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Examining the Evolution of a Teacher Induction Program In A Diverse, Urban, Southeastern School District

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EXAMINING THE EVOLUTION OF A TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM IN A
DIVERSE, URBAN, SOUTHEASTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DEDICATION

The Cambridge Dictionary defines *cheerleader* as, "someone who strongly supports a particular idea or person." My cheerleader has always been my husband, Joel. We have devoted almost forty years to supporting each other. Support for the day-to-day, routine happenings is always in place, but more recently endeavors of larger magnitude required a level of support unlike any we have experienced. He never stopped believing in me and did everything in his power to remove obstacles and support me throughout this journey. Other family and close friends were also members of the cheerleading squad. I deeply express heartfelt thanks to my children (Chris and Ashley), my siblings, (Linda, Darlene, Michael and Johney), my parents (Faye, John, Gary, and Patty) and all my extended family. Your support and understanding during this process was greatly appreciated!

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ABSTRACT

Educational institutions struggle to increase student achievement. While the educational needs of students remain at the forefront, teachers' needs must also be met—before and after entering the classroom. My experience in public education has shown most beginning teachers depend on the support a teacher induction program provides to manage the multitude of new responsibilities faced during the first year in the classroom. Induction programs are constructed and implemented within school districts in a variety of ways. This study is an in-depth analysis that identifies factors that impacted an effective teacher induction program, examines how the program changed as a result, and explores the district's response over a five-year period. The discussion of findings includes recommendations for future research and policy implications for sustaining effective teacher induction programs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Establishing a quality teacher induction program is difficult; sustaining it is more difficult still. This dissertation explores how a teacher induction program was affected by challenges and obstacles, and how stakeholders responded to those impacts. Increased student achievement is a topic that reverberates through educational institutions as we relentlessly search for programs and practices that will lead to improved performance for students. While the education of students is always at the forefront, teachers' needs must also be met before and after entering the classroom. In my experience as a public school teacher and administrator, it is apparent that most beginning teachers depend on the support that a teacher induction program provides to manage the multitude of new responsibilities faced during that first year in the classroom. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) note that teacher induction programs are constructed in various formats, but typically include multiple levels of support from the school and district. According to scholars across the professional field, induction programs should be comprehensive and include support that focuses on teacher development (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wong, Briton & Ganser, 2005).

This qualitative study explores the factors that impacted an effective teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response to the factors that impacted the program.

The primary research questions that guided this case study are:

(1) How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

(2) What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

(3) What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

For this study, an effective teacher induction program will be characterized as meeting the expectations set forth by the state induction policy criteria published by the New Teacher Center (Goldrick, 2016, p. ix). The New Teacher Center monitors each state's policy for providing support to beginning teachers. Effective programs that meet these criteria include those with a two-year program timeline, trained mentors, release time for new teachers and mentors, and a reduced teaching load. Additionally, program standards and accountability measures are in place and adequate funding is designated for the induction program (Goldrick, 2016).

Literature pertinent to the structure and implementation of teacher induction programs was reviewed to provide a deep understanding of induction programs and what components are deemed essential and effective by the research. Understanding what is essential and effective for teacher induction programs is necessary to explore the impacts faced by a school district as the program evolves. This understanding will also allow for purposeful examination of the responses made by the school district in its efforts to overcome impacts to the program.

Induction programs are constructed and implemented within school districts in a variety of ways that result in diverse outcomes. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) argue the inclusion of an induction program will result in teachers who are better prepared, contribute to improved student learning and growth, and are more likely to remain in the

profession. The rationale behind the inclusion of certain components in the induction program must be considered to ensure that teachers and their students benefit. Wong, Britton, and Ganser (2005) emphasize that, "induction is a highly organized and comprehensive form of staff development, involving many people and components, that typically continues as a sustained process for the first two to five years of a teacher's career" (p. 379). While some of the research helps define characteristics and parameters of teacher induction programs, other research focuses on the development of the teacher within the learning community of the school. Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman and Liu (2007) studied how beginning teachers behaved within different school cultures and related how those experiences shaped the teacher's view of the profession, thus impacting teacher retention. Although school culture and teacher attrition are important attributes to consider while exploring teacher induction, the focus of this study is based on the research that specifically addresses the structure and implementation of the programs to identify factors that impact the structure and implementation of the program over time.

A conglomeration of theories and research has emerged over time and reveals a number of key tenets about the various components of and the need for a formal process to induct teachers into the profession. The most basic theoretical supposition is that learning takes place through experience (Dewey, 1997) and is evident as pre-service teachers "practice" teaching, and it continues when they enter the classroom as a "real" teacher. Once placed in the school setting, contextual factors begin to alter and further shape theory. For example, Dewey's assertion that learning takes place through experience may not look like the same process from one school context to another. In his exploration of experiential learning, Kolb (1984) describes Dewey's model of learning as

a developmental process that relies on observation of surroundings, feedback from others with experience, and judgment that molds observation and feedback into subsequent action.

This contextual interaction intrigues me as I view schools as social systems that have defined roles and players that intertwine throughout the system and its programs. While we often think of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) when educating children, Chaiklin (2003) explained:

> The common conception of the zone of proximal development presupposes an interaction between a more competent person and a less competent person on a task, such that the less competent person becomes independently proficient at what was initially a jointly-accomplished task. (Common Conceptions of the Zone of Proximal Development, para. 1)

I propose that this concept applies to the on the job training for beginning teachers. While teachers may have the ability to perform some tasks based solely on knowledge acquired in the teacher preparation program, they will need assistance to progress to a more independent level. Warford (2010) builds upon Vygotsky's ZPD by identifying stages within zones of proximal *teacher* development (ZPTD) that begin in the teacher preparation program and culminate when teacher candidates "prepare to confront the dichotomy of theory and practice in all its intensity" (p. 255). Warford (2010) goes on to say, "given the feelings of isolation that many candidates experience in their initial teaching experiences, collaboration with peers can also be a powerful tool for teacher development" (p. 256).

Purpose of the Study

The examination of prior studies on beginning teacher induction programs prompted further study to identify factors that impact programs as they evolve. The purpose of this qualitative study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to identify factors that impacted the program, determine how the program changed as a result, and explore the district's strategic response as the program evolved. The understanding of *how* and *why* an induction program evolves the way it does may provide a critical missing link in the research that will enable us to better inform the practice of teacher induction programs. More effective teacher induction programs will lead to increased teacher retention, thus reducing the number of teachers leaving the profession. A decrease in teacher attrition will provide school districts with more experienced educators in the classroom and have a positive economic impact, as districts will not repeatedly invest in the induction of new teachers to replace those leaving the profession within a few years.

The theoretical framework undergirding this study is based on the quality teacher induction research conducted by Wood and Stanulis (2009). Teacher induction will be defined and induction program goals, structure, and implementation will be identified and discussed. This study will contribute to the understanding of the lasting benefits and positive impacts of an effective teacher induction program while identifying impacts and response strategies put in place to sustain an effective induction program. Regarding policy, this research can inform efforts to revise existing teacher induction programs when faced with challenges that impact effectiveness. As Merriam (1998) notes, "insights

gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research" (p. 19).

This study is contextualized to explore how key school district personnel, school leadership, and teachers interacted with and responded to components of the teacher induction program during a specified timeframe of five years. To maintain focus on the purpose of this study I relied on data from interviews, a survey, and document analyses to identify factors that impacted an effective teacher induction program. Merriam (2009) states that researchers conducting basic qualitative research desire a better understanding of "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 23). Semi-structured participant interviews, open-ended survey questions, and document review were used to develop a deep understanding of the teacher induction process within this school district. Impacts to program effectiveness were identified and strategies put in place to respond to these were explored.

Methodology

To gain a deeper understanding of teacher induction programs and how challenges impact the effectiveness of the programs, a qualitative approach was used. Creswell (2007) considers using qualitative research appropriate when "a problem or issue needs to be explored" (p. 39). In this study, impacts made to an effective teacher induction program, as well as strategies put in place to address these were explored. Merriam (1998) reminds us that quantitative research "takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts," (p. 6), while "qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole" (p. 6). The collection of data from interview participants

and survey respondents, as well as pertinent document review helped reveal how the individual components integrate into a functioning teacher induction program.

Yin's (2003) recommendation to first consider the research question(s) being asked before we determine the research strategy for the study was followed. This study sought to discover how an effective teacher induction program evolved, given the factors that impacted its program structure and implementation. Yin (2003) also explained that the case study method is beneficial when working with "contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study" (p. 13). The case study was an appropriate method to examine the evolution of a teacher induction program situated within a single school system and allowed for exploration of the contextual conditions of this teacher induction program.

This study used a single case design to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program. Factors that impacted the program as it evolved were identified and the strategies employed by the school district in response were explored. To best examine the evolution of the teacher induction program, semi-structured interviews, an open-ended survey, and document review and analysis were the methods for collecting data. This study design allowed for triangulation of data to help develop a deeper understanding of the teacher induction program through the exploration of different participant perspectives (Maxwell, 2013).

The interview method was suitable to obtain information from the deputy superintendent and other key district personnel to determine what may have impacted the teacher induction program. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were

used. The design of the open-ended questions encouraged participants to respond in-depth to questions, resulting in richer data collection (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994).

To construct a comprehensive picture of the evolution of this teacher induction program, a survey was used to collect data from teachers who were employed with the district and involved with the teacher induction program during the specified timeframe. The survey questions were more structured than those used in the interviews. The rationale for conducting this survey is based on Merriam's (1998) explanation that highly structured questions can be beneficial when the intent is to have all respondents reply to the same statement.

School districts operate under the auspices of federal and state guidelines. Legislation and resulting mandates shape the programs found in today's school systems. A review of the district's pertinent documents led to a deeper understanding of factors that impacted the induction program. Analysis of federal and state legislation, school board minutes, district budgets, and program manuals revealed not only impacts to the teacher induction program, but also the strategies put in place by the district as a response.

The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to identify factors that impacted the program, how the program changed as a result, and explore the district's strategic response to these impacts. This study focused on examining the evolution of a teacher induction program situated in a diverse, urban, southeastern school district. While at first glance the selection of the study site may appear as a result of convenience sampling, the selection of the school district was determined in a purposeful way. Maxwell's (2013) guidance was followed while

selecting a site "that will provide the best data" (p. 99) and that will allow me to best answer my research questions. To gain access within a school system, it is helpful to have some pre-established relationships with those who will be able to assist you in obtaining the resources that will result in rich data collection. My position of having professional relationships with key personnel at a district in which I formerly worked prompted a closer examination of its induction program. To remain purposeful in my site selection, I referred to Goldrick's (2016) state policy review to ensure this school district met the expectations set forth by the New Teacher Center's recommended criteria for induction and mentoring programs. Through implementation of its state mandated program, this district met all but one of these criteria. I also reviewed program guidelines for other states in the Southeastern United States and determined they are similar and have common characteristics such as the inclusion of a mentor, mentor training, and professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. A review of the respective legislation and policy for teacher induction programs helped to support the identification of this site. The combination of my familiarity with the district, professional relationships with key personnel, and the district's induction program composition all contributed to the selection of a site that supported data collection to best answer the research questions.

Individual interviews were conducted with key school district personnel to gain insight into the evolution of this teacher induction program. These participants were purposefully selected because they were involved in the structure and/or implementation of the teacher induction program. A survey was designed to help construct a comprehensive picture of the evolution of the teacher induction program. With the

assistance of district personnel, potential teachers were identified based on their participation in the induction program as a beginning teacher during the specified timeframe. Convergence (or the lack thereof) of these data with data from interviews and document review and analysis added another layer of understanding of the impacts and responses were revealed (Yin, 2003).

Analysis of the data collected for this study incorporated various methods. To make sense of the data, a framework was constructed (Patton, 2002) to assist with the identification of patterns, categories, and themes. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) encourage researchers to look to the research questions for guidance in generating coding schemes. The research questions sought to explore the factors that impacted a teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response to the factors that impacted the program. Data collected from interviews, a survey, document review, field notes, and memos were examined throughout the study using inductive analysis (Patton, 2002) or open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2007) to break down the data and discover patterns pertinent to the evolution of this teacher induction program.

The study design included precautionary measures to eliminate potential risks to the participants. Prior to conducting research, the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Human Research program was completed and I obtained written permission to conduct the study from the University of South Carolina Health Sciences South Carolina Institutional Review Board. The purpose of the study, as well as procedures for anonymity and confidentiality were disclosed to potential participants. Participants who agreed to contribute to this study did so on a voluntary basis, and written consent was obtained from each participant at the onset.

Summary

As many professionals do, teachers progress through an induction period when beginning a career in the education system. There are many new responsibilities teachers face during their first few years of teaching in a classroom. Not only are teachers expected to demonstrate proficiency in content knowledge and teaching methods, they are charged with the task of providing evidence their students learned what was taught. Effective teacher induction programs can support and assist beginning teachers in becoming successful practitioners, thus impacting the performance and achievement of students.

Teacher induction programs come in many shapes and sizes, but common elements can be found in the structure and implementation of the induction program. The program structure typically provides a beginning teacher with an induction timeline, various induction components, and best practices to be used in the classroom. Program implementation results in support for the beginning teacher through administrative leadership and mentoring and developing the teacher as a professional. Because schools and districts vary in their composition and needs, the decision to include certain elements into an induction program needs to be based on a rationale that is purposeful and benefits both beginning teachers and their students.

Teacher induction programs can be found in school districts across the nation; however, this study focused on a teacher induction program situated in a diverse, urban, southeastern school district. The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to identify impacts to the program, determine

how the program changed as a result, and explore the strategies used to respond to the impacts.

The qualitative case study design facilitates an in-depth exploration of the teacher induction program situated within an identified school district. A variety of data sources were collected and analyzed to reveal multiple facets of the teacher induction phenomenon. This design resulted in data analysis that allowed for exploration of the phenomenon and identification of and explanations for programmatic changes to an effective teacher induction program.

Organization of the Report

This report is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 is comprised of the introduction of the study and includes the context, the problem statement and purpose of the study, research questions, methodology overview, and related operational terms. Chapter 2 provides a synopsis of related literature and research germane to effective teacher induction programs. Chapter 3 reports the methodology and procedures that were used to collect and analyze data, while Chapter 4 presents a summary of the key findings. Chapter 5 contains the study conclusions and discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, policy implications, and recommendations for further research.

Operational Terms

For this study, a number of key terms have been defined as follows:

Beginning teacher: A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher preparation/education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms first-year or induction teacher.

Best Practice: Professional standards of teaching put in place to guide the practices of teachers. For example, effective classroom management procedures and instructional strategies that produce the desired results would be best practices.

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA): provides training for mentors as part of the overall induction and mentoring initiative to support beginning teachers in South Carolina.

First-year teacher: A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher preparation/education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms beginning or induction teacher.

Effective teacher induction program: Meeting the expectations set forth by the New Teacher Center's *State Policy Review* (Goldrick, 2016).

Induction teacher: A teacher who is entering the teaching profession in the first year of his/her career. This could be directly out of a teacher preparation/education program or through an alternative certification program. This term can be used interchangeably throughout the study with the terms beginning or first-year teacher.

Preservice teacher: A teacher in training in a school for teacher preparation at a 4-year college or university.

Professional development: Ongoing learning opportunities available to teachers and other education personnel, typically offered by their schools and districts.

South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE): Role is to provide and manage educational systems based on legislative mandates that promote sufficient educational systems.

Southeastern United States: For this study, southeastern states include Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Teacher Attrition: Reduction or decrease in the number of teachers remaining in the profession.

Teacher education program: An accredited college or university program of study to prepare students for certification as teachers.

Teacher induction program: A program designed to provide a systematic structure of support for a beginning teacher, including new teacher orientation, mentor teachers, support structures, professional development, and evaluation.

Teacher Mentor: Person who provides support and assistance for beginning teachers.

Teacher Retention: Maintaining the number of teachers that enter the profession.

Title II, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): Federal policy to increase student achievement, improve the quality and effectiveness of educators, and provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to explore the factors that impacted the program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response of the district to those impacts. The literature review will provide an overview of teacher induction theories and programs. Although there has been wide support and discussion about the components of teacher induction programs, there has been limited attention in the literature on how various factors impact the effectiveness of teacher induction programs. This literature review was compiled to fill the void in knowledge and to provide a solid foundation for the present study.

The process for conducting this review of the literature first began in 2012 and continued through 2017. A systematic search was conducted to locate literature on the topic of teacher induction programs using Google Scholar and the University of South Carolina library system databases. The search terms used for the initial search include *teacher induction* and *teacher induction programs*. I included all fields, including title, abstract, key words, and full text for all result types (articles, studies, books, etc.) for each search. Steps were taken to ensure articles were timely and published in a peer-reviewed journal or other publication. Subsequent searches were conducted using the terms *beginning teacher support*, *mentoring and induction*, *teacher induction program structure*, and *teacher induction program implementation*. In addition, references and

bibliographies by researchers in the field of teacher mentoring and induction were used to identify relevant studies. Further resources such as internal citations and references found within initial sources were also explored. To focus on the evolution of teacher induction programs through the structure and implementation of program components, literature on school culture and climate for beginning teachers and teacher attrition was excluded from this review.

The organization of this chapter is based upon the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (see Figure 2.1) created to guide this study. A general overview of teacher induction programs will be provided and the historical review of teacher induction theory will be discussed. Within the teacher induction program structure, research will focus on the timeline, components and best practices that are found in effective teacher induction programs. Similarly, research on leadership, support, and professional development that characterize effective teacher induction program implementation will be provided.

Overview of Teacher Induction Programs

Upon entering the field of education, beginning teachers lack one thing many of their colleagues possess—experience. All teachers, either formally or informally, experience the rite of induction. That is to say, all teachers have a beginning point at which they enter the classroom for the first time. To gain experience that results in effective teaching and student learning most beginning teachers depend on the support that an induction program provides to successfully navigate the first years of teaching (Wong, 2002). As in other fields, beginning teachers benefit from the knowledge and experience of established colleagues who have proven to be effective. Bruner (1996) surmises in the cultural-psychological approach that it is a responsibility of
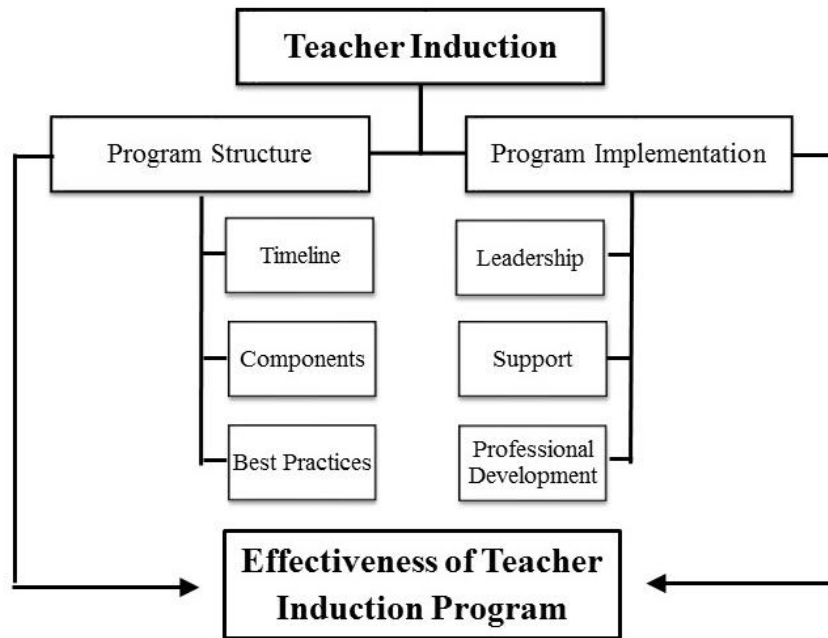
Figure 2.1 Teacher Induction Theoretical Model

members in a group "to help each other get the lay of the land and the hang of the job" (p. 21). To guide and promote the development of new teachers, induction programs are designed to assist them as they master new responsibilities.

Teacher induction programs are constructed in various formats, but have some common characteristics (Moir, 2003; Wong, 2002; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005). For example, induction programs should be comprehensive, include support that focuses on teacher development, promote continuous opportunities for learning, and assist beginning teachers in becoming a part of the school culture (Wong, 2002). In addition to the components of induction programs listed above, in a report to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Moir (2003) emphasizes the importance of policy to guide implementation and that policy makers "provide adequate funding to help districts meet these mandates" (p. 8).

Although the characteristics of teacher induction programs have often been researched, few researchers have looked at factors with long-term positive effects (Ingersoll, 2001). In prior studies (Wong, Britton, and Ganser, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), researchers identified specific limitations of teacher induction programs that warrant further investigation. For example, in their critical examination of 15 empirical studies on induction, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) concluded that, "Future research could begin to clarify and sort out which elements, supports, and kinds of assistance are best and why," suggesting there be more clarification on "the balance between induction focused on acquiring pedagogical skill versus that focused on subject-matter content" (p. 227).

Historical Review of Teacher Induction Theory

Induction programs typically provide support and guidance in an organized format for beginning teachers during the first years of teaching (Wong, 2002). Assistance for beginning teachers may include the assignment of a mentor teacher to provide support and assistance throughout the induction process (Wong et al., 2005). Glazerman et al. (2010) agree with Wong, but stress that the mentor should have teaching experience and training in the mentor process. They also outline that comprehensive induction support moves beyond the assignment of a mentor to include both school and district orientations, focused professional development, the opportunity to observe in other classrooms, and opportunities for constructive feedback.

A review of the literature revealed the support known as teacher induction first became discussed as an educational issue in the mid-1900s (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). While the act of inducting teachers into the profession has evolved over time, the

definition of induction has remained relatively constant. Veenman (1984) conceptualized the process of induction as the "entry and the planned support the new teachers receive as it occurs" (p. 165), while Wong, et al. (2005) expanded upon this concept emphasizing that, "Induction is a highly organized and comprehensive form of staff development, involving many people and components, that typically continues as a sustained process for the first two to five years of a teacher's career" (p. 379).

Wood and Stanulis (2009) use a wave metaphor to describe "the ebb and flow (initiation and culmination) of induction programs" (p. 2). The waves are representative of time periods that prompted various degrees of implementation as a response to social, political, and economic issues. The first three waves cover a ten-year period (1986-1996) where induction practices progressed from new teachers having a buddy teacher as support to a more structured program. The fourth wave (1997-2006) of teacher induction experienced additional modification resulting in programs that were more comprehensive and would provide beginning teachers diverse mentoring and professional development opportunities.

The most basic theoretical supposition that growth and learning take place through experience stems from Dewey (1997), although he cautioned "growth might take many different directions" (p. 13). Thus, Dewey reminds us that we must not lose sight of the "direction" or the "end" we want to achieve as we put in place programs to assist new teachers. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) describe the goal of induction programs as support put in place that leads to student growth. This goal can be achieved through the development of beginning teachers who then choose to remain in the classroom. In their critical review of the research, they propose a theory of teacher development that begins

with preservice training and progresses to an induction program. This support results in improved classroom teaching practices and teacher retention which lead to improved student performance.

Existing research on the effects of teacher induction programs as they relate to teacher quality and student performance concludes that such programs can be effective, but there is limited research to explain why that is the case (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Mori, 2009; Wong, 2002). Induction programs are structured and implemented within schools in a variety of ways that result in diverse outcomes. In their critical review of the impact of induction and mentoring programs, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) proposed that the inclusion of an induction program would result in teachers who are better prepared, contribute to improved student learning and growth, and are more likely to remain in the profession.

The rationale behind the inclusion of certain components into the induction program must be considered to ensure that teachers and their students benefit. Wong et al. (2005) reviewed in-depth case studies of induction programs for purposes of providing a rich description of the nature and design of such programs. They determined that teacher induction programs are structured and that leaders at both the school and district levels provide support to beginning teachers for several years. Clark and Duggins (2016) accentuate putting in place an induction plan that "builds systems of support among peers; allows for networking with mentors, veteran teachers, school- and district-level support staff; and creates space for professional learning" (p. 41).

While some of the existing research helps define characteristics and parameters of teacher induction programs, other research focuses on the development of the teacher

within the learning community of the school or on teacher attrition. Kardos, Johnson, Peske, Kauffman and Liu (2001) studied how beginning teachers behaved within different school cultures and related how those experiences shaped the teacher's view of the profession. Additionally, the characteristics of individual teachers have often been researched in light of attrition, but it is not as common for researchers to study how factors affect the school system (Ingersoll, 2001). Although school culture and teacher attrition are viable attributes to consider while exploring teacher induction, the focus of this study is on the research that specifically addresses the structure, implementation, and effects of induction programs.

Teacher Induction Program Structure

The structure of teacher induction programs is often driven by policy and school district leadership (Moir, 2009). Common characteristics of induction program structure center on a timeline that defines the period of duration for the program (Ganser, 2005). Structural components such as mentoring and release time from teaching for collaboration with colleagues are common practices. Induction programs are designed to provide beginning teachers with best practices in their teaching methods (Wong, 2005).

Although their perceptions are not based on a formal research study, Clark and Duggins (2016) offer the following suggestions about induction programs from a practitioner perspective. They suggest that the "main purpose of a formal induction program is to elevate the teaching profession and promote support for new teachers" (Clark & Duggins, 2016, p. 41). They emphasize this rationale by stating that induction programs should be developed to include formative assessments, collaboration with a

mentor, and the development of a professional development plan (Clark & Duggins, 2016).

Within the following sections, I elaborate on the identified common characteristics of teacher induction program structure. The section on the temporal organization of induction programs will consider the factors that influence them. I will also discuss the common components and best practices found within teacher induction programs.

Teacher Induction Program Structure: Timeline

Effective induction programs incorporate a timeline that defines the duration of the program. Teacher induction programs vary in length, with some institutions initiating the process before the beginning teacher even reports to school for the first time (Ganser, 2005). Wong et al. (2005) suggest that induction programs are most beneficial for new teachers if in place for two-five years. They conclude that school "districts that provide structured, sustained induction, training, and support for their teachers achieve what every school district seeks to achieve — improved student learning through improved professional learning" (p. 384).

School districts determining the exact timeline can be influenced by many factors including funding and resources, but researchers agree that the duration of teacher induction programs impacts the support provided to beginning teachers (Ganser, 2005; Wong, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Interestingly, Ingersoll and Strong, (2011) also ponder when the saturation point of teacher induction might occur, "is there an optimum program length and intensity for induction and mentoring programs, beyond which additional time invested diminishes in value?" (p. 228). However, Wong (2005) notes in

his critical review of the literature that induction programs are just the beginning of a teacher's career-long professional learning and are not intended to mark the end of systemic support for teachers.

Villani (2004) states that one of the items to consider when designing an induction program is its duration. She suggests that induction might encompass three successive years. The first year could focus on a beginning teacher acclimating to the school environment and developing content pedagogy, while the second and third years could expand upon coaching to better understand the content being taught to a classroom of diverse learners. In their study analysis of beginning teachers, Hobson and Ashby (2012) note that some teachers who participated in a one-year induction program experienced a "phenomenon called reality aftershock" during their second year of teaching (p. 177). They argue that the difficulties second year teachers have may be a result of decreased or removal of support. Having support that continues into the second and even third years of teaching may alleviate this reaction.

Teacher Induction Program Structure: Components

Just as the duration of teacher induction varies among institutions, the components of the program also range from minimal to exceeding recommendations based on best practices. What constitutes a best practice is sometimes confusing. Educators, textbook publishers, and even providers of professional development are fond of categorizing and labeling teaching practices. As a result, educators grapple with what is best. If a practice is *best,* is it the most effective? Is there nothing better? Ermeling, Hiebert, and Gallimore (2015) caution educators on the term *best practice*. They emphasize that by labeling a method as best practice, educators risk confusing activity

with achievement, and accepting the "mere presence of specific instructional practices as meaningful" learning (p.50).

Wang, Odell, and Clift (2010) remind us that, "improved student learning is the ultimate goal of teaching and, therefore, an important component of an effective induction program" (p. 8). In preparation for the development of a high impact induction program that will lead to targeted professional growth and student achievement, Sweeney (2008) considers certain components crucial. Providing the new teacher with an orientation and training will help ensure that teachers are successful during the first year. Additionally, the development of professional goals and an action plan assist beginning teachers as they progress to desired levels of proficiency. Sweeney (2008) suggests beginning teachers receive support and guidance from a mentor to help "make sense of and apply in the classroom what was learned in other induction activities," (p. 54).

Five common components of effective induction programs that have consistently emerged from the research and professional literature included in this review are that programs are *policy-driven*, they *communicate clear expectations*, they are *comprehensive*, there are *provisions for pertinent teacher development*, and *levels of support* are provided throughout the duration of the program (Moir, 2009; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). These components will be explored in-depth in the Program Implementation section.

While resources to construct an effective induction program may be scarce due to funding, in a program review of the New Teacher Center Induction Model, Moir (2009) emphasizes that those developing policy must be cognizant of existing resources such as mentors and professional development opportunities, and be willing and able to

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implement policies such as reduced teaching loads and release time for mentors to support beginning teachers. In their findings from a pilot study of the cost of teacher turnover in five school districts, Barnes, Crowe and Schaefer (2007) suggest funding the development of beginning teachers at the onset "by implementing an effective retention strategy, such as a high quality induction program" (p. 5). Their rationale is that investment in such program policy would pay off by not having to replace teachers due to turnover. Duke, Karson and Wheeler (2006) also "believe that the long-term benefits to student achievement brought on through retention of more experienced teachers justify any short-term costs" (p. 14).

Glazerman et al. (2010) studied the impacts of comprehensive teacher induction in relation to "usual induction support" in over 400 schools within 17 urban districts. In their executive summary of this study, the authors specify that, "support that is intensive, structured, and sequentially delivered is sometimes referred to as 'comprehensive' induction" (p. xxiii). Glazerman et al. (2010) propose that comprehensive induction programs provide beginning teachers with "experienced, trained fulltime mentors and may also include a combination of school and district orientation sessions, special in-service training (professional development), classroom observations, and constructive feedback through formative assessment" (p. xxiii).

Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) conducted a two-year case study that examined two teachers that participated in separate induction programs and conclude that it is not only the induction program that makes a difference, but how the individual school sets expectations for overall professional development. They assert that, "if mentoring is to function as a form of individualized professional development, it must be

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guided by a vision of the kind of teaching to be developed" (p. 695). A study by Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) conducted to determine the implementation and effectiveness of two middle school induction programs revealed professional development opportunities for beginning teachers provided necessary skill honing in the areas of management, curriculum and students as learners.

Support for beginning teachers includes programs implemented at the state, district, and school levels. The primary source of support for most beginning teachers is at the school level. In a brief published by The New Teacher Center, Watkins (2016) emphasized the role of the principal as instrumental in the success of the induction program by ensuring measures are in place to promote a productive relationship between the beginning teacher and the mentor. The brief elaborates further on the relationships that exist between the principal and district induction leaders, as well as those between the principal and the assigned mentors. Open communication between the principal and district leaders will ensure the principal stays abreast of teacher induction program requirements and guidelines. To promote teaching and learning, the brief suggests a three-way relationship based on "communication, collaboration, and coordination" (p. 2) between the principal, mentor, and beginning teacher. We are reminded in Ingersoll's (2012) review of pertinent studies that continued support for beginning teachers is not consistent among school systems. Study results revealed, "the data also show that the kinds and amounts of support vary [in] content, intensity, and duration" (Ingersoll, 2012, p. 51).

Teacher Induction Program Structure: Best Practices

Educators, through experience and research, have adopted best practices that purport to garner desired results, specifically, increased student achievement. Combining best practices with national, state, and subject-specific standards result in a conundrum that educators, researchers, and policy-makers regularly attempt to make sense of to increase student performance. Ganser (2005) conducted an exploration of current and emerging trends of induction and mentoring programs and notes the design of current teacher induction programs was dictated in response to the rise of professional standards for teaching. Although beginning teachers depend on academic standards to provide the content for teaching, they rely on best practice research to establish classroom management procedures and routines and develop instructional strategies (Wong, 2002).

In their review of the scientific evidence on effective teaching practices, Zenelman, Daniels, and Hyde (2005) express concern over the term *best practice*. They warn the term has "suffered from 'terminology drift,' a process by which useful educational ideas become overly popular, are carelessly used, and come unmoored from their original meanings" (pg. v). Zenelman et al. (2005) discuss how educators borrowed the term from the medical and legal professions where the term *best practice* was used to refer to the soundest practices. They assert there is an underlying assumption that those adhering to best practice are up to date on current research and standards of practice. Zenelman, et al. (2005) go on to say that educators should also have a professional language which "must label and respect practice that is at the leading edge of the field" (pg. vi). Their definition of best practice is stated as "a shorthand emblem of serious, thoughtful, informed, responsible, state-of-the-art teaching" (pg. vi).

Daniels and Bizar (2005) suggest, "Best Practice kids….do better on the customary measures of educational achievement as a natural consequence of good teaching—or as a side effect of it" (pg. 3). In a discussion of teaching methods, Daniels and Bizar (2005) contribute improved achievement of students to best practices such as small-group projects, strategic reading activities, and authentic experiences.

Situated in a more historical and philosophical context, Bullough (2011) suggests educators replace the term "best practice" with "better practice" as a more appropriate concept. In his discussion of current challenges of teaching, Bullough (2011) emphasizes the need of collaboration among educators and the research community, stating that "local studies hold genuine promise," (p. 355) and "enrich and enliven the conversation about teaching, produce better, more intelligent and contextually fitting practices and, as suggested, probably raise test scores" (p.355).

Effective teacher induction programs are designed in ways that reflect best practice strategies (Wong, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The inclusion of strategies that support classroom management and instructional strategies within a comprehensive professional development plan will provide beginning teachers with the necessary support to become effective in the process of teaching and learning (Moir, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2005).

Teacher Induction Program Implementation

Teacher induction program structure relies on the implementation of its components to provide beginning teachers with the training and support needed to become effective practitioners (Wong, 2005). In a report prepared for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005)

advocate, "a system of induction should include a network of supports, people, and processes that are all focused on assuring that novices become effective in their work" (p. 4).

Effective program implementation centers on school district leadership that organizes support and the provision of professional development opportunities to allow novice teachers to further develop within the field. Drexel (2006) emphasizes, "a crucial factor in all of this, of course, is strong administrative support and encouragement coupled with the time, resources and space to provide comprehensive induction" (p. 36). Feiman-Nemser (2001) cautions educational leaders to "frame induction around a vision of good teaching and compelling standards for student learning" that results in "promoting teacher development and improving the quality of teaching and learning" (p. 1031).

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Leadership

Those responsible for the implementation of teacher induction programs usually include a district level administrator, school administrators, and possibly a curriculum coach or lead teacher. Wong (2005) surmised that this administrative support is an essential component that needs to be present in effective teacher induction programs. Wong et al. (2005) note that the increased number of induction programs present in schools across the country leads us to believe that those who play a part in the development and implementation of the programs not only favorably endorse the programs, but also have an integral role in shaping and reshaping them to meet the changing demands placed upon teachers.

Arends and Rigazio-DiGilio (2000) reviewed research on teacher induction programs and in their summary, acknowledge that orientation or induction programs can be found in most school districts. They maintain that some orientation programs are minimal, involving less than a day of training before the start of school. These programs introduce the teachers to the organization and train them on policies and procedures of the school or district. The past decade, however, has seen an attempt by many school districts to formalize their induction programs. In his study on variations in district policy for teacher induction, Youngs' (2007) findings indicate the differences in district policy pertaining to the selection and assignment of mentors, as well as the professional development policy, appear to be related to the variations in induction support.

Wood and Stanulis (2009) published an essay on teacher induction program development and research that proposes, "the effective implementation of other induction components depends on site administrators' leadership and commitment to induction" (p. 11). In a prior study, Wood (2005) indicated that school principals assume multiple roles in the induction process, including instructional leader, teacher recruiter and advocate/retainer, facilitator of mentor preparation and mentoring, and builder of school culture. While Wood (2005) postulates on the roles instructional leaders may play, the New Teacher Center (2012) suggests in a report that, "an effective program leader understands the potential of comprehensive teacher induction to leverage change. Strong programs require leaders with vision that reaches beyond the initial years of a teacher's practice" (p. 2).

Often, it requires more than just district and school administrators to implement a quality induction program. Those responsible for the implementation of teacher induction

programs could also include a curriculum coach or lead teacher. There are both benefits

and challenges to having an increased number of participants in the process. Ganser

(2005) surmised that while increasing the number of stakeholders allows for more

educators to take ownership of the induction program and what it represents, there will be

additional opportunities for multiple trains of thought that could both promote and hinder

program implementation. Ensuring that all stakeholders participate in the planning of an

induction program that has clearly defined goals and expectations that keep teaching and

learning as the primary focus will allow teachers participating in the program to

experience higher levels of success (Moir, 2009).

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Support

The most common formal provision of support for beginning teachers is the

assignment of a mentor. Wong (2005) observes that induction and mentoring are not one

and the same. Specifically, he explains that induction is the program, while mentoring is

a component of the induction program. As Drexel (2006) explained in his review of the

literature, mentoring is a key component of induction programs for new teachers. He

indicates further that

> schools should consider assigning new teachers to a "triad" of mentors: a formal
>
> mentor, a lead teacher, and a department head. This "triad" approach, along with
>
> various administrative supports and small groups, will go a long way in helping
>
> new teachers grow and succeed professionally. (p. 36)

Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) conducted an in-depth case study in which

they focused on the experiences of two beginning teachers. Their research focused

specifically on the interaction of beginning teachers with differing levels of support. In

the results of this study they suggested policy makers and educational leaders promote and actively construct induction experiences that empower new teachers to experience success.

While the focus of induction programs is usually on the beginning teacher, school district leaders must also determine how to best provide training for those selected to mentor novice teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Ganser (2005) distinguishes how the characteristics of a mentor have changed over time. Whereas it was desirable to have mentors with about a decade of teaching experience that shared the same grade level, subjects taught, and the same planning time as their mentees, several factors negatively impact achievement of this configuration. For example, as experienced teachers retire or assume other leadership roles, those left to mentor new teachers may be teachers with fewer years of experience in the field. Feiman-Nemser (2001) stresses, "educative mentoring rests on an explicit vision of good teaching and an understanding of teacher learning" (pg. 18).

In the southeastern United States, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina have in place programs to provide support for beginning teachers. The Georgia Department of Education implemented a teacher induction program in 2011-2012 as part of its Race to the Top initiative. Program guidelines state that mentors are to be recruited and provided with differentiated training based on individual needs to provide support to beginning teachers (Georgia Department of Education, 2016). North Carolina has mentor standards in place as part of its teacher induction program. Selected mentors are provided a formal orientation and foundational training to prepare them for working with new teachers (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2017). In South Carolina, The

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), provides training for mentors as part of the overall induction and mentoring initiative to support beginning teachers (South Carolina Induction, 2006).

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Professional Development

While mentoring is a form of professional development, Wong (2005) stresses that induction mentoring should be part of a more comprehensive professional development plan that continues to progress throughout a teacher's career. Norman and Feiman-Nemser, (2005) relate this professional development to the vision that school district leaders have for developing teaching practices that will support the desired educational program. Wong (2005) concurs, stating "good induction programs are comprehensive, last several years, have clearly articulated goals, and provide a structured and nurturing system of professional development and support" (p.43).

Results from a study of induction program structure and implementation in France, Japan, China, New Zealand and Switzerland conducted by Wong, et al. (2005) revealed these five countries shared a highly structured focus on professional learning. When compared with programs in these five countries, professional development opportunities for beginning teachers in the U.S. were found to be insufficient in alignment and duration. It should be noted the programs in this study received adequate funding, were comprised of many levels of focused assistance, and implemented teacher development opportunities for at least two years.

Applications for school districts in the United States include three factors that were common to the international induction programs researched by Wong, Britton and

Ganser (2005). First, the induction program should be highly structured with defined roles for participants. Secondly, the focus on professional learning should result in a continuous program throughout the career of a teacher. Lastly, collaboration opportunities must be provided teachers to prevent the exclusion that many novice teachers experience (Wong et al., 2005).

The National Teacher Center (2012) reports that school districts often structure professional development opportunities to meet needs of beginning teachers and to provide support with the district's curriculum and instructional initiatives. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) conducted a study of two middle schools to determine the effectiveness of teacher induction program implementation. In their findings, they put forth that classroom practices of all beginning teachers who participated in the study benefited from the professional learning provided by the program. Alternatively, Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) emphasize districts should remain vigilant to ensure professional learning opportunities are structured to enhance and support other teaching responsibilities, not hinder them. Interview participants revealed "time" as a valuable commodity that should not be squandered with unhelpful professional learning sessions.

Summary

The conceptual framework for this study is organized according to *structural* and *program implementation* themes found in the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1). These are essential to effective teacher induction programs. The *structural* themes I researched in the literature include the timeline or duration of the program, structural components, and best practices of teacher induction. Each of these structural themes will be summarized below.

Researchers (Villani, 2004; Hobson & Ashby, 2012) suggest that the timeline or duration of teacher induction should be considered during the program's design phase. Teacher induction program length varies from one to five years (Ganser, 2005; Wong et al. 2005) and is influenced by factors such as funding and resources (Wong, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Just as the duration of teacher induction varies, so does the inclusion of components in the program. Many researchers (e.g., Wang, Odell & Clift, 2010; Sweeney, 2008) focus on improved student learning as the culminating goal for induction programs. The five most common components of induction programs revealed in the literature are (a) programs are policy-driven, (b) they communicate clear expectations, (c) they are comprehensive, (d) there are provisions for pertinent teacher development, and (e) levels of support are provided throughout the duration of the program (Moir, 2009; Wong, 2002; Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Clark & Duggins, 2016).

As discussed in an earlier section, the term "best practice" can prove to be troublesome. Again, keeping in mind that increased student achievement is the primary goal, professional standards of teaching are put in place to guide the practices of teachers. Combining sound educational practices such as classroom management procedures and routines, as well as instructional strategies (Wong, 2002) with the content standards should result in the desired result of increased student achievement. The inclusion of best practice strategies into current induction program structure was likely dictated in response to the rise of rigorous standards and expectations for increased student performance (Ganser, 2005).

In addition to the *structural* themes discussed above, *program implementation* themes are essential to effective teacher induction programs. The themes I researched for *program implementation* include leadership, support, and professional development. While the structural themes address the "what" of an induction program, the implementation themes address "how" those will be put into play.

Those responsible for the implementation of teacher induction programs usually include a district level administrator, school administrators, and possibly a curriculum coach or lead teacher. Research concludes that administrative support is a vital piece of teacher induction programs (Wong, 2005) and considers that administrators play a part in the design of programs that will meet the needs of induction teachers (Wong et al., 2005).

The most common formal provision of support for beginning teachers is the assignment of a mentor, though it is not uncommon for an induction teacher to also be supported by a lead teacher or small groups of educators, such as professional learning communities (Drexel, 2006). While policy makers and educational leaders should construct induction experiences that empower teachers to experience success (Norman & Feiman-Nemser, 2005), school district leaders must also determine how to best provide training for those selected to mentor novice teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

During my research, sustained professional development that is part of a comprehensive plan emerged as a recurring theme for teacher induction programs (Wong, 2005; Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005). Professional development opportunities for induction teachers should assist with the development of teaching practices that support the desired educational program (Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005), as well as provide focused support that fosters professional growth of these teachers (Wong, 2005).

Through analysis of critical reviews, exploration of current and emerging trends, program reviews, and case study findings, the research supports the structural and program implementation themes discussed above as common characteristics of teacher induction programs (Ganser, 2005; Moir, 2009; Ingersoll and Strong, 2011; Norman and Feiman-Nemser, 2005; Wong, 2002, 2005; Wong et al., 2005). Additionally, the research addressed teacher attrition and school culture as they relate to teacher induction programs (Kardos, et.al, 2001; Ingersoll, 2001); however, since the focus of this study is on the structure and implementation of induction programs, attrition and school culture were excluded from this review of literature.

To inform the practice of teacher induction programs, especially as they relate to effective leadership and increased student performance, focused research in this field is needed. Existing research has provided policy makers and educational leaders valuable information on teacher induction programs. For example, in a review of the research, Arends and Rigazio-DiGilio (2000) identified trends in teacher induction programs including a renewed interest in the implementation of induction programs, extending the timeline of the program beyond the first year, and connecting the induction process to state standards, state licensure, and national certification. Keeping in mind that the practical application of research findings informs policy and policy drives education, both policy makers and educators should support continued research in the area of teacher induction.

As indicated in the literature review, the structure and components of teacher induction programs help define the overall effectiveness of beginning teachers. This overview of teacher induction theories and programs lays the foundation for the

examination of the evolution of a teacher induction program. The goal of this study is to investigate and understand how one diverse, urban, southeastern school district has responded to impacts to its teacher induction program over the course of five years. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to explore the factors that impacted the program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response of the district. The research questions that guide this study are:

(1) How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

(2) What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

(3) What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

In this chapter, a general overview of teacher induction programs was presented and the historical review of teacher induction theory was discussed. The Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1) was introduced to provide a visual guide to the organization of the research. In Chapter 3, I will support the use of a qualitative research approach as appropriate for this study and the methodology and procedures for data collection will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

"Qualitative inquiry cultivates the most useful of all human capacities: The capacity to learn" (Patton, 2015, p.1). This study delves into multiple facets of teacher induction programs that are unique to the educational systems in which they exist in an attempt to *learn*. Merriam (2009) states that researchers conducting basic qualitative research desire a better understanding of "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 23). For this study, qualitative research will allow for exploration of teacher induction using questions that examine both the impacts and responses that transformed a teacher induction program during its evolution over a five-year span. The primary research questions that guided the scope and sequence of my research are:

(1) How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

(2) What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

(3) What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

Qualitative Research

To gain a deeper understanding of teacher induction programs and how factors may impact the effectiveness of the programs, a qualitative approach was used. This method is appropriate considering both the exploratory and explanatory components of this study. Creswell (2007) considers using qualitative research appropriate when "a problem or issue needs to be explored" (p. 39). Merriam (1998) contrasts this approach

with quantitative research, reminding us that quantitative research "takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts," (p. 6), while "qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole" (p. 6). The purpose of this study was to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to explore factors that impacted the program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response of the district.

Case Study

Yin (2003) reminds us that we must first consider the research question(s) being asked before we determine the research strategy. He contends that, "'how' and 'why' questions are more *explanatory* and likely to lead to the use of case studies" (p. 6). Yin (2003) also states the case study method is helpful for illuminating the contextual conditions of a study. Exploration of this teacher induction program was situated within the context of a singular district and revolved around research questions that sought to explain "how" and "why."

According to Merriam (1998), researchers are cautioned to clearly identify "the case," and determine the case is a self-contained unit (bounded system) that will allow for finite study of the phenomenon. The school district is the case (self-contained unit) and the phenomenon is the teacher induction program. Due to the configuration of school districts, there is a set number of key people to interview and survey, and pertinent documents to review during the data collection phase. This constitutes a finite study of the phenomenon through analysis of the teacher induction program.

Research Design

This study used a single case design to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to identify impacts to the program and the district's strategic response. To best explore and analyze the teacher induction program, key school district personnel were interviewed. Teachers who participated in the district's induction program were surveyed. Additionally, pertinent documents such as legislation, district policy, district budgets, school board minutes, district strategic plans and induction program documents were reviewed and analyzed to help identify impacts faced by the school district during the evolution of the induction program. Glesne (2011) advises that, "an instrumental case study refers to studying a particular case to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization" (p. 22). This design provided the opportunity to explore the induction program from different perspectives, while maintaining the focus on the circumstances faced by the district that impacted the program. Additionally, the district's response to these challenges was determined through interviews, a survey, and the document analysis process.

This study investigated the evolution of a teacher induction program in one diverse, urban, southeastern school district. Maxwell (2013) guides us to make data collection decisions based upon the "issues you are studying and the specific context of your research" (p. 87), while Creswell (2007) advocates collecting "multiple forms of data to build the in-depth case" (p. 143). To best understand the factors that impacted an effective teacher induction program, Glesne's (2011) recommendation was followed to determine the best options for gathering data about what I wanted to learn. Based upon

this study's research questions and Glesne's (2011) thoughts on data-gathering, I selected techniques that:

(1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in

question,

(2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and

(3) make effective use of the time available. (p. 48)

The intent of the original study design included inviting teachers who had participated in this district's induction program to participate in a focus group. This would allow the teacher voice to be heard. Due to unforeseen impediments, the focus group was not part of the data collection for this study. To examine the evolution of this induction program, interviews, a survey, and document review and analyses were used to collect data.

Seidman (2008) characterizes interviewing as "a basic mode of inquiry" (p. 8). For case studies, Yin (1994) considers interviews to be key in obtaining information, often through an open-ended format. Merriam (1998) guides researchers to select the interview type by considering "the amount of structure desired" (p. 72). Merriam (1998) goes on to explain that the most structured type of interview resembles a survey and may limit what the participant has to offer the study. Alternatively, unstructured interviews are used more for probing in an exploratory manner to learn more about the phenomenon.

Falling midway between the two on Merriam's (1998) continuum for interview structure are semi-structured interviews, often used to garner information based on specific questions. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect data that led to a better understanding of this induction program. The design of the

open-ended questions encouraged each interview participant to move beyond one- or two-word responses, resulting in richer data collection (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994).

This method was suitable to obtain information from the deputy superintendent and the coordinator of teacher quality. These individuals are situated at the district level and each has a different perspective toward the program. The deputy superintendent oversees the district's instructional division and actively supports professional development for all teachers in the district, including beginning teachers. The coordinator of teacher quality is situated in the personnel division and works closely with teacher quality, including the management of the teacher induction program. While the deputy superintendent may not have first-hand knowledge of the day-to-day operations of the induction program, he is aware of its structure and implementation within the district.

Interviews were also conducted with the former coordinator and a former master teacher for the mentoring and induction program to determine factors that may have impacted the district's program. The former coordinator, in collaboration with the instructional division, crafted the district's program components to move beyond minimum requirements mandated by the state. One of these components was the addition of district-level master teachers, creating a comprehensive team to assist with the design and implementation of the program. This addition expanded the district-level team to include experienced classroom teachers as master teachers who supported the trained teacher mentors and beginning teachers. This support system was in place for at least two years to ensure beginning teachers had support through year two, the highly-consequential formal evaluation year. For this district, formal evaluations determine if a continuing contract is offered to the teacher for year three.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) elaborate on two specified paths for conducting interviews. Interviews may either be the prevalent means for collecting data or they may be combined "with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p.94) of data collection. I followed the second path, combining interviews with a survey and document review and analysis.

To help construct a comprehensive picture of the evolution of this teacher induction program, a survey was used to collect data from teachers who were employed with the district and participated in the teacher induction program as a beginning teacher during this timeframe. Although this strategy was more structured than the interview technique discussed above, it allowed for participants to respond to questions specific to the topic of the induction program's structure and implementation. Merriam (1998) explains that although using highly structured questions limits participant perspective, it can also be beneficial when you "want everyone to respond to a particular statement or to define a particular concept or term" (p. 74).

School districts produce and receive extensive amounts of documentation, especially for programs that receive federal and/or state funding. Teacher induction is one such program. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the teacher induction program, documents including legislation, school board minutes, district budget, and program documents were reviewed. Analyses of these documents helped develop a deeper understanding of factors that impacted the induction program and any strategies put in place as a response.

Site Selection

The purpose of this study is to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction program to identify factors that impacted the program, as well as explore the district's response. This study will focus on examining the evolution of a teacher induction program situated in a diverse, urban, southeastern school district in South Carolina. The selection of this district was not simply one of convenience. My former association with this district as a classroom teacher and school administrator defines my membership status as one with unique insight into the context of this study. In their exploration of membership roles for those conducting qualitative research, Dwyer and Buckle (2009) suggest that researchers can "occupy the position of both insider and outsider rather than insider or outsider (p. 54). My former affiliation with the school district and key personnel provided me with an understanding of the district's configuration and programs, and the experience necessary for study participants to accept my current position as a legitimate researcher within the context of this district. Because I am no longer a part of this district, there is an element of outsider status present for this case study. I consider the length of my separation from the district long enough to allow for objective, rather than subjective data collection and analysis.

Many years prior to this study timeframe, I was a beginning teacher in this district, navigating my first year of teaching without the support of a formal induction program. This district, like most others at that time, assigned a buddy teacher to help new teachers survive the first year in the classroom. Fast forward about a decade, and you would see the introduction of formal induction programs into most school systems, including this district. My transition into school-level administration defined my role as

more evaluative than that of a mentor for beginning teachers. My lack of experience with the mentoring component of support on the receiving or giving end prompted my interest in the overall induction program. Over successive years, I watched the induction program evolve. What I did not see were the factors that impacted this program over time. I only saw pieces of the district's response to factors that impacted the program.

To remain purposeful in my site selection, I referred to Goldrick's (2016) state policy review to ensure this school district met the expectations set forth by the New Teacher Center's (NTC) recommended criteria for induction and mentoring programs. The South Carolina State Department of Education (SCDE) mandates districts-including this site-adhere to eight of the nine criteria recommended by the NTC as most critical for providing high quality induction and mentoring support for beginning teachers. Criteria included in the South Carolina's program are: (1) serving new educators, (2) quality mentors, (3) allotment of sufficient time for mentor/mentee collaboration, (4) program quality, (5) program standards, (6) funding, (7) educator licensure to move beyond induction status, and (8) program accountability. Not included in the state's program is the ninth criterion, formal standards for teaching and learning conditions.

In addition to my association with this district and its meeting the recommended criterion for induction and mentoring programs, I considered what defines this site as one that can offer the best insight into an effective teacher induction program. While still working in this district, the teacher mentoring and induction program was viewed by neighboring districts as one that exceeded the expectations mandated by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). After leaving this district, I was exposed to programs in other districts that did not offer the levels of support provided by this site.

To summarize, this site was selected because it meets all the recommended criteria critical to high quality induction and mentoring support mandated by the state. My positionality as both an insider and outsider contributed to a deeper understanding of all the components of this teacher induction program as it evolved over time. Additionally, the status of this district's program as one that exceeded expectations led to its selection as the case for this study.

Participant Selection

Having identified the school district, I identified key school district personnel. These participants were purposefully selected because of their roles within the school district during the timeframe of the study. The district's superintendent was contacted, and the purpose and method of this study was shared with him. With the superintendent assuming the role of gatekeeper for this system, his approval to conduct the study was an essential piece of the study design (Glesne, 2011). The superintendent granted approval, and the deputy superintendent was designated as the primary district contact to assist with gaining access to participants and documents. The deputy superintendent has direct experience working with the implementation of the teacher induction program and with the other divisions within the district, making him the most logical person to facilitate identifying participants for the study.

Interviews were conducted with key school district personnel. In addition to the deputy superintendent, the coordinator of teacher quality participated in a person-to-person interview. During the final year of the timeframe for this study, the induction program was moved from the instructional division to the personnel division. The coordinator of teacher quality works within the personnel division and could speak to the

induction program for that year. Invitations to participate in interviews were also extended to the former coordinator and a former district master teacher for the district's mentoring and induction program. These two participants were key district personnel during the first four years of the study timeframe. In addition to these district level interviews, a school principal was invited to participate in an interview. This principal has been employed with the district over the course of the defined timeframe, adding yet another perspective to the study.

The purpose of the survey used was to help construct a comprehensive picture of the evolution of this teacher induction program. Yin (1994) advocates the use of surveys in the overall case study design. Data gathered from surveys are based upon the perceptions of the respondents and can provide an additional component to the study. With the assistance of the coordinator of teacher quality, teachers were identified based upon their employment with this district and participation in the teacher induction program during the specified timeframe. There were thirty-three teachers who met these criteria still working in the district. These teachers were sent an email invitation to participate in the study and the purpose of the survey was conveyed. There were fourteen respondents who completed survey questions on the topic of the district's induction program structure and implementation.

To further examine the evolution of this teacher induction program, review and analysis of pertinent documents was necessary. Patton (2002) encourages the review of documents, stating, "they can reveal goals or decisions" (p. 293), providing useful information not otherwise observable. The district's chief financial officer was contacted, and induction program budget documents were provided for the years of this study. The

district's director of public information provided electronic copies of school board minutes, and teacher induction program documents were provided by the coordinator of teacher quality. In addition to these documents, federal and state documents pertinent to teacher induction were accessed via the Internet.

In summary, I conducted interviews with the district's deputy superintendent, coordinator of teacher quality, the former coordinator and a former district master teacher for the district's mentoring and induction program, and one school principal. A survey was conducted with 14 identified teachers, and official documents from the federal, state, and district levels were reviewed.

Data Collection

The data collection goal was to gather information from individuals who were significantly involved in the evolution of the district's teacher induction program for the school years 2009-2010 to 2013-2014. The data collection phase spanned the course of several months, beginning in June 2017 and culminating in August 2017. The data collected were obtained from interviews of key district personnel and survey responses of teachers who participated in the induction program during the specified timeframe. Documents were reviewed and analyzed to explore factors that impacted the teacher induction program during this five-year period. Additionally, strategies implemented in response to these impacts were explored. Throughout the study, field notes and memos were useful in exploring factors that impacted the teacher induction program.

To construct validity and reliability of this study, Yin's (1994) three principles of data collection were used as a guide for the case study protocol. The first principle emphasizes collecting multiple sources of data, which Yin (1994) argues is one of the

strengths of case studies. The second principle encourages researchers to maintain an organized database for all evidence collected, adding to the reliability of the study. Lastly, Yin (1994) refers to establishing "a chain of evidence, that is, explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn" (p. 78).

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key district personnel directly involved with the teacher induction program. Interviews were scheduled to span approximately one hour and included open-ended questions (see Appendix A). To garner rich data, open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to elaborate on the questions posed, not simply respond with one or two words (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). The semi-structured interview format allowed me to include a "mix of more and less structured questions" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). Merriam (1998) reminds us to use more structured questions to elicit "specific information, [and a list of less-structured] questions or issues to be explored" (p.74) to encourage participant responses that reflect upon the topic. Interviews were all recorded using a portable audio recorder and the audio record feature on my iPhone. This provided me with a backup recording to ensure no word was lost. In addition to the recordings, I used handwritten notes to record observations on the setting, demeanor of the participant, and any other thoughts or ideas that surfaced during the interview. These notes were included in my field note journal as part of my account of the event. Following each interview session, I transcribed audio recordings into a word processing program and saved the transcripts in password-protected electronic files.

Within the context of this study, I needed to ensure that the interview sessions were conducted in a consistent manner among the participants. An interview guide was used to organize the areas of the teacher induction program I wanted to explore and included specific questions to be asked of each participant (Patton, 2002; Merriam, 1998). A relaxed atmosphere was established at the onset of each interview by informally chatting with the participant. My former experience working in this school district as a teacher and assistant principal provided me the necessary familiarity and established professional rapport to engage with participants. I then explained the purpose of the consent form and had each interview participant indicate consent by signing one.

Surveys

Surveys (see Appendix B) were used to help construct a comprehensive picture of the evolution of this teacher induction program. Data were collected from teachers who were employed with this district and participated in the teacher induction program at some point during the specified timeframe. Respondents replied to questions specific to the topic of the induction program's evolution. Yin (1994) advocates the use of surveys in the overall case study design. While data gathered from surveys are based upon the perceptions of the respondents, survey data can provide an additional component to the study. Data analyses of survey responses in conjunction with interview responses may, in fact, "determine the degree of convergence of the two sources of data" (Yin, 1994, p. 86).

Document Review

To examine the evolution of this teacher induction program, review and analysis of pertinent documents are included in this study design. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) consider internal documents as data that "can reveal information about the official chain

of command and internal rules and regulations. They also can provide clues about leadership style and potential insights about what organizational members value" (p. 137). Patton (2002) agrees and encourages the review of documents to discover goals in place and decisions made to support those goals, thus providing useful information not otherwise observable. While the analysis of documents can prove to be a daunting task, Yin (1994) suggests putting in place a structure to guide data collection. The systematic search plan put in place was to review and analyze federal and state legislation, district policy, board meeting minutes, and budget documents pertinent to the evolution of this teacher induction program. Yin (1994) goes on to say," For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 81). He cautions researchers to be aware of contradictions between documents and other forms of study data. If there are contradictions, further inquiry may be warranted.

Field Note Journal

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) define field notes as, "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (p.107-8). Following each interview and document review session, I recorded in a journal my account of the event. Journal entries also included a description of the session setting, participant's demeanor, and any disruptions. These reflective field notes were coded as part of the interview and document review data.

Memos

The use of memos is a strategy that was practiced throughout this study. Corbin and Strauss (2015) advocate, "when researchers write memos, they are doing analysis.

They are dialoguing with data and moving the analysis forward" (p. 106). Not only did memos prove useful during the data analysis phase of this research, recording my thoughts assisted me in reflecting on the research purpose, questions, and methods of this study.

Data Analysis

Analyses of the data incorporate various methods. According to Patton (2002), "the challenge of qualitative analysis lies in making sense of massive amounts of data (p. 432). Patton (2002) goes on to explain that data analysis "involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (p. 432). The analyses of data were conducted to reveal patterns, categories, and emerging themes that might help explain the evolution of this teacher induction program. These patterns, categories, and possible themes were identified using an open coding system (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). In the review of interview transcripts, survey responses, field notes, and documents, "salient categories of information supported by the text" (Creswell, 2007, p. 160) were discovered. Successive coding within identified categories allowed concepts central to the phenomenon of the evolution of a teacher induction program to emerge as possible themes (Creswell, 2007).

Coding

Merriam (1998) describes coding as the organization and management of data. To organize and manage data for this study, I relied on the research of Bogdan and Biklen (1998). They explain, "particular research questions and concerns generate particular coding schemes" (p. 171). The research questions sought to explore factors that impacted

an effective teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response to the factors that impacted the program.

Based on the purpose and research questions of this study, coding was a continuous process throughout the data collection period. Interview and survey responses were sorted multiple times to identify potential categories through open coding. Documents were reviewed and analyzed to determine if there was corroboration or contradiction for those potential categories. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) support open coding that allows the researcher to examine the data "without all of the assumptions of grounded theory, coding as you go, rather than preparing a list [and then] refining the concepts" (p. 223).

Single Case Study Analysis

Study data was organized before beginning the process of analysis. Merriam (1998) considers managing the data one of the greatest challenges in conducting a case study. Data from interviews, survey responses, and documents were collected and organized both manually in files and with the assistance of computer programs (Merriam, 1998). This allowed me to secure, manage and retrieve the data, and give meaning to the information obtained during this study.

Each interview audio recording was listened to and interview notes read multiple times prior to transcription. This process allowed me to better interpret not only the words spoken, but also the tone of the interview participant. Interviews were analyzed individually, before analysis of the teacher survey responses, to ensure the survey data did not shape the interpretation of the interview data. Document analyses occurred throughout the data analysis period.

Analysis of the data was a continuous process throughout the data collection

period. Glesne (2011) encourages "conjuring up titles as the data are being collected"

(p.190) to begin classifying the data from the onset. As analysis of the data progressed,

text from the transcripts and documents relevant to factors that impacted an effective

teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic

response to the factors that impacted the program were identified. The process of coding

began, based on the discovery of patterns that emerged from the identified text. Patton

(2002) describes this interaction with the data as inductive analysis, while Strauss and

Corbin (2007) refer to this process as open coding, where "data are broken down into

discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences" (p. 101).

Patton (2002) describes content analysis as the reduction of large quantities of

data to assist the researcher in identifying common threads among the data. From the

interview data, I looked for patterns, compared similarities across those patterns, and

chunked like concepts together. Strauss and Corbin (2007) describe this process as one

where the researcher groups items based on similar properties to begin the identification

of patterns. "Data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are

then given a name that represents or stands for these" (Strauss & Corbin, 2007, p. 102).

While conceptualization of the data may at first reveal many concepts, further

reflection on the data will likely allow for some of these concepts to be grouped together

(Glesne, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 2007). Concepts were examined and re-examined to

continue the process of making meaning of the data. Wolcott (1994) provides guidance as

qualitative researchers move through this process, transforming data. His first

recommendation is to remain true to the data and to allow the data to "speak for

themselves" (p.10). Secondly, while analyzing data it is essential to "identify key factors and the relationships among them" (p.10). Lastly, interpretation of the data should lead to making sense of the data by "develop[ing] an understanding or explanation" (p.10) that aligns with the purpose of the study. Wolcott (1994) also reminds us that while interacting with qualitative data, description, analyses, and interpretation are not exclusive of one another, nor is the process a linear one. Qualitative data analysis is recursive and guided by the data themselves, not the researcher.

Trustworthiness

To develop trustworthiness throughout the process of conducting research, gathering and interpreting data, along with communicating the findings of the study, researchers must consider the validity and reliability of the study. Merriam (1998) states, "validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (pp. 199-200). While I want to remain true to the research questions, I also considered the participants, respondents, and readers of this study during the process. By remaining within respected boundaries, I developed a level of trust with interview participants and survey respondents. Triangulation of data was achieved by collecting data from multiple sources-interviews, a survey, and documents-resulting in the exploration of multiple perspectives.

Ethical Considerations

This study design included precautionary measures to eliminate potential risks to the participants and respondents. Prior to conducting research, this researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Human Research

program and obtained written permission to conduct the study from the University of South Carolina Health Sciences South Carolina Institutional Review Board. The purpose of the study, as well as procedures for anonymity and confidentiality were disclosed to potential participants and respondents. Individuals who agreed to contribute to this study did so on a voluntary basis, and written consent was obtained at the onset.

Measures have been taken to ensure the school district and each interview participant and survey respondent remains anonymous. Each interview participant was assigned a unique reference number and respective interview notes and audio recordings were labeled with corresponding reference numbers. Data collected from interviews will remain confidential and data collected from surveys will remain anonymous, accessible only by this researcher and dissertation chairperson. To instill confidence in and validity of this study, triangulation was achieved through use of multiple data sources and perspectives, member checks, and peer examination (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Although I was previously a teacher and assistant principal in the school district under study, I attempted to maintain an objective view of participants and respondents in relation to their contributions to the study. In my previous positions with the district I was not in a supervisory role over any of the interview participants. There was a slight chance that a survey respondent was an induction teacher in the same school where I worked as an assistant principal. If so, I would have been one of the participant's supervisors. To allow respondents to reply freely, survey responses were submitted anonymously, promoting neutrality on my part as the researcher. Additionally, my current position at another state agency does not produce any conflict or power imbalances with any of the study participants or respondents (Creswell, 2007).

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the methods and research design for this study of a teacher induction program. Teacher induction programs are often adopted and modified to fit the unique context of a school system and the needs of the personnel in that system. The qualitative case study design facilitates an in-depth exploration of the teacher induction phenomenon within its unique context by relying on a variety of data sources. Furthermore, by examining teacher induction through a variety of lenses, including those of teachers, principals, and key district personnel, this study will reveal multiple facets of the teacher induction phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Discussion in this chapter included the rationale for conducting qualitative research and why a case study is an appropriate method to examine the evolution of a teacher induction program. Further discussion described how qualitative methods would be used to explore the factors that impacted the teacher induction program and the responses to those. The selection of the study site and participants were discussed, and interview and survey procedures for this study were outlined. Additionally, measures to develop trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the interview participants and survey respondents were included as part of this study design. The study examined factors that impacted a teacher induction program, how the program components changed as a result, and explored the strategies identified to overcome factors that impacted the program.

As discussed in Chapter 1, this qualitative study is focused on examining the phenomenon of a teacher induction program within a diverse, urban, southeastern school district. The case study design will result in data collection and analysis that allows for

exploration of the phenomenon and identification of explanations for the changes in this teacher induction program over time.

In Chapter 4, I present the research findings for this qualitative study. The data will be organized in a way that reveals the factors most impactful to the evolution of the school district's teacher induction program. Data that emerged from interviews, survey responses, and document review revealed changes in the program because of these impacts. Analysis of the data also revealed patterns that allowed me to organize the data within a framework to guide further analyses, remaining consistent with the purpose of this study.

In Chapter 5, I present the study conclusions and discuss the findings. Suggestions for future research on the challenges and responses experienced by school districts as they strive to induct beginning teachers through a systemic program will be presented. Additionally, since most teacher induction programs are state-mandated, policy implications will be included to add to the body of existing knowledge on teacher induction programs.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Data do not initiate conversations, but they are willing to participate—Karen Pack

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that impacted an effective teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic responses by the school district to factors that impacted the program. The research questions posed were:

(1) How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

(2) What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

(3) What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

Although many factors could have impacted the effectiveness of a district-wide initiative such as the teacher induction program, the researcher's professional experience and background in public schools led to several *a priori* predictions regarding the influences of new district initiatives and funding priorities.

Methodology

This study focused on examining the evolution of a teacher induction program situated in a diverse, urban school district located in South Carolina. The purposeful selection of this school district was based upon a combination of my familiarity with the district, professional relationships with key personnel, the district's induction program composition, and its reputation for having an exemplary induction program. In addition,

this district met recommended criteria for induction and mentoring programs set forth by the New Teacher Center (Goldrick, 2016). I also reviewed program guidelines for other states in the Southeastern region of the United States and determined their induction programs similar to South Carolina's state requirements and have common characteristics such as the inclusion of a mentor, mentor training, and professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. A review of the respective legislation and policy for teacher induction programs in each of these states helped to support the identification of this study site as one that supported data collection to best answer the research questions.

Individuals, including key district personnel and teachers, were purposefully selected for the study based on their direct involvement with the district's teacher induction program during the specified academic timeframe (2009-2010 through 2013-2014). The key personnel selected for interviews were involved in the structure and/or implementation of the program. Teachers were identified based on their participation in the program as beginning teachers during the specified timeframe. These teachers were invited to complete a survey designed to help construct a comprehensive picture of the teacher induction program.

To further develop understanding of this program's evolution, pertinent documents were reviewed. Analysis of federal and state policies and legislation, local school board minutes, district budgets, strategic plans, and program manuals revealed not only impacts to the teacher induction program, but also strategies that may have been put in place by the district as a response.

Data were collected in the form of interviews, survey responses, and document review. Key district personnel were interviewed, teachers who participated in the

program were surveyed, and documents were secured for review and analysis. An iterative approach was used to review and code data from interviews, the survey responses, documents, field notes, and my journal entries. The data were sorted, and open coding was used to identify patterns, categories, and emerging themes. Data analysis was guided by my research questions as I explored factors that impacted this teacher induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic responses to the factors that impacted the program.

Protecting the identity of both the school district and the individuals contributing to this study was achieved using pseudonyms. The school district will be referenced as *Sunnydale School District*, and pseudonyms will be used to maintain confidentiality for the five interview participants. There was a total of fourteen survey respondents out of thirty-three individuals invited to complete the survey. The respondents invited to participate were induction teachers from elementary, middle, and high school settings.

The Sunnydale School District is in the state of South Carolina and is considered an urban district by the U.S. Department of Education. In its 2014 report to the community, Sunnydale refers to a long tradition of excellence, dating back to the late 1800s. Through decades of growth in the region and in response to national and state policy, Sunnydale experienced changes in its demographics and school composition. Their 2014 report to the community states that approximately 55% of its 7,172 students are African American, 33% Caucasian, and 12% Hispanic, Asian, or Other.

The South Carolina state report card indicated that during the 2013-2014 school year, Sunnydale had 652 certified teachers out of approximately 1100 total district staff. Of these teachers, 52 were induction year teachers hired to replace 91 teachers that did

not return from the previous year. Of those 91 teachers, 15 were teachers with four or fewer years' experience in the classroom. The remainder were retirees (25) and teachers with five or more years' experience in the classroom (39). While student enrollment remained about the same as the year before, it is plausible that some positions were not filled due to budget constraints and by increasing low enrollment within pre-existing classes.

During the first year of this study timeframe, Sunnydale had 88.5% of its teachers return from the previous year. Midway through this study timeframe, 92.5% of the teachers returned, and 91% of the teachers returned during the final year of this study timeframe. While these percentages do not represent induction teachers exclusively, they do reflect that Sunnydale experienced an average of 10% teacher attrition during the timeframe of this study. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) published a research brief that examined teacher shortages in the United States. The brief included the 2012 National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey results, which revealed Sunnydale's attrition rate falls below the 18% average reported for the state of South Carolina.

Overview

In Chapter 2, the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1) was introduced as the framework that guided my research of teacher induction programs. To best analyze the data considering the research questions, I first needed to develop a solid understanding of induction program structure and implementation. Within the teacher induction program structure, literature focused on the timeline, components and best practices found in effective teacher induction programs. The structure alone does not

result in an effective program. Leadership, support, and professional development were characterized by the literature as essential for effective teacher induction program implementation. Since both the structure and implementation of the teacher induction program were instrumental to my study, the overview of findings will be organized based on the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1).

Common attributes of induction program structure include a timeline to define the duration of the program, structural components such as mentoring, release time, and collaboration, and a design that supports best practices in teaching methods (Moir, 2009; Ganser, 2005, Wong, 2005). The inclusion of these attributes contributes to the overall effectiveness of teacher induction programs (See Figure 2.1).

Analysis of the data revealed that while the identified attributes are mandated at the national and state levels, they are personalized and implemented at the district level. For example, the South Carolina state department of education requires districts to adhere to a timeline; however, the district leadership determines the activities that will be included within that frame of time. This was also found to be true with the structural components. State mandates for the induction program include the communication of goals, trained mentor teachers, and professional development opportunities for beginning teachers. This district, like others in the state, is responsible for identifying experienced educators to be trained as mentors and developing a professional development plan to support beginning teachers. The best practice attribute found in the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model is incorporated into the district's professional development plan. For example, this district presents various instructional strategies that support effective,

research-based teaching practices to its induction teachers in monthly induction meeting sessions.

While federal and state legislation and policy mandate teacher induction programs, the task of implementing the programs falls upon school districts. Program implementation attributes are the actions that support the structural components of a teacher induction program. One example of leadership within this district is the provision of mentor training to school and district administrators in addition to those selected to serve as mentor teachers. Support and professional development are also present in this district's induction program. The levels of support and professional development opportunities vary across the timeframe of this study and will be discussed in the findings.

Findings

Findings will be discussed using the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 4.1) and literature, which informed the design and implementation of this study. Analysis of legislation, mandates, and guidelines that align with the model are also presented. Following a general summary of the findings, the discussion below reveals how the teacher induction theoretical model informed and guided the analysis of the interview and survey data.

Federal, State, and District Document Analysis

Education policy is not developed within a vacuum. Factors including research and political agendas affect legislation pertaining to public school systems, prompting responses in the form of further legislation and mandates. To better understand the
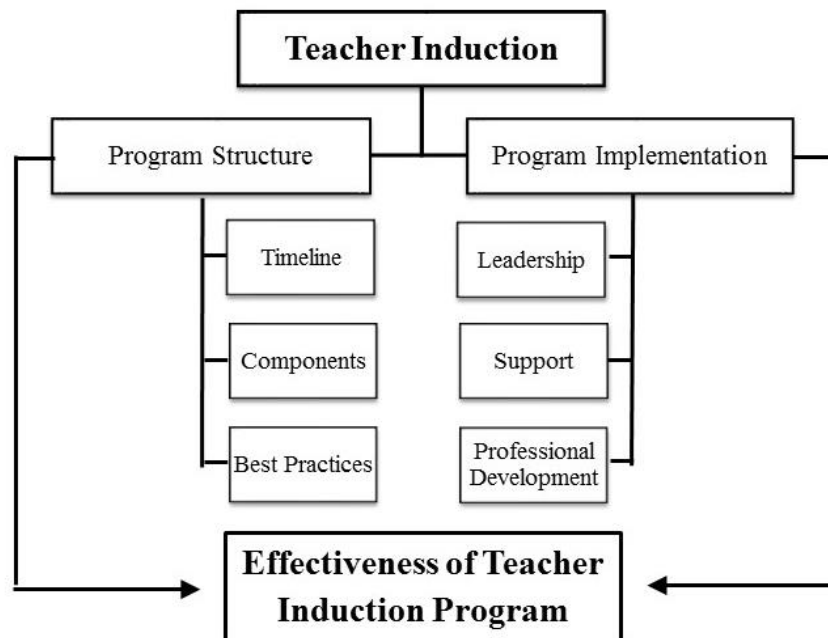
Figure 4.1 Teacher Induction Theoretical Model

legislation and mandates in place during the timeframe of this study (2009-2010 through

2013-2014), I will present pertinent federal legislation and explain state responses.

The Johnson administration produced federal legislation to address the issue of

providing all students the opportunity for an equitable education. The Elementary and

Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 provided federal funding to assist school

systems with ensuring a program structure that complied with this legislation. The ESEA

was to be reauthorized every five years, and over the course of time it has been amended

eight times. Each amendment addressed equitable education for all students, including

those with special needs, those living in poverty, and non-English speakers.

The most significant legislation pertaining to teacher induction is the No Child

Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB reauthorized the ESEA legislation to include

preparing, recruiting, and training high quality teachers. Additionally, state education

systems were required to implement annual testing for students as an accountability measure. While these findings will not delve into the proficiency expectations for student performance under NCLB, it should be noted the NCLB legislation prompted responses from educational systems. Other components of the ESEA were also reauthorized under NCLB; however, these findings will focus on teacher quality and accountability, as they are most directly related to teacher induction programs.

In anticipation of the passage of NCLB (2001), the South Carolina Legislature, in its Code of Laws, Section 59, charged the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) with the development and adoption of programs on two issues. The first was to adopt criteria for the selection and training of teachers to serve as mentors for new teachers participating in the induction program, to be acted upon by the SCDE by July 1, 2000. The second was to review and refine teacher evaluation standards and procedures, to be acted upon by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) by September 1, 2001.

In response to this state legislation, the SCDE was to develop teacher induction program guidelines that provide beginning teachers with continuing coaching and support. The SCDE also had to determine the criteria for selecting and training teachers to serve as mentors. In addition to drafting program guidelines, the SCDE was directed to make available to districts best practice information on teacher induction programs. The SCDE also had to revise its teacher evaluation program standards and procedures. The resulting evaluation procedures include an induction year where a beginning teacher participates in the process, but is not formally evaluated until year two.

Issued by the South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina

Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines (2006) was published to

assist school districts in the development and execution of their induction and mentoring

program plans. South Carolina's induction and mentoring initiative was the result of

collaboration among the school districts, higher education teacher preparation programs,

the South Carolina Department of Education's Division of Educator Quality and

Leadership (DEQL), the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement

(CERRA), and the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The

SCDE notes the "induction and mentoring program requirements are based on nationally

recognized and research-based models" (South Carolina Induction, 2006). South

Carolina's Induction and Mentoring program is aligned with the state's teacher

evaluation program standards. CERRA and the DEQL are responsible for the

administration of the induction and mentoring initiative, aiding school districts through

implementation of the guidelines by:

- providing districts with information and guidance on best practices in induction;

- providing districts with information and guidance on best practices for assisting beginning teachers through professional learning communities;

- coordinating and conducting initial mentor training;

- collaborating with each district's induction and mentoring coordinator to help plan, implement, and conduct the district's program evaluation;

- coordinating and arranging for selected mentors to receive advanced mentor training;

- providing and/or coordinating continuing professional development for all mentors; and

- collecting data on district's implementation of the mentoring program (South Carolina Induction, 2006, p. 3).

Following the publication of the induction and mentoring program guidelines in 2006, the state's school districts were tasked with developing a local plan to support beginning teachers, incorporating the four key elements outlined in the guidelines. Key elements for inclusion in district plans include program leadership, program for beginning teachers, mentors, and program evaluation. Plans were submitted to the SCDE for approval and plans were fully implemented in South Carolina school districts by August 1, 2008.

In 2010, the South Carolina State Board of Education adopted Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The new standards were transitioned in during the timeframe of this study, with full implementation in the 2014-2015 school year. In addition to the new standards, new standardized assessments to measure student performance were also implemented.

Historical accounts of a school district's planning, including initiatives and programs, can be identified in documents such as strategic plans and school renewal plans. A review of the 2005-2010 strategic plan for Sunnydale School District revealed the district had a year-long induction experience in place for its beginning teachers when the South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines document was published in 2006. Sunnydale's strategic planning documents provided

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somewhat of a timeline for the process of building an induction program to meet the recommendations put forth by the published guidelines.

Sunnydale School District's strategic plan for the 2005-2006 school year noted experienced teachers were trained as "special mentor teachers," and assigned to beginning teachers to provide support. During the 2006-2007 school year, the district identified five trained mentors to serve in the district master teacher capacity, creating a district-level induction team. Each master teacher was considered an "expert" in his or her subject area/grade level. This added another layer of support for beginning teachers. The district master teachers worked closely with the induction program coordinator and supported beginning teachers, as well as the trained mentor teachers. Additionally, the district master teachers acted as liaisons between beginning teachers, mentor teachers, school administrators, and district personnel.

During the 2007-2008 school year, school principals were added to the support framework of Sunnydale's induction program configuration. It was also noted in the district's 2008-2009 strategic plan that district master teachers worked with beginning teachers at all levels and conducted monthly classes as professional development for new teachers. Sunnydale's district strategic plan supports the inclusion of three of the four recommended key elements for teacher induction and mentoring programs set forth by the SCDE. There is sufficient documentation in the strategic plan to support a district induction and mentoring plan that includes program leadership, a program for beginning teachers, and trained mentors. Although the program evaluation element was not clearly stated in the district's strategic plan, there was documentation of induction teacher and mentor surveys within the induction program's end of year files. Additional findings

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from the analysis of pertinent documents for Sunnydale School District will be presented as they converge with interview and survey response data. Any lack of convergence of the data will also be noted.

Interview and Survey Findings

Interviews were conducted with key district personnel, including the deputy superintendent, the coordinator of teacher quality, and a principal. The former coordinator and a former master teacher for the district's induction program also participated in interviews. Teachers who participated in the district's induction program during the specified timeframe and were still employed with the district were invited to participate in a survey. Fourteen of the thirty-three teachers meeting these criteria completed a survey. In addition, existing survey data was discovered during a review of documents that were shared by the school district. These data were collected during 2009-2010 and 2012-2013, when Sunnydale sought input from all the participating teachers and mentors in the induction program. The questions included in the 2009-2010 end of year survey instrument are provided in Appendix C, and subsequent discussion will reference this as the 2009-2010 survey. The questions included in the 2012-2013 mid-year survey instrument are provided in Appendix D, and subsequent discussion will reference this as the 2012-2013 survey.

These findings will be organized using the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 4.1). Interview and open-ended survey responses were analyzed through open coding and identification of patterns. I compared similarities across those patterns and chunked like concepts together (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). Concepts were examined and re-examined to continue the process of making meaning of the data. Concepts were then

categorized within and across each of the attributes corresponding with program structure and program implementation of the teacher induction program found in Figure 4.1. Following the discussion of findings, I will introduce themes that emerged from the data.

Given the unique role of Ms. Hopkins, who was the first coordinator of the Sunnydale School District's mentoring and induction program, I conducted her interview first. In addition to the teacher induction and mentoring program, Ms. Hopkins had other responsibilities that were part of the district's instructional division. Ms. Hopkins retired at the close of the 2012-2013 school year from Sunnydale, after over 20 years of service.

To help situate the induction program's administration at the district level, it should be noted that the program operated within the instructional division of Sunnydale from the late 1990s through the 2012-2013 school year. Upon the retirement of Ms. Hopkins at the close of the 2012-2013 school year, a replacement was not hired. Her job responsibilities were absorbed by other individuals and/or divisions within the district. One of those responsibilities was coordinating the teacher induction and mentoring program. The responsibility of coordinating this program shifted from the instructional division to the personnel division.

Subsequent interviews were arranged based on the identified participants' availability. An additional four key personnel were interviewed following the interview with Ms. Hopkins. Their titles and brief descriptions are introduced below in the order of their interviews. Ms. Lee, a former teacher and induction mentor for the Sunnydale School District, also served as a district-level master teacher. Ms. Lee's final year with the district was 2014-2015; she retired with over 30 years of service. Following Ms. Lee, I interviewed the deputy superintendent of the Sunnydale School District, Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Thomas began employment with Sunnydale during the summer of 2008 and remains with the district as second in command. One of his responsibilities is to oversee the instructional division of the district. Mr. Thomas was designated by the superintendent as the primary contact at Sunnydale for this study.

The final two interviews were conducted with Mr. Edwards, the coordinator of teacher quality, and Mr. Roberts, who currently serves as a principal at the secondary level in the Sunnydale School District. Mr. Edwards worked in the district as a school administrator before assuming his current role in 2011, within the personnel division of Sunnydale. His primary responsibilities include teacher quality and evaluation. In preparation for the 2013-2014 school year, Mr. Edwards also assumed administrative responsibility of the teacher induction and mentoring program. Mr. Roberts has been principal for eight years. Prior to becoming principal, Mr. Roberts was a classroom teacher and assistant principal.

Analysis of data from interviews and pertinent documents assisted with mapping out the development of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program. Prior to the timeframe of this study, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 2001 legislation was implemented and specifically called for preparing, recruiting, and training high quality teachers. South Carolina began preparing for NCLB before the passage of the legislation. The South Carolina Department of Education developed teacher induction program guidelines and determined criteria to select and train teachers to serve as mentors to beginning teachers. In its revision of the teacher evaluation procedures, the SCDE included an induction year. Beginning teachers participate in the process during the induction year, but are not formally evaluated until the second year of teaching. These

mandates provided school districts with a foundation as they designed their induction programs.

The inclusion of a trained mentor and participation in the teacher evaluation process without penalty were part of Sunnydale's induction program. The induction year timeline closely reflected the teacher evaluation timeline. Due dates for long range plans, classroom observations, and reflection pieces were included. Initial, mid-year, and end-of-the-year meetings with the beginning teacher's induction team were scheduled throughout the beginning teacher's first year. Induction team members were trained in the state's teacher evaluation process and usually included a school administrator and at least one other member. During the induction year, the teacher evaluation process was followed, but tailored to include additional induction program components. These will be presented with the findings for structural components of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program.

Teacher Induction Program: Timeline

Interview data gathered on any given aspect of the teacher induction and mentoring program varied, based on the perspective of the participant. Once the data were sorted, coded, and categorized within the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 4.1), the data revealed how the timeline of the teacher induction and mentoring program was viewed through multiple lenses. Mr. Thomas, Mr. Edwards, Ms. Hopkins, and Ms. Lee all discussed opportunities provided to induction teachers prior to the start of the school year as the beginning of the induction process. In general, these included a tour of the district, an introduction to district personnel, as well as explanations of expectations and procedures, professionalism, and relationship building. Ms. Lee stated

that experiences such as these provided a focus on the community and exposed induction teachers to the diversity found within the district's schools. She noted that the district paid for the three days of professional development before the start of school for induction teachers and that it "allowed them to hit the ground running."

In his discussion of the implementation of the teacher induction and mentoring program timeline, Mr. Thomas stated, "it needs to be done well and efficiently. We need to stay on schedule." Both Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee discussed the timeline in terms of its longevity-how long program support for induction teachers continued beyond the first year. Ms. Lee elaborated on this when she stated, "the second year was affected by cutbacks for what was offered the first year." Her statement references budget cuts to the teacher induction and mentoring program funding. Based on the budget documents provided by the Sunnydale School District, the induction program's budget for 2009-2010 was $39, 965. For the five-year timeframe of this study, the budget decreased by $30,965 to $9,000 in the 2013-2014 school year. Ms. Hopkins shared initially it was the material resources that had to be cut from the program, but by the end of the study timeframe support for induction teachers in the form of personnel was affected, as well. She stated, "I tried to do the best I could with what was given."

In summary, determination by the school district of the exact timeline for this teacher induction program was influenced by many factors including funding and resources. Prior research reported that the duration of teacher induction programs impacts the support provided to beginning teachers (Ganser, 2005; Wong, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). In Sunnydale, Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee were closely involved with induction program implementation and viewed the timeline for induction in terms of

support beginning just before the first year and extending into subsequent years. Mr. Thomas also discussed the pre-start-of-school opportunities for beginning teachers, noting in particular, the timeline had an impact on the program's effectiveness and efficiency.

Teacher Induction Program Structure: Components

During the first four years of this study, specifically between the academic years, 2009-2010 through 2012-2013, the structural components of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program included an induction program coordinator, trained mentor teachers, five district-level master teachers, and school and district administrators. The mentor teachers, induction coordinator, district-level master teachers, and school and district administrators were trained using the state-approved induction and mentoring model delivered by CERRA, as a component of the program. In addition, this group was trained in the use of the teacher evaluation model. The induction program coordinator and master induction teachers also tailored their collective professional learning based on research and induction teacher needs.

Ms. Hopkins discussed how the district's induction program was "built from the ground up." Prior to this program, Ms. Hopkins said the goal was to "just get them through the first year." Similarly, Ms. Lee indicated before the induction program was in place, district leaders would "funnel information" to the beginning teachers. Ms. Hopkins discussed that leadership at the instructional level supported the development of a program that contained components "based on the needs of the teacher." She went on to say that when the induction program was at its best, there was "buy-in from the

constituents…. specific goals, and resources to achieve those goals." Ms. Lee referred to the induction program as once being "premier."

Both Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee referred to the district-level master teachers as "experts" in their fields. Ms. Hopkins shared the induction program had master teachers with "expertise in special education, early childhood, elementary, and the high school subjects." Ms. Lee said, "one size does not fit all, you have to have a team of people." Similarly, one of the survey respondents stated, "my mentor had so much experience in the field of special education-her expertise was a huge support to me in my first year of teaching."

In addition to the personnel component of Sunnydale's teacher induction program, structural components such as monthly induction classes and classroom observations were included. The coordinator of teacher induction and the master teachers planned and taught the monthly classes. The induction teachers received three graduate credits from a local college for successfully completing the year-long class. A review of the syllabi revealed monthly class topics such as professionalism, classroom management, long-range planning, parent conferences, and data analysis. Both mentor and master teachers conducted regular classroom observations of the induction teachers and provided constructive feedback. Induction teachers were required to reflect in writing on their classroom observations. Mr. Thomas stated that this "reflective piece" is one of the most effective attributes of the teacher induction and mentoring program. He went on to say that, "the feedback provided-the coaching-working with mentors in a non-evaluative way is beneficial."

Induction teachers were also given release time from teaching to observe in other classrooms. Classroom coverage was provided for master and mentor teachers to allow them to observe induction teachers. This structural component was achieved by arranging class coverage or placing substitute teachers in the classroom. Ms. Lee stated that mentor or master teachers, or even principals could request an induction teacher "observe veteran teachers that had expertise" in an area the induction teacher may have been struggling. She went on to say, "the district would cover the release and sub pay for the induction teachers."

Related structural components of teacher induction programs are reduced class loads and minimal assignment of extra duties. These emerged as vital aspects of Sunnydale's program as evidenced by the comments of several survey respondents. For example, one individual stated that learning "how to juggle planning/prep, ordering materials, and grading without being too depleted to manage the classroom" was stressful and impacted teaching. Another survey respondent commented, "paperwork was not my favorite part." These same concerns had previously been expressed by the 2012-2013 survey respondents. For example, when asked to identify needs or concerns, several of the teacher's responses included, "how quickly the forms and papers add up," "amount of documentation and paperwork," and "paperwork/expectations."

To summarize, the Sunnydale School District's teacher induction and mentoring program included structural components such as the inclusion of a program coordinator, trained mentor teachers, trained master teachers and trained school and district administrators. Based on responses of interview and survey participants, monthly professional development opportunities and classroom observations with induction

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teacher reflection and mentor feedback were also included in Sunnydale's induction program. Additionally, induction teachers were provided opportunities to observe other teachers in their classrooms.

Glazerman et al. (2010) refer to the combination of these components as comprehensive induction. The document review revealed the induction program was aligned with the teacher evaluation program, with nonconsequential participation in the evaluation process during the induction year. Analysis of survey responses also revealed needs and concerns of induction teachers that include performing administrative tasks such as paperwork, and meeting expectations for planning, grading, and classroom management.

Teacher Induction Program Structure: Best Practices

Effective teacher induction programs are designed to reflect best practice strategies (Wong, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The Sunnydale School District incorporated various instructional strategies that support research-based best practice strategies into its induction program. Mr. Thomas stated, "the intent of the induction program is to improve teaching through the use of best practices." He followed up by saying, "I believe teachers do the best they know how to do."

Ms. Hopkins stated the design of professional development opportunities for induction teachers was based on what they needed to be successful in the classroom. She detailed how the district induction team would conduct research and incorporate best practice strategies based on identified needs into professional learning opportunities for induction teachers. Strategies for classroom management, collaboration, and observations with reflection and feedback were evident in Sunnydale's induction plan. Moir (2009)

and Feiman-Nemser (2005) advocate the inclusion of strategies such as these to provide beginning teachers with the necessary support to become effective in the process of teaching and learning. To support implementation of best practice strategies, modeling and coaching by master and mentor teachers were also part of the monthly induction classes. These best practice strategies continued as master and mentor teachers collaborated with each induction teacher on incorporating them in the classroom setting.

Although best practice strategies were included in the induction plan, a review of survey responses revealed areas where teachers expressed a need for further development. While one respondent indicated a need for "effective use of data to drive instruction," others indicated classroom behavior management was an area where there was a need for additional assistance. Data from the 2012-2013 mid-year survey indicated the following areas where professional development was still needed: lesson planning, providing feedback to students, time management, classroom management/discipline, and incorporating Common Core State Standards into instruction.

To further support the inclusion of best practice strategies, Sunnydale's strategic planning document indicated the district would provide a focus on research-based best practices to impact student learning. Additionally, the district budget for the teacher induction and mentoring program contained line items for expenditures for professional literature and induction supplies. Mr. Edwards indicated that professional literature on the topics of Common Core, classroom management, and the induction experience were purchased to support the program.

Mr. Thomas stated, "in terms of best practice, in addition to the district mentoring, you had master and mentor teachers in each TAP school." The Teacher

Advancement Program (TAP) was present in seven out of eleven district schools. The SCDE refers to TAP as, "a very detailed approach to comprehensive reform in South Carolina schools" (South Carolina Department of Education-TAP, p. 2). Components of TAP included opportunities for teachers to become trained master and mentor teachers, ongoing, applied professional development, and instruction with a focus on accountability. The master and mentor teachers trained in the TAP model provided school-level support in addition to the support delivered by the induction master and mentor teachers.

In summary, the research findings revealed Sunnydale School District's teacher induction and mentoring program included best practice strategies that supported teaching and learning in the classroom. While many areas of beginning teacher needs were addressed within the program, some induction teachers expressed a need for additional assistance developing best practice strategies in data analysis, instructional planning, providing feedback to students, time and classroom management, and incorporating Common Core State Standards into instruction.

A teacher induction program's structure relies on implementation of the timeline, components, and best practices throughout the duration of the program. Effective program implementation is dependent on school district leadership, as well. To be effective, leaders are expected to organize and provide professional development opportunities that allow beginning teachers to develop within the field (Drexel, 2006).

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Leadership

Researchers (e.g. Wood, 2005; Wood and Stanulis, 2009; Wong, 2005) consistently identify the key role of district leadership in promoting effective programs.

Sunnydale established its formal induction program in the 2005-2006 school year, under direction of the assistant superintendent of instruction. During the critical years in which the teacher induction and mentoring program emerged and transformed to meet state implementation guidelines in 2008-2009, the school district leadership team went through significant changes. During the four years prior to the timeframe for this study, Sunnydale had three different superintendents and two different assistant superintendents for instruction. According to the district strategic plan for 2008-2009, "the superintendent was able to complete the new administrative team, with new faces at all the assistant superintendent levels." Also noted in the plan were new initiatives introduced to address previously identified concerns, such as poverty and literacy.

During 2010-2011, the second year of this study, Sunnydale brought on an additional assistant superintendent as superintendent elect. That individual assumed the superintendent position of Sunnydale during the third year of this study. Other than a change in the head of the finance division during 2011-2012, the senior leadership of the district remained intact for the remainder of this study.

While those most closely involved with the design and implementation of the induction program stated there was much support from the instructional division at the onset, changes in that department included a shift in focus to address new district initiatives. The assistant superintendent for instruction indicated the program was functioning well under the coordinator for induction, therefore, there was not as much direct involvement and collaboration between the induction program coordinator and the assistant superintendent of instruction. Following the retirement of the induction coordinator, the induction program shifted from the instructional division to the personnel

division of the district. Participants shared this move, along with budget cuts, resulted in decreased instructional focus and a return to minimal induction opportunities for beginning teachers.

Research indicates those who play a part in the development and implementation of induction programs have an integral role in transforming them to meet changing demands placed upon teachers (Wong, 2005; Wong, et al, 2005). Leadership was evidenced at the program level as the induction program evolved to include a district team comprised of a program coordinator and five master teachers, providing leadership for mentor teachers and overall implementation of the program.

To summarize, prior research indicates the effectiveness of a teacher induction program is dependent upon leadership that supports the structure and implementation of the induction program (Wood, 2005; Wood and Stanulis, 2009; Wong, 2005). Sunnydale experienced total restructuring of leadership at the district level. With new leadership, many changes took place and new initiatives were introduced. The following statement was included in the 2008-2009 narrative update of Sunnydale's district strategic plan:

> Having the right people can make all the difference, and the local expectation is that the right people are in place, both at the district level and at the school level. The effect, though, of having four different instructional leaders over the past ten years and five different superintendents (interim or regular) must be considered as the district strives for stability. Teachers need that stable leadership in order to feel a purposeful direction that will be sustained over time.

Throughout the changes in leadership at the district level, the need for continued support of new teachers was not ignored. Although changes in personnel and budget amounts

were seen during the study time span, the district provided induction teachers with appropriate training and assistance.

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Support

Support for a teacher induction program comes from all levels. The SCDE has in place a program to support beginning teachers. The Sunnydale School District implements a teacher induction and mentoring program that guides and assists beginning teachers. At the district level, support often includes all senior leadership personnel, representing the various divisions of the district. In addition to having a program in place, support is realized through the provision of instructional strategies and practices, personnel to execute the implementation of the induction program, and funding to sustain the program. At the school level, administrators, trained mentors, instructional coaches, and teachers all play a role in supporting beginning teachers. Glazerman et al. (2010) note that an induction program must have all these components in place to provide beginning teachers with a comprehensive induction to teaching.

Survey responses to questions about support were more detailed than any of the other responses. Some were positive, but others were not. Most included a reference to the mentor or master teacher. Some included the lack of support for procedural tasks, while other responses referred to the level of support experienced from colleagues and school administrators.

The following comments illustrate the intense reactions of survey respondents to questions about support during the induction experience. One respondent shared, "My principal gave no guidance, did not take the [induction] dossier seriously," while another stated, "In all areas, I was provided limited guidance. I really didn't have a mentor to

assist me. My mentor did not meet with me on a regular basis and did not provide any helpful information. I'm not sure she knew what to do to assist as a mentor. I relied on myself and others who were willing to help me."

Other respondents portrayed greater levels of support from the mentor. One individual shared, "My mentor provided constructive feedback that helped me grow as a professional," while another replied, "My mentor was a friendly face (someone I knew) in a building of new names and faces. And she was a help and a resource when I had questions." Additional responses included references to the mentor and master teachers as "very helpful and knowledgeable," and "they prepared me very well."

Data gathered from Sunnydale's 2012-2013 mid-year survey indicated induction teachers turned to administrators, master teachers, mentors, media specialists, interventionists, department chairs, and guidance counselors for support. The 2012-2013 mid-year survey included the question, "Who/What helped you most?" A summary of responses indicated the "administration and mentor," and "collaboration with other teachers of the same subject/grade level," were the most helpful.

As evidenced by the research and survey respondents, support within a teacher induction and mentoring program is provided by school and district personnel. The level of support is dependent upon the designation of personnel to assist beginning teachers and the provision of resources such as experience, time, and funding. Wong, Britton, and Ganser (2005) suggest leaders at both the school and district levels provide support to beginning teachers. To best understand the level of support found within Sunnydale's induction program, additional findings from the district and school level will be presented.

Mr. Thomas began working at Sunnydale School District in 2008, as head of the instructional division. He commented that the teacher induction and mentoring program then "looks a lot like it does now." He added there is a planning component and training and assignment of mentors to induction teachers. In response to a question about the shift of the induction program from the instructional division to the personnel division, Mr. Thomas stated that Mr. Edwards may have more details on how the program may have changed since the move.

Mr. Thomas' comparison of the induction program during its early years to the current program does not converge with comments provided by Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee. Missing program elements noted are: (1) the inclusion of master teachers as part of the induction team, (2) the level of focused research, design, and implementation of professional development by the induction team, and (3) the amount of funding designated to support the induction program.

The Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) present in seven of Sunnydale's eleven schools ended at the close of the 2011-2012 school year. This impact is situated midway through the timeframe of this study. Mr. Thomas indicated that when TAP was phased out, "the collaboration time [between school administration, TAP master teachers, TAP mentor teachers, and teachers] started being trimmed off. When principals didn't have to do that [weekly professional development meetings], they stopped doing it." Mr. Thomas went on to say, there was a loss of support for teachers, including induction teachers, when the [TAP] master and [TAP] mentor teachers went back into the classroom." He noted there was a "loss of them providing coaching, mentoring…you lost that. [You] didn't have that structure anymore." In this portion of the interview, Mr.

Thomas referenced on multiple occasions the concept of *time*. There will be additional references to this concept in the findings presented for the professional development piece of induction program implementation.

Mr. Roberts is a secondary school principal. He shared that induction teachers are supported by mentor teachers who help meet needs in areas such as long-range planning, curriculum guides and pacing, classroom management, and professional responsibilities. He went on to say that changes in the state teacher evaluation process impacted the induction program. In addition to meeting induction teacher needs in the areas listed above, the induction program also had to incorporate these changes. Training was provided by the SCDE for mentor teachers and school and district administrators for the new teacher evaluation instrument. To better prepare beginning teachers for participation in the evaluation process, Mr. Roberts stated that, "induction teachers received additional training from district office staff and teacher leaders throughout the district."

Ms. Lee discussed the role the district master and mentor teachers played in support of induction teachers. She emphasized that induction teachers need the opportunity to build professional relationships with "veteran teachers not involved in evaluating what issues they are having." She continued by saying induction teachers need to have conversations with master and mentor teachers "who help them to make the most of the issues." Ms. Lee attributed the successful provision of support by induction master and mentor teachers to the fact that they were also classroom teachers facing many of the same issues as induction teachers. She noted the district master and mentor teachers had the experience and expertise to help induction teachers respond to these issues.

Ms. Lee indicated that the end of year one for induction teachers was not the end of support provided by Sunnydale's induction program. When asked to further explain this statement, Ms. Lee responded, "pressure increases into year two when evaluation happens. That is the year when we [the induction team] find out how good we really were." She also stated that the induction team continued meeting with teachers in year two. While the induction team still checked in on these teachers in the school setting, the frequency of these visits decreased.

Second-year teachers also became a resource for the induction program. Ms. Lee shared the second-year teachers joined an induction class session to share first-year experiences. Additionally, second-year teachers were matched up with induction teachers, based on the grade or subject area taught. She went on to say this practice "would help build a community of learners."

Ms. Hopkins noted the number of mentor teachers needed for any given year depended upon the number of beginning teachers hired by the district. The number of teachers leaving a district at the end of a school year affects the following year's induction program.

Data collected annually by CERRA from South Carolina school districts provides the number of teacher turnovers within a district. The following figure (Figure 4.2) shows the total number of teachers who left this district for each year of the study. Out of that total number, the number of retirees, the number of teachers with four or fewer years in the classroom, and the number who left with five or more years in the classroom are given. A review of district documents revealed that for the five-year span of this study, the number of incoming induction teachers ranged from 18 to 52. Those numbers are

included in the last column of Figure 4.2, and reflect beginning teachers hired in response

to teachers leaving the prior year. Training for existing mentors was updated regularly

and if needed, new teachers were identified to complete mentor training. Worth noting

are the low numbers of teachers with four or fewer years' experience in the classroom

leaving this district. This group represents teachers most closely situated in time to the

support offered through the mentoring and induction program.

School Year	Total Number of Teachers That Left District	Number of Retirees	Teachers with ≤ 4 Years in Classroom	Teachers with ≥ 5 Years in Classroom	Number of Incoming Induction Teachers
2009-2010	62	22	10	30	21
2010-2011	51	18	0	33	18
2011-2012	70	30	7	33	24
2012-2013	91	33	10	48	38
2013-2014	79	25	15	39	52

Figure 4.2 Teacher Turnover

Ms. Hopkins stated the decrease in Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring

program budget impacted the level of support offered to teacher inductees. She associated

the decrease in funding to a lack of district support. She stated, "support is the operative

word for the whole thing." Ms. Hopkins went on to say that, "even when the district

wasn't as supportive of it, the principals still used our team as a resource." This last

statement references the dissolution of the district induction team of five master teachers

who worked in conjunction with Ms. Hopkins. The dissolution of the team occurred upon

the retirement of Ms. Hopkins at the end of school year 2012-2013. While the induction

team no longer existed, and Ms. Hopkins was no longer working in the district, she said

principals had learned the value of the district master teachers as a resource. Ms. Lee stated, "I had principals contact me 'under the table,' so to speak. Teachers listen to other teachers. They [principals] trusted us." Ms. Lee added she helped principals deal with issues such as professionalism, inter-faculty relations, and organization of classrooms. She pointed out these were areas once addressed in the monthly induction classes, prior to the program being moved to the personnel division.

Following Ms. Hopkins' retirement, Ms. Lee was asked to assist Mr. Edwards with portions of the induction program, specifically with professional development, until her retirement at the end of the 2014-2015 school year. The induction program continued to have monthly class meetings, with induction teachers receiving graduate credit from a local college. Mr. Edwards indicated he relied on the files of Ms. Hopkins and existing syllabi to plan the induction program's offerings for beginning teachers.

According to district financial documents, $39,965 was budgeted for the teacher induction and mentoring program in 2009-2010. There was a total of 21 induction teachers this year. Actual expenditures were over $50,000, including portions of salaries, stipends, and supplies. In addition, there was a payment made to a local college for the teacher induction class. The following school year, the budget was cut to $20,800, with actual expenditures of just over $21,000, serving 18 induction teachers. In 2011-2012, the amount budgeted for the teacher induction and mentoring program was reported as $13, 884, with the same amount reported for actual expenditures, serving 24 induction teachers. The budgeted amount in 2012-2013 was $6,508, with expenditures not quite meeting that amount, and serving 38 induction teachers. During 2013-2014, the final year

of this study, the budgeted amount was $9.000, with expenditures just under $6,000, serving 52 teachers.

Mr. Thomas explained that while there is an induction account, they sometimes pull funds from other accounts to support the program. When asked for clarification, he shared there were times that instructional funds were used to supplement funding for professional development offered through the induction program. Ms. Hopkins agreed, stating the instructional division sometimes supplemented funding for the induction program.

When I asked about the process through which the district receives funding from the SCDE for teacher induction, Mr. Edwards stated the amount of funding budgeted at the state level is based on the number of induction teachers from the previous year. For example, he indicated funds received from the SCDE for the 2013-2014 school year for 52 induction teachers were based on having 38 induction teachers the year before. Moir (2003) stresses the importance of policy to guide implementation, but also reminds policy makers that districts need to receive adequate funds to assist in meeting mandates.

In summary, support for Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program was provided by the SCDE through program policy, guidelines, funding, and training opportunities. Sunnydale's induction program included a support structure composed of the district-level induction team (including a coordinator and master teachers), both the instructional and personnel divisions, program funding, trained mentor teachers, school-level administrators, and professional development opportunities. Induction teachers also received support from colleagues who taught within the same grade level or subject area. Norman and Feiman-Nemser (2005) looked closely at the interaction of beginning

teachers with differing levels of support. Their recommendation for policy makers and educational leaders included an emphasis on promoting and actively constructing induction experiences that empower new teachers to experience success.

Teacher Induction Program Implementation: Professional Development

Sunnydale's strategic planning document indicated the district will "provide novice teachers with an intense, ongoing professional development that will impact student achievement with the Induction/Mentoring Program." Wong (2005) states, "good induction programs are comprehensive, last several years, have clearly articulated goals, and provide a structured and nurturing system of professional development and support" (p.43). Ms. Hopkins concurs with Wong (2005). She stated that the induction program has clear goals for professional development. She went on to say, "the actions and practices, along with the coaching, help to develop teachers." She also added that it is not only the provision of content, it is the emotional support provided to beginning teachers throughout the induction program that impact them in the classroom.

During the interview with Mr. Thomas, he shared that professional development for teachers is a challenge because of the staff differences at each school. He also said time is an important factor when establishing professional learning environments. He again referenced the TAP model used in seven of the district's schools. "When TAP phased out, there was a removal of built-in PD [professional development]." He indicated he did not believe that impacted the induction program or the teachers participating in the program. "What changed more was the ongoing training that you had built in with TAP." With the loss of TAP master and mentor teachers, "the collaboration time started being trimmed off. To me, that's all part of professional learning."

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Mr. Thomas said the district is now using reading coaches to help with the loss of ongoing training. He recognized their primary goal is to assist with literacy in all subject areas, but contends through this assistance, reading coaches can provide modeling of best practice teaching strategies. He elaborated on this by saying, "one role of reading coaches-acting as master teachers-is to deliver a minimum of one hour per week of PD to allow for collaboration."

In addition to reading coaches, Mr. Thomas discussed the current practice of early-release days. Students are released early from school and professional development is provided for all teachers. He stated, "this is sacred time. No district meetings are scheduled." He added, "they love it." Teachers appreciate this opportunity to collaborate during the school day and still have time after school to spend with their families." When asked if induction teachers received training specific to them during early release days, he replied they did not. The addition of reading coaches and the implementation of early-release days began in school year 2014-2015, one year after the final year of the timeframe for this study.

During the interview with Ms. Lee, her responses on professional development centered on preparation of these opportunities for induction teachers. She was passionate as she spoke about the productivity of the district induction team as they collaborated to provide "quality professional development" pertinent to beginning teachers in the Sunnydale School District. Planning by the district team spanned months before induction teachers came on board. Survey data were used to identify areas of need and professional development opportunities were provided through monthly induction classes. The National Teacher Center (2012) reports that school districts often structure

professional development opportunities for beginning teachers to meet their needs and provide support with the district's curriculum and instructional initiatives.

State legislation and district policy also impacted professional development for induction teachers. During this time, South Carolina's teacher evaluation requirements experienced changes from one instrument to another. This resulted in school districts revising teacher evaluation policy. Changes in the teacher evaluation process were introduced into professional development opportunities and school and district administrators, along with master and mentor teachers, received training on the new instrument. When speaking about the change in the teacher evaluation process, Ms. Lee stated, "we had nine months to make sure they were ready to step into year two's evaluation."

Mr. Roberts discussed meeting the needs of beginning teachers from a school principal's perspective. He commented, "a cohort of induction teachers meet regularly to discuss the needs of each induction teacher, and training is provided to assist them with challenges." He also added that induction teachers receive training from the district office staff and are "walked through" the teacher evaluation process.

At least two of the survey respondents shared conflicting views regarding the benefits of the resource meetings. For example, one respondent stated, "the induction teacher class my district provided for us" was most helpful. Another respondent vaguely referenced that the meetings in general were not a helpful resource. Thus, it is unclear if the meetings or classes were beneficial for all participants.

Thus far, the discussion has been on providing professional development for beginning teachers. The 2012-2013 mid-year survey given to mentors revealed areas in

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which they requested additional learning opportunities to help them provide guidance to their mentees. These areas included the school intervention team process, limitations (knowing it's okay to say "no"'), working within a subject-area department, middle school behavior, implementation of Common Core State Standards, supervising a teacher assistant, and dealing with frustration with colleagues.

Sunnydale's district strategic plan narrative update for 2008-2009 touched on budget constraints faced by the district. The 2009-2010 update revealed state budget cuts continued, "forcing the district to make tough decisions regarding resources and the placement of personnel." Also included in the narrative for 2009-2010, was a reference to a "learning gap" experienced by teachers as they worked with new academic standards and the district literacy initiative. An additional challenge faced by the district was overcoming the "poverty gap" which resulted in At-Risk ratings for several schools based on student performance requirements for NCLB. The plan noted having TAP in the seven district schools with the highest poverty populations helped to address that challenge. These district challenges were experienced by all teachers, including those in the induction year.

Sunnydale's strategic plan update for 2009-2010, also noted that planned initiatives and programs to address ineffective practices sometimes experience setbacks due to cutbacks in funding. The plan indicated there were delays in planned implementation of initiatives essential to establishing a comprehensive program throughout the district. The plan continued by stating this may be due to postponed training or professional development. According to the strategic plan, training and professional development in initiatives such as literacy and poverty were areas affected

by budget constraints. This impacted all teachers, including induction teachers. The strategic plan also included the following update for 2009-2010, "in the area of curriculum and instruction, the district will continue and expand its [professional development days prior to start of school] to provide proper training, guidance, and motivation for new district personnel."

In summary, the implementation of professional development for beginning teachers was provided prior to the start of school and continued through monthly induction classes. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) surmise professional development opportunities for beginning teachers provide opportunities for them to hone skills in areas such as management, curriculum, and students as learners. Needs of induction teachers and their mentors were determined and opportunities for professional learning were developed by Sunnydale's induction team and district personnel.

As indicated in Sunnydale's strategic plans and board minutes, and by district-level administrators, budget cuts and the variation of staff needs impacted the planning for and execution of professional development opportunities for all personnel. Challenges such as poverty and literacy prompted the district to respond through the development of initiatives and programs; however, the implementation of these was affected by delays in requisite training for all teachers, including induction teachers.

Emergent Themes

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that impacted Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program over a five-year span. Through interviews, a survey, and review of documents, I explored how the induction program changed during this timeframe because of these impacts. Strategic responses to factors that impacted the

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induction program were also identified. The primary research questions guiding this study were:

(1) How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

(2) What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

(3) What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

The identification of emergent themes was an intricate process given the varied perceptions of study participants as their stories were entwined with one another, the research, and the document analysis. District and school administrators mostly viewed Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program through a wide-angle lens, while the induction program team used a lens with a narrower focus. The view from the survey respondent lens was even narrower, still. During the process of analysis, similarities in the findings revealed the areas where all three groups converged as *leadership* and *support*.

While I relied on the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 4.1) to guide my research, analysis, and organization of findings, it would be simplistic to categorize emergent themes as falling only within the program implementation realm of the model without considering the structural aspect of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program. To promote the valid and reliable development of emergent themes, I focused on how leadership and support impacted the comprehensive model of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program. The following discussion of themes is not intended to pigeon-hole findings by neatly fitting them into one section of the model over another. Instead, I will discuss the findings that led to the identification of leadership and

support as emergent themes. I will also discuss leadership and support in the context of existing literature.

Leadership

The most prominent theme focused on leadership during the evolution of Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program. Specifically, there was a change in leadership at all top levels of the school district. Given the vital role that district leaders play in meeting "the needs of the school system and most efficiently and effectively use its resources" (Sunnydale Board Policy, 2008), it is not surprising to see leadership emerge as a theme.

To develop a better understanding and to help ground the findings, I conducted additional research on the characteristics of effective school district leaders. This was not an attempt to evaluate the performance of district leaders, but one to gain understanding of performance expectations for school district leaders. Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston (2011) state, "the purpose of leadership should be the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical skills, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student achievement" (p. 2). DiPaola and Stronge (2003), in partnership with the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), published a handbook for superintendent evaluation. Identified in the handbook are the following performance domains: *Policy and Governance, Planning and Assessments, Instructional Leadership, Organizational Management, Communications and Community Relations, and Professionalism*. The ECRA Group (2010) published a literature review of effective superintendents and presented the following assessment categories: *Vision and Values, Core Knowledge Competencies,*

Instructional Leadership, Community and Relationships, Communication and

Collaboration, and Management.

While worded and organized differently, these domains are similar in promoting effective school district leadership. The performance domains were reflected in Sunnydale's board policy and were present in the district's strategic plan. Comments made during interviews and in survey responses often focused on one or more of these leadership areas.

At the onset of this study, Mr. Jones, Sunnydale's superintendent, was contacted and the purpose and method of this study was shared with him. Superintendent approval to conduct the study was granted, and the deputy superintendent was designated as the primary district contact to assist with gaining access to participants and documents.

Mr. Thomas is the deputy superintendent of Sunnydale School District. He has direct experience working with the implementation of the teacher induction and mentoring program and other divisions within the district. One of his responsibilities is providing leadership of Sunnydale's instructional division. During the first four years of the study timeframe, the teacher induction and mentoring program functioned within the instructional division.

Ms. Hopkins, the coordinator of the teacher induction and mentoring program submitted yearly plans and updates to Mr. Thomas. According to Mr. Thomas, the program was "running well," under the leadership of Ms. Hopkins. He stated, "[Ms. Hopkins] would write our plan, she would train mentors [and] assign them to teachers." He discussed how Ms. Hopkins would work over the summer with mentors in terms of training and preparing mentor assignments for the following school year. He also stated,

"she had a team [pause] principals, district level teachers [district master teachers] that usually helped write the teacher induction plan every year." Ms. Hopkins said she would consult with Mr. Thomas if she needed any assistance with the program. For example, there were times during the adoption of new academic standards or other initiatives when it was necessary to collaborate on professional development that would be provided to beginning teachers through the induction program.

Mr. Thomas also said he thought the plan looked much the same once the induction program shifted to the personnel division. He stated, "[Mr. Edwards] may know more of the specifics than I do on what's changed." Mr. Edwards indicated that the induction program remained similar after the move to his division, although the induction team only includes district and school administrators and mentors. District master teachers were no longer part of the induction team the final year of this study. Mr. Edwards said he relies on the files of Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee to plan beginning of school professional development and the monthly class meetings for induction teachers. He also aligns the induction timeline to mirror the teacher evaluation timeline.

As new initiatives and programs were introduced, both Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee expressed there was a shift in priorities for district leaders. The collective perception was one where the teacher induction and mentoring program became less of a priority for district leaders. Ms. Hopkins expressed with frustration on multiple occasions, the program was "not a top priority." Ms. Lee stated, "strangely enough, I felt we had the buy-in of the principals. It was the upper level." The "upper level" referred to by Ms. Lee indicated the new superintendent and assistant superintendents.

Sunnydale's district strategic plan included areas where the district needed to improve and problems that needed to be addressed. The plan also included initiatives and programs introduced to address these. In his role as superintendent-elect, Mr. Jones was involved in the research and developmental stages of initiatives including those that responded to underperforming schools not meeting NCLB's requirements.

District documents identified a "poverty gap" as the root cause for underperforming schools. Sunnydale developed initiatives to respond to the impact of poverty present in many of its schools. To meet NCLB recommendations for improvement, schools with low populations and an underperforming status were closed and students were reassigned to other schools. There was reconfiguration of grade levels to place 6th grade students in a middle school setting and 9th grade students at the high school campus. Specialty areas for schools were established, including those with a focus on technology, alternative school-year calendars, and the arts. School choice measures were put in place to allow parents the option of selecting the school best suited to meet the needs of the student. A community relations effort was spearheaded by Mr. Jones to change the perception of the district from one that had many underperforming schools to one that offered many opportunities for students to succeed. Parents and community members participated in forums and other informational meetings initiated by Sunnydale to include them as district stakeholders. By the time he assumed the superintendent position the following year, many initiatives were well under way.

As communicated by both Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee, there was a shift in focus for the district leadership team. With a well-established teacher induction and mentoring program in place, district leaders appeared confident with letting the induction program

continue under the direction of Ms. Hopkins. What did not continue was the same level of funding as in previous years and the perceived commitment of district leaders to a program that saw increases most years in the number of induction teachers served. In frustration, Ms. Lee stated, "the expectation was, we want the same accolades, the same quality. Because we like being known for having the program." Ms. Lee went on to say, "it was a great program. Lauded all over South Carolina and even the Southeast. I spoke with folks from Florida and Georgia about what we did in [Sunnydale]. *Did* being the operative word."

During this study timeframe, Sunnydale also had to respond to statewide budget cuts. Teachers and administrators were required to take furlough days and department budgets were cut, impacting funding for programs such as teacher induction. Yet, many new programs and initiatives were receiving funding. What could be interpreted as a redirection of existing funds may not be the case. Districts commonly receive grant funding for various programs and initiatives, but are bound by guidelines to meet spending stipulations for the grants. Most of the initiatives presented here would fall into that category. For example, funding from a federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) was used to help finance programming that addressed overcoming the poverty gap. Consequently, it was probable that these dedicated funds could not be used for other programs, including teacher induction. However, induction teachers working within the school receiving the grant benefited from changes put in place to increase student performance. Alternatively, these induction teachers were required to participate in professional development pertinent to the initiative in addition to offerings through the induction program. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) caution school districts to remain

cognizant and take measures to ensure professional learning is structured to enhance, not hinder, other teaching responsibilities.

Thus far, I have described the leadership theme through the broadly focused lens of the district leaders and the more narrowly focused lens of those working within the teacher induction and mentoring program. The findings for survey respondents focused on leadership at the school level, which can come from a variety of individuals. In addition to leadership support from the district master and mentor teachers, survey respondents relied on their school administrators to provide guidance. Wood and Stanulis (2009) emphasize the commitment to the induction program determines the effectiveness of the principal's leadership. Some survey respondents indicated that a co-teacher or other colleagues assisted with leading them in the right direction in the areas of instruction and non-instructional duties. While most of the survey respondents commented favorably to the provision of leadership, two participants did not. One respondent shared that, "in all areas, I was provided limited guidance." Another respondent stated, "my principal didn't have the time to really observe me. My evaluation was perfect, but I didn't feel like that was a completely honest observation."

Support

Merriam Webster includes the following in its definition of support: to pay the cost of; to promote; to assist or help; to uphold or serve as a foundation; to maintain; to comfort; and to sustain. After reflecting on this extensive list, it is not surprising that support emerged as a theme for this study. Each of these supports can be applied to Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program.

Support will be discussed at two levels: support for the induction teacher and support for the induction program. The provision of support at both levels contributes to the effective implementation of a comprehensive induction program.

Support for induction teachers began with the assignment of a trained mentor. As part of Sunnydale's induction program, induction teachers and their mentors participated in professional development for three days prior to the beginning of school. This was an opportunity for teachers to learn more about the district, school, and community before they met their students for the first time in the classroom. Ganser (2005) concurs, noting that some institutions initiate the process of induction before the beginning teachers report to school. Monthly classes were conducted for induction teachers, with topics ranging from classroom management to long-range planning. Mentor teachers visited the induction teachers at least once a month and had even more frequent contact via email or phone calls. Master teachers also communicated with induction teachers and were available to assist them.

School leaders, including the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches were all sources of support for beginning teachers. For those schools participating in TAP, there were also TAP master and TAP mentor teachers who provided support. Navigating the first year of teaching generates a range of needs. For example, new teachers need assistance with learning policies and procedures, as well as where to find supplies and materials. Colleagues within the same grade or subject area may also be instrumental in helping induction-year teachers with curriculum and other classroom needs.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the level of satisfaction with induction program support. Figure 4.3 shows the frequency of individual responses. Respondents were also asked to provide comments about the level of support received as an induction teacher.

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Unsure	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Satisfaction with Induction Program Support	8	2	2	1	1

Figure 4.3 Frequency of Responses

One of the respondents who selected "Unsure," commented that examples provided for the required unit work sample were received after his/hers was "completed and turned in." The other respondent who selected "Unsure," did not respond with a comment. The respondent who selected "Somewhat Unsatisfied," commented, "My principal didn't have the time to really observe me." The respondent who selected "Very Unsatisfied," did not respond with a comment. However, later in the survey, this same respondent commented, "It was most helpful to have a mentor/advisor to ask questions when I needed help with school procedures or state requirements."

Respondents who selected "Very Satisfied," or "Somewhat Satisfied," shared comments that indicated the mentor was instrumental in providing support in the areas of lesson planning, classroom management, instructional strategies and resources, providing constructive feedback, and answering questions. One of these individuals commented, "my mentor was a wealth of information and support-I could not have had the successful first year of teaching without her input-invaluable."

Mr. Thomas commented that while Sunnydale secures, trains, and assigns mentors to induction teachers, time plays a factor in the level of support offered. He stated,

> The one thing that's kind of a hindrance is time. Time for those mentors to really coach those teachers. It is so hard to teach full time and you're serving as a mentor. We have some great ones and they do a good job. I just wish we could do more.

Mr. Thomas also shared there was a loss of support for some induction teachers when the TAP program in seven of Sunnydale's schools ended in the 2011-2012 school year. TAP master and TAP mentor teachers returned to the classroom and the built-in structure of support through on-going training, collaboration, and professional learning ceased. Mr. Thomas said some principals tried to recreate that structure, but they usually faced challenges like class coverage for teachers and identifying someone to plan and lead the professional learning.

Ms. Hopkins was instrumental in developing Sunnydale's induction program to include levels of support. Drexel (2006) indicated that multiple levels of support, including a mentor, lead teacher or department head, and a school administrator, assist new teachers in their professional growth. In addition to school administrators and colleagues, the induction teachers had the support of mentor and master teachers. During the years of this study timeframe, Ms. Hopkins said the decrease in funding for the induction program affected the level of support for induction teachers. She shared that at first, only materials and resources were affected by the budget cuts. The year she retired, the personnel working as master teachers in the induction program were relieved of those

duties. This cut in personnel also affected the support provided for induction teachers.

Ms. Hopkins, though retired, shared how she perceived this as a lack of support from district leaders for the induction program.

Ms. Lee was also very involved in building Sunnydale's induction program. She worked closely with Ms. Hopkins to secure and train mentors to support induction teachers. They identified and trained master teachers who had expertise in their respective areas to provide additional support to induction and mentor teachers. They also developed professional learning opportunities based on best practice and district initiatives as part of the program to support induction teachers.

Both Ms. Hopkins and Ms. Lee expressed that Sunnydale's induction program was more than just preparing teachers to make it through the first year of teaching. Wong et al. (2005) suggested induction programs are most beneficial for beginning teachers if in place for two to five years. After year one, meetings continued, and communication remained open to support Sunnydale's induction teachers and address any concerns. Ms. Lee stated, "it was understood that if we could keep an induction teacher through the first three years, we would count it as successful." From the perspective of these two members of Sunnydale's induction team, the program had long-term effects.

Ms. Lee shared that once Ms. Hopkins retired and that induction team configuration dissolved, she worked with Mr. Edwards to assist with the program. She believed the relationship piece once present between induction teachers and the master and mentor teachers suffered because of the move from the instructional division to the personnel division. She was visibly dismayed as she said,

That was the death knell for our program. Plain and simple. When it went to

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personnel, it was placed under someone who had not been in a classroom in many

years. One person cannot have expertise in all areas, K-12, and special areas such

as art, P. E., foreign language, and music. I stayed on to assist, but the frustration

was way too much. Induction needs to be handled by instruction because that is

what we hired them [induction teachers] to do. Personnel should work to hire the

best.

As noted earlier, Ms. Lee stressed the relationship piece as essential to providing long-

term support for induction teachers. She shared that induction master and mentor teachers

weren't just experts in the field, they also taught in classrooms every day and faced the

same challenges as induction teachers. Ms. Lee stated it was this credibility that made a

difference in building relationships.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I presented the research findings for this study. The data were

organized to reveal factors most impactful to the evolution of this school district's teacher

induction and mentoring program. Data that emerged from interviews, survey responses,

and document review revealed changes in Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring

program because of these impacts. Analysis of the data also revealed patterns that

allowed me to organize the data within a framework to guide further analyses, remaining

consistent with the purpose of this study.

Leadership and *support* were identified as emergent themes based on similarities

found within data collected from interview participants, survey respondents, and

documents. The leadership theme was discussed through the various lenses of district and

school administrators, the induction team members, and induction teachers. Levels of support for the induction teacher and the induction program were also discussed.

Chapter 5 will interpret the study findings as related to the research questions. Discussion will situate the findings in existing literature on teacher induction and mentoring programs and describe how this study contributes to that body of knowledge. Limitations will be noted and implications for further study will be presented. In addition, considerations for educational policy will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Establishing and sustaining an effective teacher induction program is a responsibility faced by every school district in South Carolina. Federal and state legislation, policy, and guidelines provide parameters for teacher induction programs, but local school districts are responsible for developing a program that meets the needs of their beginning teachers. The implementation of an effective program prepares induction level teachers to positively impact student performance. This study explored the factors that impacted one school district's teacher induction and mentoring program structure and implementation over the course of five years. Through analysis of data, changes in the program were identified and responses to impacts were examined.

The review of existing literature provided an overview of teacher induction theories and programs. Although there has been wide support and discussion about the components of teacher induction programs (e.g. Wong, 2002; Moir, 2003; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), there has been limited attention in the literature on how various factors impact existing programs. The understanding of *how* and *why* this induction program evolved the way it did may provide information to guide future research that will better inform not only the key components of teacher induction and mentoring programs, but also how these programs are implemented and sustained over time.

Research Design

This study used a single case design to conduct an in-depth analysis of a teacher induction and mentoring program to identify impacts to its program and the district's strategic response. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with five key district personnel, teacher surveys, and document review and analysis.

Interviews were conducted with current district personnel and two retired personnel who were directly involved with the induction program during the timeframe of this study. At the district level, the deputy superintendent and the coordinator of teacher quality were interviewed. Additionally, one secondary principal participated in an interview. Interviews were also conducted with the former coordinator of the district's teacher induction and mentoring program and a district master teacher. These individuals were part of the district's induction program team before their retirement from the district.

The survey was completed by teachers who participated in the induction process during the study timeframe and were still employed with the district at the time of this study. Of the thirty-three teachers who met these criteria, fourteen responded to the survey. Respondents were asked questions specific to the topic of the induction program's structure and implementation.

Pertinent documents such as legislation, district policy, district budgets, school board minutes, strategic plans, and induction program guides were reviewed and analyzed to help identify multiple facets that may have impacted the school district during the evolution of the induction program. Analysis of these documents helped develop a deeper understanding of factors that impacted the induction program. While

some responses to factors that impacted the induction program were easily identified, others were not. At times, it was unclear if a response was directly related to factors that impacted the teacher induction and mentoring program.

The following discussion will present my interpretation of the findings as they contributed to answering the research questions for this study. The purpose of the study was to explore factors that impacted an effective induction program, how the program changed as a result, and the strategic response to the factors that impacted the program.

Results for Research Questions #1 and #2

The first research question focused on how the teacher induction program evolved over time. To determine how Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program evolved over time, I began by looking at the specific factors, or impacts, that contributed to the program's evolution. Because the second research question, "What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?" was closely related to the first question, the results for these questions are discussed together.

Sunnydale's induction program was developed in 2006-2007, by the coordinator of teacher induction, in collaboration with the assistant superintendent of instruction, to meet the needs of beginning teachers. Sunnydale's program included the establishment of an induction team comprised of the coordinator and five master teachers. This team supported the mentor teachers identified to work with beginning teachers, conducted research, and developed and delivered professional development for induction level teachers. Subsequently, in 2007-2008, additional district and school administrators joined the induction team to provide support for Sunnydale's first-year teachers. Additionally, the coordinator, master and mentor teachers, and district and school administrators were

trained in the state-supported model for teacher induction and mentoring. With a well-designed program in place, Sunnydale met state guidelines in 2008-2009 for the development and implementation of its teacher induction and mentoring program.

Year One, 2009-2010: At the onset of this study the formal induction and mentoring program at Sunnydale had been in place for three years. The district allotted almost $40,000 to the program budget to support its twenty-one induction-year teachers. Expenditures included stipends for personnel (master teachers) and material resources to provide induction teachers experiences and professional development to support them during the first years in the classroom.

Sunnydale's establishment of the district-level induction team provided a level of support for beginning teachers that exceeded the expectations of the SCDE. The preparations made by the team to provide support for its beginning teachers were reflected in the professional development opportunities provided to teachers. For example, a beginning of the year, three-day institute was established to prepare induction teachers to start the school year with a better understanding of the district and its expectations.

The institute included a tour of the district, introductions to district-level personnel, and expectations for professionalism in the educational setting. The induction team considered these experiences valuable, exposing new teachers to the dynamics and diversity of the community they would serve. This focused immersion into the Sunnydale School District was also the point at which relationships between the induction team members, mentors, and beginning teachers began to develop. The establishment of these

relationships likely played a role in the low numbers of induction-level teachers leaving this district each year of this study.

In addition to the institute, monthly class meetings were conducted by the induction team to provide beginning teachers with best practice strategies in areas such as classroom management, lesson planning, parent conferences, and data analysis. As part of its support structure, members of the induction team regularly observed the teachers and provided opportunities for reflection and feedback. This was in addition to the observations conducted by assigned mentor teachers. The relationships between and among master, mentor, and induction teachers continued to develop. The induction team demonstrated experience and expertise in areas where new teachers were lacking; assistance was provided as inductees navigated the first years as a classroom teacher. Year one support focused on needs of the beginning teacher to be effective in the classroom and year two provided support for teachers as they participated in the formal evaluation process for the first time. Support continued in subsequent years, based on the relationships established in the first two years of the induction program. I believe it was this support structure that prompted neighboring districts and states to view the program as a model for comprehensive teacher induction and mentoring.

The district leadership team experienced multiple changes over a five-year period. This included a new superintendent and new assistant superintendents in the areas of personnel and instruction during the first year of this study. While district leaders focused their collective efforts on responses to issues such as the effects of poverty in many of their schools, they also faced transforming adverse perceptions of the district. With the

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identification of many underperforming schools because they did not meet NCLB's requirements, the stigma of a failing district had attached itself to Sunnydale.

Induction program leaders also recognized the stigma overshadowing the district and worked with district department heads to incorporate strategies to help overcome these perceptions. The induction team believed the development of relationships with beginning teachers as they engaged with the district's diverse communities contributed to the effort to overcome the identified poverty gap. Support provided by the induction team to new teachers as they served students from these communities helped develop a more positive perception of Sunnydale. The induction team and the cohort of induction teachers became a positive voice for the district as it worked to improve its perceived status.

Year Two, 2010-2011: Sunnydale's teacher induction and mentoring program was required to make some minor adjustments in year two of this study. While funding provided by the district was cut in half, the program configuration and personnel remained intact, serving eighteen induction teachers. Since many of the resources put in place as supports for induction teachers were sustainable, the program continued to function much as it had the previous year.

What did surface during this year was a shift in how the induction team perceived program support provided by district leaders. A program the induction team believed was once viewed as a high priority within the district was now experiencing budget cuts and there was a shift in focus of the district leaders. This perceived lack of support overshadowed the work of the induction team members as they worked to revise the

content of professional development for beginning teachers to include strategies for addressing new district initiatives such as poverty and literacy.

Year Three, 2011-2012: Year three of this study saw additional budget cuts for the teacher induction and mentoring program. The original budget amount of almost $40,000 decreased to just under $14,000. During 2011-2012, Sunnydale's induction and mentoring program served twenty-four beginning teachers. In other words, although the number of teachers being served had increased, the budget actually decreased. Other changes in this year included a new superintendent with an agenda, as well as directives from the school board to continue focusing on initiatives to address poverty in the schools, literacy, and improving the image of the district. In addition to the superintendent, a new individual was hired to head the finance division. Accounting procedures were updated, and this individual played more of an active role in the decision-making process for funding district programs.

The perceptions of the induction team that the teacher induction and mentoring program had become less of a priority for the district deepened. Not only did the program experience additional budget cuts, there were new leaders in place who supported that decision. A significant change for the induction program coordinator was one that shifted from working closely with the instructional division to determine funding for support of the induction program to one where little input was provided in the allocation of a yearly budget from the finance department. While the induction coordinator was aware of reduced federal and state funding and its impact to the district, the perception of the program's shift in priority status continued to be reinforced by the actions of the district. No longer having the opportunity to contribute to the program's budget planning process

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was perceived by the induction team as another area where the program lacked district support.

During the school year, the induction team continued to provide support for beginning teachers through professional development opportunities and school-based interactions. By the end of the school year, the district level team experienced feelings of frustration related to the induction program. Looming ahead was an anticipated induction cohort larger than those experienced in recent years, due to thirty teachers retiring and over thirty teachers with five or more years of experience leaving the district. There was an intense effort to identify potential mentors to be trained to support the next cohort of induction teachers. What once would have been an exciting challenge to induct a high number of teachers into the district was now seen as a challenge to be faced with a decreasing budget and perceived lack of support from district leaders.

Year Four, 2012-2013: As anticipated by induction program leaders, the induction teacher cohort increased in size and again the budgeted funds for the induction program decreased. The new school year brought with it thirty-eight induction teachers and a budget of $6,508. Even with the high induction teacher number and low budget in place, induction team members continued to provide support to beginning teachers. The commitment of the team to maintain quality induction opportunities sustained the program for this school year.

Adjustments were made in the provision of material resources and creative strategies were put in place to ensure induction teachers still had opportunities to be observed and to observe in other classrooms. Instead of relying on induction funds to pay for substitute teachers, induction team members arranged for coverage of classes by

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utilizing other teachers, instructional coaches, and school administrators. At times, the induction team master teachers personally secured a floating substitute teacher, using their own personal days, to allow for observations to take place. Creative scheduling of these floating substitute teachers allowed for multiple observation opportunities within the same day.

What appeared as the most challenging year for the induction and mentoring program thus far was not; more changes would soon be imposed. At the end of the 2012-2013 school year, the coordinator for the induction program retired from the Sunnydale School District.

Year Five, 2013-2014: The final year of this study reflected great change in Sunnydale's induction program placement, configuration, and offerings. The school district did not fill the position vacated by the retired induction program coordinator. The induction and mentoring program once situated within the instructional division of the district was moved to the personnel division of the district. In addition to this move, the induction team master teachers were no longer included as support personnel for the induction program. Management of the program was assigned by the personnel director to the coordinator of teacher quality, who also worked with the teacher evaluation process.

To provide stability and guidance during this transition, district leaders allowed one of the former master teachers to continue working with the induction program. This decision could have been the district's response to having an induction cohort of fifty-two teachers, replacing ninety-one teachers who left this district the previous year. While this provided the new coordinator with needed expertise from an experienced educator, the master teacher experienced frustration by trying to deliver the same levels of support

once offered by the induction team without the former resources. While the program's components and professional development offerings continued to meet the SCDE expectations, the absence of the collective expertise and experience of the master teacher induction team reduced the level of support to which the district had become accustomed. The district relied on mentor teacher support, professional development opportunities, and support from colleagues to provide the induction year experiences for beginning teachers.

Although research supports the inclusion of mentor teachers as valuable resource to first-year teachers, to be effective, mentors require training and support. Under the new configuration, while mentors received training, they lacked the support once provided by the master teacher induction team as they collaborated on how best to serve new teachers. The district continued to offer the pre-established institute for new teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. Monthly class sessions continued, primarily using the agendas and materials prepared by the former induction team.

While the current coordinator focused on providing support to a cohort of beginning teachers during the first year, the focus during the second year for that same cohort shifted to teacher evaluation. Whereas the previous induction team provided multi-leveled support that continued beyond the first year, including the evaluation year, there would be a conflict of interest for the current coordinator to provide support while managing the evaluation process. With the arrival of a new cohort of inductees each year, the mentors were not always available to meet the needs of second-year teachers.

Results for Research Question #3

The final research question explored strategies that emerged to address changes in the induction and mentoring program as it evolved over the period of five years. This proved problematic because the intent behind a given strategic response was not always clear. Additionally, one strategy may have been executed to respond to multiple changes. To maintain objectivity within the final phase of this study, it was important to explore responses to both positive and negative changes that impacted the evolution of Sunnydale's induction program.

The Sunnydale School District, like most across the nation, recognized the need to establish a formal plan for inducting new teachers into the profession. In response to this need, Sunnydale designed and implemented its induction and mentoring program. To best respond to beginning teacher needs, teachers were identified and trained as mentors. Sunnydale expanded its level of support by creating an induction team of master teachers that brought experience and expertise of subject areas and grade levels to the program. The district supported the building of its induction program with resources such as funding and the provision of requisite training for all personnel involved with the program.

The establishment of the induction and mentoring program took place during a time when Sunnydale experienced changes in its district leadership. An examination of the timeline of events revealed that just enough of the leadership team remained intact at any given time for the program to continue to grow, providing increased support for beginning teachers. For example, during consecutive tenures of three superintendents, the assistant superintendent for instruction remained a constant source of support for the

induction program. Upon the retirement of this individual, the superintendent had been in place for two years and could see the value the program had for newly hired teachers.

During the second year of this study, the induction and mentoring program was well established, with all components in place. While growth may have continued each year, the foundation of the program was solid. It is likely the district responded to having a well-functioning program in place by decreasing the amount of funding allotted to the induction budget. It is plausible funds once used to design and build the program were no longer essential to sustain the program.

The third and fourth years of this study were situated in a time when the United States economy was recovering from the stock market crash that occurred in the fall of 2008. In response to financial instability, government agencies across the board, including the South Carolina Department of Education, experienced cutbacks in funding. Responses by the SCDE to cutbacks in federal and statewide funding included reduced financial assistance provided to its school districts. Sunnydale responded to statewide budget cuts by decreasing departmental budgets and operating costs. These impacts were felt by all. Teachers and administrators were required to take furlough days and the decrease in departmental budgets impacted funding for programs such as teacher induction. The budgeted amount for the teacher induction and mentoring program decreased by about $7,000 in each of these years.

In response to overall funding issues, new accounting procedures were put in place. What appeared to induction team members as lack of support for the induction program may have been the district implementing measures to continue functioning and providing services to students during times of financial hardship.

In addition to budget cuts, the district also experienced high teacher turnover during these years, resulting in greater numbers of induction teachers to be served. Those most closely involved with the induction program struggled to coordinate meeting the needs of more teachers with fewer resources. While there was a decrease in financial support, district leaders continued to believe the program in its current form was beneficial for inducting new teachers into the profession. As the district was dealing with its own issues related to negative perception due to failing schools, the induction program team perceived district responses, or the lack thereof, as declining support for the program.

The induction team's perception of waning support for the program was also affected by the district's involvement in grant programs put in place to respond to failing schools. With attention focused on meeting state and federal accountability requirements, it is reasonable to believe the district's focus was not the teacher induction and mentoring program.

The final year of this study saw many changes in the induction program. In response to the retirement of the induction program coordinator, the district chose to leave the position unfilled and redistributed job responsibilities among existing district personnel. The teacher induction and mentoring program was assigned to the coordinator of teacher quality, located within the personnel division of the district. The inclusion of district-level master teachers in the induction program was discontinued. It is unclear why this took place, but one explanation could be funding.

This school year experienced greater numbers of first-year teachers hired by the district. With a new coordinator in place, the induction program prepared to serve fifty-

two beginning teachers. The district responded by retaining one of the induction master teachers to assist with the transition of the program. While on paper, fifty-two teachers completed the induction process, it was not at the level previously established by the former induction team. Multiple levels of support put in place by the former induction team were reduced to support provided by mentors and school administrators.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

The Sunnydale School District accomplished a feat not realized by many school districts. The design and implementation of its teacher induction and mentoring program was viewed by other districts and states in the southeast as one that exceeded expectations for meeting needs of newly hired teachers. Sunnydale had established a district-level team of master teachers whose primary focus was to provide induction teachers with the tools necessary to become effective classroom teachers. Focused, ongoing professional development that included research-based best practice strategies, as well as school-level interactions between members of the induction team, the mentors, and beginning teachers, resulted in the formation of a well-functioning learning community. In subsequent years, members of this learning community contributed to the induction process with new cohorts of beginning teachers, further establishing professional relationships that supported teaching and learning.

The teacher induction and mentoring program was sustained, providing this level of support for most of the study timeframe. The commitment and determination of the induction team members kept the program going, even though they experienced significant impacts to the budget. Events experienced just prior to the final year of this study impacted the program's future. Decisions made by district leaders to relocate the

program led to decreased functionality of the program. It should be noted that even at this lower level of functionality, the program continued to meet the guidelines set forth by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).

Limitations and Recommendations

Given the design and scope of this study, limitations exist, thus the following recommendations are offered as general advice, and should be regarded as such. The single case design of this study may limit application outside of this school district and state. As is typical with single case study designs, study results are directly applicable only to the specific case that was examined. While the transferability of the results from this study to other school districts is minimal, because this case is situated within a public school district of the State of South Carolina, the findings can provide a foundation for further discussion and research for teacher induction programs located within this state. Future studies containing multiple cases from different parts of the United States would strengthen the range of application for findings and conclusions.

This school district, like many others, is configured with a set number of personnel. The smaller number of participants for this study does not diminish the significance of the findings. Further research with a larger number of participants across multiple districts may enhance the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Additionally, there is a slight potential for researcher bias given my prior employment in this district and work with the teacher induction program. I sought to minimize such risk of bias through a variety of strategies, including the careful analysis of data guided by the literature and theoretical model, and the use of open-ended interview questions to ensure participants' voices were primarily driving the data

collection rather than my personal research agenda. Furthermore, I did not previously have supervisory authority over any of the study participants and had been separated from the district for three years before conducting the study.

Practitioners

Leadership at the district level should contribute to a comprehensive teacher induction program that provides support for beginning teachers as they enter the profession. Keeping in mind improved student performance is the primary goal for school districts, district leaders need to ensure induction teachers receive the training and resources essential to promote teacher success as measured by student growth. The following district-level recommendations will help to ensure teacher induction programs are structured and implemented to provide optimal benefits to beginning teachers, students, and the district.

Recommendation One: School districts should make the investment of leadership, funding, support, and resources upon the hiring of beginning teachers. Implementation of a comprehensive induction program may thwart perpetuation of a cycle of hiring replacement teachers for those who leave the profession within the first few years. Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) believe this is an investment strategy that will pay off by decreasing the costs associated with replacement of teachers due to turnover. South Carolina's (2006) guidelines state that one of the purposes for teacher induction is to "reduce the rate of attrition among our newest teachers" (p. 2).

Recommendation Two: School districts need to establish district policy and communicate expectations for supporting induction teachers and their mentors. The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines (2006)

state that school administrators "must make an active effort to reduce the demands made on beginning teachers" (p. 10). The guidelines include making an effort to limit class size, limit or exclude extra duties, and reduce the inclusion of challenging student populations in classes. District responsibilities as outlined in the guidelines include the provision of release time for both mentors and induction teachers. Strategies such as these will support both mentors and induction teachers.

Recommendation Three: As districts introduce new initiatives and programs, they need to ensure the existing teacher induction program is sustained or improved. Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) caution school districts to remain cognizant and take measures to ensure professional learning is structured to enhance, not hinder, other teaching responsibilities. School districts need to examine how the new initiatives and/or programs and the teacher induction program support each other. Points for district leaders to consider when designing professional development opportunities for beginning teachers amid new initiatives and programs include determining how one affects the other and how the district will respond to minimize impact to the induction program. Additionally, communicating how all programs collectively fit into the big picture of improved student performance may help alleviate negative perceptions of leadership and support for the induction program.

Recommendation Four: The identification of teachers to serve as mentors needs to be a reflective and purposeful process. The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines (2006) includes the following requirements for teachers selected to become a mentor:

The district must ensure that in every case a teacher who is selected to become a

mentor has been evaluated on the basis of the degree to which he or she:

- has knowledge of beginning-teacher professional development and effective adult learning strategies;

- is conversant with the [teacher evaluation] process;

- has knowledge of researched-based instructional strategies and effective student assessment based on the state's academic standards;

- understands and appreciates the importance of an educator's having a thorough command of the subject matter and skills that he or she is teaching;

- has a record of exemplary teaching and professional conduct that allows him or her to serve as a role model;

- has effective interpersonal and communication skills;

- has a demonstrated commitment to his or her own professional growth and learning;

- has the willingness and the ability to participate in professional preparation to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective mentor; and

- has the willingness and the ability to work collaboratively and share instructional ideas and materials with beginning teachers. (pp. 18-19)

Although this list of requirements is quite extensive, it emphasizes the importance of the identification process for mentor teachers by district leaders.

The guidelines (South Carolina, 2006) also stipulate that district and school leaders "support and reinforce the vision and purpose of induction and mentoring," (p. 10) by participating in an overview of the program to become familiar with the model. Based on the negative perceptions communicated by some participants in this study, a

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greater focus here may help improve the overall perception regarding support of the induction program.

Recommendation Five: School districts need to dedicate time for mentors to collaborate on how best to serve mentees. The provision of release time from teaching, a decreased teaching load, and relief from duties will provide collaboration opportunities for mentors and contribute to more effective support for beginning teachers.

Recommendation Six: Principals should play an active role in support of the teacher induction program. Woods and Stanulis (2009) relate the success of induction programs to the leadership and commitment of school administrators. School leaders can establish a culture where colleagues embrace new teachers and promote the profession. While the assignment of a formal mentor is provided, informal mentoring support should be embedded and reflected in the actions of all school personnel. If the beginning teacher's mentor is not located in the same building, school leaders can designate a buddy teacher to assist the induction teacher. All school personnel should anticipate common needs of its beginning teachers and ensure measures are in place to provide support and guidance before new teachers become frustrated searching for answers. The investment of time and resources for induction teachers will pay off economically, as well. Retaining induction teachers in the classroom reduces the costs associated with replacing induction teachers leaving the profession. Lower costs due to teacher turnover result in the availability of additional funding to support educational programs.

Recommendation Seven: Teachers are the best resource in place to promote the profession. This recommendation is an appeal for teachers to demonstrate professionalism through both formal and informal support of beginning teachers. While

teacher leaders may promote and support the teacher induction process as a viable means to positive change, all teachers should consider the process of induction as one that brings new members into the field they represent. The actions of teachers should reflect exemplary practices and behaviors for those entering the profession to strengthen the number of teachers that consider professionalism within the field of education non-negotiable.

Implications

Researchers

Additional research is needed on the identification of common obstacles and challenges to a teacher induction program. The effects of these obstacles and challenges need to be explored and suggestions for strategies that may assist school districts as they respond to these impacts should be included. While examining the evolution of this teacher induction and mentoring program provided valuable insight to the effects experienced by this program, there were limitations. First, it was difficult to move beyond the perceptions of participants to determine the strategies, if any, put in place as responses. Second, while helpful, district documents did not indicate any initiative or program was a direct response to factors that impacted the teacher induction and mentoring program.

Additional research is also needed to explore differences in the structure, implementation, and effectiveness of teacher induction programs based on where the program is situated within a district's divisions. Are there differences in the effectiveness of a program based on where it is "housed" within the district? While South Carolina's induction program is aligned with the state's teacher evaluation standards, and the

personnel division is responsible for overseeing teacher evaluation, is this division the most appropriate for providing support and professional development opportunities for induction teachers? Alternatively, if the program is situated in the instructional division, is there sufficient support for the teacher evaluation process?

South Carolina (2006) guidelines direct districts to establish an induction and mentoring leadership team including representatives from district offices of professional development, curriculum and instruction, and human resources. While this may be reflected on paper, how do we ensure a comprehensive induction and mentoring leadership team is in place and actively participates in the process of inducting beginning teachers into the profession?

Future research is needed to determine the impact on teacher induction programs based on the amount of federal, state, and district funding received. Sustaining an effective program is reliant upon the allocation of resources to support beginning teachers. What resources are already in place within school districts and what resources would be considered as "consumable," requiring replacement each year? Are existing resources used effectively to support induction teachers? Are designated funds utilized to best support new cohorts of beginning teachers?

Finally, future research on informal support networks for beginning teachers should be conducted. With talk of continuing budget cuts, this resource for induction teachers is essential. What constitutes an informal support network? Who are the key players? How are the networks organized and managed? What short- and long-term impacts do current teachers have on teachers entering a classroom for the first time?

Policy Makers

Teacher induction program policy originates at the state level, with implementation of the program taking place at the district level. The South Carolina Induction and Mentoring Program: Implementation Guidelines were last revised in 2006; however, the mentor training was redesigned in 2016 to update the process of preparing teachers to mentor induction teachers. The following discussion highlights programmatic implications for leaders at the state level based on the 2006 implementation guidelines. To provide policy that results in effective teacher induction programs, there must be a focus on the interpretation of induction and mentoring policy, considerations for funding, and district accountability.

Interpretation of Induction and Mentoring Policy: District leaders often interpret language used in policy based on training they receive. Policy language that is too vague or not communicated clearly in training may inhibit the effective implementation of a program. South Carolina's current implementation guidelines delineate support of induction teachers in separate sections for induction-contract level (year one) and annual-contract level (year two). During the induction-contract year, specific guidelines are provided for districts as they establish and implement induction programs that meet state-stipulated requirements. Guidelines for annual-contract level support include the provision of a mentor for teachers who need diagnostic assistance or those going through the state's formal evaluation. My experience working with induction teachers in this district and my participation in the basic and advanced trainings offered by the SCDE does not converge with the wording in the guidelines for year two teachers. While the induction and mentoring program policy includes provisions for mentor support during

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year two, the provision of support provided by a mentor is not emphasized in the training beyond year one. The latest revision of South Carolina's program guidelines occurred over a decade ago. I recommend another revision to clarify language used in the policy, specifically emphasizing the duration of mentor support into year two for beginning teachers. Consequently, the training of school and district administrators should emphasize effective implementation of teacher induction and mentoring programs as they extend beyond the first year.

Funding Methods: The current method of determining the amount of funding a district receives for its induction teachers is based on the number of induction teachers from the prior year. However, the number of induction teachers is not consistent from year to year. Revised procedures to determine funding amounts may be more helpful to state and district budgets if other options are considered. Perhaps a more accurate account of induction teacher numbers could be determined by providing focused projections based on the number of teachers leaving and anticipated new hires in school districts.

Budget Considerations: In a report to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Moir (2003) emphasizes the importance of policy to guide implementation of programs, and that policy makers ensure there is adequate funding to support the mandates. As state leaders determine the amount of funding for mandated teacher induction programs, consideration needs to be given to how decreases in the budget may impact the level of support and professional development opportunities for current inductees. In addition, the level of impact needs to be considered if current inductees are not retained, resulting in an economic impact experienced by hiring increased numbers of future induction teachers. Alternatively, if there is an increase in

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the budget for teacher induction programs, expectations for the use of funds need to be clearly communicated to districts.

District Accountability: Currently, district accountability for teacher induction and mentoring in South Carolina is included in the teacher evaluation plan completed by school districts each year. A section of the district teacher evaluation plan is devoted to its induction program and districts are required to assure the induction coordinator and mentors are trained using the approved instrument. Districts also report the number of mentors currently trained in the approved instrument, and provide an induction calendar that includes monthly activities and topics. Additionally, districts submit feedback regarding the induction plan, as well as the process for collecting feedback on the effectiveness of the program and how they will use the feedback to improve the program. Other than this reporting, the only accountability measure in place is the submission and approval of the initial induction program plan. Failure to submit a plan or have an approved plan would result in sanctions, including the withholding of funds.

While teacher induction is related to teacher quality and evaluation, I suggest the adoption of a separate accountability and growth reporting system for teacher induction programs. As it stands, districts report information but are only providing evidence to document that an induction and mentoring program exists. For the state to improve its induction and mentoring program, more detailed evidence of current practices in school districts needs to be collected in a portfolio format and reviewed to identify effective practices. I also suggest the SCDE conduct district visits to gather additional evidence of the practices in place. If personnel and funding prohibit yearly visits, these could be conducted on a three- or five-year rotation.

I do not believe we are serving the induction and mentoring program well by having it buried within teacher quality policy and accountability measures. Perhaps developing a separate accountability framework will allow legislators to see not only how teacher induction and mentoring fit into teacher quality and evaluation, but also how the program itself is a valuable teacher recruitment and retention tool.

Final Thoughts

This study revealed the importance of clearly articulating the purpose and crafting research questions to help define the scope of the study. As a researcher, it was critical to identify and establish a solid foundation upon which study findings could be situated, analyzed, and synthesized within the context of existing research. The conceptual framework I used for this study allowed me to organize my research and findings according to the structure and program implementation of teacher induction programs found in the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1). The emergence of themes accentuated convergence of data from multiple sources, validating the research process.

Over the course of this study, I was engaged in the learning and reflection process, which revealed new insights about the significant components and sustainability of an effective teacher induction program. My former involvement with the program limited my view of teacher induction to one through the lens of a school administrator. Because I had been away from the district and this program for over three years, I was able to step out of my previous insider role with a specific responsibility. Encountering the program as an outsider now, I was better poised to immerse myself in the comprehensiveness of the teacher induction program. I now have a clearer picture of how

programs are designed to support beginning teachers through district personnel and resources.

The emergence of themes in the areas of leadership and support prompted additional reflection on my experiences working with this induction program. As I revisited the Teacher Induction Theoretical Model (Figure 2.1) created to organize the review of literature and data collection and analysis for this study, the structural and implementation domains reflected less of a linear process leading to effective teacher induction programs. The study findings suggest more of a recursive process, with elements of teacher induction interacting with one another as beginning teachers navigate the first years of teaching. The Teacher Induction Process Model (Figure 5.1) was created to provide a visual representation of how the emergent themes of leadership and support merge with teacher development through the induction program structure and implementation to culminate in an effective teacher induction program. The study
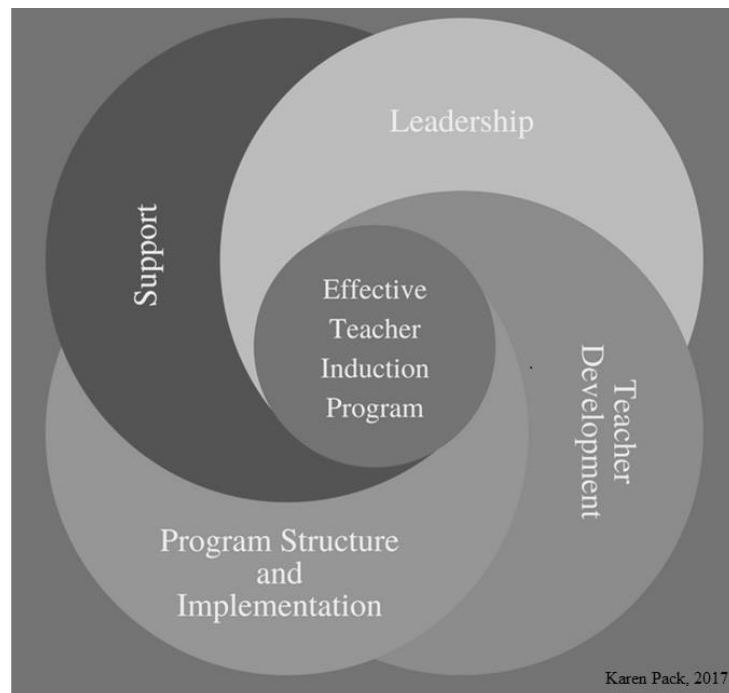
Figure 5.1 Teacher Induction Process Model

findings suggest a separation between the various elements reflected in Figure 5.1. While a minor separation found among these elements may not result in the immediate demise of an induction program, left unaddressed a minor separation can widen to substantially impact the effectiveness of the program. This study emphasized the importance of having all elements of a comprehensive induction program functioning synchronously to support beginning teachers.

Study findings can be used to impact teacher mentoring and induction policy, as noted in the implications section. Policy makers should revise the state program guidelines, clearly communicate expectations to its school districts, examine the process for budgeting induction funds, and explore the district program accountability process for teacher mentoring and induction programs. While in the midst of teacher shortages, teacher mentoring and induction programs become a crucial strategic response to increase the retention rate for teachers. The investment is a profitable one. Economically, fewer dollars are spent on retaining teachers than on hiring new ones to replace those leaving the profession early.

The study findings can also be used to strengthen existing induction programs in place throughout South Carolina. Each school district is responsible for the evaluation of its mentoring and induction program to determine the effectiveness of the program and make changes, where warranted. As an educator, I see beginning teachers as one of our most valued assets. We must do what we can to induct, develop, and support them. How well we do this will determine how well these teachers characterize the future within our educational system.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Questions:

The primary research questions that guided this study are:

1. How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

2. What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

3. What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

Interview Questions

The following list of questions was used as an outline for the interview questions. Where appropriate, the interviewees were asked probing, follow-up questions to expand upon their answers. Participants were also given an opportunity at the end of the interview to share additional information.

1. Tell me about the attributes of an effective teacher induction program?

   a. Can you give more details about this attribute?

   b. Can you describe how this contributes to an effective program?

2. Can you describe how this district first implemented its teacher induction program?

   a. Can you give more details about what factors influenced the design of the program?

   b. Can you tell me more about the preparation of those implementing the program?

3. Over time, were there factors that impacted the nature of events that played out with the induction program?

    a. Can you describe in more detail these factors?

    b. Can you share an example of the changes that took place?

    c. Can you give more details about those changes?

4. How did the district respond to the factors that impacted the teacher induction program?

    a. Can you describe in more detail the strategies identified to respond to these factors?

    b. Were you able to then introduce those strategies?

    c. What challenges did you face when introducing response strategies?

    d. Can you describe those in more detail?

    e. Were there any challenges faced during implementation of these strategies?

    f. Can you describe those in more detail?

    g. How did the response strategies impact the overall teacher induction program?

        i. What did this look like for induction teachers?

        ii. What did this look like for teacher mentors and district master teachers?

        iii. How were school administrators impacted?

        iv. How were district-level personnel impacted?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Research Questions:

The primary research questions that guided this study are:

1. How did the teacher induction program evolve over time?

2. What factors impacted the evolution of the teacher induction program?

3. What strategies emerged to address changes in the program over time?

Survey Questions

This survey has a combination of question types that require participants to respond using a rating scale and open-ended questions. The questions with a rating scale were used to bring participants into the context of the study. The rating scale consisted of *Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Unsure, Somewhat Unsatisfied, and Very Unsatisfied* options. Participants then followed up the rating selected with a narrative response.

1. How satisfied were you with the support provided by your induction program during your first year of teaching? (Rating Scale)

2. Please support your answer with a narrative response.

3. Which strategies and resources provided though the induction program were **most helpful** during your first year of teaching?

4. Which strategies and resources provided through the induction program were **least helpful** during your first year of teaching?

5. In what areas did you feel unprepared during your first year of teaching?

6. Overall, how effective was your assigned mentor in providing tailored support that met your needs as a first-year teacher? (Rating Scale)

7. Elaborate on the level of support provided by your mentor.

8. Overall, how effective were school administrators in providing support for your first year of teaching? (Rating Scale)

9. Elaborate on the level of support provided by school administrators.

10. Since your induction year, are you aware of any changes to the induction program?

11. Please share any additional comments about your experience with the teacher induction program.

APPENDIX C

2009-2010 Sunnydale School District

End of Year Survey

The following questions were submitted in survey format by the Sunnydale School

District to the 2009-2010 class of induction teachers.

1. What are ways your mentor teacher helped you plan and pace instruction and
   design, implement, and reflect on lessons and units used in your classroom?

2. Describe ways your induction mentor teacher provided guidance and assistance in
   obtaining resources and materials to support your work.

3. Explain the assistance you needed in working with students in this district and the
   ways in which your induction mentor teacher assisted you with this skill.

4. In what ways did your induction mentor teacher and the district induction
   program assist you in completing your induction year?

5. What recommendations do you have for the induction of new teachers in your
   school and our school district in future years?

6. Additional thoughts and comments:

APPENDIX D

2012-2013 Sunnydale School District

Mid-year Surveys

The following questions were submitted in survey format by the Sunnydale School

District to the 2012-2013 class of induction teachers.

Lessons Learned

1. What have been your greatest triumphs?

2. What challenges/obstacles have you overcome?

3. What have been your biggest surprises?

4. What/who has helped you most?

Still Burning Questions

1. What continues to be your major areas of concern?

2. To whom do you go for help in these areas of concern?

The following questions were submitted in survey format by the Sunnydale School

District to the 2012-2013 forum of mentor teachers.

1. My mentee is having an issue with _____.

2. Please discuss suggestions on how to help a mentee with _____.

3. Please discuss how other mentors handle _____ with their mentees.

4. I would like to meet with you one-on-one and discuss an issue. ___ (check blank)

5. I would like to ask all the mentors in this forum a question. ___ (check blank)

6. Everything is going well; I have no particular issues that I need to discuss.

___ (check blank)