports that “…training for mentors engages them in important professional learning, and a heightened awareness of their own practice” (p. xi). Training for mentor teachers in Valley View School District is minimal at the moment. The PDC is however aware of the need and is currently seeking
avenues for mentor training. Mentors at all levels are expected to answer the novice’s questions and concerns, providing emotional/social, instructional, and procedural support.

The district contends that the role of the mentor is as follows:

The role of the mentor is to provide professional instruction and guidance to assist inductees in making a smooth entry into the district with a practical, working knowledge of effective teaching practice. The Valley View School District recognizes the importance of this role and, therefore, the principal/coordinator, director selects teachers for this person who demonstrate the following qualities:

A. Recognized as an excellent teacher who implements the district-supported curriculum.
B. Works well with students, families, colleagues, and members of the community.
C. Demonstrates organizational skills, has knowledge of and uses effective classroom management techniques.
D. Exhibits a good grasp of learning theory and an understanding of how theory is translated into effective teaching practices.
E. Implements successfully a variety of different instructional techniques and strategies, including applications of technology.
F. Demonstrates good listening skills and an understanding of the needs of new certificated professionals.
G. Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching and a positive attitude toward the professional as a whole.
H. Motivated to contribute to the professional development of the inductees.

(Guidebook for Effective Mentoring of Elementary Teachers, Guidebook for Effective Mentoring of Middle School Teachers, and the Guidebook for Effective Mentoring of High School Teachers, Valley View School District).

Support Meetings
Every month, new teachers come together to receive professional development focusing on one specific topic. The meetings, though more frequent in the beginning of the school year, are developed for each level, based on the needs of their teachers rather than on generic issues or generic content. With that said, some researchers believe that there are common needs to all new teachers (Villani, 2002; and Feiman-Nemser, May 2003) and the school district acknowledges that, but chooses to present the same in-
service on three separate occasions, once for each level (e.g. elementary, middle, or high school). For instance, similar induction meeting topics include professionalism and ethics, special education, and IEPs/ISTs/ESL. The content is extremely similar, but is provided to new teachers in a relevant manner according to the level they teach. All new hires are required to attend, regardless of their prior experience.

Monthly meeting topics include the following, but can vary depending on the level of instruction (Valley View School District Induction Plan 2003-2004):

- The First Days of School
- Back to School Night
- Professional Ethics
- Classroom Management (Listed only for Middle School, but provided to all)
- Library/Media Services
- Counseling Services and Child Abuse
- Mediation
- Career and Technical Center (High School only)
- Course Registration (High School only)
- ESL
- Special Education
- Supporting Struggling Students (Listed only for Middle School, but provided to all)
- Writing Letters of Recommendation (High School only)
- Literacy Workshop
- Technology
- Special Needs/Requests
- Unit Chairing/Unit Planning (Elementary only)
- Portfolios and Conferences (Elementary only)
- Teacher Evaluation Plan (Elementary only)
- Record Keeping and Report Cards
- Overview of Testing (PSSA and District)

Though there are many variations on the support meeting topics, each meeting also attempts to provide time for new teachers to discuss issues and concerns that they are currently experiencing. The purpose of the monthly meeting is to provide informational support on district and state-level policies, procedures, and processes, in addition to instructional and pedagogical information.
Evaluation

According to the district induction program, both elementary and secondary-level new teachers are evaluated a minimum of four times a year, one informal and one formal observation per semester, until they successfully complete their third year of teaching and are granted tenure. Most secondary teachers in this study stated that they were observed six times during their first year, rather than the required four visits. Accompanying both the formal and informal observations as a means of evaluation is the goal setting meeting whereby each new teacher works in collaboration with their administrator to develop professional development goals, both short and long-term or as needed, to be used as a benchmark for the professional development checklist. All observations are conducted by the administrator assigned to the building or the new teacher. In terms of induction, there is a professional skills checklist that was developed and revised by the PDC that details the skills each new teacher must demonstrate in order to meet minimum requirements. The checklist is now available as a word document and is beginning to be differentiated on an individual basis, based on each new teacher’s needs, the specific support they received and the goals they developed for their professional growth and development. Inductees receive the checklist in their Certificated Employee Induction Handbook when they enter the district.

In terms of program evaluation, at the end of the orientation day, inductees and mentors are provided with an evaluation form and are asked to complete it at their leisure. The feedback is used to not only evaluate the program itself, but is also used to identify possible areas for change for the future. A summary of the findings is provided for the PDC and district administration. (Patti, June 2005; and Celeste, May 2005). In addition,
an end-of-the-year evaluation is included in the Certificated Employee Induction Handbook. Most of the questions are in a yes/no format, though there are three open-ended questions at the end. There are no questions regarding the effectiveness of the mentoring or the monthly support meetings, but rather asks in general for any comments not addressed by earlier questions. Mentor teachers are provided with an evaluation form for the effectiveness of the Mentor Handbook, but not for the induction program. Again, all findings from each evaluation form used and completed is compiled and provided for the PDC and district administration and is ultimately used for programmatic changes and confirmation of programmatic or structural successes.
Chapter 5

SUPPORT FOR NOVICE TEACHERS, AS PERCEIVED BY NOVICE TEACHERS

The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.

Abraham Lincoln

Introduction

Novice teachers require a great deal of support during their initial years of teaching. Support, in the Valley View School District, can take shape in the form of mentor teachers, curriculum support staff, administrators, materials and resources, or induction meetings and seminars. This case study is attempting to uncover how one school district meets the needs of their new hires. This chapter will present the findings from the viewpoint of twelve new teachers. Through careful examination of three major themes (1) Support, (2) Teacher Needs, and (3) Induction Program Pitfalls, this study attempts to uncover how, when, where, if, and why support was received and differentiated during their initial years of teaching.

Theme 1: Support, the Benefit of Induction

Novice teachers viewed support as an integral piece to their success. Based on new teacher interviews, support stemmed from four main areas: the induction program, the mentor teacher, the team or division, and specialists.

The Induction Program

The Valley View School District Induction Program, as detailed in depth in the previous chapter, provides new teachers with several avenues for support: an initial basic orientation, induction program seminars, a mentor teacher, curriculum support staff, a division/team/department setting, and an administrator who serves in the capacity as
The first avenue for support was the *induction program* as a whole, providing new teachers with monthly meetings guided by district personnel in order to provide technical, policy/procedural, and emotional support.

Probably half of the meetings were really, really beneficial and more so near the beginning of the year because it was the technical stuff that you don’t really talk about throughout the year. It was beneficial to us to go over things related to the union or policies in the district and that really helped me out. Also, going through the process of going over the steps it takes to get your second certification and what you have to do to get tenure, so that was really helpful. That was the most beneficial part of the induction. We also talked about things that were going on in our classrooms and gave each other guidance (Hilary).

As well, the induction program provided structure for beginning teachers. The overall supportive environment enabled teachers to benefit from others’ experiences, ideas, and camaraderie.

I am not flying by the seat of my pants and it makes me feel better about what I am teaching and my students feel better about what they are learning. You can think about what you’re doing better… There is always somebody there who can direct you and help you (Tasha).

Induction, for teachers in this study, was a vehicle for finding information necessary to do their best in their respective classrooms.

They do a really good job of getting speakers from the different programs there to talk to you. I got a lot out of ESL and I will always remember some of the resources that they said during the ESL portion because it wasn’t something that I would have sought out myself, but it was information that was incredibly helpful, not just for my ESL students, but for all of my students because those resources were out there and to be aware of certain things (Brandi).

*The Mentor Teacher*

The second possibility for support is the *Mentor Teacher*, according to George, “Basically I look at it as you have a guide person who takes you from beginning to end.” The “guide” mentality served a broad purpose in terms of how support was received for
each new teacher. The guide was there to answer questions, provide material support, present curriculum, give emotional encouragement, and steering toward the right direction, if needed.

The process of mentoring...was really good. She was able to meet with me long before the school year even started and we met during the summer and actually I came in and even met with the department chair, too. I was given books that I was going to be teaching. Shannon\textsuperscript{2} kind of let me know what was going on for the year and an outline of how she taught her year here and what the curriculum looked like... so in the respect of mentoring, it was really good. The time was well spent (Jack).

Cindy added that,

She would sometimes pass on different hand-outs that she used or I found this great book and I want to pass it on to you... You might be interested in reading it and see if your class might be interested in this... So, basically, it was that kind of stuff. It was just, I found something good and it would be vice versa, so if I found something then I would pass that on. Um... sometimes if I had little questions, I...um... about a book that we would be reading that I know is coming up, you know... did you send out permission slips for this book or, so those kinds of things. Like the little nitty-gritty.

Mentor support became a critical issue for most new teachers. It provided assurances for some that they were doing a “good job” (Jackie and Tasha) and emotional support for times when they needed guidance and encouragement.

I think mostly she was there emotionally, which I couldn’t have done without it. I still go to her this year for it. And, if that was all she was there for, I still think that the struggles that I went through curriculum-wise were just struggles that a first year teacher has to go through, so if she was there emotionally, that was all I thought she was supposed to be there for... that was fine with me. She helped me with struggles with students who were failing or with students who were mean to me or with and all of my meetings with my administrator. I would debrief her what had happened. So friendship-wise and emotionally she was there (Brandi).

\textsuperscript{2} Names of new teachers, mentor teachers, administrators, and curriculum support staff have been changed throughout to protect identities of personnel in the school district.
Other times, the mentor provided technical assistance through introducing new teachers to other staff members or enabled them to receive needed support within their department and subject area taught (Jack, Brandi, and Jackie). Collaboration was also an important facet to the mentor – mentee relationship. George and Hilary discussed having opportunities to collaborate with their mentor teacher. The collegial atmosphere provided a warm environment where risk-taking became commonplace and asking for support, however needed, was normal and accepted.

… I had a chance to collaborate with her, so basically get to know the material that I had to teach a lot faster because I could discuss it with someone who taught it multiple times. And, she shares a lot of materials with me. It made the transition coming in new a lot easier (George).

I think the biggest need I had was getting a great mentor. Not only was she wonderful, but we got along really well. She was a great teacher and I think having someone that you’re able to work well with is probably the most important thing. I can see how some people would be put with people or mentors who were good teachers, but you have to have a lot in common with your mentor, too in order to get along with them because it goes from a mentorship to a partnership. You’re working more as equals. At least that is what happened with me and we could work more as equals and partners and I could be respected as a teachers even thought I was new and a first-year teacher. I could put my own ideas into what we were doing” (Hilary).

The Team/Division

The team or division or department personnel offered an additional opportunity for support for new teachers. Many of the new teachers in this study commented that their team members provided support throughout the year, helping them with curriculum, materials/resources, ideas, emotional support and social acceptance or camaraderie/collegiality.

I had a really great team and I took it to them instead of induction because when people came to induction, I don’t know how to put it, but for me, I felt more comfortable talking with my team than talking with others and
when they came with their problems and stuff, I felt more comfortable talking to, I don’t know – I liked talking with my team better. It was easier to get information from people who know what’s going on and you could always get good advice and things like that, um… that was the most beneficial part to me (Hilary).

In terms of curriculum support, the team was able to provide direct access not only to how to teach the curriculum, but also provided answers to questions and concerns that impacted their success in the classroom. Hilary continued, commenting that,

We all get along well. It’s easy to find someone to talk to… knowing there was someone there to answer questions or help with materials… To say, here’s what I do and give copies of it to you. I feel bad for other teachers who don’t have that in their department. To have three new classes to teach in one year, to have someone to share it with that really helps because you get to focus on quality. It’s a lot for a new teacher… I think having a strong team helps. I could give them ideas and say, ‘You take what you want’ but I don’t’ think I would be here today if I had a team that didn’t allow you to have your own say in things. I’ve worked with people who say, ‘Oh, you’re young; you don’t know what to do’ – that kind of stifles your teaching and doesn’t let you be the person that you want to be in your classroom. I think that’s probably the most important thing.

Curriculum guidance quickly blended into emotional support. Tasha noted that, “It was all taken care of for me… even the emotional support like, ‘I know you have a lot of work to do so I’ll do this and you can make it up to me later.’” Having team members who were able to provide materials, curriculum guidance, and resources enabled new teachers to focus on their teaching and learning.

I think part of… if you have a good rapport with your colleagues, you can go to your division or to different people for a second opinion to get support. I know in some districts people stick to their rooms. Here, that’s why we have divisions and you have to have an open policy (Jackie).

As well, George noted that he preferred going to his team over his mentor because their support stemmed from experience teaching a common subject.
… My colleagues in the world languages department have been really helpful. They know how things work in this school better than my mentor does… the logistics, the policies and procedures, who to talk to, where to get things done… They give me suggestions about different games they play and different assignments they do because basically we all have the same goals (George).

As noted earlier in the chapter, George commented that he equated his mentor teacher with that of a “guide”. Hilary, without using the same term, discussed the importance of acceptance and guidance from her team. Knowing that new teachers have specific needs, her team was able to guide her through their planning process, making her feel valued and integral to their division.

We would have unit planning before every unit that we taught and we could meet a half day and we would sit down and go over the unit lesson by lesson. They helped me a lot and I would bet that unit planning would go a lot easier without me because I had needs. They would sit with me and say, ‘Ok, here’s this lesson and this is what it really does and this is what it shows.’ That really helped me a lot with the curriculum by really going through the lessons… Yes, sometimes they didn’t look at me as the new teacher, but when we went over the last unit of the year, I had to say, ‘Hey, slow down… remember I haven’t done this before. You need to go back and explain it.’ (Hilary).

Even though her team at times forgot she was new to the profession, which could be viewed as a compliment, nonetheless, realizing the importance of their job as a support mechanism for novice teachers, they went back, slowed down, and guided her through the final unit of study. The guide in this instance took shape via a collaborative and collegial environment. The notion that working together can form a stronger system of learning, not only for the students, but also for the new teachers, who are still learning and forming their ideas about teaching.

That’s the good thing about working here. I mean all of the teachers really collaborate with one another and try to work together, so I think that kind of continues throughout. I don’t think you can have a good department unless you collaborate (Jack).
The Specialists

The last support mechanism new teachers’ discussed was from the specialists in the district. Specialists ranged in classification from curriculum support staff members to instructional support teachers (IST) to technology support staff to special education teachers. Though not all of these staff members were housed at each school site on a daily basis, new teachers knew that they could access support via email, telephone or in person when on-site.

I think it’s important for new teachers to be introduced to all of the specialists in your building. They need to meet them and develop some type of relationship so that there is a comfort zone with them so they can go to them to get that support. They don’t have to solve everything themselves or it would be a weakness for me to go to them. I do feel that it was a part of the induction program and I did meet them prior to and I knew them because I got to meet them at the orientation. It would have been a crazy year for me if I had not been able to get that support and go to them for help and advice (Linda).

Curriculum specialists, also known as curriculum support teachers (CST), department chairs, and curriculum coordinators worked with new teachers in their classrooms throughout the year, supporting new teachers though modeling, instructional coaching, quasi-mentoring, material/resource support and curriculum guidance. For the new teacher, the curriculum specialist was an integral facet in their professional development and learning.

A CST came in and looked at things to help me and figure out ways that I could do things better. I want to say that in the beginning, they came every week and then periodically touch base and see how things are going… then they brought in new teachers this year to see what we were doing (Jackie).

Hilary, a second year teacher discussed how she worked with the specialists in her classroom.
Last year, the CST worked a lot with me on math because we had a new program… This year, I work a lot more on IST issues… She has been such a resource for me… You know, there are 25 kids in this room and there is just one of me and I would go to her and she would do a lot of IST work or I would send my Title I kids to her to get a quiet place to work and she helped out a lot with them and that. It was really important because she helped me understand the terms, the testing, and the meetings. She’s been really great this year.

Support can come in many forms. What is important is that new teachers receive support in a manner that is indicative of their needs. Support in the Valley View School District Induction Program was presented to new teachers through a basic orientation, induction program seminars, mentor teachers, team/division/department members, specialists, administrative personnel, and through the overall collaborative environment. Though not all aspects of support were discussed or identified as meaningful by the new teachers in this study, is it significant to note that the school district induction program utilizes multiple strategies and support mechanisms as a means of meeting the needs of their novice teachers.

**Theme 2: New Teacher Needs: Common and Individual**

New teachers in this study identified their needs through individual, face-to-face interviews. Noting 25 various needs, ranked based on frequency (level of occurrence among participants) participants stated that their needs were not met fully through the induction program seminars or day-long orientation at the beginning of the school year. Their need for individualization or differentiation was addressed through other facets of the induction program. As well, in comparing their needs to the common needs of new teachers, as noted in current research, the idea of “common needs” in this study does not match what research has developed.
Common vs. Individual Needs

According to several researchers, Veenman (1984) and Gordon and Maxey (1990), new teachers do have common needs, but they also have varied needs based on each new hire’s experiences, levels of understanding, abilities and aptitudes, and preparation. Individual needs discussed during each new teacher interview are as follows: (Needs are ranked in order of most to least frequent).
Table 6: Variances Among Novice Teacher Needs and Concerns
**All needs are listed in rank order from greatest need to least.**

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<tr>
<td>5. Assessing Students And Evaluating Student Work</td>
<td>4.5. Relations with Parents</td>
<td>4.5. Curriculum Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Adjusting To The Teaching Environment</td>
<td>11. Planning of Lessons and Schooldays</td>
<td>13.5. Knowing Staff/Personnel Resources</td>
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<td>16. Knowledge of Subject Matter</td>
<td>13.5. Safe Atmosphere</td>
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<td>16. Relations with Principal/ Administrator</td>
<td>17. Administrative Support</td>
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<td>18. Inadequate School Equipment</td>
<td>17. Content Knowledge/Processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Dealing with Students of Different Cultures and Deprived Backgrounds</td>
<td>20. Emotional/Physical Support</td>
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<td>22. Lack of Spare Time</td>
<td>23. Knowledge of School Resources</td>
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<td>23. Inadequate Guidance and Support</td>
<td>23. Support with Reflection</td>
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<td>24. Large Class Size</td>
<td>23. Classroom Discipline/Management</td>
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<td>25. Questions on Testing</td>
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The above table lists the needs found within the Gordon and Maxey (2000), Veenman (1984) and this case study. Needs are listed in ranked order, with the number one need in each study receiving the highest frequency level. In addition, needs that tied in frequency share a ranking (e.g., 4.5 Situational Questions and 4.5 Curriculum Materials). A common need, for the purpose of this study is defined as a need that a majority of new teachers possess. The common needs new teachers in this study presented, in conjunction with current research, as identified in the above table are:

- Curriculum Questions
- Policy and Procedures Questions
- Situational Questions
- Support Needs - Mentoring
- Curriculum Materials
- Help with Colleagues
- Collegiality/Collaboration
- Understanding of Students
- Parental Support
- Administrative Support
- Content Knowledge/Processes
- Support in Classroom
- Emotional/Physical Support
- Classroom Discipline/Management

When looking across each study, Valley View’s new teachers only experienced 14 of Veenman’s (1984) 24 challenges; and, though 11 out of 12 (92%) of Gordon’s (1990) list of novice teacher needs were experienced, they are inclusive of the same 14 needs bolded in the above table. Why only 14 were needs found in Veenman’s earlier study identified by new teachers in this case study? The possibilities for answers are vast. One such answer could be that new teachers are different and inherently present different needs based on their own experiences, understandings, abilities, and preparation, as stated earlier in this chapter. Another such answer could be the manner in which data were collected (e.g., survey vs. face-to-face interviews, open vs. closed questions,
interviewer prompting, etc.). A third possibility could simply be how the data were analyzed and interpreted. However, I believe the differences lie in the simple notion that people are different. People, teachers in this case study, experience things differently; they have varying likes and abilities that contribute to their current levels of understanding. Moreover, how they perceive their own needs as a beginning teacher and how their needs are actualized can differ tremendously based on how they were prepared to teach, their personalities, skills, knowledge of content and pedagogy, likes and dislikes, life experiences, and personal background. Because of these differences, individualization and differentiation is necessary within a comprehensive induction program in order to meet each new teacher’s needs.

Meeting Individual Needs

Support for the individual new teacher.

Based on feedback from new teacher interviews, only 50% of new teachers stated that they received the type of support that they desired. Eighty-three percent of new teachers in the study discussed needing additional or different support. This begs the question, “What type of support do new teachers want?” In terms of the new teachers in this case study, their wants were not very different. From their mentor teachers and curriculum specialists, many novice teachers commented that they would like support in the following areas: materials, curriculum guidance, instructional coaching, answering questions, giving advice, emotional support, and time. From their administrators, new teachers requested a mentor in their department or grade level who had experience teaching in their given subject area or grade level. They also wanted a common prep time so they could easily find time to talk, meet, and collaborate with their mentors.
Though these sentiments were somewhat common among study participants, how their needs and wants were expressed were as vastly different as were why their needs became individual rather than common place.

Brandi was unaware of what her mentor teacher could have provided her with in terms of support, noting that she thought her mentor simply forgot to provide certain supports to her because she was retiring at the end of the year and was too far removed from the notion of being a first-year teacher.

I don’t know why my mentor was assigned to me - but it wasn’t helpful or perfect that she was at the same grade level. I am on the professional development committee this year and I brought up why mentors have to be at the same grade level and I didn’t find out it was the curriculum thing until then. But I still don’t know why because the teacher that I share a class with isn’t at my same grade level, but she was still very helpful and I think that the curriculum should be in a box and it should say that this what you have to teach and give you ideas… I think curriculum-wise, maybe it shouldn’t be give it to you but it should be told where you can go find it. Maybe that is my fault because I didn’t go seek out that information, but I didn’t know that it was there either – that there is something there for you to plan and develop (Brandi).

Six new teachers articulated the need for more support in terms of mentor teacher availability and equity. Equity quickly stood out as an issue as some new teachers with similar needs were treated unequally. Three out of 12 new teachers wanted to attend professional conferences as a means of professional growth. Attending conferences related to Special Education and world languages, teachers stated, would allow them to focus on issues that were important to their own learning and development (George and Lily). Permission to attend their chosen conference was granted to these two teachers. However, one new teacher, (Monica) was informed by her administrator that she would not be allowed to attend a conference after she was initially given permission and purchased airline tickets and paid for conference fees. She was told afterward that there
was no money for conferences that year. Yet, Patti, during her interview, stated that attending conferences was viewed as professional growth and she encouraged her new teachers to look to attend conferences that related to their instruction.

*Curriculum/grading support.*

I think the biggest need was getting used to the curriculum… it’s just finding all of the resources you want to use… when you have no experience to fall back on, it can be challenging at first and then it become easier. But, at first, where do you go because there is a lot to choose from (Jackie).

Those sentiments and concerns were stated not only by the above new teacher, but were also expressed by five other novices. The main need, according to Cindy, Tasha, George, and Jackie was curriculum guidance. Cindy, George, Brandi, Karly, Jackie, and Monica all developed their own curriculum because one was not provided for them or they did not have access to one in at least one area.

Well, my mentor was the other English teacher on the other team and she had these big binders where she kept like anything that she did. But, just to look at it, it wasn’t really set up in a way that made sense to me so I couldn’t just like sift through it and find materials. It was just any resource that she found or had, she put in these binders. If I was going to use it, I would need someone to sit down with me and show or tell me how to use it, so that wasn’t extremely helpful. I didn’t really know the other English teachers and I was never introduced to them and they are all different ages. I am young and it was my own lack of security, but I felt like they were criticizing me or measuring me up in their minds. You just don’t have time and they don’t have time to get to know you (Monica).

Another beginning teacher, Karly, changed grade levels at the beginning of her second year of teaching. Her mentor teacher no longer taught the same grade level and the materials that she did collect during her first year were no longer applicable. Finding support came about through another teacher at her grade level; however, the feeling of
security in knowing that you are providing your students with sound curricula was a concern.

I had to majorly adapt how I was doing things. I had to allow for a natural progression to things and I had to progress with them and develop with them. I had to spend a lot of time reevaluating and reassessing with another first grade teacher making sure that this is what you are supposed to be doing this time of the year, making sure I was progressing them at the rate and at the level that they should (Karly).

Two novice teachers commented that grading became an issue when one entered a new school and was unaware of the grading expectations and the climate of the school in terms of how to grade or what was expected of student performance (Paula) while another beginning teacher (Karly) was asked to change a student’s report grade in one subject (the grade level utilized flexible grouping across classes in reading and mathematics). When she said that she wasn’t comfortable doing that, she went to her mentor teacher for advice. She was told to grade the child according to what she could verify to the parent and to what she was comfortable doing in the matter. In the end, Karly took the advice given to her by her mentor teacher and did not change the grade. According to the new teacher, the teacher who asked for the grade change, upon not receiving her request, did not speak to her for the remainder of the year, causing additional stress and a need for colleague support.

_Parental and colleague issues._

Parental and colleague issues were felt by several new teachers in this study. Their needs came about as one new teacher stated, because of her age and experience level. Karly believed she struggled with parents initially because she was young and new to the profession.
I think the biggest challenge is that I am 24 and parents come into this with preconceived notions and you look at other 24 year olds in the world and you think it’s a hard thing to overcome. You meet with them at first and you win them over, but that initial contact is overwhelming. A lot of times, you’ll have faculty meetings and I get grouped in with the interns that are there simply because I am younger and then I don’t speak up because that is something of a challenge that I have to overcome (Karly).

With regard to Monica, parental problems ensued when she initially sought support from her mentor. Instead of collaboratively working toward an amicable solution with the concerned parent, her mentor teacher began to overpower her voice and ultimately took over discussions with the parent. As a result, Monica became increasingly more frustrated upon being removed from conversations regarding the student in her classroom and with her own teaching. Feeling insecure and unsure of her place in the classroom and with that parent, Monica decided to contact the parent and discuss the matter at hand. She was able to respond to the parental concern on her own. Working toward bettering the situation and her own understanding as a result of this experience, Monica became empowered to use a stronger voice in terms of what type of support she needed.

Support with colleagues was a cause for concern from one study participant. Though this need was not common among all participants, it should not be easily dismissed or disregarded because of the lack of frequency. This is a prime example of when individualized support is necessary for one teacher to find success and comfort in their teaching.

I had another teacher who made it very uncomfortable who tried to undermine me and put her two cents in when it was not asked for and in a way that was not good (Lily).

When, during the interview, I probed as to what type of support she received or sought in the matter, she added,
First, I talked to my colleague and asked them not to be there and it didn’t go for as long as I needed it to go for. My co-teaching partner stood up for me and went to the administration. I am not the kind of person to rock the boat, so she did it for me. My co-teacher has 30 years of experience in the district and was able to put it in a way that helped. My colleague didn’t talk to me for a while, but it’s better now” (Lily).

On a positive note, Hilary did not report an issue or a concern with any parent or colleague. Rather, she commented on a need, a wanting, and yearning for a collaborative environment within her current department. Hilary, a second year teacher, described her school this year as being more of a “business”, while the other school was a “culture”, meaning that the culture she preferred to work under was accepting, willing to support, and collegial.

*Administrator/mentor support.*

Webster’s New American Dictionary defines a guide as “One who leads or directs another’s course” (1995, p. 231). The guide metaphor came about through an interview with one new teacher. He noted that a mentor should resemble a guide, one who can steer the new teacher in the right direction. The guide can take form in either the mentor or the administrator as both have the ability and are charged with the job of providing support and guidance for new teachers when they enter the school district. It is the responsibility of the guide to provide essential information necessary to make well-informed decisions, as in the stated by George:

*Sometimes it’s like going down a road for a first time. Going down for the first time you miss some things and you might go pass the exit that you want to get off at. But, if you have someone with you who can say, get off right now or give you a time that it’s coming up on your left… like we have mid-term progress reports coming up. That would be helpful. That can be very helpful because there are things that are specific to your subject or grade. You need that person to tell you what’s going on.*

For Cindy, the guide was there to provide counseling and guidance. “I would really love
to just be sitting down and talking with a teacher, you know, who could be telling me exactly what I need to be doing these first few weeks.” And, yet for Monica, the guide should provide encouragement and not try to derail progress, emotional security, or overall support.

Well, I like forced it so that I would succeed. My mentor once said to me and I almost just wanted to walk away and do something else. She said she didn’t know if I would make it and I don’t remember her ever saying anything positive to me, ever. And, I just decided that, ‘Damn it, I am going it make it. You know, I am not a stupid person and I care a lot. And, I am going to make it!’ So, I would just connect with people who cared and listed to me whenever I could, like my paraprofessional. She listened and cared and that was just what I needed and I’ll always hold onto that. The more I could focus on my strengths and focus less on my weaknesses, the more confident I would become. I know I am good at connecting with student and I know that I am good at motivating them and I am good at being exciting and creative. And, so maybe some of my weaknesses are not being organized or on time, but I just don’t fret over that anymore because everybody has a weaknesses and I made it and I just couldn’t believe that a mentor would say a comment like that (Monica).

Monica also talked about her inability to relate to her mentor.

The guide, whether they take form in the mentor teacher or the administrator, should have time to meet and time to discuss the needs of new teachers. Unfortunately, this was not prevalent throughout the induction program. “…They were there when they felt they needed to be there and not when the new teacher needed them to be (Karly). Explaining that she would have liked her Principal to be around more, Karly commented that her building administrator was responsible for two school sites, making her time available at each less.

Induction program structure.

As a whole, I think the induction program is a good idea. I just think they need to tweak the timing of things… the timing of meetings. Now, the program itself, the mentoring part is a really good idea and also, once again, I am sure it is a logistical nightmare to try to match up schedules so
that a new teacher and another teacher… have a common meeting time.
It just works better (Jack).

Time or the timing of the induction program support mechanisms was of concern for many new teachers, as previously discussed. Tweaking the schedule of seminars would have helped many new teachers develop a clearer understanding and provide them with essential information necessary to their job and classroom. One hundred percent of new teachers in the study agreed that the timing of the induction seminars should be tweaked. Corroborating the need to alter the timeframe and schedule of induction meetings and seminars, both Patti and curriculum support staff stated that they have been rearranging when certain seminars will be offered but considering time itself is an issue, fitting all necessary workshops in according to teacher needs will be a difficult task (See Chapter Six for further details). As well, having a common meeting time to discuss individual needs as they arise would greatly benefit new teachers during their initial years of teaching. Having someone there, at a given or specific time, provides comfort in knowing that getting the needed support will happen and they can count on that specific time for it to occur.

Because the seminars and workshops she needed were not scheduled until later in the year, Tasha was forced to seek answers to her questions and support for her need much earlier than anticipated. Over 50% of new teachers in the study commented that they enjoyed the workshop on Special Education and the IST process, however, since it was provided during March and April, many new teachers sought information and advice much earlier in the school year (Jack and Lily).

During her interview, Jackie elaborated on her experience with the induction
seminars and how needs are different among new teachers, even within one building.

Int: “What were the weekly meetings about?

TH: One of them was a review of how to do running records… one about report cards… we had a meeting about how to handle the library. It was always run by a CST or a principal would attend.

Int: Were the meetings solely primary or a mixture of grade levels?

TH: It was a mix of the buildings the CST was in. At the time, I was the only primary teacher and the rest of the new teachers were third grade.

Int: Did that make it difficult for you?

TH: Sometimes… the meetings seemed more geared to the upper grade than mine and sometimes they would split the topic so I could use the information… things are different and for example, third grade does report cards differently than primary does” (Jackie).

Open/safe environment/need for feedback.

New teachers, or for that matter, any person new to a job, can feel anxiety. It can come in the form of emotional insecurity, presenting a need to know that that a good job is being done or it could take shape if problems ensue and the right type of support is not provided or it could come about if trust is not fully established and an open and safe environment is not felt. In Valley View School District, the expectation is that all teachers will succeed, that they will collaborate, and they will utilize the support of specialists, mentors, and administrators to better their practice.

A safe environment was a need expressed by one fourth of the new teacher participants in this study, two of whom experienced what they considered to be a difficult first year of teaching; the third teacher, discussed the issue in reference to being able to freely express her needs. The need for praise and feedback surfaced as well in one-third of new teacher interviews. Noting that positive feedback or praise was important and key
to knowing that what you are doing in your classroom as a first-year teacher was correct, solid, or good was needed.

I just wanted someone to be interested in me and show me where I’m at and say, ‘It’s going fine’… You know, what I needed was someone to listen and not criticize me. I wanted to be able to say, ‘This is what’s going on and this is not going right’ without somebody agreeing with it or picking it apart. I needed somebody to say that, ‘It’s normal,’ but that wasn’t what I got when I went to my mentor or to the meetings… (Monica).

Paula noted also needing more feedback. “I definitely needed more positive praise. I would do a lesson and I would think, ‘This is the coolest lesson!’ but no one was there to see it.”

…One of the most important needs is to have feedback that what you’re doing is a good thing in the classroom because it is very easy when you’re younger and there is a parent that comes in and they are critical of you and there is constant pressure from every angle, you kind of want someone to come in and say, ‘I really like what you are doing here.’ And, I don’t think that happens too much. You’re taught to go onto the next thing and they come in and get these snapshots, but they don’t get the big picture of what’s going on in your classroom. I think that is the most frustrating part… not that I want credit, but that I did it right (Karly).

Karly went on to say that, “There is always an element of that they’re judging or critiquing me or how is my job going to be affected over this… there is not always that comfort level to talk when the CSTs or your administrator is there”. The feeling or discomfort in talking with the CST, or Curriculum Support Teacher, was also familiar to another new teacher. Noting a lack of trust, Paula commented that,

The CSTs would come around and ask you to reflect on how you’re doing and they say they’re not supposed to go to the principal with that information, but you know they do. We all knew it. So how much are you really going to confide in your CST? It was hard to know what or who you could trust. To say, this doesn’t work, I felt ‘OK,’ say it because I knew they knew there were many positive things going on, but if there were a lot of struggles, I don’t know that I would have said anything or
that these things are not working… ‘Help me.’ I wouldn’t have said it. If you were tenured, I think it would be OK, but when you’re still looking to get hired for the next year, you don’t say those things.

The fear that someone is going to judge your abilities or have control over your profession and job in the coming year is a powerful determinant as to whom trust begets and why. Having an open environment where competition is not prevalent is a gift that many new teachers hope to find when they enter their new jobs. Hilary discussed a feeling of competition among her colleagues, commenting that

Last year, I was kind of an equal with everyone; whereas this year, it’s more competitive. So, there is another first-year teacher here and her and I are really good friends and we talk about our issues and figure out ways to deal with them and I still do that with my team, but I, just because I don’t want people to look at me because she doesn’t know what she’s doing, I make a plan first and say, “Here’s what I was thinking. Here’s my problem. Would you do the same thing?” That seems to work her more because of the different personalities that are here at this middle school. I always have to have a plan of what I would say before I would say it just so people don’t look at me and say, “Oh, she’s young. She doesn’t know what she’s doing.” I don’t agree with that.

When one succeeds and the other doesn’t, to a certain respect, feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty follow suit, making for a difficult experience for any new teacher. Being directly compared or not knowing how to ask for individualized support became an issue for Monica. The idea of having to compete for her mentor’s time with another new teacher was an issue for this new teacher. “I felt like I was the odd-ball out because things were going great for the other person” (Monica). Knowing that you are not alone in the world of teaching is important, but perhaps more important is the need to know that you are doing a good job, that you’re not being compared to others, and that you can be forthright and honest without fear of judgment or inadequacy.
Theme 3 – Induction Program Pitfalls

New teachers in this study noted three main concerns during their induction year. First, support from mentor teachers and administrators varied based on whom each new teacher worked with and to which school they were assigned. Second, a lack of materials and curriculum increased stress levels for many new teachers. Lastly, time and the timing of the induction program seminars did not meet the needs of the beginning teachers in the district.

Varied Support - Mentor

The reality for many new teachers in this study was that the support they received from their mentors, though it was noted earlier in this chapter as a benefit, was varied due to variation in availability, knowing how to utilize support, and mentor - mentee matching.

Mentor availability.

Issues based on availability and equity was present in 50% of new teacher responses in the study. According to the district induction program, as detailed in Chapter Four, mentor teachers are to work with new teachers for 30 hours a year and 15 hours if the inductee is not new to teaching but rather new to the district. The time, according to the district is there, but how each new teacher experiences that availability varies greatly.

…If I hadn’t sought her out, I would not have gotten much at all. And, you know, she kept saying to me and to another teacher, too, ‘You seem so with it’ but I think it would have been nice to get a little refresher. Still, I had to ask and if I wasn’t the type of person who could do that and feel comfortable asking it, it would not have been good (Paula).

Knowing how to utilize support.
Induction and mentor support does not come with a manual by which new teachers can refer to and read about how to use support. There is no clearly defined ideal for new teachers in this respect. However, there is a manual for mentor teachers, as noted in Chapter Four, which stipulates what support mentor teachers should offer new teachers at each grade level (i.e., elementary, middle, and high school) and provides a calendar for when that support might take place. New teachers are not privy to that information. There is no diagram or pamphlet or seminar to inform them as to what they should receive from their mentor teacher and when each area or type of support should be offered. That is partly due to individualization, as noted earlier in Theme Two. Novice Teachers present different needs and as such, it is important to note that induction programs cannot predict what needs will be or when those needs will occur within an induction year. The only thing that can be predicted or rather suggested is the type of support a mentor teacher should offer. This idea of what type of support should be offered is not left up to the discretion of the novice, but is rather delineated through the constructs of the district induction program. Several new teachers discussed the importance of awareness or knowing how to utilize support.

I thought, I was never really explained what that process was like. I was an intern and I had a mentor that was with me every day – 24 hours a day and we co-taught and that was my definition of a mentor. So, as a first-year teacher, I didn’t. I assumed that she couldn’t be with me 24 hours and I assumed that she would be with me if I needed help… that she was like a safely net. I didn’t realize that she was there to give me curriculum packets, or tell me what I was supposed to be doing day-to-day that other people were getting day 1, day 2, day 3, day 4… here’s my plans. Um… so I didn’t get that. I made up everything from scratch and didn’t even know to ask and I thought everybody was in their own corner. Um… it
wasn’t until this year what it was supposed to be like because I was on the professional development committee and I saw a paper that they get (referring to mentors) that tells them what they are to do and I thought, “I didn’t know that they were supposed to do that… I didn’t get that.” She didn’t offer it whatsoever. And, I think because she was a year away from retiring that she forgot what it was like to be new. She was there if I had a major question, but it wasn’t until then that I got that. I didn’t know to ask, so last year was kind of putting out fires as they happened. She wasn’t really there to help me on that. She didn’t tell me what to teach up front” (Brandi).

Cindy added that though she gained access to her mentor when she needed support, she had to create a lot of materials because the “right” type of support was not presented or offered.

I know that no matter what… if I sent her an email or if I went down to her office and she was there, she would take me immediately and talk to me and give me some advice. I sometimes look back on last year and think that maybe I should have utilized the support a little more. I felt like, now that I look back on it, like I created a lot of things… like I was recreating the wheel because I didn’t go to my mentor teachers that much… that’s just me… I thought, oh… I can do this, I can do this on my own… um… and I don’t feel like there are a lot of times where we could meet just where I could meet with my mentor teachers… you know, (laugh) I just that it was built in because we are all so busy and I know that sometimes maybe I’d have a day 1 area and we didn’t have a meeting and know I could probably contact my mentor and say let’s meet during this time, but then there would be something else coming up to fill in that time. So, I think the support was good, but I don’t think I always utilized it as much as I should have” (Cindy).

Cindy further suggested indirectly that the responsibility for gaining needed support rested upon her shoulders, as did Brandi. Lily contends new teachers have to take the lead and ask questions when answers are needed. “What I figured out quickly though was, and this is true and I don’t care what school you’re at or where you went to school, you have to be the one to ask” (Lily).

**Mentor – mentee matching.**
Matching between mentor teachers and mentees or new teachers happens during the hiring process, as noted in Chapter Four. The match is thought to be optimal and is sought because two teachers might share similar styles, likes/dislikes, experiences, or teaching assignments. For most new teachers, the match was pleasant and beneficial; however, for some new teachers in this study, the match proved to be detrimental to their learning.

… It just was an uncomfortable thing. I wanted more of a one-on-one and be able to talk about my experiences and have a relationship and it was just a strange dynamic and grew away from that. I tried to find other people to help me. I tried to find other people outside of that to help me with ideas and what to do (Monica).

Tasha added that her mentor was in another department and made for an uneasy match.

It was different for me. We didn’t teach the same courses, so if I needed anything, I went to someone in the department. It wasn’t that she couldn’t help me because she had taught the courses before; she just wasn’t teaching them now (Tasha).

**Varied support – administrative.**

Support did not vary solely with mentor teachers. Administrative support also wavered for new teachers during their induction year. Two new teachers discussed needing support from their administrator and not receiving what they required. At the elementary level, Karly noted that her administrator was supposed to attend a parent conference with her, but got caught up in her work and forgot to attend. Additionally, she purported that,

One thing that has been challenging this year is that they wanted me to pilot a new math program because my mentor was, but I was not taking the class for it so I was kind of on my own with it and it’s a huge program. That has been a sticky place for me this year. It was kind of like, ‘We’re telling you to do this program, but we’re not going to support you on it.’ There wasn’t a whole lot of support and there had been some issues with the building principal not understanding the program, not liking the
program, and she came into me, a second year teacher, and observed me teaching it and I had to clarify what was going on and why I was going something and that was challenging for me (Karly).

Needing support from her administrator when dealing with an issue with her colleagues, Brandi experienced the following:

One of the major issues that I faced in the beginning of the year was with another teacher… (talked about specifics – I decided to keep the matter private and not transcribe logistical information about the issue other than it dealt with another teacher not giving support to a student) and I thought early on, ‘This is not fair, this cannot be’ and instead of going to that teacher, you have to start contributing and not shoot students down, I went to an administrator from an insider’s perspective, and said, ‘This is what’s happening.’ … It ended up like a cat fight of people who just were upset at each other. It ended in, people seeking out my advice because I was neutral. I just wanted to point out that it wasn’t working… the administrator said that I needed to find a way to work it out since I was neutral… a teacher actually quit that position and in that obstacle, I think, I don’t even know… but I didn’t really trust that I could be honest with the administrator because one of the teachers involved was the person evaluating me and I wanted to remain as neutral as possible. So, the challenge of getting along with other colleagues was some of the biggest problems that I faced. I received support from other teachers and administrators and from the critical friends group (Brandi).

Though support was in fact offered from the administrator, it was not what the new teacher expected. Support can be key to helping new teachers gain comfort and confidence.

*Lack of materials/curriculum.*

Forty-two percent of new teachers in this case study noted that at least during one point of the school year, they had material or curriculum needs. For two new teachers, there was a surplus of materials and neither new teacher knew where to begin looking.

Jack discussed receiving too much material from his mentor and needing to be able to work through all of it whereas Jackie reported the following:
I said to my CST that there are so many resources to choose from that I don’t know where to begin. As a new teacher, there needs to be something more structured… you don’t know what order and you need that… so I would just do my own activities. You feel comfortable with a teaching resources and you’re using it, but you also know it’s supposed to be good and coming up with a good activity, but there’s no back up to make a good choice. They talked about making it better for new teachers. Last year, I did math stations and I planned 3 different math activities each day, which is a lot. I spent a lot of time and you have to come up with ideas and materials.

George commented that he wanted to know in advance how much material he would have to develop over the course of the school year and what curriculum would be available to him in his classroom.

I knew regardless, coming into a new situation I wanted to know how much new material am I going to have to come up with and what can I use from before… how much will the people that I work with help me out because if they don’t’ help you out, then it makes you jump much farther (George).

Two others (Brandi and Monica) commented, as discussed earlier in this chapter, not receiving any curriculum support from their mentors. Brandi clarified her comments further stating that she felt the entire department’s curriculum was “weak” though they were working on trying to fix that issue. “Any kind of work that had already been done would have been helpful” (Monica).

Time and timing of support.

How can I say this diplomatically? It was frustrating at times. Some of them were really very good and the problem that I noticed was what I really needed to know was told to me at the end of the program rather than at the beginning. For example, I needed the Special Ed information when I first got here. They didn’t do that program until the very end. Um, the ESL information that we went through about three-quarters of the way though… Had I had that at the beginning, it would’ve been helpful (Jack).

The sentiments expressed above were not uncommon among new teacher participants.
The largest area of concern expressed by novice teachers was finding time to get the much needed support. Aware of time, this issue was also expressed by both administrators and mentor teachers as they attempted to meet their new hires’ needs. One-third of new teachers in this study reported that the timing of support was untimely.

There really wasn’t a set time to meet or talk. But, what worked here was if I needed something, I would just ask. I think we met maybe twice during the whole year and it was, ‘Ok, let’s look at things” (Lily).

Another new teacher (Jackie) noted that her mentor left after school to go home and, though he was a “good mentor”, made it difficult to find a meeting time, while George commented that his mentor taught at another school, making it difficult for him to ask questions. As well, Paula reported that her mentor would, at times, request another meeting time because she had outside obligations and time constraints. Continuing in regard to scheduling difficulties, Jack further explained that in his experiences,

… Our schedules were totally opposite, so it was a problem… I would poke my head in after school or during lunch, but it wasn’t like we had a set meeting time. I would say that was one of the lower parts of the program itself. Not having a common meeting time with your mentor makes it more difficult.

New teachers reported having many varied needs throughout their initial year of teaching. It is interesting to note that all 12 new teachers were hired back at the end of their induction year. At the end of her second year of teaching, one new teacher chose not to come back to teaching.
Chapter 6

SUPPORT FOR NOVICE TEACHERS: PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER INDUCTION PARTICIPANTS

*The beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand.*

-Frank Herbert

The viewpoint of the mentor teacher and the school administrator is critical to gaining an understanding of what needs new teachers present and how to address and meet those particular needs. Understanding is key to helping new teachers succeed. In trying to gather data based on mentor teacher perspective, a questionnaire was given to 24 mentor teachers, building-level administrators and specialists. A follow-up interview was conducted to clarify and gain further depth and insight into their perspective on novice teacher support and induction. Patti, the Director of the Induction program, participated in this study via a face-to-face interview. As well, Brad, the Curriculum Support Teacher (CST), responsible for the direction and implementation of the elementary level induction program, participated in both the questionnaire and a face-to-face interview. Chapter Six examines, from multiple perspectives, how Valley View School District attempts to meet the needs of their new teachers. The first theme explores how support was actualized within the new teacher induction program. Theme two discusses multiple areas of dissonance and variances within the mentor teacher and administrative perspectives regarding support and the induction program. The final theme presents how and why the induction program has changed over time with the aim of adapting to meet both common and individual novice teacher needs.

**Theme 1: Multi-faceted Support**

Support within the Valley View School District, as previously discussed in
Chapters Four and Five, stems from multiple systems: the induction program, the mentor teacher, the specialist, the building-level administrator, and the Director of Induction. The concept of support is not new nor is it a stand-alone feature within the induction program. Support is the foundation by which the induction program exists and is embedded throughout the system. It is the primary benefit of induction new teachers have noted within this study. This section details how support was actualized and presented to beginning teachers in this school district.

Mentor teachers, building-level administrators, and curriculum specialists alike provided support on multiple levels for new teachers under their supervision and guidance. The process begins early in the school year with the opening professional development luncheon where new teachers meet with their mentors and are also introduced to and recognized by district employees. As well, there is an opening induction meeting where the basic district orientation occurs. Immediately following the orientation, the customization of support begins with the mentor teacher and new teacher meeting to discuss the start of the school year, instructional materials and curriculum, classroom set-up and any questions that need to be addressed. The curriculum specialists also meet with each new teacher to provide similar assistance. The building-level administrator meets with each new teacher to develop goals, answer technical questions, and set expectations for the school year.

*Mentor Teacher Support*

All participating mentor teachers in the study stated that being there to answer questions was key to providing support. Mentor teachers noted that the act of *listening* was also critical to being able to provide meaningful support for each novice teacher.
Additionally, all participants noted working with new teachers in a differentiated manner, with efforts toward individualizing support for each novice teacher’s needs. Brian developed a series of 11 aspects to mentoring that help to provide meaningful support to novice teachers. He commented that he,

1. Listened.
2. Explained.
3. Showed how to do something.
4. Provided tours.
5. Explained forms, after forms, after forms.
7. Advised curricular content.
8. Reviewed procedures.
9. Acted as a touchstone.
10. Acknowledged the ins and outs… the ups and downs and the roller-coaster ride of first year teachers.
11. Oh yeah… answer a lot of questions. That’s about it (Brian).

The listing above is comprehensive and inclusive of many supportive structures the district intends for mentor teachers to provide to their inductees. Another way to provide support, which also included the act of listening to new teachers so as to become well informed as to what their particular needs were was detailed by Samuel:

I present alternatives without demanding conformity; I listen reflectively; I work directly with the inductee as needed (relating to parent relations, student behavior, district expectations, building protocol, report card completion, material selection and content delivery… anything necessary for success); I listen reflectively; I support them; I remain available.

Presenting alternatives or different ways of thinking about a problem, issue, or concept was necessary to helping new teachers build understanding and a broad repertoire of instructional methodology, district policies and procedures, curriculum understanding, and classroom management. Providing time to meet was also critical as new teachers require support and needs can and do arise at varying times throughout the school year.

As a mentor teacher, I met with a new teacher weekly, or as needed. Prior
to yearly ‘events,’ such as goal conferences, report cards, Back to School Night, I would share information, letters, hand-outs, etc. I checked to make sure the teacher had an understanding of our report cards and I even sat in on a parent/teacher meeting once. I felt I was always available for advice (Sara).

The giving of advice, as noted by the above mentor teachers was an essential piece of support. Advice can come in many forms, from what they might do to help one student in their classroom who is struggling with a particular concept to parental support and guidance to what to do at a particular school event. Mentors, administrators, and specialists all began in the same context... that of a new teacher... and can present ideas, give advice, and contextualize teaching from a unique perspective as having lived through induction and the stress of being a beginning teacher.

**Building-level Administrator Support**

Support from building-level administrators was different from the support of a mentor teacher. Many building-level elementary principals participated in or facilitated the induction program seminar meetings. At the middle and high school levels, Patti and Molly took responsibility for the monthly meetings and the overall induction program. As well, building-level administrators worked with novice teachers to develop goals, identify needs, observe and evaluate their instruction and classroom management, and provide support in terms of district policy, procedures, and expectations. “I’ve worked to identify needs and I’ve met formally on a regular basis with new teachers. I’ve also given curriculum support teachers direction for working with new teachers” (Leslie). In addition, Dolly noted that she worked with Brad as they “Developed and coordinated elementary program.” Dolly also worked with new teachers through classroom observations to “Help with individual needs” and also “Provided opportunities to visit
other classes and schools; and Goal setting”.

Based on administrator feedback, it is possible to presume that a building-level administrators and curriculum support staff were responsible for the following induction facets:

1. Presenting at various monthly induction seminars
2. Listening to new teacher needs and concerns
3. Assisting new teachers with curricular questions, needs, concerns, materials, and resources
4. Collaborating with other administrators for induction professional development purposes
5. Identifying new teacher needs
6. Providing support as needed

Judi noted her role was multi-faceted and took into account the entire act of inducting a new teacher into the profession rather than simply looking at one aspect individually.

Well, I make sure that I meet with each teacher individually and I go over not only curriculum things, but policy and procedure things that they need to know and I make it a point to meet with them first. Then, I meet with the mentor teacher assigned to them and also work through that mentor teacher all of the things that the new teacher needs to know. And, then, in addition, we do an induction program with a variety of topics that I am also involved in. We arrange for certain resource people to come to meet with the new teachers. Um… as a part of the evaluation, I encourage the new teachers to use the curriculum support teachers to help them with often times language arts objectives and also the math/science objectives. I really try to push those things (Judi).

Judi went on to say that she feels,

The curriculum support teachers are the big support and if for example, if I found that a teacher was struggling in one area, I might suggest and meet with the CST privately and say, ‘I really need your help,’ because they are non-threatening. They are observing, but they are not evaluating. I would suggest to the novice teacher that we have someone who is going to come in and model lessons for you… I then say and I am very clear, “This is a learning experience for you and I want you to take notes and watch and observe the curriculum support teacher and try to find things that you could do or try.
Support from the Specialist

Support from the specialist, as noted by Judi, is an important support and feature in the lives of novice teachers. As a part of their job, all of the curriculum support staff participating in the study stated that they do at least one of the following for new teachers under their auspices: model or demonstrate lessons, conduct professional development, listen to their concerns, provide materials and concerns, brainstorm and share ideas, welcome them to the district and their department, and help decide topics for the monthly induction seminar meetings. Nina noted the following ways she supports new teachers at the elementary level:

…We provide one-on-one assistance with them to help them interpret the curriculum documents to plan then and use resources to use the curriculum and that would apply to math and science and we do the same with both. We make an effort to um… work with teachers in the classroom with them, co-teaching with them, um… and if they choose to have us observe and make a critique, we make it very clear to them that we are not there to evaluate, but to support – it’s a peer coaching kind of thing and that is often well received. We of course meet with the teams that they are in to further clarify how to proceed with units and curriculum. We also work a lot with them if they have classroom management issues or how they communicate with parents. We help them with any parent communication they have. We work with the principals in the formal induction process which includes a monthly meeting on an identified topic… it might be testing in the school district… it might be parent communication in the school district, but they are topics that the curriculum support staff and the principals working in the district have identified as important for beginning teachers and inductees and they are gone into in-depth at the monthly meetings.

In terms of meeting individual novice teacher needs, support has to be one-on-one. Group seminars work toward meeting common needs, suggested both Patti and Brad, but individual support in the classroom from a specialist can help to alleviate new teacher needs and struggles.

I individualize how I work with new teachers based upon their needs. I
make sure that they are familiar with the curriculum, the expectations of their teaching, and the resources that are available for their use. I will model lessons for them by request or by need. I will arrange for them to visit classrooms of experienced teachers. I will coordinate and deliver training/professional development programs that will benefit new teachers when they design and deliver instruction. I act as an additional mentor that will listen to the concerns and needs of a novice. Often I am able to just be a sounding board for ideas and a voice that gives encouragement (Brad).

At the middle and high school levels, the curriculum specialist takes the form of the department chair or specialist in a specific subject area. Noting the importance of providing new teachers with material and curriculum guides, Bill commented that,

Part of their role as an administrator was to think beyond the needs of the average teacher. We have been cognizant as we have developed curriculum materials to develop them in a more deep way for the new teachers and we have even um use it as a model. We recently began a research project and we said, “Let’s do it as if it were for a new teacher that came in.” So, it serves as a process for us and as a tool for new teachers.

Working together with building-level administrators, mentor teachers, and division members, specialists are there to help novice teachers when they have questions, when they have specific needs, and when they struggle (as noted above by Judi).

I would say that our administrative team and our coordinator group has done an outstanding job of setting up a culture in our school that is one where you can be open and know that it is ok to mess up. And, so our new teachers most of the time feel that they can be open about the struggles that they are having and ask for other help from other coordinators or department members. You know, they’ll come to a meeting and they’ll say, ‘You know, I know this isn’t working. What would you do? Or, what can you do to help me?’ (Bill).

**Theme 2 – Varied Perceptions and Understandings**

The induction program is a fluid system of support, allowing for variances in support based on each new teacher’s need. Variance occurs within how support is offered and also under the pretense of how the practice of induction is understood by key
personnel in the district. This study noted earlier that no two teachers are alike, that they present varied understandings, come with unique life experiences, and have different needs. This study as well purports that no two mentors, no two administrators, and no two specialists are alike either and the manner in which they deliver support is as different as are their understandings as to what induction is, why the program exists and how needs are identified. These distinct, different, and sometimes unrealistic perceptions regarding induction in the Valley View School District make for an unclear understanding and paint a fuzzy picture in the eyes of the new teacher as to what the induction program is like and how their needs will be met during their initial years of teaching. There is a possibility for confusion to occur based on feedback from novice and mentor teachers, administrators, and specialists, (See Chapters Five, Six, and Seven for details).

*Understanding the Induction Program*

In an attempt to gain an understanding and definition as to what types of support new teachers entering Valley View School District would receive, mentors and administrators discussed their interpretation of what the induction program was and what kinds of support were available to inductees. Guide books are given to all induction participants with the purpose of establishing a common understanding of the induction program and new teacher support, providing directives, a calendar, and ideas for support for all involved. (See Appendix T for further details). Interpretation, however, is individual and can vary on understanding, experience, and knowledge. Interpretation of the induction program varied drastically as a result.

From a simplistic viewpoint, Joanie noted that, “It is a sincere, well-meaning
attempt to help new teachers become acclimated to the teaching profession in general and Valley View School District* in particular”. Rebekkah commented that it is, “A combination of individual, one-on-one assistance, and group sessions for information and support”. And, Rhonda added that, “It is helpful and thorough; provides useful and helpful information.” Ideas regarding district induction program were distinctly different. One building-level administrator suggested that, “It is a combination of district-level, elementary-level, building-level, and individually focused material and sessions” (Dolly), while another stated that, “The program is designed to provide information and support to new teachers” (Leslie). Finally, Molly, the Associate Principal of Curriculum, directly responsible for the induction program for over 30 new teachers at the high school, commented that it is a program meant, “To provide support for a successful entry into employment.” Only two of the aforementioned six descriptions of the induction program included multiple aspects to support.

Comprehensiveness of the program also varied. Those study participants who provided more depth and detail alluded to increased levels of support, but varied on the timing of support and when, how, and where it was to be received.

The induction program is a one-day event that introduces you to the district and the district to you! The morning is spent learning about the district curriculum and some policies. The afternoon is spent with your mentor teacher in the classroom in order to help you get you and your planning underway (Kara).

Celeste commented on that the program provided a high level of support.

Our goal is to help all new teachers be successful for the sake of our students. We have at least 10-12 meetings around pertinent, over-arching issues and individual help through CSTs and mentors.

Additionally, Alison, a middle school mentor teacher, added that the program also
includes an orientation, and described an induction program from the beginning on out.

Official aspects of the program include 1-2 in-service days at the beginning of year and monthly meetings after school with all teachers (and mentors) at the same instructional level. As a new teacher, you and your mentor meet often (usually daily) to discuss the organization of the school, the district, the needs you have. (Alison)

Perhaps the most inclusive understanding was presented by Brad and Nina,

The induction program is more than a series of meetings. It is a process of district-wide meetings, building level meetings, meetings with supervisors, collaboration with mentors and curriculum support. It also can entail teacher training through release time or through IU classes. It is a constant learning experience as the new teacher learns about district-wide procedures to simple management techniques picked up from a colleague. The philosophy of the program is to set the novice teacher on a path of continuous learning as an educator (Brad).

I would describe a program that has several components; district, building, team, curriculum. The district takes care of the employee “nuts and bolts” of belonging to the district (forms, salary, etc.). Under the district there are several opportunities for all elementary inductees to come together to learn about district-wide concerns (progress reports, unit plannings, testing, etc.). The building principal provides more specific information relative to that particular environment. The team the new teacher is assigned to supports that teacher with day-today operational details and through division meetings and unit plannings the thematic curriculum details necessary to conduct instruction. The other important piece is the interaction the new teacher has with the Curriculum Support Teachers who work specifically in their assigned curricular areas to articulate the curriculum and the standards for teachers. They help new teachers understand how to teach the curriculum by planning with them and demonstrating techniques and strategies (Nina)

Goals of Induction

The ultimate goal of induction is to help new teachers and their students succeed.

With the attrition rate rising throughout the United States, it is imperative that induction programs relay their goals to key personnel and members of the staff who serve the needs of new teachers.
The explicitly stated district goals for the induction program are as follows:

1. To foster the development of strategies for instruction and assessment that will enable all students to meet or exceed the student learning outcomes.
2. To support development of the knowledge and the skills needed by beginning teachers to be successful in their initial teaching positions.
3. To integrate beginning teachers into the professional relationships within the school, school district, and community.
4. To provide an opportunity for inductees to reflect on their teaching through a mentor relationship.
5. To encourage new teachers to view themselves as lifelong learners.
6. To present the Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators as the standard for professional and ethical conduct in the teaching profession. (Certificated Employee Induction Handbook, September 2003, See Appendix T).

However, mixed feedback from administrators, specialists, and mentors noted that a common understanding was difficult to ascertain. Reporting 25 different perspectives on the induction program goals for Valley View School District, none of the study participants included all six district goals within their interpretation. Thirteen of Twenty-five administrative and mentor teacher participants noted only one goal and seemed to present a short-sided response or view point. Again, understandings ranged from the very simple to more complex and comprehensive.

Dolly suggested five goals for the induction program: (1) Support new teachers; (2) Provide them with essential information regarding District and Elementary programs and building and individual support; (3) Provide opportunities to visit other classrooms; (4) Provide opportunities to share ideas and concerns; and (5) Act 48 hours. The understanding was multi-faceted. Yet, another building-level principal noted that one goal: “This program should help novice teachers prioritize the many facets of teaching” (Dolly) She continued her response and discussed that, An effective induction program focuses on modeling and encouragement of risk-taking based on staff development
offerings” (Judi). In terms of cohesiveness of understanding, no two administrators perceived the goal of induction similarly. Nor did any two mentors or specialists.

I feel the program’s goals are to help novice teachers feel a part of our district, to help them understand policies, procedures of our district, to make new friendships/relationships, to build teams with existing team members, and of course, to help them feel more comfortable with the curriculum. I think it also is a means of showing new teachers that we are a “team” working together for the “good” of students. We need each other and the support from one another (Kori).

Rebekkah reported that the “Goals are to become familiar with school district and building personnel and policies and procedures and also to become comfortable and effective in the classroom.” Yet, Sean simply stated that the goals was, “To give information about district policies and procedures and curriculum. To answer/brainstorm solutions to concerns/questions” (Sean). And, the goal, according to Alison was to, “Lessen the fear/stress of new teachers; provide professional guidance for appropriate actions, behaviors, and classroom management practices; and provide curricular support and guidance.”

In terms of understanding presented by specialists, again, no two curriculum coordinators, specialists, or department chairs presented similar goals of induction and new teacher support. Bill stated that the goal was, “To get teachers to understand how our district works in terms of policy and procedure.” Another curriculum coordinator noted that the goal of the induction program was to, “Ease the transition for new teachers into the district’s system and culture” (Lola). While Sally simply commented that the goal was, “To help new teachers to the district get through their first year of teaching.” Most comprehensively, Nina, discussed her hopes for the induction program and how she perceived the goals:
I would like a new teacher to feel welcome and competent. I want to create a working environment that allows the teacher to feel free to ask any question and not be made to feel inadequate when they do. I want support that clearly and efficiently communicates the curriculum expectations and how to meet them. I want to assist the new teachers with parent communication and building the classroom community that includes teacher, child, and parent. I want the new teacher to know the resources to tap when special services are needed for a child.

It is important to note that comprehensiveness or inclusiveness of all district goals in each study participant response was not the aim of the questionnaire or study. The idea was to determine whether or not a united front was presented in terms of new teacher support, that all members and key personnel responsible for supporting new teachers understood their role, and finally that a common definition of the program structure could be derived from their feedback. That common definition was difficult to come by and was all mixed up.

Identifying Novice Teacher Needs

We know, based on feedback from study participants that a goal of new teacher induction is to help new teachers succeed. In order to help new teachers succeed, their needs must be identified, strategies must be developed and put into place with the purpose of providing differentiated and meaningful support, all with the hope that the end results in needs being met. How needs are identified is a process by which, again, no two study participants stated similar processes. Two mentor teachers did not have a response, stating that they “Did not know” (Grant and Jill). Two curriculum coordinators commented that, “They weren’t aware of any procedures” (Lola and Bill). Though most administrators were cognizant of district procedures for identifying novice teacher needs, most stated that it was left up to the discretion of curriculum support staff and mentor teachers. Only five administrators noted that there was a district form given to new
faculty members during the first month of the school year. The form is a Needs and Interest Inventory and is used in conjunction with the New Teacher Checklist during evaluations to note teacher progress and goal setting. Patti confirmed that this form is indeed used in the induction program and is one means of identifying novice teacher needs in the district. Joanie stated that she waits until the need arises before attending to the teacher’s need. My wondering is who is responsible for identifying novice teacher needs? The Mentor? The Inductee? The Administrator? The Specialist? According to the induction program guidelines (See Appendix T) and the Director of Induction, administrators, in concert with mentor teachers, inductees and curriculum support staff, informally identify new teacher needs throughout the school year.

In terms of how needs are acknowledged or the process mentors and administrative participants use to identify new teacher needs, Kara stated that the, “curriculum support teachers will visit the new teacher regularly throughout the year to help with curriculum needs. The mentor teacher will touch base daily with the new teacher and meet formally on a weekly basis.” Commenting that the checklist is used to identify new teacher needs, Rebekkah added that she also answers, “Questions during meetings and discussions” and uses information about the inductee to determine new teacher needs. According to Samuel, a middle school mentor teacher,

Frequent dialogue and interaction between the mentor and inductee is the key. Reflective discussion and listening to the needs to identify and address areas of inductee concern and insecurity. In addition, the mentor must anticipate what is “coming” to encourage the inductee to proactively reflect on their beliefs and perspectives.

Agreeing with several study participants that the process of identifying new teacher needs occurs on an individual basis (Brad, Bill, Judi, and Sara), Nina
purported that,

It is totally an individualized process and depends on the new teacher. Some require more support than others and the CSTs just simply assess what the needs of that teacher are and um… usually it is front-loaded more in the beginning of the year and then things move out away a little bit allowing them a bit more autonomy, but it is really… it is up to what that teacher feels his or her needs are or what the CST assesses the needs are or together they come up with a plan that works best for them… Let me just add a little bit more. There is often another component that enters into this and that is, in the evaluation process, the principal will often indicate to the inductee that it would behoove them to be working with the CST and in fact, they put an objective like that into the evaluation plan. It is expected that you will work with a CST and you will have gains. It is a way that the principal can be a part of the process as well. Another thing that the CSTs do is very generously give their phone numbers and their emails out to each new teacher that they work with; so, there are lots of types of communication. It is not just face-to-face communication.

Sara added during her follow-up interview that she also meets with her inductee weekly to discuss their needs or to answer any questions that they have. However, she also stated that there is another component to meeting novice teacher needs on a less formal basis by being available to talk daily with them about their emotional well-being, noting that the first year of teaching is stressful and teachers go through many ups and downs each day. It’s important to acknowledge the life cycle of a new teacher as a means of knowing when you can push them and when they might need more support. (See Chapter 2 for additional information on the life cycle of a new teacher.) Further clarifying when new teacher needs get addressed or identified, Sara added the following: (Int is the Interviewer)

Sara: I think pretty quickly because based on any individual, let alone any individual new teacher, we all have different strengths and weaknesses and certainly in this profession, that is the case… well, maybe not at first because you don’t really even know the novice teacher very well.

Int: It could be that they don’t even know what their needs are yet.
Sara:  Exactly.  I think though it happens pretty quickly once you get those kiddos in the classroom.  You get a feel right away where you might have needs.  Then, hopefully, the idea would be that you would be comfortable enough to bring these things up with your mentor and find a way together to alleviate those weaknesses or concerns.

At the district level, new teacher needs get identified through the Professional Development Committee.  The PDC notes common needs to be addressed by the mentor teachers and the induction program seminars.  The individual and unique needs of new teachers are not addressed by the PDC but rather through a tool that they devised, the needs/interests inventory checklist.  Though Patti commented that the interest/needs inventory is not as useful as it was intended to be, other support features are in place to counteract or add to how new teacher needs are identified and subsequently met.

The needs inventory then is used to help standardize how the monthly support meeting topics are decided.  The idea is to present a common seminar topic and individualize support through differentiation by both mentor teachers and curriculum support staff (Patti).

Again, trying to develop a common viewpoint or understanding as to how new teacher needs are identified is difficult as each study participant presented a different perspective.  It is important to note though that new teacher needs do get identified throughout the year and supportive structures are in place to provide assistance as needs arise.

**Theme 3: Changing Times**

Change is inevitable and is a necessary by-product of time, learning, and hindsight.  The induction program in Valley View School District has gone through and is continuing to undergo a face-lift, so-to-speak, in an effort to maximize the supportive structures that are in place while making sure to address how to meet the individual and
unique needs of its new teachers. This section notes how, when, where, and why change has or will occur in order to better meet the needs of their participants.

*Designed and Emergent Aspects of Induction*

Having direct experience with the design and implementation of the elementary-level induction program, Brad, during the previous year, worked on his principal certification and during his internship and took on the responsibility of the elementary induction program for half of the district’s 10 elementary schools. Working to change and adapt the program to better serve the needs of elementary new teachers, Brad redesigned the induction program and individually worked with new teachers at three elementary schools. At the remaining elementary schools in Valley View School District, other district curriculum support staff were in charge of the induction program and identified novice teacher needs.

Each year the participants evaluate the induction program. Changes are made based upon this input for ensuing years. New teachers are customarily given a needs and interests survey to complete. Topics not planned to be covered can be addressed in appropriate time and manner (Brad).

Six administrators commented that the program is becoming more “institutionalized” or “standardized” (Stacy, Don, Celeste, Judi, Leslie, and Dolly), with all of the building-level principal participants describing the program as moving away from being site-based and moving toward a collective endeavor. Interestingly, one curriculum coordinator discussed the opposite. She believed that it was becoming more site-based, stating that,

The principals seem to be playing a larger role. The unit planning structure is well defined and helps the teacher understand how the team moves through an instructional unit. The CSTs have continued to refine strategies that work best for communicating curriculum issues to new
Samuel believes that, “It no longer takes direction from the expressed needs of the inductee but rather delivers what content it deems important. That is why the inductee/mentor relationship is irreplaceable.” The idea that the district induction program no longer is structured so that it takes into account individual needs, but rather is designed for the common needs of novice teachers, takes out the notion that new teachers present varied needs, experiences, and understandings, leaving the crux of individualization, customization, and differentiation up to the discretion of each mentor teacher and curriculum support staff member. As noted earlier in Chapter Five, the new teacher case study presented a varied perspective and it was markedly dependent on who their mentor was, what types of support were offered to them and how that support was received.

Discussing the needs assessment piece to the induction program, Patti commented that,

There is actually in the induction plan and this is one of the structures that may have outlived its usefulness, so you’ll see a change… There was a needs assessment that we would ask our inductees to complete by the end of their first month and I did that routinely, but they were more generic and so with the needs assessment, it was also talking and working with mentors and observation… What we were able to do with those informal, unannounced observations, was to quickly identify patterns and topic areas that could be pulled together for induction.

Patti also reported the following changes to the overall structure of the induction program,

What we did the first year that I was asked to take the leadership reigns… we spent the first year looking at what is quality staff development and the product of that first year was really an executive summary of state of the art research on staff development. I did it for a couple of reasons and the Superintendent and I worked closely on the PDC. We undertook it for two reasons… (1) if we were going to move away from potpourri
workshops that people liked, we needed to educate our committee and (2) the product was not only to in-service our committee but we also did some in-servicing with our administrative staff and curriculum staff – coordinators as well… Out of that came a need to more fully support novice teachers and to make some changes in our induction process. This has led to a group which is creating a second day with technology skills and are making some changes to the opening sessions for our orientation day. Changes include a mentoring book to fully support our mentors, so that they are able to fully support our inductees. Also, there were changes in the professional skills checklist… So all came out of that. The other piece that has come out clearly, and the professional development school is the best example of that, is the need to move away from event-oriented professional development to something that is much more organic in honoring of daily practice – inquiry based.

Further changes to the overarching induction program structure, as noted by Patti, include increasing the induction time period from one to three years, with the aim of years two and three focusing more on individual professional development.

The elementary program has seen many changes in the past year as Brad began to alter the structure of the program. Beginning with a small cohort of new teachers at three elementary schools, he piloted a new induction program. His version of an induction program allowed new teachers more opportunity to discuss matters of importance to them during each meeting, something that new teachers discussed during their interviews as being of great importance to them. Though the elementary induction program also moved toward a standardized model, new teachers had the opportunity to customize each meeting based on their experiences. During his interview, Brad expanded on how changes have occurred. (INT stands for Interviewer.)

INT: What are the differences between this year and next year?

Brad: Actually quite a bit. There are basic cosmetic changes… like the time.

INT: Like pacing and when you do things?
Brad: Pacing, we’re front-loading. I say we, but I think my role is going to be much less as I am not someone with that responsibility. It will be much more front-loaded rather than stretching things throughout the year.

INT: Front-loaded with what… policy and procedure… what types of information?

Brad: Nah… Many of the same kinds of information that was related to curriculum.

INT: Like going over the LAC, special ed, learning support and different things like that?

Brad: Right… different kinds of policies, procedures, let’s say you have an issue, a concern, what do you do in terms of trying to help that child with counseling or the IST process… all of those different kinds of things. Curriculum… there’s a session on curriculum. There is a session dealing with assessment, library, IMC services… that differs by building of course, but a lot of things are the same. There are services that the IMC that people really don’t know about. That was a session that was added. Things that were changed… technology session this past year dealt with a lot of the basic things… new teachers today know how to do that. The session is now going to be… here are the basic applications available to you… here are the kind of things that you can use. Can I get digital and video cameras… can I get um, jump drives, zip drives… how do I put together my web page?

In terms of planning how the program was designed, changes are made each year based on inductee feedback. Brad noted that he provided his inductees with a program evaluation and asked new teachers to detail what changes they would like to see in the program. Though the changes would not directly benefit them, they would benefit incoming new teachers, provided them with a better, more effective induction and support program.

… We want to make sure that sessions have time for these people to come together to ask questions. Sometimes they relate to the topic and sometimes they don’t. I got feedback from my first year that they liked being able to talk and get together with people who were in the same situation as they were and see value in that. Or, that they got to see other
classrooms… one of the advantages is that we meet in different buildings so they get to see different classrooms throughout the year. They get to meet different principals and other people who may or may not have a direct impact on their teaching career. Like I said, sessions were moved around. I know that the difficulty in that when you set it up, our first priority was to look at the school calendar and plug in sessions that matched that time of year. For instance, you have parent conference in mid to late October. Well, you want to have a session not that week, but several weeks before, so you plug that session in. You step yourself back and plug in those sessions that need time management” (Brad).

Suggesting the same collective or standardized format to induction as discussed previously, Brad also reported that,

Changes also came in the form of bringing the induction program to all new elementary teachers collectively instead of at each building site. Previously, each building principal was responsible for each school’s new teachers and what new teachers received in terms of support varied greatly from school to school. Currently, all new teachers within the district at the elementary level experience the same induction program. Differentiation again occurs with the support of mentor and curriculum support teachers, rather than from the scope and sequence of the induction seminars.

When asked where he saw the induction program in five years, Brad mentioned the following, “I think it would be great if we had more time if new teachers could come together informally to just talk amongst themselves… I think that is something that we are going to try to do… to get their ideas.” The changes that have taken place thus far within the elementary level Valley View School District are as follows: (1) New teachers meet as a whole group for monthly induction seminars, rather than individually as one school site; (2) they have the opportunity to visit and observe other classrooms and schools; (3) feedback from the end of year program evaluations are used to guide changes in program structure for following year; and (4) the program is more front-loaded with policy and procedure information, technical support, and curriculum guidance. As well, elementary new teachers, if they participated in the district pre-service professional
development school, may refrain from certain induction seminars due to having received similar support during their internship in the district. At the middle and high school levels, the program has adapted to the needs of new teachers due to the work of the Professional Development Committee and feedback from new teachers, mentors, and administrators in the following ways: a new checklist or needs assessment form is being developed as a means of identifying new teacher needs, the timing of seminars has been revised and is more front-loaded with the same policy and procedure and technical support, as did the elementary level induction program, and curriculum guidance. As well, the PDC, and school district as a whole, now uses Charlotte Danielson’s Framework, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* (1996) to guide how professional development is structured. As a whole, the program is more structured and standardized with new teachers across the district receiving a more comprehensive induction experience with support from seminar meetings, mentor teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators.
Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS and IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW TEACHER INDUCTION

The Blending of Mentoring, Induction Customization, and Curriculum Support in order to Meet Individual Novice Teacher Needs.

_They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself._
- And Warhol

Introduction

In this study, I explore the concept of induction, specifically how one well-respected school district attempts to meet the need of their novice teachers. Interviews were conducted and questionnaires were completed among 37 participants, including 12 beginning teachers, 12 mentor teachers, 12 site-level administrators and curriculum specialists, and the Director of Induction. The first section of this chapter begins with a summary of the study. Next, the conclusions for new teacher induction are presented based on the research and findings. The final section of this chapter discusses implications and issues for future research and further wonderings.

Summary

The overarching research question in this study was, “How are the individual needs of novice teachers met in a well-respected novice teacher induction program?” The goal for this research was to uncover the ways in which one well-respected school district supported their beginning teachers as they entered their chosen careers. The following sub-questions served as the backbone to this study.

1. How do novice teachers experience induction?

2. What role, if any, do individual novice teacher needs and differences
play in the induction process?

3. What role, if any, does differentiation to meet individual novice teacher needs play in the induction experience from the perspective of novice teachers and other stakeholders, e.g., central office, administrators, and veteran teachers?

   a. Does differentiation occur within induction strategically or informally?

4. What role, if any, does mentoring have on individual novice teacher learning?

The reality for new teachers in this study is that they do experience induction differently. New teacher perspectives were based on their experiences with support from their mentor teacher, administrator and curriculum specialist, individual novice teacher needs, and the overall induction program and seminars. Novice teachers reported having 25 varied needs throughout their initial years of teaching and the extent to which needs were experienced depended greatly on the support they received. Some of their needs included curriculum/material assistance, emotional guidance, answers to district policies and procedures, and parental or colleague support. Many new teachers noted that they would have liked additional support from their mentor teachers. Mentor teacher guidance tended to differ from new teacher to new teacher based on each mentor’s style, time constraints, attitudes/understandings, and abilities, rather than being driven by novice teacher need. Some new teachers, like Jack, Linda, and Paula commented little on their unmet needs, stating that their experience with induction was positive; whereas in contrast, other new teachers presented greater need and noted a more negative feeling
because they did not feel emotionally, socially, or academically supported by the induction program or their mentor teachers (Brandi and Monica). Most new teacher experiences lay somewhere in between the overall optimistic sentiments expressed by Jack, Linda, and Paula and the poor feelings expressed by Brandi and Monica (See Chapter Five for a complete analysis).

Support was important in three distinct areas: academic, emotional, and physical. Most new teachers reported having needs in the academic arena, with questions regarding the curriculum, material management or allocation, planning, specific situations, and students. All 12 new teacher study participants commented that they experienced academic needs. On the other hand, very few study participants noted having an emotional need. Not all novices experience induction, their initial year of teaching, or how needs are presented in the same manner. From the research collected in this study, it is possible to infer that all or most novices require support in their content area, curricularly and academically. However it is also possible to infer that only certain novices needed emotional support from their mentors or other support systems and, thus, it is important to understand individual as well as collective needs. Emotional needs were seen typically through the need for support, stress management, and the emotional well-being of the new teacher. Kori, a mentor teacher in the study, noted that the life-cycle of a new teacher must be taken into consideration when supporting inductees. Monica strongly noted the need for emotional support in all domains, and also referred to a social need because she was new to the community as well. Tasha found support from her mentor and administrator when dealing with a difficult situation involving a student and a parent. As well, two new teachers found emotional support from their mentors and
found that their relationship was reciprocal and they supported each other because they worked together collaboratively (Linda and Hilary). Finally, the physical needs of new teachers presented a need for support. Linda required assistance from administration because she had an extremely large class and did not have an assistant in her primary classroom to provide help. It took half of the year before another person entered her classroom daily to provide physical support. Lily asked to attend a conference, as did Monica. Only one of the two teachers was provided funding to attend, even though conference attendance was approved by Patti, the Director of Induction. Furthermore, Jack, Paula, Brandi, Jackie, and Monica said that they had received a great deal of curriculum materials, but needed support in trying to sift through it so they could use it in their instruction and lesson planning.

Because support can and does vary based on which support structures provide the most or meaningful guidance, new teachers experience induction differently. Some new teachers in this study, like Cindy, Jack, Linda, Karly, Tasha, and Hilary were able to develop a strong, positive, and nurturing relationship with their mentor teachers. Hilary described her mentor as a friend, one who values her opinion and discussed how learning was reciprocal. Tasha discussed a camaraderie and collegial environment with her team and mentor that helped her to develop skill and confidence. Induction and support became significantly more constructive and rewarding for those teachers who had positive experiences with the mentors, team members, and support systems than those new teachers who were unable to connect or build a rapport with their mentors or team members (George, Paula Brandi, Lily and Monica.) George discussed having a better connection with his World Languages department members than with his mentor teacher.
He was able to get the needed support through various people within his division. Yet, Brandi wondered why she was assigned to her mentor. Her mentor was retiring at the end of the year and did not provide her with material or curriculum guidance, though she did receive emotional support. And, Lily found that she was able to build a stronger and more meaningful relationship with a teacher with whom she shared a classroom than with her mentor teacher. She created a situation that enabled her to gain advice and assistance from someone she trusted and with whom she related. Did they each receive the support they needed? For the most part, yes, though support did vary for each new teacher.

Sometimes the support came from the formal structures and processes (e.g. mentoring) that are included as part of the induction experience. In other cases, support was provided by individuals who did not have a formal role in the induction process. It seems that novices found support from those with whom they were able to establish the most positive relationships. Time to meet was also detrimental to establishing a rapport with supportive team members and mentors. One teacher (Jackie) commented that she was able to build a relationship with her mentor, but it was not as meaningful as they had hoped because they worked on opposite schedules. Her mentor preferred to come in early in the morning and she preferred to stay late into the afternoon and evening to work, making it difficult to find a common meeting time. As well, Cindy noted that she worked better with one mentor than the other. She received two mentor teachers because she taught both seventh and eighth grade. She was able to connect with one mentor more than because time and availability were issues. In contrast, George reported that he asked another teacher to switch hall duty times with him so he could have a common meeting time during the day with his mentor. He found a solution to his need for timely support.
As noted earlier in this chapter, several questions framed this study. The findings and implications of this research and data will be presented in the next section. In summation, this study found that novice teachers experience induction differently. Most new teachers in this study sought and received support from their mentor teacher based upon their own unique needs. Most new teachers as well were able to develop a positive relationship with either a mentor teacher or another teacher within their school who was able to provide guidance, camaraderie, and technical assistance throughout their initial years of teaching. Though there is a formal checklist that can be used to identify novice teacher needs, most new teachers commented that they were not given a checklist and rather presented their needs verbally in the forms of dialogue and questions to their mentor teacher or other support systems. The role individual needs took within this induction program is mixed. The overall induction program is structured such that the common needs are met through formal induction meetings; whereas the individual needs of novice teachers are met through support received from either their mentor teacher, curriculum specialist, site-level administrator, or other support systems at the school site (e.g., veteran teachers, other new teachers, instructional support teachers, paraprofessionals, etc.,) or a combination of support mechanisms. In the same informal setting, differentiated support takes shape and molds or yields to each novice teacher’s need.

Conclusions

Four areas or conclusions will be discussed in this section. The first conclusion highlights the natural instinct of survival that many new teachers experience during their initial years of teaching. The next conclusion presented stems from the idea of agency or
novice teachers taking control of their induction program as a means of ensuring their success. The third conclusion details the need for consistency among how support was offered within the induction program and support structures. Finally, the idea of time and timing of support, along with the idea that support came from a number of sources will be discussed.

Surviving Induction and the First Year of Teaching

According to Ellen Moir (1990) of the New Teacher Center at Santa Cruz, Survival is a natural time period in the life of a beginning teacher. Moir details the attitudes novices take throughout their initial year of teaching in the Phases of First-Year Teaching Model (See Appendix A). The second phase, Survival, is a common emotional thread that many new teachers feel as they struggle with their instructional practice, beliefs, and classroom management. Burke, Fessler, and Christensen (1984) also discussed the path novices encounter in their Model of Teacher Career Cycle (See Appendix B) and suggest that teachers enter and exit the eight-stage cycle at any point in their career. The eight-stage cycle represents a multi-step, multi-dimensional emotional time period in which teachers tend to begin at the pre-service stage and logically move toward induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, stable and stagnant, career wind-down, and career exit at a normal pace. However, there is nothing normal about this process, as the authors noted that it can be fast-paced, slowed down, or transient, whereby each teacher’s career cycle is indicative of their own path and might not seem normal due to personal or organizational issues, obstacles, or concerns.

Novice teachers, who enter the Survival stage in this respect, enter and sometimes fail to exit, at a normal rate. The idea of survival or needing to survive an experience
evokes images of fear, turmoil, uncertainty, frustration, and anxiety. Monica, a new
teacher at the middle school level described the induction experience as “traumatic” and
did not want to remember the events during her first year because they were not positive
(Interview, 2005). Her feelings of discomfort and angst were overwhelming for her as
she struggled to find support or positivity through her mentor. When discussing her
experience with her mentor, Monica stated that,

… It just was an uncomfortable thing. I wanted more of a one-on-one and
be able to talk about my experiences and have a relationship and it was
just a strange dynamic and grew away from that. I tried to find other
people to help me. I tried to find other people outside of that to help me
with ideas and what to don (Interview, 2005).

Moreover, feelings of insecurity and uncertainty began to loom over Monica’s psyche as
she continued to battle between her emotional and instructional needs.

I remembered trying to ask her for help in the emotional sense, like I
didn’t feel I was doing a good job and had invited her to even come into
my classroom to see if there was anything that she could tell me that I was
doing good or not doing to see if she could help me because I didn’t know
if I was really that bad or if it was just this one group that at the end of the
day I really couldn’t get a handle on. She did come in once, but I think we
miscommunicated what to observe because I really wanted her to come in
to observe what I was doing and give me feedback about what she saw and
she jumped in and started to help with the teaching and I felt even worse,
like “Oh, she must be jumping in because I don’t even know what I am
doing or I’m terrible, or you know…” So, that made me a little off, like I
felt worse than I did in the beginning (Monica, 2005).

Similarly, Brandi, a high school teacher, noted that she did not know why she was
placed with her mentor as she did not receive the support she needed during her first year
of teaching (Interview. 2005). Demands on time became a source of stress in terms of
trying to figure out the curriculum. Mentors in Valley View School District were
charged with supporting novices as they learned to use the approved curriculum and
instructional materials. Mentor teachers, department chairs, and curriculum specialists,
according to Patti should provide insight, guidance, and material support to novices in their charge. Brandi, a first-year high school teacher questioned what her mentor provided as compared to what could have offered.

I didn’t realize that she was there to give me curriculum packets, or tell me what I was supposed to be doing day-to-day that other people were getting day 1, day 2, day 3, day 4… here’s my plans. Um… so I didn’t get that. I made up everything from scratch and didn’t even know to ask and I thought everybody was in their own corner (Brandi, 2005).

Survival, in this instance, came under the auspices of having to find materials or searching for understanding as to how to utilize the curriculum effectively for instructional and planning purposes. Brandi was not alone in this aspect of Survival, as novices like, Cindy, George, Paula, Karly, Jack, Jackie, Monica, and Hilary (Individual Interviews, 2005) all sought support as they struggled with needing additional materials, understanding the scope and sequence of the curriculum, or how to use what materials they were given in their classrooms. Some of these new teachers found support within their relationship with their mentor, while others found guidance from curriculum specialists, department chairs, administrators, team members, or other teachers. It is important to note however that not all new teaches received positive support, propelling feelings of insecurity and exacerbating stress.

You know, what I needed was someone to listen and not criticize me. I wanted to be able to say, “This is what’s going on or this is not going right” without somebody, like agreeing with that or picking it apart. I needed somebody to say, “That’s normal,” but that wasn’t what I heard when I went to my mentor or to the meetings because to me, it looked like everyone else was doing great and maybe it wasn’t that way, but I didn’t know that. That wasn’t really how we talked. So, I really struggled in that, “Maybe they made a mistake in hiring me and that maybe I was terrible” (Monica, 2005).
Karly also discussed the need for support and felt discouraged because she did not receive the assistance she needed as she learned how to implement a new math program.

One thing that has been kind of challenging this year is that they wanted me to pilot the Math Program because my mentor is, but I am not taking the class for it, so I am kind of on my own with it… it’s a huge program and that has been a sticky place for me this year. It was kind of like, we’re telling you to do this program this year, but we’re not going to support you on it (Interview, 2005).

Paula, an elementary teacher who student taught in the district, noted that, “At first, curriculum wise, I felt very overloaded. They didn’t give me anything really over the summer. I took the initiative and got the units over the summer to look it over” (Interview, 2005). Though Paula took onus over her need for material management, the idea that the curriculum can be overwhelming and can place a teacher in a mode of Survival is integral to understanding how to meet the needs of beginning teachers.

Earlier in this section, Monica alluded to the need for feedback as a means of building personal understanding. Feedback enables one to know where they are successful and where improvement lies within their professional practice. It can help a novice teacher move out of the mode of survival and into one that is positive and beneficial for both the individual beginning teacher and his or her students.

I think one of the most important needs to have feedback that what you’re doing is a good thing in the classroom because it is very easy when you’re younger and there is a parent that comes in and they are critical of you and there is constant pressure from every angle… you kind of want someone to come in and say, “I really like what you are doing here.” And, I don’t know that that happens much… you’re taught to go on to the next thing and they come in and get these snapshots, but they don’t get the big picture of what’s going on in your classroom. I think that is the most frustrating part… not that I don’t want credit, but that I did it right (Karly, 2005).
Without feedback, be it constructive or well-meaning, novice teachers increased stress levels and maintained their place in the *Survival* phase in the *Model of First-Year Teaching*.

Eventually, survival gives way to rejuvenation and anticipation for the coming year, according to Moir (1990). Even though many of the novices in this study experienced stress at one point or another and entered or remained in the mode of Survival for much of their initial year of teaching, positive feelings do come about as experience grows and support is sought from those who shared common needs, beliefs, and interests. “… All year-long I felt so out of place, not measuring up to where everyone else is. But, I don’t feel that way at all this year now that I have survived it once” (Monica, 2005).

*Agency and Taking On Responsibility*

The idea of agency, or taking responsibility for your own need for support, was critical to novice teachers’ needs being met and the right support being offered to each new teacher in the Valley View School District. Taking responsibility for one’s needs is an integral piece to making sure that the right type of support is offered at the right time. What that particular support is and when it should be offered is up to each individual novice teacher as each one presents varied needs and understandings. As discussed in Chapter Three, Huling-Austin (1989) and Feiman-Nemser (May 2003) suggest that flexibility in an induction program is necessary to meet the needs of all participants. The idea of flexibility begins with the notion of agency among inductees as they detail what types of support are needed to meet their specific needs.

Most novices in this study grasped the idea of agency, at one point or another
during their induction time period, and took control over their needs and sought specific support from mentors, curriculum specialists, administrators, department chairs, team members, and/or other teachers. Beginning teachers like Karly, Paula, Hilary, Monica, George, Linda, Lily, and Jackie turned to other teachers at their school site, some within their department, some from their grade level, and others in nearby classrooms for support as their needs surpassed the support offered from the overall induction program. Agency placed the novice teacher in the proverbial driver’s seat as they guided meaningful support in the right direction to meet their specific needs. Lily spoke with her administrator and department chair requesting additional support for her special needs students as she learned how to accommodate their learning needs in her classroom (Interview, 2005). Linda noted that one way that she was able to find success in her classroom was because she approached the Title I teacher and school psychologist in order to gain further support for her students’ unique needs (Interview, 2005). During Paula’s interview, she discussed grading issues and noted that she had to approach various teachers at her school in order to gain an understanding of how they scored students’ writing (2005). Monica, Karly, Paula, Jackie and George each sought support from other teachers in their department and grade level because their mentor was not readily available, forcing the act of agency to come about as a means of finding meaningful support. George asked another teacher to switch duty times with him so that he could have a common meeting time with another teacher whom he valued as a supportive structure (Interview, 2005) and Monica found a teacher who was also having a difficult time in her classroom with which to confide in and offer her own support to as a means of feeling value and worth, building confidence, and finding needed support.
(Interview, 2005). Brandi, Jackie, Cindy, George, and Jack spent a great deal of time each creating and developing curriculum for their classroom as little curriculum, instructional materials, and curricular support was provided for their instruction (Individual Interviews, 2005). Tasha and Hilary each discussed how they sought out their team members because they were viewed as of greater value in terms of support to meet their specific needs rather than induction or their mentor. Agency came about because the right equation or optimal mix of emotional, physical, and curriculum support was not available.

However, it is important to add that there is no perfect mix or equation that can be accessed or derived from any or all of the variables in an induction program to meet the needs of all novice teachers. Every new teacher presents varied needs and induction programs thereby have a difficult goal to meet each beginning teacher’s needs within its charge. It is also imperative to understand that the goal of meeting each inductee’s individual needs is quite difficult to achieve; it is achievable and probable if inductees are encouraged to take responsibility for getting their needs met and if flexibility in providing support is part of the program structure.

Agency can be equated to being assertive and taking responsibility for one’s own learning and performance. When novice teachers in this study took responsibility, thereby taking on the role of agent, things changed for the better and in most cases, they improved. When they were hesitant or took a passive role in their learning, the district induction program, regardless of how well-designed the program was, remained unable to meet their specific needs. It is when the novice teachers took responsibility and became an agent for their own learning and performance, did they find the necessary support and
Experienced teachers can help novices have a successful first year of teaching. They can also influence what novices learn from the experience. Little (1990) distinguishes between emotional support that makes novices feel comfortable and professional support that fosters a principled understanding of teaching. She argues that the promise of mentoring lies not in easing novices' entry into teaching but in helping them confront difficult problems of practice and use their teaching as a site for learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

**Consistency Across Supportive Structures**

Consistent support means that the context of support offered is common among new teachers, that every new teacher receive similar supportive structures in a manner that is dependent upon their particular need, situation and/or style. It means that the induction program has been designed so that support is consistently available to all inductees. However, the type of support, the timing of support and the sources of support differed according to the expressed needs of each inductee. In other words, the district should attempt to create a supportive induction culture in which individual inductees can find ways to get their needs met. Consistent support can come in the form of a team approach, where all support mechanisms work together for the betterment of the novice teacher and learner. Ingersoll (Summer 2002) noted that a team approach was best suited for induction. New teachers should know that no matter who their mentor or administrator is, or what teachers work within their department or are on their team, or what specialist was chosen to work closely with them during induction, they will receive quality support. Moreover, consistent support can also pertain to the fact that support was offered throughout the entire induction process. It is important to note that the source and type of support should not waver, but be consistent throughout an induction program. In the case of Valley View School District, the sources and types of support
differed among participants, as did the need to take responsibility for one’s own learning.

Most curriculum support staff and site-level administrators did state that they have worked with new teachers in at least one of the following capacities:

- Familiarize them with curriculum and content
- Model lessons
- Arrange for additional training or classroom observations
- Provide release time
- Act as an additional mentor
- Meet with them
- Listen
- Support parent and colleague communications
- Make suggestions/solve problems
- Provide support as needed
- Provide materials, resources, units of instruction, curriculum, etc.
- Give feedback
- Evaluate their instruction

(Administrator Participant Questionnaires, April-June 2005)

Most mentor teachers responded that they have worked with new teachers in at least one of the following capacities:

- Listen to new teachers
- Provide alternative viewpoints or ideas
- Share ideas, materials, and resources
- Offer solutions
- Handle disgruntled students, parents, and colleagues
- Help with scheduling and planning
- Help complete forms and report cards
- Answer questions
- Provide time to meet

(Mentor Teacher Participant Questionnaires, April-June 2005)

Within this study no two administrators, curriculum support staff members, or mentor teachers responded that they worked with new teachers in the same manner or presented similar understandings regarding novice teacher support or identified beginning teacher needs in a similar fashion. This can be interpreted as a bad or a good thing. Having a variety of different people who provide different types of support can be an
indicator that the community as a whole is responsible for mentoring. As was stated earlier in this study, it takes a village to mentor a new teacher- that is the advantage of working within a community of practice or a learning community. However, with this much fluctuation in responses, consistency became an issue even though it was clear that novice teachers did receive support, for the most part. Providing support that is meaningful, needed, and consistent for all novice teachers can only benefit their learning and help build a positive induction experience for each new teacher. Support that can be found consistently across an induction program is needed, but should be flexible and offered in a variety of ways so as to meet individual novice teacher needs.

Finding where teachers feel success can depend on the flexibility of an induction program and its support mechanisms. As discussed earlier, Huling-Austin (1989) and Feiman-Nemser (May 2003) noted that flexibility is necessary in induction programs in order to meet the vast needs of new teachers: flexibility in how support is provided, in how needs are addressed, and in which personnel are best suited to provide meaningful support.

Ingersoll (Summer 2002) suggested that a comprehensive induction program will best meet the needs of new teachers because it provides multiple levels of support, basing assistance of the common and unique needs of novice teachers. Comprehensive induction in this sense provides a network of support systems for novices that reach beyond the supportive efforts of a mentor teacher. Patti, the Director of the Induction Program noted during her interview that the goal for the induction program was to move toward a comprehensive induction program with total of three years of support offered to new teachers. She further commented that the first year of the induction program would
provide mentoring, curriculum support, and induction program seminar meetings. The
subsequent years of induction would flexibly focus on the individual novice teacher
professional development and teacher inquiry. Veenman (1984) and Gordon and Maxey
(2000) as well reported that new teachers have distinct and common needs. Though their
respective studies focused more on the common needs of new teachers, it serves to note
that novice teachers experience certain aspects of induction similarly; while, on the other
hand, experience other aspects of induction differently, making flexible induction or
supportive structure necessary to meeting individual novice teacher needs. With that
said, new teachers in this study described 25 different needs that were reported based on
frequency level. Flexibility within an induction program is necessary as not all inductees
experienced all 25 needs or experienced any need for that matter in the exact manner.
Providing differentiated, consistent, and flexible support can help novice teachers reach
success.

Support Systems for the Novice Teacher

No one ever said that supporting novice teachers was an easy task and designing
an induction program that focuses on meeting both individual and common needs of
beginning teachers is difficult, but not impossible or improbable. Novice teachers are all
different; and has been stated throughout this study. They have different understandings,
different preparation paths, different backgrounds and different experiences making
finding one induction program that is well suited for all inductees very difficult.

As a means of counteracting that issue, the first support structure Valley View
School District put in place uses an Induction Program Interest Assessment Form to
guide or direct novice teacher professional development, also referred to as a Needs and
Interest Inventory or Checklist. “New teachers are customarily given a need and interests survey to complete. Topics not planned to be covered can be addressed in an appropriate time and manner” (Celeste). The topics, as discussed by Celeste, address the common needs of new teachers through monthly or bi-weekly seminars, the second level of support. Topics not addressed within the seminars, as noted above, are contextualized as individual needs and are met through dialogue and interaction with mentor teachers, site-level administrators, and curriculum specialists, or the third level of support through induction. Timing of support was critical to meeting specific needs. All 12 new teachers in this study stated that there were specific seminars and support structures needed at earlier times than were offered (Individual Interviews, 2005). Seminars, for example, presented on topics such as English Language Learners and Special Needs Students were of prime interest to inductees like Lily, Linda, Cindy, Jack, Brandi, and Hilary. Because these topics were discussed late in the year, these inductees had to take responsibility to find answers on their own. Time devoted to identifying each beginning teacher’s needs is necessary in order to acknowledge where growth can occur and where questions and concerns abound. The idea of dedicating time to identifying important issues to novices is evidenced by their agency within seeking meaningful support throughout their induction. Induction programs that attempt to meet only one level of teacher needs (more than likely, the common need is the first level met through group seminars) ends up with a hit or miss situation whereby the support offered may or may not be what the novice needs. Without noting or delineating what each new teacher needs to be successful, an induction program cannot purport to meet the collective and individual needs of its new hires. In terms of the induction checklist Valley View School District uses to identify
new teacher needs, it is important to note that Patti and the Professional Development Committee are re-evaluating the effectiveness of the needs assessment tool as most mentor teachers, administrators, and novices did not use or understand the needs assessment inventory, noting that they chose to identify novice teacher needs through informal discussions or observations. One possible solution to the issue of timing of support would be to offer seminars at various and multiple times throughout the school year and induction time period or video-tape seminars so support could be offered in a self-selecting basis. The idea of time and timing of support will also be detailed later in this chapter as an implication for new teacher induction.

As stated earlier in this chapter, new teachers experienced induction differently. Differentiated support, in all domains, eased stress and increased confidence levels for new teachers, helping to bridge content knowledge and instructional methodology and alleviate the discord between theory and practice or pre-service and in-service teacher. Though differentiated support can seem to be contradictory to the need for consistent support, the notion of differentiated support mandates novices receive meaningful support that speaks to their needs. It does not mean that support not be consistent or consistently offered or available to all new teachers, but that when support is provided, it be based on the needs of the novice. The idea of support in Valley View School District was multi-faceted with some supportive structures focusing simply on the common needs of new teachers (e.g., the induction program seminars and meetings), while other support mechanisms work in concert to guide and assist new teachers on an individualized basis (e.g., mentor teacher support, curriculum specialists, needs/interest inventory, and goal setting).
The common needs new teachers in this study faced ranged from curriculum and situational questions to the need for differentiated support or praise and feedback, as detailed in Chapter Five, Table Three: Variances Among Novice Teacher Needs and Concerns. The higher the frequency level, the more common the need. Most new teachers purported that induction, mentoring in particular, was very beneficial for their learning. Having time to meet with their mentor or curriculum specialist was critical to their success. They enjoyed the mentoring process and found that they were able to utilize their advice and guidance. Curriculum guidance and planning support was most commonly noted as a new teacher need. It is also probable to infer that those needs with lower frequency levels denoted areas where differentiation could or did occur or where novice teachers did not present great need collectively. For instance, one teacher presented a need for support on testing, as in the case of Lily. Her mentor and one team member worked together to provide her with meaningful and customized support. An induction seminar on testing was not needed because the majority of new teachers in this study were able to get needed support from other support structures. Sixteen out of 25, or roughly two-thirds of needs expressed in this study, had a frequency of five or less. These were areas of need where differentiation could and should have occurred in order to meet individual novice teacher needs. Most of these less frequent issues were not discussed or presented at monthly induction meetings. As well, because few inductees reported these specific needs, individualized assistance in each matter would help to alleviate the need and provide necessary guidance to each teacher. This of course does not preclude a new teacher from receiving customized support even if the topic at hand was discussed at an induction seminar. It simply means that topics that pertain to the
mass should be discussed during general induction seminar meetings within a timely manner. Those topics that relate to one person or even a few novices provide possible topics that mentor teachers, specialists, and administrators could use as vehicles for discussion or reflection with each new teacher individually.

In referencing Veenman’s (1984) categories of novice teacher challenges, Roehrig, Pressley, and Talotta (2002) developed five distinct categories or areas defining how and where novice teachers described dilemmas during their first year of teaching. The authors attempted to link Veenman’s categories together through commonalities or similar characteristics. In doing so, the authors also noted that an assumption become apparent: that new teachers perceive or incur challenges or dilemmas at varying levels; thus providing further evidence that differentiation within new teacher induction supports novice teacher professional development. As well, challenges faced within Veenman’s (1984) study could be grouped such that support could be provided under specific topic areas: Self, Students, Professional, Other Adults in Schools, and Outside of the School, based on Roehrig, Pressley, and Talotta’s 2002 work on Five Sources of Beginning Teaching Challenges (p. 19).

**Implications for New Teacher Induction**

The implications for new teacher induction and support are based on the data presented from this study. Three implications will be discussed in depth. The first finding and implication for novice teacher professional development details the need for differentiation and personalized support and also examines how differentiated support can be initiated within an induction program. The next implication for new teacher induction programs revolves around the premise of meeting individual novice teacher
needs through comprehensive induction. The final implication for novice teacher professional development and new teacher induction stems from the need for new teachers to feel a part of a community of learners or a community of practice.

*The Need for Differentiation and Personalized Support*

Furthering the need for differentiation in induction, as previously detailed, the frequency of needs varied greatly. Veenman (1984) ranked needs based on frequency of response and occurrence. *Classroom Discipline* (ranked 1), based on his *Summary of the Results, Table II*, had a frequency of 77, while the number 12 need, *effective use of different teaching methods* had a frequency of 20 and the number 24 need, *large class size* had a frequency level of eight. In comparison, Valley View teachers ranked Curriculum Questions as the number one need, with a frequency level of 12 or 100%, while Classroom Discipline had a frequency of two or 17%.

Based on a comparison of Veenman’s (1984) study and this study, the occurrence of any particular need varies greatly. Why the variance? It is possible to surmise that variances lay within the fact that elementary, middle, and high school teachers face different challenges based on the level and content area they teach. Teachers perceive problems at different rates. Some problems are not factors, while others not even mentioned on Veenman’s study are apparent. Variances can also be attributed to individual school district expectations, hiring practices, personnel, support, curriculum, and individual need. Differentiation in induction can help to meet individual novice teacher need.

Variation is the key to differentiation in Valley View School District. Mentor teachers, in conjunction with support from site-level administrators, curriculum support
staff, and team members are integral to differentiating new teacher induction. Mentor teachers, team members and curriculum specialists have direct access to novices and are afforded many opportunities, some daily, while others are weekly to provide individualized assistance to the beginning teacher assigned to them. Nineteen out of 25 mentor teacher and administrative participants presented a clear understanding of how to assist and support novice teachers on an individual basis. For example, Samuel, a middle school mentor teacher, stated that he provides the following, (1) a “Breakdown of a lot of information into smaller packets – what you can take with you; (2) Puts a face to the district and slow introduction to hundreds of staff; (3) Having daily/weekly contact with a mentor (someone to turn to); and (4) The Handbook – in written form – is used as a reference for information” (May, 2005). Furthering the understanding of how to help novices succeed, Jill, an elementary school mentor stated the she believes,

“Frequent dialogue and interaction between the mentor and inductee is the key. Reflective discussion and listening to the needs to identify and address areas of inductee concern and insecurity. In addition, the mentor must anticipate what is coming to encourage the inductee to proactively reflect on their beliefs and perspectives” (June 2005).

It is clear that both of these mentors possess an understanding of what it means to help beginning teachers as a mentor teacher. With an 11-tiered response, Samuel provided a very clear, coherent, and comprehensive answer to what he does to help new teachers.

“(1) Listen; (2) Explain; (3) Show how to do something; (4) Provide tours; (5) Explain form after form after form; (6) Solve problems; (7) Advise on curriculum content; (8) Review procedures; (9) Act as a touchstone; (10) Acknowledge the in’s and out’s and the up’s and down’s and the roller-coaster ride of first year teachers; and (11) Oh yeah, answer a lot of questions” (May 2005). If most mentor teachers follow the
aforementioned 11-tiered answer, then a possible assertion could be that many novice teacher needs would be addressed by the end of their induction time period. Induction programs can differentiate program design through varying when workshops are offered throughout the school year, as discussed earlier in this chapter. For example, a workshop on Special Education could be offered two different times during the school year to accommodate when new teachers might need that particular session or video tape each session so that in subsequent years, if information is needed sooner than planned, a guide would be available and on-hand for new teachers to utilize at their own discretion or need. For instance, Cindy, Jack and Hilary commented that timing was an issue in terms of receiving information on how to support English language learners (ELL) in their classroom, again as noted earlier in this chapter. Because the seminar on ELL occurred during the later part of the year, a video tape of the seminar could be available through a library system or catalogue of presentations for novice teachers, or for that matter, any teacher who needs support on specific topics when the need arises. In doing so, the induction program adapts to meet the individual needs of its new hires without having to alter the timing of their presentations. As well, Cindy and Lily noted that they would have liked to receive information regarding how to support Special Education students before the end of the year, when the seminar was scheduled. Having videos available can alleviate this concern and can provide differentiated support for novice teachers when needs arise. Furthermore, with the technological age at hand, an i-movie or digital movie could be developed for new teachers to watch on their computers and download any pertinent hand-outs or information necessary. Electronic mail is also an easy and cost-effective tool for new teachers to be encouraged to use after attending a workshop or
viewing a video for further questioning or areas of concern if they are not able to attend a meeting or need information at an earlier date.

The possibilities for differentiating workshop timing are numerous. Some are costlier than others, such as offering similar workshops throughout the year, but most are well worth the time and effort if individual novice teacher needs are being met. Most new teachers in this study commented that they did not want to add anything else to their already hectic schedule; however, when presented with a challenge, their first priority was to seek additional support. Induction programs need to devise a plan to provide that support. Unfortunately, it is near to impossible to account for each need that arises or have a workshop, video or support mechanism already in place when the new teacher comes to call; however, it is possible to plan for individual variances within novice teacher needs, wants, and development through careful and inventive planning and preparation. For instance, seminars can be offered twice a year, giving new teachers an option as to when to attend, based on their needs and concerns. As well, differentiation can occur through varied seminar formats. For example, support could be offered via a traditional seminar or could be directed through a critical friends format where teachers work together to generate ideas and provide collaborative and collegial support for one another. Other variances could be that teacher inquiry or action research could provide an avenue for professional development based on individual action plans and yearly goals. Of course inquiry could become part of an induction program during years two and/or three when novices are given the opportunity to focus on individual concerns and goals. VVSD is currently adapting their induction program form one year to three for this purpose. Possibilities for differentiation within induction are as endless as the as are
the needs new teachers present. Ideas for differentiation within induction can change
from year to year based on the needs of the new hires within the district, as Brad
commented during his interview; and, when feedback from program participants is used
to guide and inform the direction of the coming year’s program, induction becomes
personalized and better suited to meeting the needs of individual beginning teachers.
Differentiated induction requires school districts to be flexible and think outside of the
traditional box of staff development calendars. Though it might take time to develop a
new system for meeting novice teacher needs, differentiation within induction is possible,
probable, and necessary. A plan over 3 years or so, might be developed to have a library
of presentations, PowerPoint’s, varying modes of differentiated support, etc. that new
teachers could access through a website or through a library or through various
supportive structures, such as mentor teachers, curriculum specialists, and other new
teachers.

Possibilities for where differentiation, or where differentiated support can occur,
is evidenced through an added section to Fiszer’s (2004) Table, *Contrasting the Old with
the New*. Fiszer’s model of staff development attempts to show how traditional models
or a traditional orientation to staff development can transform to become an on-going
model whereby the focus of professional development moves from ad hoc or event-
centered to teacher-centered, meaningful, and experiential. The on-going process of staff
development provides teachers with support throughout the year, including follow-up
assistance and built-in time for dialogue with colleagues, specialists, and experts. The
original table discusses the type of support within induction with what is viewed as
traditional and what is perceived to be an on-going model. The addendum I developed,
as detailed in grey, presents possibilities for change within new teacher induction, based on the findings from this study, noting where differentiation can occur as a means of meeting individual novice teacher needs.
**Table 7: Contrasting the Old with the New**  
(Fiszer, Appendix A, pp. 67, 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Ongoing Model</th>
<th>Adaptations for New Teacher Induction Based on Study Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Observations</td>
<td>Rare, for those really needing help; an imposition on others; uncomfortable</td>
<td>New and experienced teachers alike visit one another to gain ideas</td>
<td>Allow for release time; build into program release time for both mentors and inductees to experience formal and informal focused observations, building in time for instructional coaching and dialogue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing support</td>
<td>Approach administrators or peers when you need help; partnered with mentor-type teacher</td>
<td>Out-of-classroom teacher available to provide assistance</td>
<td>Mentor teachers and CST's assigned in building, in grade level, in curricular area; provide common meeting time or common prep time for support to continue throughout induction period. Specialists in the building can also provide instructional, emotional, and physical ongoing support for new teachers. Induction seminars can be used to bring information to novice teachers through a common formal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent feedback</td>
<td>Administrative responsibility; rare to have a visit from anyone else</td>
<td>With peer observation and out-of-classroom support staff, more opportunity for meaningful, nonadministrative feedback</td>
<td>With release time, novice teachers can observe or be observed and have time to conference with mentor or out-of-classroom support staff regarding lesson; train mentor teachers and out-of-classroom support staff as instructional coaches whereby pre and post lesson conferencing becomes a normal or structural facet to the induction program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Dialogue</td>
<td>Not typically a part of staff meetings</td>
<td>Opportunities to dialogue and reflect on practice are scheduled and viewed as important</td>
<td>Provide new teachers with a weekly or bi-weekly common time (staff meeting or induction meeting time) for new teachers to meet with other novices, grade-level or departmental members to share ideas, talk about curricular or student issues, and reflect upon their learning and instruction and also time to meet with either their mentor teacher or a curriculum specialist in order to clarify understandings, get ideas or advice, and receive individualized support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The adaptation to Fiszer’s comparative table of traditional support as compared to what he refers to as ongoing types of support was devised so that we could discover how to allow for changes to occur to induction programs. Valley View School District’s current model of novice teacher induction mixes the first two columns basing their program structure on traditional induction practices, whereby the common needs of the novice are met through a one-time seminar style format. Follow-up to each seminar occurs solely when the novice teacher has a question or presents a need. As well, the individualized support offered through mentoring and curriculum specialists allows the novice teacher to focus on professional development predicated upon their own specific needs and wants. The last column presents a new focus for comprehensive induction programs for novice teachers. The final column, Adaptations for New Teacher Induction based on Study Findings provides avenues for programmatic or structural changes to present induction program organization to allow for ongoing support to occur as a means of differentiating to meet individual novice teacher needs, combining both the traditional and on-going forms of support to one comprehensive induction program.

Meeting Individual Needs through Comprehensive Induction

All new teachers need support. The type of support they need can and does vary. A common means of identifying needs, whether it is in the form of a checklist, needs assessment, interview, or through an evaluatory process, should be developed to work in conjunction with the district plan which should address how to develop a plan of action or individualized action to meet individual novice teacher needs. A standard practice should be developed and staff members should receive staff development as to what district expectations are and how new teacher needs are to be identified and addressed
Valley View School District is moving the induction program toward a standardized format. Feedback from past inductees has been and will continue to be used to guide the format and structure of the induction program, from a collective and individual perspective. Identifying areas of need in terms of what features of induction were most beneficial and which aspects were less meaningful was critical to delineating where support worked best. Designing a comprehensive induction program where differentiated support focuses on meeting individual novice teacher needs while simultaneously meeting the common needs of novice teachers is essential. Both pieces of support are critical and one cannot exist alone in an effective induction program. A comprehensive induction program, however, cannot exist without examining and meeting the individual needs of new teachers; and, second, the risk a school district takes in supporting only one aspect of novice teacher professional development is high. New teachers, as research has shown, leave the profession if they do not find and receive the much needed support (Ingersoll, Summer 2002; Richin, R., R. Banyon, R. P. Stein, and F. Banyon., 2003; Feiman-Nemser, May 2003; WestEd., November 2000; and Renard, L., May 2003). Individualized or differentiated support, as reported by the participants in this study, within induction helps to alleviate stress levels, builds confidence, and provides novices structured support that is contextualized to their meet their specific demands, experiences, understandings, and needs.

Comprehensive induction programs that include support from multiple mechanisms are best suited for meeting individual and common needs. Multiple support systems include an orientation to the school and school district, monthly or bi-weekly seminars focused on specific topics, mentor teacher support, administrative guidance and
supervision, assistance in the classroom from curriculum specialists, release time to observe others and be observed by an instructional coach or mentor, and time to meet with colleagues, peers, and supportive personnel throughout the year.

The overall impact of the induction program on meeting individual novice teacher needs is three-part. First, utilizing multiple support mechanisms throughout the induction program structure enables support to come from various avenues and systems. Second, meeting individual novice teacher needs is difficult and can be construed as hit or miss if support is not consistent, flexible, and differentiated and is a function of how well the novice develops a high quality relationship with the mentors or other team member. Lastly, the common needs of new teachers need to be identified throughout the induction time period. Individual needs are met through both formal and informal program structures both simultaneously and independently. A combination of both structures, a balance, is necessary to meet the needs of each novice teacher.

Perceptions within the district as to the effectiveness of the induction program, how it is designed, and how it goes about meeting individual novice teacher needs swing from one end of a continuum to another. If one end of the continuum rests upon the common needs and standardized induction practices for all teachers and the other end rests upon meeting individual needs and having flexible support mechanisms, it is possible to infer, based on the data, that Valley View School District currently falls closely to the end of the continuum labeled “common needs and standardized induction” even though they utilize the support of mentor teachers and curriculum specialists. The formal induction process, as noted by many study participants, is moving toward a standardized process whereby the common needs of the new teacher are addressed. As
the needs assessment inventory tool used to identify new teacher needs is refined, a common vision and mission for induction is developed and shared among all team members, and mentor teachers receive professional development on instructional coaching, mentoring, and supervision, the process of induction will begin to move more toward the center of the continuum, creating a balance between formal and informal induction support systems. In the near future, Patti and Brad both alluded that the process will change as differentiated strategies are infused into the formal induction program, including a three-year process of individualized professional development. With these additions, the VVSD induction program will achieve balance within new teacher induction, gravitating toward the center of the continuum as they strive to meet both the individual and common needs of beginning teachers.

A United Front: Developing a Community of Practice

Gordon and Maxey (2000) and Ingersoll (Summer 2002), as noted in an earlier study, noted that a team approach is best in terms of meeting needs and developing an effective and supportive induction program. Lave and Wenger (1991) note that communities of practice enable novices to learn under a communal mentality and are included as valued members of the learning community. The idea of consistent support can stem from the notion of a community of practice in that support is ongoing, is an integral feature of the culture and climate of the district, school, and induction program, and is provided via a variety of sources. According to Lave and Wenger (1991) discuss legitimate peripheral participation as, “social practice” whereby “… engagement in social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent” affords communities of practice opportunity to learn and practice together rather than independently (p. 34-35). The
authors further suggest that legitimate peripheral participation provides participants opportunity and “… a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice” (1991, p. 29). Newcomers, in a community of practice, can engage in legitimate peripheral participation, for instance, through the sharing of ideas, materials, and understandings whereby reciprocal learning opportunities exist for all members. As Hilary, a middle school teacher, experienced during her initial year of teaching, “it goes from a mentorship to a partnership. You’re working more as equals” (Interview, 2005). However, participation can range from full membership or involvement to marginal where participation begins with the induction program and support is offered from specific structures rather than the collective or community as a whole. Lave and Wenger purport that for newcomers, “… peripherality, when enabled, suggests an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement” (1991, p. 37).

Presenting a united front, a learning community where goals are shared by all, can only strengthen the induction program and the foundation for novice teacher support. Providing a context where all supportive systems share a common belief and goal for supporting novice teachers through their initial years of teaching brings forth a team approach to new teacher induction. Valley View School District acknowledged their need to bring cohesion to their induction program, beginning with providing mentor teachers with professional development in an attempt to help bridge the gap between mentor styles, abilities, skills, and understandings (Brad, 2005 Interview). Patti, the
Director of Induction, also purported that developing a common vision among the Professional Development Committee was critical before their work in retooling the induction program could begin. Stephen Covey stated that the process of understanding stemmed from knowing your goal and being aware of the intended outcome (1989). For a common understanding to be presented under one professional learning community whereby new teachers receive support based on their needs, regardless of who their mentor is, who their administrator is, or with which curriculum specialist they work, a common vision and mission must be shared by all team members. Valley View School District is currently working toward building a shared vision among all employees who strive to support beginning teachers. School districts should present a united front, under one shared mission and vision so that new teachers gain the needed support and those people responsible for supporting beginning teachers have a common understanding as to their role within induction and the cause to which they serve.

Developing a community of practice begs the following questions, “What should an induction program resemble in a community of practice?” and “Where does support come from when situated in a learning community or community of practice?” School Districts like Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia and LaFourche Parish School System in Louisiana, as detailed by Pardini (Summer 2002) note that support and learning is multi-faceted, initiating from within the culture of the school. “Working together and sharing are second nature…” as it is a part of the learning community and school culture (Pardini, Summer 2002). Pardini further discusses Terrence E. Deal’s belief in that induction programs should function in a fashion similar to that of sororities, fraternities, and gangs whereby the family mentality is brought to the forefront of their
organizational structure.

Effective induction provides the support new teachers need in order to ‘become part of a family – part of a cohesive group of people who are adding something of value to the world.’ Deal defines induction as a ritual that marks the transition between the time newcomers join a community and the point at which they become full-fledged members of that community (As cited in Pardini, Summer 2002).

Time is critical to enabling the family mentality within a community of practice to begin. Time provides opportunity to share stories, values, mission, goals, history, and affords both new and veteran teachers opportunity to learn from one another.

Many researchers will agree that new teachers have common needs, as stated earlier in Chapter 2; however, according to other researchers, like Sharon Feiman-Nemser (May 2003), Richard Ingersoll (Summer 2002), Leslie Huling-Austin (1989) and Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999), we know that learners are unique and have different needs. Ingersoll detailed a comprehensive induction program whereby inductees receive the necessary support that is conducive to providing individualization via using a team approach and engaging in professional development opportunities for a three-year time period. According to Tomlinson and differentiated instruction strategies, academic content standards are essential to learning, but differentiating your instruction to meet individual learner abilities and needs is crucial to designing effective instruction. With the changes VVSD will be implementing in the near future (as discussed in Chapter Six), their balance will gravitate from one side of the continuum toward the center with both end of the continuum or areas of need being taken into consideration. The idea here is to bring balance whereby induction programs meet both the common and individual needs of beginning teachers. When asked where she saw the district induction program in five years, Patti, the Director of Induction commented that she,
“Would like to see additional days upfront for true novices. I would like to see them a little earlier out so it’s not so quite intense as it is… I would like to see us look at this in a tiered fashion with supports in years one, two and three to match the tenuring process for true novices. We do this on a customized basis, but I would like to see us recognize the need for differentiation more than just on an informal and idiosyncratic basis… I would like to see us beyond the needs assessment to find out what are the typical needs… what does this individual teacher need and what would be useful for that particular teacher and I do that in my evaluation processes… We talk about where they want to go and where there’s a need and there’s actually notes as to where we start next year” (June 2005).

Brad, a curriculum specialist, was asked the same question during his interview. He commented that he would like to see the program use feedback to alter the design for the coming year. He also stated that it would mean the program would have to change every year then because each new group of teachers is different (May 2005). Though I am not sure that is feasible, the idea that feedback is used to guide and better the system as a whole, basing the program on specific feedback from new teachers, enables a school district to adapt their program to meet the needs of their teachers. Moreover, who better is there to help evaluate the effectiveness of a program than its participants? Change, in this instance, begins at the heart of the program… the new teachers and strives to bring balance to the supportive structures in place to guide their development.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

More research is needed on new teacher induction. Induction, as it is defined and described today, has been around for approximately 20 to 25 years. There is a lot of information that is known and there is also a great deal of information that is not. New teachers in this study presented different needs, divergent to those listed in both the Veenman (1984) and the Gordon and Maxey (2000) study. This study was not brought
about to uncover how many new teacher needs are possible, nor was it constructed to compare the needs of teachers in this study to those of another. The purpose for this study was to examine how one well-respected school district attempts to meet the needs of their new teachers. During this study, it became apparent that more research is needed as to what the common needs of new teachers are as compared to what possibilities are in terms of individual novice teacher needs on a broader scale. Much of the current research notes that new teachers do present common needs. Have those needs changed since those studies were conducted? Are common new teacher needs static or do they change over time, based on the demographics and experiences of new teachers as they enter the profession? Further studies need to be conducted.

This study focused on one school district in particular, based on a reputational case-sampling of six key informants in three intermediate units within a 100 square mile radius. Will the findings be replicated in other well-respected school district? Further studies of individual, well-respected school district induction programs need to take place to lend further understanding of novice teacher induction in other settings.

Because change is inevitable and is also an on-going process, a follow-up study in the Valley View School District is recommended. The structure of the program in this study will change in the near future and grow to become a multi-year comprehensive induction program. Further longitudinal study in this district, will detail if the proposed changes to the various support mechanisms and the structure of the induction program were meaningful, warranted, and, in turn, become powerful predictors of new teacher success. Ingersoll (Summer 2002) noted several examples of comprehensive induction program (As detailed in Chapter Two). A comparative study contextualizing Valley
View School District with those districts in his study would provide further support for comprehensive induction programs as the primary source for supporting new teachers successfully.

Lastly, further studies comparing induction processes in schools that are marked by an individualized school culture and schools marked by a collaborative school culture or learning community are warranted and would provide context to how support differs and varies within each culture. The effect the culture has on novice teacher learning is integral to understanding how to build community, foster collaborative and collegial relationships, and provide meaningful, flexible, and consistent support. As well, it is recommended a study be conducted regarding when, how, if, and why novices take responsibility for their own needs and learning so that induction programs may better structure support and gain an understanding of how learning can become self-directed in contrast to why some novices are unable or unwilling to assume that responsibility.
REFERENCES


Beerer, K. M. (Fall 2002). District carves out time for new teachers to learn: Quakertown’s academy takes induction to class. *Journal of Staff Development*. 23(4), 46-49.


Garza, L. and L. Wurzbach. (Fall 2002). Texas plan drowns the idea of sink or swim induction. *Journal of Staff Development*. 23(4), 41-45.


http://newteachercenter.org/article3.html


**WEBSITE REFERENCES**


**Please note that the participating school district’s website was used to gather data, but due to confidentiality issues cannot be referenced.**
APPENDICES

Models of Teacher Development
Interview Guide for Novice Teachers
Questionnaire for Mentor Teacher Study Participants
Questionnaire for Administrative Study Participants
Addendum to Questionnaire for Mentor Teacher and Administrative Participants
Interview Guide for Director of Induction
Questions for Administrators/Mentors in Follow-Up Interview
Informed Consent Forms
Email to Intermediate Unit Members (Key Informants) for Sampling Process
Research Study Information Provided to Assistant to the Superintendent, VVSD
   Email Invitation to Director of Induction – Prospective Study Participant
   Email Invitation to Prospective New Teacher Study Participant
   Email Invitation to Prospective Mentor Teacher Study Participant
   Email Invitation to Prospective Site-level Principal Study Participants
Email Invitation to High School Associate Principal Prospective Study Participant
Email Invitation to Prospective Curriculum Coordinator Study Participants
   Email Invitation Follow-Up Interview Study Participants
   Timeline for Dissertation
APPENDIX A

Models of Teacher Development

1) Ellen Moir (1990) - Model of First Year Teacher Attitudes

2) Burke, Fessler, and Christensen (1984) - Model of Teacher Career Cycle

A Model of the stages of the Teacher Career Cycle and the environmental factors that affect it.

(Christensen, McDonnell, and Price, 1988, pp. 17)
APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for Novice Teachers

1. Talk to me about your induction experience?

2. Can you tell me about your own needs as a beginning teacher? (Probe for how they are different from and similar to other new teachers.)

3. Remember back for me to when you began your induction program and your first year of teaching. What were your hopes for learning experiences or professional development as a new teacher?

4. Now that you have experienced induction, did what you received for induction match your hopes for learning and/or professional development?

5. If the interviewee does not discuss support, ask the following probing questions:
   a. Tell me about the support that you received from people in the induction program?
   b. Did you have a mentor teacher? If no, why not? If yes, what did you do with your mentor? (Probe for support from principal and other teachers.)

6. Do you feel that your needs as a beginning teacher met through the program? Can you tell me a little more about that? (Probe for how the needs were met in a similar or different fashion from other new teachers.)
APPENDIX C

Questionnaire for Mentor Teacher Study Participant

1. If you were asked to describe the new teacher induction program to a new teacher coming into your district, how would you describe it?

2. What processes or strategies are used to identify and meet the needs of novice teachers during the induction process?

3. What role(s) do or have you played within the induction program?

4. What do you see as the goals of the induction program?

5. Has the induction program changed over time? If so, how and why?

6. Please describe how you have worked with and helped novice teachers during their induction process.
APPENDIX D

Questionnaire for Administrative Study Participant

1. If you were asked to describe the new teacher induction program to a new teacher coming into your district, how would you describe it?

2. What processes or strategies are used to identify and meet the needs of novice teachers during the induction process?

3. What role(s) do or have you played within the induction program?

4. Who developed the program?

5. What do you see as the goals of the induction program?

6. Who are the key players in induction process and what are their responsibilities?

7. Has the induction program changed over time? If so, how and why?

8. Please describe how you have you worked with and helped novice teachers during their induction process.
APPENDIX E

Addendum to Questionnaire for Mentor Teacher and Administrative Participants

Definitions for questionnaire:

*Induction Process*… includes the technical induction program sponsored by the district and also refers to any support/guidance a new teacher receives from any teacher, curriculum support teacher/coordinator, mentor, etc. during their first year of teaching informally or strategically.
1. Let’s start off with the induction program itself. Tell me about the teacher induction program.

2. What’s your role within the induction program?

3. When did it begin?

4. Who developed the program? (Probe further for how was it developed/how it began)

5. What do you see as the goals of the program?

6. Is there a guide for identifying individual needs of novice teachers? (Probe for what it is or the strategies or processes used.)

7. So, how do you go about helping individual novice teachers with their own needs?

8. Can you tell me a bit about who the key players in the induction program are and what they do?

9. How has the program changed over time? Why?
APPENDIX G

Questions for Administrators/Mentors in Follow-up Interview

(1) What specifically have you done in the past to support novice teachers in the classroom and within their professional development as a beginning teacher?

(2) When does support become individualized?

(3) How is support individualized for each beginning teacher?

(4) Are there support structures that are in place to assist teachers when they struggle? What are they, who is responsible for initiating that support, and how is the support presented?
APPENDIX H

Informed Consent Forms

I
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Novice Teachers)
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Does Differentiation of Teacher Induction Affect Individual Novice Teacher Professional Development? A Phenomenological Case Study of a Well-Respected Induction Program

Principal Investigator: Debbie Hankin
College of Education
Curriculum and Instruction Department
153 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-235-0584
dsh187@psu.edu

Advisor: James F. Nolan
Henry J. Hermanowicz Professor of Education
College of Education
Curriculum and Instruction Department
204G Rackley Building
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-2243
jimnolan@psu.edu

1. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of where, when, why, and if differentiation occurs within induction in order to meet individual novice teachers’ needs. My hope for this case study is to uncover how a well-respected induction program delivers professional development that meets their new teachers’ needs.

2. Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview and will be asked questions about your experience as a new teacher. You will also be asked to review your interview transcript and check it for accuracy. The Principal Investigator will be using an audio-recorder to tape your interview.

3. Discomforts and Risks: There are no risks to participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There will be questions asked during your interview that are personal and might cause some discomfort. All audio-recordings will remain confidential.

4. Benefits: The benefits to you include that you might learn more about yourself and your needs as a novice teacher. You might have a better understanding of who you
INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Novice Teachers -- continued)
The Pennsylvania State University

are as a beginning teacher and what your strengths are as well as where your needs lie within your own professional development and growth. The benefits to society include gaining a better understanding of how to meet individual needs of novice teachers as they enter their profession.

5. **Duration/Time:** It will take about 45 minutes to complete the interview. It will also take about 10-15 minutes to read over your interview transcript in order to verify the content. The interview will take place in March, 2005. Your interview will be transcribed afterward and you will be provided with a transcript within one week after your interview.

6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Only the person in charge and the advisor (listed at the top of page one) will have access to your interview data. Your data will be stored and secured in a locked file/password protected on the Principal Investigator’s home computer. The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. A pseudonym will be developed and used throughout the research to identify information learned from your interview and experiences as a new teacher.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Debbie Hankin at 814-235-0584 or email at dsh187@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

8. **Compensation:** There is no compensation available for participating in this research. The research is being conducted for doctoral dissertation purposes.

9. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

_____________________________________________  __________________________
Participant Signature       Date

_____________________________________________  __________________________
Person Obtaining Consent, PI       Date
Title of Project: Does Differentiation of Teacher Induction Affect Individual Novice Teacher Professional Development? A Phenomenological Case Study of a Well-Respected Induction Program

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1 Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of where, when, why, and if differentiation occurs within induction in order to meet individual novice teacher’s needs. My hope for this case study is to uncover how a well-respected induction program delivers professional development that meets their new teachers’ needs.

2 Procedures to be followed: You will be asked to answer six questions on a paper-pencil questionnaire. You could also be asked to participate in one follow-up interview and will be asked questions about your experience with new teacher induction in further detail. You will also be asked to review your interview transcript and check it for accuracy. The Principal Investigator will be using an audio-recorder to tape your interview.

3 Discomforts and Risks: There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There will be questions asked during your interview that are personal and might cause some discomfort. All audio-recordings will remain confidential.

4 Benefits: The benefits to you include that you might learn more about individual novice teacher needs and professional development. You might have a better understanding of who you are as an educator how you wish to advise and support novice teachers as they enter the teaching profession. The benefits to society include gaining a better understanding of how to meet individual needs of novice teachers as
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Administrators, Directors, and Teachers -- continued)

they enter their profession.

5. **Duration/Time:** It will take about 10 minutes to complete a paper pencil questionnaire, which will be given to you in March, 2005. If you are selected or choose to participate in the follow-up project, an audio recorder will be used to tape the interview. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the interview. The interview will take place in late March, 2005 or early April, 2005. Your interview will be transcribed afterward and you will be provided with a transcript within one week after your interview.

6. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Only the person in charge and the advisor (listed at the top of page one) will have access to your interview data. Your data will be stored and secured in a locked file/password protected on the Principal Investigator’s home computer. The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. A pseudonym will be developed and used throughout the research to identify information learned from your interview and experiences as a new teacher.

7. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Debbie Hankin at 814-235-0584 or email at dsh187@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

8. **Compensation:** There is no compensation available for participating in this research. The research is being conducted for doctoral dissertation purposes.

9. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

_____________________________________________       Date
Participant Signature

_____________________________________________       Date
Person Obtaining Consent, PI
INFORMED CONSENT FORM
(Administrators, Directors, and Teachers Follow-Up Interview)
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: Does Differentiation of Teacher Induction Affect Individual Novice Teacher Professional Development? A Phenomenological Case Study of a Well-Respected Induction Program

Principal Investigator: Debbie Hankin
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1 Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of where, when, why, and if differentiation occurs within induction in order to meet individual novice teacher’s needs. My hope for this case study is to uncover how a well-respected induction program delivers professional development that meets their new teachers’ needs.

2 Procedures to be followed: You will be asked participate in one follow-up interview and will be asked questions about your experience with new teacher induction in further detail. You will also be asked to review your interview transcript and check it for accuracy. The Principal Investigator will be using an audio-recorder to tape your interview.

3 Discomforts and Risks: There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There will be questions asked during your interview that are personal and might cause some discomfort. All audio-recordings will remain confidential.

4 Benefits: The benefits to you include that you might learn more about individual novice teacher needs and professional development. You might have a better understanding of
INFORMED CONSENT FORM  
(Administrators, Directors, and Teachers -- continued)

who you are as an educator how you wish to advise and support novice teachers as they enter the teaching profession.

The benefits to society include gaining a better understanding of how to meet individual needs of novice teachers as they enter their profession.

5. **Duration/Time:** If you choose to participate in the follow-up interview, an audio recorder will be used to tape the interview. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the interview. The interview will take place in late March, 2005 or early April, 2005. Your interview will be transcribed afterward and you will be provided with a transcript within one week after your interview.

6 **Statement of Confidentiality:** Only the person in charge and the advisor (listed at the top of page one) will have access to your interview data. Your data will be stored and secured in a locked file/password protected on the Principal Investigator’s home computer. The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared. A pseudonym will be developed and used throughout the research to identify information learned from your interview and experiences as a new teacher.

7 **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Debbie Hankin at 814-235-0584 or email at dsh187@psu.edu with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

8 **Compensation:** There is no compensation available for participating in this research. The research is being conducted for doctoral dissertation purposes.

9 **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form for your records.

_____________________________________________   Date
Participant Signature

___________________________________________   Date
Person Obtaining Consent, PI
APPENDIX I

Email to Intermediate Unit Members (Key Informants) for Sampling Process

Hello ____________.

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a doctoral student at Penn State working on my dissertation. My advisor is Jim Nolan and he gave me your name in the hopes that you can offer me a bit of advice. My dissertation topic is looking at whether or not and how differentiation occurs in new teacher induction in order to meet individual needs.

What I am hoping to do is study a school district that is and has a well-respected induction program. The school district will remain anonymous and will have a pseudonym developed for it as well as for any teacher or administrator participating in the study.

Where your help would come in is with identifying the name of a school district in your region and the director of their induction program (if there is a director or person in charge). If you could please provide me with their name and contact information, it would be greatly appreciated.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have. I can be reached at 814-235-0584 or via email at dsh187@psu.edu.

I greatly appreciate any support you can offer.

I am hoping to start my research as soon as a school district is identified.

Again, thank you for getting back to me and for your advice.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD

The Pennsylvania State University
APPENDIX J

Research Study Information Provided to Assistant to the Superintendent, VVSD

Wed, 09 Mar 2005 14:11:48 +0000

Dissertation Study

Main Question:

How are the individual needs of novice teachers met in a well-respected novice teacher induction program?

Study Participants:

1. 9 novice teachers who have fully completed the district induction program and have been employed in the district for 3 years (including induction year) - They will be asked to participate in 1 interview for approximately 30-45 minutes and possibly 1 follow-up interview on an as needed basis. They might also be asked to provide documents (for viewing only, not to be used for evaluative purposes, as to what they have done or participated or pertaining to the support they received in induction.

2. 9 administrators (chosen randomly - and based on voluntary participation) 3 at each level of administration (3 elem., 3 middle, and 3 h.s.)- They will be asked to participate in one open-ended survey, and will take them approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If needed, on an individualized basis, there could be a follow-up interview, lasting approximately 20-30 minutes.

3. 10 veteran teachers (including 5 of whom who have recently or currently are mentor teachers in the induction program, not to be confused with those who serve as mentors in the PDS). - They will be asked to participate in one open-ended survey, and will take them approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. If needed, on an
individualized basis, there could be a follow-up interview, Lasting approximately 20-30 minutes.

4. Director of Induction - (or any persons responsible or directly involved in the administration and development of the induction program. This person(s) will be asked to participate in one interview, lasting approximately 30-45 minutes.

5. Induction Documents - These are the district parameters for induction. These are to be used to gain an understanding of the program and will not be used in any evaluative capacity.

My study is qualitative and will not evaluate the program in any capacity or form. The sole purpose of my dissertation is to gain an understanding of when, how, if, and why differentiation occurs in induction in order to meet individual novice teacher needs.
Dear ____________,

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I also work in the elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As the Director of Induction, you have a unique perspective working with new teachers, mentor teachers, administrators, and curriculum specialists in the induction program in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers.

As a doctoral student, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to participate in one face-to-face interview, taking approximately 30-45 minutes, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices.

If you agree to participate, I would like to set up an initial meeting time that works best for your schedule answer any questions you have in person and to provide you with an informed consent form. The initial meeting will take less than five minutes. I am available to meet with you at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for this week or early next week that fits your time-frame best. If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu.

Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.
Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
The Pennsylvania State University
APPENDIX L

Email Invitation to Prospective New Teacher Study Participant

Dear ________________,

My name is Debbie Hankin. I am a graduate student at Penn State and I also work in the Elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As a recent participant in induction in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers. I know how valuable your time is and I will make every effort to keep your participation to a 30-40 minute time period.

As a doctoral student at The Pennsylvania State University, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to participate in one interview, approximately a 30-40 minute long session, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices. I know how valuable your time is and I will try my best to make this experience as easy as possible for you. I appreciate any time you can offer me and I will do my best to keep to our time frame.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu. If you agree to participate, I would like to set up an interview time that works best for your schedule. I am available to meet with you at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for next week that fit your time-frame best.

Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

Deborah Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
Penn State University
Email Invitation to Prospective Mentor Teacher Study Participant

Dear ________________,

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I also work in the elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As a mentor in the induction program in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers. I know how valuable your time is. Your participation in this study will take about 10 minutes of your time.

As a doctoral student, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to complete one questionnaire, taking approximately ten minutes, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices. Again, I know how valuable your time is and I greatly appreciate your support and any time your can offer.

If you agree to participate, I would like to drop off the questionnaire and answer any questions you have in person. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for this week or early next week that fits your time-frame best to drop off the questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu.

Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.
Sincerely,

Deborah Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
Penn State University
Dear ________,

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I also work in the elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As an Elementary Principal working with new teachers in the induction program in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers.

As a doctoral student, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to complete one questionnaire, taking approximately ten minutes, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices.

If you agree to participate, I would like to set up an initial meeting time that works best for your schedule to drop off the questionnaire and answer any questions you have in person. The initial meeting will take less than five minutes. I am available to meet with you at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for this week or early next week that fits your time-frame best. If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu.

Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.
Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin
Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
The Pennsylvania State University
APPENDIX O

Email Invitation to High School Associate Principal - Prospective Study Participant

Dear ____________,

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I also work in the elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As a High School Associate Principal in charge of mentor teachers and Curriculum Development in the induction program in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers.

As a doctoral student, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to complete one questionnaire, taking approximately ten minutes, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices.

If you agree to participate, I would like to set up an initial meeting time that works best for your schedule to drop off the questionnaire and answer any questions you have in person. The initial meeting will take less than five minutes. I am available to meet with you at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for this week or early next week that fits your time-frame best. If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu. Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
The Pennsylvania State University
APPENDIX P

Email Invitation to Prospective Curriculum Coordinator Study Participants

Dear _______________,

My name is Debbie Hankin and I am a graduate student at Penn State. I also work in the elementary PDS in State College. I would like to invite you to participate in a study on novice teacher induction. As a Curriculum Coordinator working with new teachers in the induction program in the State College Area School District, you have first-hand knowledge and experience with professional development and support system structures provided specifically for new teachers.

As a doctoral student, I am interested in gaining an understanding of how the State College Area School District attempts to meet each new teacher’s needs as they enter their profession. I would like to invite you to complete one questionnaire, taking approximately ten minutes, in order to gain insight into your own personal experience, understanding, and beliefs about new teacher induction practices.

If you agree to participate, I would like to set up an initial meeting time that works best for your schedule to drop off the questionnaire and answer any questions you have in person. The initial meeting will take less than five minutes. I am available to meet with you at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, please let me know a date and time for this week or early next week that fits your time-frame best. If you have any questions, please contact me at 814-235-0584 or email me at dsh187@psu.edu.

Thank you and I look forward to the opportunity to meet and speak with you soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD,
The Pennsylvania State University
Hi ______________.

I hope you had a wonderful summer vacation! I have transcribed all of the data and have written much of chapter 5 and 6 that detail your responses from the questionnaire you completed for me last spring. As I mentioned to you earlier, there was a possibility that you could be chosen to participate in a follow-up interview. Your data provided a lot of wonderful context, but a little more is needed to be able to get a full picture of how novice teachers are supported.

If you are willing, I would like to interview you over the phone as I have moved to Phoenix this summer and am currently working in a school district here as a Program Coach, responsible for all curriculum and assessment at an 1100 student elementary school. The conversation can be at your convenience and I will not take more than 10 minutes of your time. I have four questions to ask and that is the extent of the interview. I know how valuable your time is and I would greatly appreciate any time that you could give me to complete my study.

Again, I can call you at your earliest convenience and will promise to only take 10 minutes of your time as I know and appreciate how busy you are. School here in Phoenix began on August 1st, so my summer was cut very short after leaving State College at the end of June.

Please email me back with a phone number and a day and time to call you. If at all possible, I would like to complete the call this week, so please let me know as soon as possible if you would be willing to continue with your participation in the study.

Thank you again for your continued support! I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Debbie Hankin, Doctoral Candidate, ABD
Penn State University
APPENDIX R

Timeline for Dissertation

September 2004

- Write Pre-Proposal – turn into Jim for advice on Dissertation topic.

October 2004 – November 2004

- Write Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Dissertation for Proposal (Draft 1).

November 2004

- Set up Proposal meeting with Committee.
- Revise Chapters 1, 2, and 3 as per recommendations and suggestions made by Committee.

December 2004

- Apply for Human Subject Testing Approval – Informed Consent Form.
- Contact IU 8, IU 10, IU 11, IU 16, and IU17 in regards to reputational sampling of School District Induction Programs.
- Conduct reputational sampling and decide upon 5 sites, recommended by each IU, to be used in the study.
  - Use Number Table to decide upon 5 school districts to be used in case study.
- Schedule/set up an interview with the Director of each Induction Program from the case study site.
- Contact school districts chosen through reputational sampling and verify that their district will be a participant in the study.
- Submit final draft of Chapters 1-3 to committee members for proposal meeting.
January 2005

- Meet with Committee to discuss Dissertation Proposal (Proposal Meeting to be held Jan. 13, 2005, between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.)
- Revise dissertation questions and research design (Chapter 3).
- Get committee approval to begin collecting data (upon receipt of and approval from revised questions and research design).

February - September 2005

- Revise and resubmit IRB/Human Subject Testing (Appendix D) to the Office of Research on campus by 2/7/05.
- Decide upon study participants using a criterion-based/purposeful sampling of all new teachers who have completed the induction program during the 2003-2004 school-year and a purposeful sampling of site-level administrators and mentor teachers.
- Send email invitation to perspective study participants.
- Get informed consent form signed by all study participants.
- Schedule interviews with each of the novice teacher study participants
- Conduct interviews with each of the novice teacher study participant.
- Transcribe each interview.
- Analyze the data.
- Provide a copy of the transcript to each novice teacher study participant to member check data.
- Send out survey/questionnaires to participating site-level administrators and mentor teachers.
- Begin analyzing survey/questionnaire data.

**August - September 2005**

- Schedule an additional interview, only if needed, with specific/designated study participants.
- Conduct follow-up interviews, as needed.
- Transcribe each interview.
- Analyze the data.
- Provide a copy of the transcript to each novice teacher study participant to verify data.
- Begin synthesis of data of each teacher’s viewpoint, needs as a new teacher, and their story – narrative description of each case study is developed.
- Description of school district and induction program is developed. (To be placed in Chapter 4.)
- Submit case study stories to each new teacher for verification. (Individual pieces within Chapter 4).
- Continue analyzing data from interviews and survey/questionnaires.

**September 2005 – April 2006**

- Continue conducting and analyzing follow-up interviews with study participants.
- Interpret findings from interviews/data.
- Write Chapter 4 through Chapter 6 of dissertation.
- Draft 2 of dissertation presented to committee chair.
- Revise dissertation draft 2 upon suggestions by committee chair.

**Early April 2006**
- Draft of dissertation presented to committee.
- Oral defense of dissertation.

**May - November 2006**

- Rewriting of dissertation as suggested by committee.
- Turn in dissertation to the University

**December 2006**

- Graduation.
DEBORAH SUE HANKIN, PH.D.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION

Doctor of Philosophy, 2006
The Pennsylvania State University

Master of Science, April 2001
Pepperdine University

Bachelor of Arts, December 1995
California State University at Fullerton

EXPERIENCE

Achievement Advisor for Literacy and Social Studies (2006 – Present) Glendale Elementary School District #40, Glendale, AZ


Graduate Teaching Assistantship (2002 - 2005). Department of Curriculum and Instruction, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

Internship (June 2004 – August 2004). San Diego County Department of Education
  * North County Professional Development Federation, New Teacher Induction
  * Mathematics Education and Curriculum

  * Internship with the Assistant Superintendent

Adjunct Professor (2002).
  * Pepperdine University, Orange County, CA.
  * National University, Costa Mesa, CA.


HONORS AND AWARDS

* Pi Lambda Theta National Honor Society in Education (Spring 2003 – Present)
* Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program Fellowship in Japan (2002)
* Project GLAD National Key Trainer Certification (2001-Present), Fountain Valley
* Nominee for Disney’s 1999 American Teacher of the Year Award
* Superintendent’s Teacher Cabinet (2001 – 2002), SAUSD
* Grant Writer: Title VII Comprehensive School Grant (2002), SAUSD
* Designated Master Teacher (2000 – 2002), SAUSD