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PERCEPTIONS OF UNTENURED TEACHERS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
DISTRICT INDUCTION PROGRAMS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

to the faculty of the

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of

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at

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

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by

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF UNTENURED TEACHERS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTRICT INDUCTION PROGRAMS

Sam Ahmed

The purpose of this study is to explore how induction programs impact untenured teachers' overall experiences and perceptions. This study focused on stories, experiences, and values that were explicitly discussed by each participant related to their district's induction program. In general, strong induction programs provide an intense level of professional development to all untenured teachers on content, instruction, and best practices related to students and classrooms (Danielson, 2008). Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977) explicitly discusses how we learn from our surrounding peers through observation and imitation.

A descriptive case study through interpretive inquiry was used to help uncover data and answer our research questions. A total of 21 participants were selected for the study and participants were grouped as first-year teachers, second-year teachers, and third-year teachers. Data was collected through focus group interviews, semi-structured individual interviews, and document analysis. Data was analyzed through three cycles of coding. Four themes emerged from data analysis and they are as follows: Theme 1: *Untenured teachers seeking collaboration.* Theme 2: *Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items.* Theme 3: *Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program.* Theme 4: *Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring.*

Findings of the study showed that participants had a misunderstanding of certain induction program components even though there were many requests for them. Many participants are interested in what literature shows to be important for teacher development, which the current induction program does not offer. Additionally, untenured teachers' overall experiences differed across first-year teachers, second-year teachers, and third-year teachers. Implications of the study and recommendations for future research were provided based on the data that were analyzed.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Professional development is a common term used in education to describe training and learning activities created for teachers and administrators to improve their practices. Effective professional development creates a culture of continuous improvement for all educators and creates a learning environment that results in both; growth in practice and student learning (New York State Education Department, 2019). Effective professional development allows faculty and administrators to enhance their practice for evaluation purposes and increase student performance. One of the most significant steps any organization or institution may take to improve teacher performance is to implement teacher training and train their teachers to be successful through professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). According to the United States Department of Education, nearly \$1.5 million dollars of federal funding under Title II, Part A, and billions more of other federal funding go towards professional development for teachers and administrators. There is a need for key infrastructure and data in order to help support professional development. (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Although many programs are designed to help first-year teachers succeed in the classroom, most programs focus on theories and concepts instead of data and direct practices (The New Teacher Project, 2014).

According to the federal regulations of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), school districts must incorporate Title II, Part A, funding in order to support effective instruction and improve the skills of their educators (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). School districts are held accountable at the federal level to make sure they provide

evidence of federal grants and funds expenditure towards training educators. This accountability is imposed on every state, and every state must complete various end-of-year documentation in order to receive a satisfactory completion designation. (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). However, professional development is often criticized for its lack of goals, measurable indicators, or even data that may promote the use of continuous professional development opportunities. Oftentimes, administrators follow the workshop theory where outside consultants provide professional development through a workshop model, but due to a lack of consistency, these attempts often fail (Rebora, 2011).

It is critical to offer an induction program to newly hired teachers in order to ensure that they are supported when challenged in the classroom (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016). A stronger induction program with a mentor/mentee and an on-going workshop model tends to have a stronger impact on teacher retention and student achievement. However, induction programs are completely different between districts that are in the same state. The National Education Association (NEA) lists three types of induction programs; the-basic orientation model, the instructional practice model, and the school transformational model (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016). Although all three models tend to be successful, each model's implementation is where most school districts often fail (California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2016). The key is to identify needs or gaps and provide professional development based on each teacher's weaknesses. Today's current group of new teachers is the largest, since 1987-1988, that need additional training. Trainings are a critical need given the increase of the

teaching force and increased student diversity, among other challenges that new teachers may face in their first three years (Ingersoll et al., 2017).

Novice teachers are challenged in various ways in the classroom, and they must have ample opportunities to gain knowledge and skills on the job to overcome those challenges (Gamborg et al., 2018). We must identify the most effective components that would enhance professional development sessions (O'Malley, 2010). Professional learning communities (PLC) would be one of the components that has been researched and align closely with professional development (Linder et al., 2012). Professional development is often referred to as professional learning and participants are referred to as a committee or community members (Webster-Wright, 2009). A PLC is made up of educators committed to working collaboratively to collect information on best practices and students to conduct inquiry and research to achieve growth and better results for their students (DeFour et al., 2008). DeFour, DeFour, and Eaker, 2008, defines professional learning communities as highly effective. Despite this, PLCs have yet to become the norm and fully implemented as designed and intended (DeFour et al., 2008). Teachers' belief system is a significant factor when it comes to practice, and changing practice will result in changing teacher's belief (Zambak et al., 2017). In order to change practice we must provide sufficient training and support our teachers through professional development very early in their teaching career. It is critical that we understand elements that will lead to successful and effective professional development sessions in order to improve overall teachers and students outcome (McKeown et al., 2019).

Studies show that co-teaching is an important element in positive collaborative PLCs and led to increases in student achievement and assists educators in building their

capacity to be successful with the diverse needs of students (DeFour et al., 2008). Promoting co-teaching is a valuable tool when identifying effective elements that will lead to a successful professional development model for teacher enhancement (Koroluk, 2017). Effective co-teaching models lead to an increase in teacher enhancement due to the collaborative and collegiality effect it will have on teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Every induction program consists of multiple days of learning activities that involves trainers, teachers, and building and district level administrators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Many of the activities include team building tasks where participants work in groups and learn from each other. This practice allows participants to build trust and partnership with their team members. The same collaboration should be carried back to the building and applied to co-teaching models. Co-teaching models exist across every school building from primary level to secondary level and require teachers to share best practices, resources and students. Incorporating co-teaching activities into induction programs for new teachers will allow for collegiality and collaboration to take place since teachers will be able to transfer the skill into their building and classroom.

As per New York State Education Department, State's Education Policy clearly states that all new teachers are to receive induction support as well as mentoring in their first-year of employment. According to New York State Commissioner's Regulation 80-3.6 (b)(1) teachers and administrators with Professional certificates must complete 175 hours of professional development in order to maintain their certification (New York State Education Department, 2019). In order to meet the required hours of professional development, many school districts schedule professional development workshops into

their school calendar where students have half-days and faculty and administrators are able to attend professional development sessions. This practice is incorporated in every school district in order to help teachers and administrators receive continued training. This approach allows school districts to provide professional training and enhancement for all staff and faculty in order to improve practice across the district. New York State Commissioner's Regulation 100.2(o) states that "Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) focuses on the process of teacher evaluation and improving professional practice in the context of local needs and resources. This regulation requires that those with unsatisfactory performance receive a teacher improvement plan with appropriate professional development." (New York State Education Department, 2019).

School district Superintendents are required to submit plans for induction and mentoring programs to the commissioner for approval and the commissioner has the right to request changes to all plans submitted if necessary. In addition, as per the commissioner's guidelines school districts are required to keep a record of their professional development logs for record keeping purposes (New York State Education Department, 2019). However, there are no guidelines on having this required induction support and programs being evaluated through an aligned rubric like the way teachers are evaluated through the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process. Even though we offer induction programs in school districts, the Department of Education has yet to develop an accountability tool to measure effectiveness and whether induction programs are serving their purpose.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives of untenured teachers on a district induction program, their experiences in the program, and what, if any, impacts the experience has on their view of professional development. Specifically the study will explore how, if at all, their induction program fosters a collaborative culture through co-teaching and learning. To do so, a descriptive case study was conducted in order to understand teachers' perceptions of their district's induction program. The mission is to introduce new teachers to a successful professional development model as early as possible. New teachers must understand the purpose and expectations early so that all future planning may be aligned with the district goals, student achievement and effective instruction (The New Teacher Project, 2014). America is currently faced with a major teacher retention problem that is costing the nation over \$7 billion a year. Teachers are entering the teaching profession and they are either changing school districts or leaving the profession completely within the first five years (Sutcher, 2016). Understanding the contributing factors behind teacher retention is critical. According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007), one key area to focus on in order to help with teacher turnover rate is to embed quality professional development. Teachers are in great need of help and support in their first three to five years of entering the teaching profession; the greater support and training they receive through quality professional development the stronger their outcome will be in the classroom (Ingersoll et al., 2012)

In addition, it is critical that we train our new teachers through a well-prepared induction program with a strong mentorship component in order to sustain the first work

experience for our new teachers (New York State Department of Education, 2019). A strong mentorship component will allow teachers to have a model practice that will assist with best practices. The design of a successful induction program should include the current perceptions and experiences of a district's existing induction program.

Theoretical Framework / Conceptual Framework

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977), perceived self-efficacy encompasses more than just belief; it creates a level of determination and motivates a person to increase effort in order to increase performance. The way a person perceives their efficacy is heavily dependent and influenced by social comparisons (Bandura, 1995, p. 621). Self-doubt is also a major detriment to self-efficacy when it comes to being successful in a challenging situation. Self-perception is a great contributor when it comes to motivation and the way a person may tackle a challenging situation (Bandura, 1977). To convince a person that they are capable requires more than just simple words or simple conversations. In order to truly convince a person that they are capable or that they are able to overcome a challenge comes from cognitively practicing and demonstrating that action. At times it may be useful to repeat the process over and over so that the practice eventually becomes their natural cognitive ability (Bandura, 1986). The theoretical framework of Bandura's perceived self-efficacy explains why certain educators may tackle challenging situations better than others. People with a high sense of self-efficacy accept challenges with a mindset of successfully overcoming them instead of viewing them as a setback or threat. The same group of people with high self-efficacy also tends to set goals for themselves and always maintain a strong mentality to achieve their goals and over their challenges (Bandura, 1977). Teachers are expected to

grow and expand their knowledge every school year. If we understand the learning conditions that may positively impact and intellectually help teachers grow, then they must be aligned and applied to our practice, especially when we prepare professional learning opportunities for our teachers.

The researcher explored the relationship between teachers' perceptions of an induction program and the effective components of professional development including PLC, co-teaching collaborative model, and mentorship through the theories of Albert Bandura's self-efficacy. The researcher studied the effective components of professional development including PLC, co-teaching collaborative model, and mentorship; components proven to be helpful when creating a professional development opportunity such as a new teacher induction program. These learnings were measured against data collected on teachers' perceptions towards their district's induction program. The researcher then described participants' experiences and opinions in the district's induction program using their words and ideas.

Significance

The findings of this study will allow educators to understand how induction programs impact teachers in an educational organization. Induction programs play a major building block and create a strong foundation when it comes to teachers (New York State Department of Education, 2019). Understanding our teachers and their perceptions toward induction programs will help to design better professional development opportunities and enable us to bridge the gaps that may exist between what research shows as effective professional development and what teachers' perceives.

Improving professional development opportunities and mentorship will also help with teacher retention, and best practices (New York State Department of Education, 2019).

Currently the nation is faced with a major teacher attrition problem, improving induction programs and professional development opportunities will lead to enhancing the overall quality of the educational organization in order to retain qualified teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2007). In addition, many of the components of an induction program are transferable to other areas. Effective components such as mentorship, PLC groups and group facilitators, and even co-teaching best practices may all be used by buildings across K-12. Understanding PLC and being able to implement and embed successful PLCs will lead to creating common goals and shared vision among teachers (DuFour et al., 2008).

Connection to Vincentian Mission/Social Justice

The researcher's mission is to understand what teachers' perceptions are for their district's induction program and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the district's induction program. The researcher then compared the data against what research shows to be effective components for professional development theoretically as well as through best practices. This enabled the researcher to clearly identify areas that needs improvement in order to enhance induction programs for that particular school district where the study was conducted and for other school districts as well. This served as a road map for school staff and faculty members, administrators, stakeholders and board of education members.

Additionally, the research findings will also help school districts explore equity in supporting their new teachers in order to assist with teacher retention. Many school

districts are faced with the hardship of retaining their teachers, and the teacher turnover rate tends to increase significantly. The research findings will assist those school districts to understand how to train new teachers effectively through an induction program and continued professional development in order to improve best practices, create a positive learning environment for teachers and students, and build a team of highly qualified teachers which students, parents, and community stakeholders would benefit from.

Research Questions

In order to explore untenured teachers' perception towards their district's induction program, we collected data, information and literature to answer the following research questions.

1. What are untenured teachers' perceptions of District Induction Programs?
2. How do these perceptions vary by years of experience?
3. How do new teachers describe their experiences in their institution's induction program?
 - a. Do these experiences align with best practices in professional development or induction programs?

Definition of Terms

Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) – A standard-based evaluation system designed to help rate a teacher using a rating scale.

Commissioner's Regulation 80-3.6 (b)(1) requires that Professional certificate holders and Teaching Assistant III certificate holders complete professional development every

five years (175 hours for teachers and school leaders and 75 hours for TA IIIs) in order to maintain their certification.

Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA) - United States Federal law that governs the education policy in the United States from K-12. This law was developed to replace the No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This law allows each State to assess its educational policy and procedures in order to create a support structure.

Induction Program - Comprehensive introduction to a position that introduces and supports new inexperienced teachers with the necessary tools required to be successful in the classroom as well as in education.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and the primary purpose for ESSA was to ensure that there was equity built into everything relevant to the educational process for our students. This law created a way to assess the educational structure for our students and enable stakeholders to create and provide a support plan for students to be successful.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) - A PLC, is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students.

Professional Development (PD) - Professional development is learning to earn or maintain professional credentials such as academic degrees to formal coursework, attending conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice.

Title II Funding - authorizes school districts and programs to utilize the funds to improve teaching and leadership through professional learning opportunities. Title II, Part A, is used to specifically increase student achievement through training teachers and administrators and increasing quality.

Design and Methods

A qualitative approach using a single descriptive case study addresses the research questions. This design comprehensively examines the induction program components in a large, diverse suburban school district in New York. Three focus groups of four to six teachers with one to three years of district experience were gathered to understand the teachers' experiences and expectations to understand teachers' perceptions in the district. Each group was asked seven to 10 questions as part of a protocol created using the theoretical framework and related literature. The questions and related literature describe best practices the district uses in its induction program for teachers at various tenure stages. Seven semi-structured interviews of selected teachers provide further insights into the engagement and practice of induction and professional development. Document analysis provided additional insight into professional development topics and opportunities provided to teachers during the process. Data analysis links current practice and perceptions to the theoretical constructs of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) to describe teachers' experiences in the district. In doing so, this study illustrates the guiding theories

and practice addressing induction as a precursor to continued professional development in the school district.

Conclusion

This research project sought to understand the current state of an induction program in a large school district. The chapter included an introduction, including a statement of the problem and a review of the research agenda. Chapter I further presented an overview describing the problem, defining the purpose of the research, and the questions that guide the study. In all, the chapter conceptualizes the induction program's role as a catalyst for future professional development and the institutionalization of cooperative learning using elements of self-efficacy and social learning to promote collaborative support and, ultimately, teacher retention. Following this framing of the study, a brief overview of the methods concludes the section. Chapter two further frames the study in the guiding theory and critical exploration of related literature.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Chapter one provides an overview of the value of professional development through an induction program process. When done well, induction programs are a great way to provide quality professional development to new teachers to improve practice and create a collaborative environment (New York State Department of Education, 2019). Quality professional development creates an opportunity for all educational institutions to provide rigorous training to their faculty and staff and increase student achievement. Additionally, as chapter one discussed some essential issues in education related to teacher retention and teacher training, it is important to reiterate a few of those issues to begin chapter two. One of the most vital issues is the teacher retention rate and the financial damage that it is causing many school districts (Sutcher, 2016). The intent of this study is to discover what teachers' perceptions are towards their district's induction program and measure it against what research demonstrates to be the most effective components that make an induction program successful. This chapter will provide further details on the theoretical framework that will be used to navigate this study as well as summaries of research and literature relevant to this research topic.

Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) explores how a human behavior change as there is a change in self-perception and self-confidence. Control over life events allows people to be in charge, and the ability to control can make situations predictable (Bandura, 1997). "Inability to exert influence over things that adversely affect one's life breed apprehension, apathy, or despair" (Bandura, 1997, p. 32). A person's

perception towards learning something new and being able to practice it effectively is dependent on their confidence level (Shunk et al., 2008). Teachers often rely on how well their comprehension may be on a single topic before teaching that topic to their students. According to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977), a teacher's overall behavior will change as self-confidence changes; the stronger the confidence level the stronger their practice will become. Teachers form a level of comprehension based on their experience and training on best practice. This comprehension is a self-assessment of their belief and the lesson's strength and depends on how strong they feel about that lesson topic. Perceived self-efficacy is a system where one's ability to perform depends on their confidence level and beliefs (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1977), a person's overall performance is tied to their ability to believe in themselves and understanding one's self-values. In the classroom a teacher's self-efficacy and performance may be associated with their motivation. A teacher's motivation may be driven by their way of being persistent, resilient, and their level of perseverance (Pajares, 1996, p. 566). As a result, this self-motivation may either drive up an individual teacher's performance or drive down their performance directly impacting their practice (Zimmerman, 2000). This motivation may change through vicarious experiences, which at times are provided by social models (Bandura, 1977). A person may observe someone or a group of people and based on what they have observed or experienced; it will influence their beliefs. A positive experience will lead to an increase in one's beliefs, and a negative experience will lead to deflating one's beliefs (Schunk, 1987).

This study explored how the new teacher induction program impacts new teachers' attitudes and how they perceive their district's induction program. Based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977), teacher's belief may directly impact their performance in the classroom. The way a teacher's belief may be influenced is through training or demonstration of a positive experience, which will result in changing their beliefs and resulting in an increase in self-motivation. In order to positively impact our teachers, there must be some kind of control that should be given to the participants of the induction program; this control will allow teachers to gain some predictability of the training thus resulting in improving their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). A positive change in people's beliefs will impact how well they organize, create, and manage their actions and performance that affect them in the classroom (Bandura, 1977).

Review of Related Research

Offering professional development to all new teachers is critical in education. It is important to offer professional development during the first three years of service so that new teachers are better prepared for the classroom (Ingersoll, 2003). In order to further explore the teacher attrition issue, the overview of the literature is broken down into three sections, and they are teacher retention rate, quality professional development (PD), and district induction programs. To learn more about district induction programs, an overview of the literature is further narrowed down to three subcomponents, Professional Learning Communities (PLC), Co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring.

In order to design an effective induction program, the following three components must be incorporated:

Professional Learning Communities - PLC allows teachers to work in a collaborative team environment where teachers may share resources, best practices and create a collegial supportive environment for new and veteran teachers to participate.

Co-teaching culture - Creating a culture where teachers are able to rely on each other in a collaborative manner creates a system of collegial support. Co-teaching allows teachers to work together in order to accomplish tasks or goals. This shared teamwork is a wonderful way for new teachers to learn and share best practices.

On-going mentoring - A new teacher may easily be overwhelmed or apprehensive in their first-year as a teacher. Having a mentor to share information with or receiving continuous feedback from creates a sense of comfort for many new teachers.

These practices aid in the retention of untenured teachers, a growing concern in K-12 Education.

Teacher Retention

Education has several threats that places the nation at great risk when it comes to providing quality education to our students. One of the major threats is teacher attrition that causes school districts to constantly go back to the drawing board to canvas for quality competent teachers; it is exhausting financially, causes an inconsistent interruption in the educational process for students, and creates unnecessary stress when it comes to staffing (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). According to Zhang & Zeller, a mixed-method qualitative and quantitative study was conducted by East Carolina University by 20 doctoral students where each student studied three new teachers that had started their teaching career for the State of North Carolina. There were 60 total teachers that participated in this study from three different teacher preparatory programs. The number

one variable identified through both studies, qualitative and quantitative, was the type of preparation that each individual teacher received that had impacted their intention of staying in the teaching profession or switching career in the first five years. Data showed that the training provided by each teacher at the very beginning of their teaching profession either prepared them to succeed in the classroom or set them up for failure due to the lack of preparation and support. The lateral entry teacher program had an overall 33% teacher retention rate versus all other programs, which demonstrated a huge turnover rate. This study demonstrates the need to involve teachers, especially new teachers, in the planning of teacher training through professional development for all new teachers (Zhang & Zeller, 2016).

In a more recent mixed-method study conducted by Ronfeldt & McQueen (2017) using national data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SSAS), Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), and Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey (BTLs), secondary data analysis identified the number one variable that impacted teacher retention was teacher induction program. This study was primarily based on all first-year teachers from the school year 2003 to 2012, and in total, there were 13,000 teachers that were full-time and/or part-time that participated in the survey. Over 79% of the teachers that participated in the survey were involved in some type of induction program through their district. Out of the 79% of teachers that participated in the induction program 73% stated they benefited from participating in new teacher orientation, and 79% stated they benefited from being assigned a mentor through the induction program (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). A series of two-level multilevel logistic regression models were utilized to determine quantitative data to answer two separate questions; 1) whether or not a teacher

migrated schools and 2) whether or not a teacher left the profession. Overall, the study results clearly showed that first-year teachers with an extensive amount of training through induction programs demonstrated a low probability of migrating to another school and leaving the profession and over 70% of the teachers identified a positive correlation between retention and specific induction program components such as mentoring and collaborative team opportunities such as common planning time (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

Sustainability is a key factor when designing professional development sessions and workshops. Teacher turnover rate is an indicator that may be taken into consideration when building effective professional development. Although research shows that many post-hire reasons led to higher attrition rates, there is a greater need to discover why teachers will stay or leave based on their training program (Latham, Mertens, & Hamann, 2015). Teacher preparation is paramount; if teachers receive adequate training, then it may influence attrition. Induction programs serve to socialize teachers into continuous professional development (Latham, Mertens, & Hamann, 2015). According to Kelly (2004), research has shown that a lack of administrative and district support leads to teachers transferring to a different school.

In contrast, teachers that participate, even in ineffective training related to student achievement, are dedicated to staying in the same school building longer. The key is to provide training related to practice as early as possible from when teachers are hired (Kelly, 2004). According to Kelly's (2004) research in teacher attrition, the researcher examined the rate of attrition through event history analysis methods where the researcher analyzed various SASS surveys to determine *when* teachers left their position

instead of focusing on *why* they left. The researcher focused on when because once the timeline was determined, the different level of support and training that teachers received during a certain time frame of their career was further researched and analyzed (Kelly, 2004). The research showed that teacher attrition rate was at its highest during the first three years of teaching career.

As we further investigate and review past literature related to teacher attrition research, it is evident that professional development significantly impacts teacher attrition rate (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). More importantly, we see a pattern where if teachers receive professional development early through an induction program, there is a better chance that teachers will feel supported and continue to advance their career through their teaching position (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). Research also shows that hearing what our teachers have to say enables us to further understand their perception to identify what they need to be successful in their position; the key is to listen to our teachers early in their career and use that information to develop and design teacher training (Kelly, 2004). Professional development is one way that teacher gain additional knowledge in.

Quality Professional Development

According to the Office of Teacher Initiative's guidelines, Professional Development / Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (PD/CTLE) allows teachers to expand his/her knowledge base and remain current in his/her content or subject area and instructional strategies, such as: enhancing subject matter knowledge; application of appropriate teaching techniques; broadening and enhancing abilities to apply more accurate and appropriate assessment methodologies, and; enhancing skills in effectively managing individual students and classrooms in both heterogeneous and homogeneous

settings (New York State Education Department, 2019). According to the guidelines provided by New York State's Office of Teacher Initiatives, training our teachers adequately prepares them to manage individual students and classrooms.

New York State defines the mandated required professional learning hours into two categories, the first category is Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE), and the second category is Professional Development (PD). As per New York State Department of Education (NYSED), the requirements for teacher or administrator depend on the type of certification they may have. Any teacher or administrator with an initial certification falls under the first category of CTLE hour requirement and is required to obtain 50 (CTLE and/or PD) hours in the State of New York. Any teacher or administrator with a professional certification falls under the second category of PD requirement and is required to obtain 175 hours of PD every five years (New York State Education Department, 2019).

All new teachers must attend professional development in order to meet the State requirements and to continue to hold their teaching certification, and oftentimes teachers attend professional development sessions that are selected by their department administrators or by the district administrators. While it is a great practice to create a wide range of professional development opportunities for teachers, the question remains, how do our teachers perceive this professional development, and is it something that they feel is necessary? Teacher perception is very important and collaborative professional development opportunities create a platform for teachers to be successful and positive about the PD they're receiving and there's a great chance that they will practice what they learn by bringing it back to their classroom (Lester, 2003).

According to Lester (2003), a qualitative case study was conducted where there were 90 participants from eight different high school settings. All 90 participants were involved in receiving two different professional development seminars; the researcher then collected data through observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus group interviews. Additionally, surveys were provided to all participants pre- and post-PD, and all survey results were thoroughly analyzed. The key findings were that teachers enjoyed participating in PD as long as there was genuine concern and care to improve instruction, teachers' voices were valued in the planning process, consistent and structured planning was behind each PD, there was accountability behind what they were learning during PD and most importantly there were collegiality and collaboration (Lester, 2003).

The implementation of collaborative action plans and collaborative effort increases the likelihood that teachers will accept and practice responsibility for continued professional improvement within their area. Secondary teachers are anxious to learn about best practices and they are willing to try out new suggestions and techniques, and support being held accountable for changes that will promote student success (Lester, 2003). The opportunities for teachers to continue to engage in professional conversations about changes and new ideas are critical. Many times, in professional organizations workers become complacent. This lack of motivation, which leads to becoming complacent, should be considered when designing professional development workshops and sessions. The key component is to continue to motivate our teachers and administrators in order to generate creative ideas within a school building. In education, teachers must feel that they are heard and valued in order to be motivated and advance in their current role. A well-disciplined professional development session will enable

teachers to focus and learn more through collaboration with their colleagues and increase the chance of practicing what they are learning (Lester, 2003).

Emily Lutrick and Susan Szabo (2012) conducted a study of five participants from one suburban school district. The participants were all females and building-level administrators. Two participants were elementary principals, one with five years of experience and one with two years of experience. The other three participants were elementary assistant principals with 1-4 years of experience. The interview study found that all administrators agreed on three common themes; that professional development must be on-going and should start early, include collaboration, and must be data driven. These three themes were discussed in detail by all five participants. PD may be offered through an induction program and carried forward in order to make it consistent and on-going, make all PD collaborative in order to create a system of a collegial collaboration of support, and all decisions must be data driven. In addition, the researchers compared the beliefs of the principals and assistant principals with the Professional Development research as well as the national professional learning standards to compare and contrast the results. The results showed that the professional learning standards and statements from the literature review mimicked the responses collected from the five participants (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). This defines that if the professional learning standards and statements are put in practice by administrators, it will result in quality professional development for teachers.

The sustainability and building of effective professional development may also influence how teachers and administrators see professional development. Teachers that attend professional development workshops will implement what is being taught into

their daily practice; however, it is not often sustained over the years (Ebert-May et al., 2011). According to a quantitative study conducted by Ebert-May et al., (2011) PD was conducted with the aim to move faculty from teacher to learner centered science courses. The faculty was then evaluated on three questions to see if the PD was effective or not. The three questions were (1) How learner centered was their teaching? (2) Did self-reported data about faculty teaching differ from the data from independent observers? (3) What variables predict teaching practices by faculty? Science teachers were provided with learner centered PD and were surveyed to see how each group felt about concepts and strategies shared during each PD. A multivariate analysis was conducted on five different subscales; three of the subscales were statistically significant ($p < .05$) and two of the subscales were not significant. This means that the PD provided to the teachers were effective; however, eventually teachers reverted back to their past practice. Continued PD and induction program design is necessary for consistent growth.

Data showed that participation in PD did not result in learner-centered teaching. The majority of faculty (75%) used lecture-based, teacher-centered pedagogy, showing a clear disconnect between faculty's perceptions of their teaching and their actual practices (Ebert-May et al., 2011). Although many professional development opportunities are geared towards improving practices and increasing professional capacity, that is not always the case. Sustaining what we are investing in becomes a major task for many school districts. In this study, the expectation that teachers would consistently practice what they've learned from professional development was not met. Teachers reverted back to their old habits and practices after a few years and continued to teach in their own ways (Ebert-May et al., 2011).

A qualitative study conducted by Siko & Hess, (2014), included a group of teachers that were offered higher level courses in technology integration in place of professional development sessions. Teachers were first surveyed and based on their interest level they were offered graduate level courses which teachers paid for at a heavily discounted rate. In return, participating teachers received higher salaries since they were able to up on the salary scale by having higher education credits. Teachers were able to practice what they've learned in their courses and share best practices with their colleagues. Teachers were able to enroll in classes at a fraction of the cost due to the articulation their district made with the participating post-secondary institutions. School districts were able to have their teachers receive high quality training which was labeled as professional development. Overall, this initiative was successful even though there were many obstacles that prevented sustainability (Siko & Hess, 2014).

Lastly, according to the federal regulations of the, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), school districts are required to allocate their Title II, Part A, funding to support effective instruction and improve the skills of their educators (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This mandate is imposed on every school district that receives Title II, Part A, funding and must use the allocation appropriately. School districts are required to report out on their expenditure on all grants and funding that they received, and during state audits, school districts are required to show evidence at the end of each year (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). However, there are no Federal or State-related accountability scores or measurements that exist in order to measure how successful or effective each school district's PD or CTLE programs are. Additionally, there is also a lack of opportunities for new teachers to voice their opinion since there are no feedback

or brainstorming sessions for new teachers at the Federal or State level. It is extremely important to involve our teachers to understand how they feel and perceive all the Federal and State mandated requirements, the current professional development opportunities that exist, and how professional development can be improved upon. A focus on district induction programs is valuable in that they institutionalize a culture of professional development.

District Induction Program

Induction programs for new teachers are a great starting point to introduce collaborative discussions and teamwork (O'Malley, 2010). A qualitative case study conducted by O'Malley (2010) revealed that teachers are eager to learn about best practice and they're willing to learn starting their first-year as a teacher. The researcher studied 13 teachers that were hired by University High School which is part of Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. The participating teachers were provided with in-depth training through an induction program every school year until they received their tenure at the conclusion of their 4th year. The researcher collected data through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis of all documents that were collected during this process. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher highlights the following: participation in the induction program changed the way teachers taught their lessons and teachers became more open to trying new things: it changed teachers from being a leader to a learner, the overall thinking changed to team development and organizational development, and the overall meaning for induction program changed from social welcome to shared values (O'Malley, 2010). Incorporating PLC into induction program creates an opportunity for teachers to experience shared best

practices and improve pedagogical performance in the classroom (O'Malley, 2010).

Induction programs create a platform for teachers to grow, not only to help improve their practice but also to increase student achievement in the classroom. Induction programs can be structured in any way necessary as long as it is beneficial to teachers and not used to satisfy mandated PD.

Perry & Hayes (2011) quantitative study was conducted with 44 first-year teachers without any teaching experience, 22 minority teachers, and 22 majority teachers, over the course of 3 years. The research design included a two-group comparative survey study. Independent variables had two arms, the first arm was minority teachers' experience, and the second was majority teachers' experience. The dependent variable consisted of 9 research questions that were structured in the form of a survey, which all participants were required to complete at the end of each induction program session. The results showed that none of the research questions were statistically significant ($p \geq .05$). This translates to, there is a major need of support for minority teachers to help increase support for our minority students and to help increase their academic needs (Perry & Hayes, 2011). In addition, supporting teachers early in their career through an induction program helps to solve our nation's teacher attrition issue, as districts' build a team of highly qualified teachers, and districts create a system where teachers continue to learn (Perry & Hayes, 2011). Induction programs must be designed with teacher support in mind, mentoring in mind and it must be a multiyear process. Many school districts mismanage the time when facilitating induction programs for new teachers due to a lack of structure and goals related to instruction as evidenced by the findings of survey questions not being statistically significant ($p \geq .05$). Restructure of an induction program

to reflect more hands-on activities and collaborative teamwork with real life scenario based workshops will lead to a successful induction program (Perry & Hayes, 2011). However, the easiest way to structure and plan an induction program is to implement ideas from our new teachers. Structure and goals should be developed with the audience in mind and more importantly the training should always focus on what the audience needs.

A qualitative comparative case study was conducted by Segraves & Reid (2019) in order to explore the experiences of newly hired teachers from four independent schools that participated in their district's induction program. The purpose of the study was to explore whether induction programs influenced teachers' overall job satisfaction. All four independent schools were located in the greater Washington D.C. area and all four schools had similar demographics. Participants included 6 administrators and 17 newly hired teachers, and the data was collected for the school year 2017-2018. Various methods were used to collect data which included semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. According to Segraves & Reid (2019) study shows that there were two key similarities across all four independent schools, and they were orientation and mentorship. Orientation programs covered all the district and building level procedures and policies in order to cover all the legal obligations and etc. Mentorship was another similarity that was included in each school's induction program although the overall roll-out of the mentoring program differed between each districts. On-going mentoring along with PLC and co-teaching models are the three critical elements that define an effective induction program. Additionally, there were four themes that the researchers identified and were evident in the data from all four schools, those

themes are belief of intended purpose, positive school culture, mentorship, and building relationships. Belief of intended purpose and positive school culture work together. As new teachers worked together, they all shared their intended purpose of becoming a teacher, which related to being successful in the classroom and increasing student achievement. This led to a positive school culture which all new teachers were proud of. Mentorship and building relationships also worked in sync since the purpose of a mentorship program is to enable teachers to work with someone in order to help build relationships and have the opportunity to brainstorm whenever possible. Combination of the similarities and themes led to an overall very high job satisfaction for all newly hired teachers in all four independent schools (Segraves & Reid, 2019). A focus on PLC, co-teaching model and on-going mentorship will help build a framework for the induction program and assist with training a high-quality team of teachers.

Chan (2014) illustrated for a new faculty induction program and mentoring model. The illustrated model was based on Edward Deming's Total Quality Management (TQM) concept and the National Staff Development Council's (NSDC) nine professional development standards. The researcher designed this K-12 new faculty induction program and mentoring model by researching and analyzing 14 TQM concepts (see appendix A) and NSDC's nine professional development standards (see appendix B). At the conclusion of the study the following two key components were highlighted to be the most effective and highly recommended to be incorporated into every induction program. The two key components are collaborative interaction through professional learning communities (PLC), and mentoring opportunities involving both the new and the veteran teachers (Chan, 2014, p. 50). Both key components add a tremendous amount of value to

any induction programs provided it is incorporated with longevity and sustainability in mind.

In order to further understand how these key components impact induction programs, we focus on three specific subcategories that research shows to be the most effective. The first subcategory is Professional Learning Communities (PLC), the second subcategory is co-teaching culture, and the third subcategory is on-going mentoring.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) allow teachers to be part of a team where teachers may share thoughts, ideas, or even resources in a supported environment (DeFour et al., 2008). Through a continuous collaborative effort to meet in a group and identify clear objectives and goals, discussion on student progress and evaluation of student data, and collaborative discussion on best practices will lead to an increase in teacher's self-efficacy (Little, 2020, p. 6). According to Little (2020) a quantitative study was conducted in a large, diverse school district in the southeastern U.S. among 990 middle school students. The study focused on nine convenience sample participants that held their own PLC group and met 30 times throughout the year for 30 minutes before school started. In addition to the participants, school administrators and other school building liaison also attended the PLC sessions in order to help the group. All participants completed a pre- and post-test in order to measure statistical significance between pre- and post-test results in two particular areas, Mathematics Teaching Outcome Expectancy (MTOE) and Personal Mathematics Teaching Efficacy (PMTE). There was an increase in statistical significance for both, the belief that mathematics direct instructions would increase student learning and achievement and the belief to effectively teach mathematics

in one year with an increase in statistical significance with large effects (1.15 and 1.30, respectively). In other words, there was a direct correlation between teachers' belief in mathematics instruction impacting student achievement and teachers' belief in their ability to teach mathematical instructions effectively resulted in a very positive way. PLC involvement enabled teachers to have a stronger belief in their own self efficacy, thus resulting in an increase in their confidence level towards teaching mathematics (Little, 2020). This also connects to the theoretical framework of Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory in Chapter 1, which describes how an increase in one's confidence level will result in an increase in their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Teachers working collaboratively in teams or in small groups lead to shared understanding and comprehension which in return enable teachers to increase self-efficacy and increase performance in the classroom (Robert et al., 2017). PLC is a large universal approach to a collaborative team model where all participants may work in a team to overcome challenges, share best practices and review data. PLC can be applied in any shape or size and would be a great element for an induction program. A mixed-method study across multi-school buildings conducted by Robert, Voelkel, & Chrispeels (2017) confirmed that teachers work efficiently and effectively when working collaboratively. The quantitative component provided a better understanding of how teachers implemented various levels of PLC and teacher collective efficacy, the qualitative component of the research provided an understanding behind teachers' perception of their work and school leadership teams. The study showed that there is a direct correlation between PLC and teachers' collective efficacy. The components that

led to a significant result included collective goal setting and teachers focusing on results rather than random student data (Robert et al., 2017).

According to DuFour, DuFour & Eaker (2008) PLC is a cultural shift in an educational setting and it cannot be implemented overnight. PLC is a cultural shift that provides teachers to always think collaboratively and create a team approach for every situation (DuFour et al., 2008). A well-designed PLC is implemented early where new teachers are used to the method and the model that is designed by an educational institution. This allows teachers to practice what they learn from their colleagues and/or professional development sessions, collect data, share and analyze the data collected and identify gaps in order to collaboratively design practice to bridge those gaps (DuFour et al., 2008).

According to Lomos et al. (2010) a study conducted on the overall topic of PLC demonstrated that it is a concept that is not fully defined and does not have a clear structure; rather it's a system that is used by many school districts and more often it is customized to fit each district differently. The study presents a comprehensive synthesis of the theories currently available that defines the conceptualizations and operationalization of the PLC concept along with a quantitative study to conduct a meta-analysis on PLC to find whether there is any effect on student achievement. Overall, at the conclusion, the meta-analysis reported a small but significant summary effect ($d = .25, p < .5$), which clearly indicates that within a school environment PLC directly impacts student outcome and student achievement. PLC directly impacts student achievement in a positive way and increases student performance (Lomos, 2010). Additionally, there is no definition that clearly defines what a PLC should be; instead

research shows that it's a system that allows educational facilities to create a system of collaborative teamwork (Lomos, 2010).

This research demonstrates the importance of incorporating team meetings through PLC in order to discuss student progress and collaboratively share resources and best practices. Additionally, this research also demonstrates that PLC can be implemented in any way, form, or shape, there are no set rules or procedures to follow (Lomos, 2010). PLC activities can be started through induction programs and the same activities may continue through common planning throughout the school year for consistency purposes. Like PLC, co-teaching is another collaborative best practice, and when implemented early, it is impactful.

Co-Teaching Culture

Co-teaching introduces another level of collaboration that will further help our teachers increase their performance in the classroom (Diana, 2014). According to the most recent article written by Diana (2014) where research shows that the implementation of co-teaching in teacher preparatory programs for student teachers showed a significant improvement in the overall teacher performance for first-year teachers. Oftentimes teachers and administrators are concerned about working with student teachers or interns, incorporating a co-teaching model that starts with student teachers alleviates this tension or concern and creates a nurturing environment for all teachers (Diana, 2014). The key is to continue to embed the co-teaching model from student teachers into untenured teachers and all the way to tenured veteran teachers. Incorporating co-teaching activities into every district's induction programs will allow teachers to experience collaboration among their colleagues and create a nurturing

environment where colleagues support one another. This practice will encourage teachers to continue to work together throughout the school year and have a team effort towards classroom challenges.

A recent study by Soslau (2019) presents data on what the challenges are in co-teaching. According to Soslau (2019) a qualitative study was conducted to better understand why the co-teaching model was highly effective in student teaching and what school districts should continue in order to continue on with the progress. The study included 12 clinical educators and candidates from mid-Atlantic University and provided videos and recordings of their co-teaching, co-planning and co-evaluating as they practiced it. The clinical educators and candidates were a mixed group of student teachers and full-time teachers that helped to shape the overall study. The researcher reviewed 108 recordings and followed up with individual interviews to further understand the co-teaching model and their experience. All data were separated into three separate categories, coinstruction, coplanning and coevaluation. For all co-teaching lessons and lesson presentations were placed in the coinstruction category, all PDs and planning meetings or sessions were placed into the coplanning category and all assessments and student evaluation related data were placed in the coevaluation category. The findings indicate that trust is a very important component between two teachers in a co-teaching model because it will define best practice. Trust will allow for a positive relationship to exist between a veteran teacher and a new teacher because it will define how the responsibilities will be shared among the team of two teachers. The simple task of letting go of control in order for the new person to steer the class was difficult for many veteran teachers. A co-teaching model is geared to allow all teammates to be equally responsible

in the classroom, however, this study shows that veteran teachers were quick to point out areas of improvement and student teachers stayed passive and received all feedback without contributing.

Overall, in order for co-teaching to work effectively, there must be buy-in from all parties and have a level of trust. Otherwise, the hierarchy tends to get in the way and teachers with more teaching experience tend to take over versus having an open-minded discussion to allow growth (Soslau et al., 2019). The biggest challenge when it comes to co-teaching model is that teachers are not exposed to co-teaching until later on in their teaching career. If co-teaching model is introduced into a district's induction program through team activities and team building workshops, co-teaching model will become familiar to all new teachers. Overtime as new teachers become veteran teachers, the co-teaching model will be practiced and respected at all levels. Introducing the co-teaching model during the induction program is an excellent practice since student teachers with co-teaching experience from their teacher preparatory program will transition to their new teaching position and practice the co-teaching model seamlessly.

To further explore the co-teaching model a mixed method study was conducted by Guise et al., (2017) involving eight co-teaching pairs of pre-service teachers (4 English and 4 Science teachers) that worked with their assigned school administrators and a post baccalaureate teacher education program that assisted with the data collection aspect. Data were collected through classroom observations, bi-weekly reflection logs, bi-monthly university professors' observations, and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data were coded in various cycles and the first cycle was based on a priori codes about co-teaching and codes were reworked in order for additional codes to surface.

Quantitative data included various lesson observation ranking and scores, and classroom management ranking and scores. This small study presented a significant amount of data revealing how effective co-teaching could be if implemented early in teachers' career. The key point in this study was that pre-service teachers were exposed to co-teaching and being trained on it through their teacher preparatory program while the true meaning is lost once entered into a full-time position (Guise et al., 2017). This study also demonstrated that the importance of teamwork and collaborative approach towards teaching students had a direct impact on student achievement and pre-service teachers were able to experience best practice instead of watching a veteran teacher (Guise et al., 2017). This study also clearly defines how important it is to introduce a co-teaching model very early in every teacher's career in order to create a system of support for all teachers. Introducing this model in the induction program will create an environment where teachers will be able to practice the model as well as experience it through the professional development lens rather than departmental procedures. In addition, the co-teaching model trains teachers to work collaboratively and have a team mentality, which will result in having a supportive environment for all teachers in their educational facility. This is a transferable skill that becomes part of all new teachers' practice despite where they teach. Study shows that teachers were to persist in the environment where they learned the co-teaching model due to the supportive collegial circle (Guise et al., 2017).

On-going Mentoring

On-going mentoring allows new teachers to work collaboratively with a mentor on many different levels. New teachers are faced with various challenges and obstacles in their first few years as they transition from preparatory programs and post-secondary

institutions into the classroom. Pairing new teachers with mentors will help new teachers feel supported and confident in the classroom. The purpose will be to help initiate discussion and training on teacher development between the mentor and mentee.

A recent quantitative study by Hong (2019) explores the effectiveness and quality behind each teacher's mentoring that they received. All participants were from the Chicago Public School (CPS) system across 322 Elementary schools. Data showed that out of the 1,013 new CPS teachers, 774 teachers received some kind of mentoring support, and 239 new CPS teachers did not. Since it was a quantitative study the researcher used survey results from all participants along with various other quantitative data in order to answer four different research questions. The key findings were a strong quality mentoring program required both, mentor and mentee, to meet several times a week in order to consistently build quality pedagogical skill set as well as curricular understanding. Weaker mentoring programs required less meetings and some only met once for the entire year (Hong, 2019). The frequency of meeting sessions and the amount of time spent during a mentoring session defined how the effectiveness of a mentoring program. Additionally, this study discovered that a new teacher is more favorable to staying with the institution if their building level administrators were directly involved (Hong, 2019). In conclusion, a school district must incorporate a quality mentoring program through their induction program and continue on with the mentoring program throughout the school year. School building leaders must be directly involved in the assessment of the mentoring program as well, so new teachers are completely connected and also receive a clear understanding of the expectations from the building leader as well as their mentors. Combination of these two will result in teachers committing to

their school building and district thus resulting in an increase in teacher retention (Hong, 2019).

The perspective of mentees and mentors are necessary to gain an in-depth understanding of mentor programs. According to Sowell (2017) a qualitative study was conducted to understand what our mentors think and feel towards the mentoring program for our new teachers. The study included three Middle School teachers that contributed to the mentoring program for their building as well as provided professional development to all new teachers. Data included analysis of various documents related to new teacher orientation and development, mentoring programs, and faculty handbook and guiding literature that were circulated to all new teachers. In addition, all three teachers participated in focus group interviews and individual semi-structured interviews (Sowell, 2017). The findings were simple yet extremely effective for mentors and mentees (new teachers). There must be trust between the mentor and mentee in order to create a platform to build on. All three mentors agreed that relationship is the key, once a relationship of trust and respect is developed, mentors will be able to assist with lesson planning, lesson presentations, student data analysis and most importantly improve practice (Sowell, 2017).

Mentors must support and guide new teachers with creating a positive learning environment in their classroom and help build instructional strategies in order to assist with the curriculum and context of the classroom. These key items will help new teachers alleviate a lot of the stress and tension that automatically builds up due to being new and lacking experience (Sowell, 2017). Oftentimes stress and tension leads to new teachers leaving their school building and even leaving the teaching profession. On-going

mentoring and continuous support will allow new teachers to relieve stress and tension in the classroom and build a healthy and positive classroom environment (Sowell, 2017). Incorporating these proven factors that works well into a district's induction program will create a wonderful opportunity for all new teachers. There will be a continuation of learning for new teachers through their mentors and also have another level of support between their colleagues and their building administrators.

A qualitative case study conducted by He et al. (2015) presents successful components that led to a successful teaching career for a male high school teacher named Charles. Charles was the participant in the study that stayed in his current school past the five-year mark and the study focuses on his obstacles and success. Many teachers leave on their first-year and a high percentage of teachers leave by their fifth year, this study focuses on a single teacher's motive to stay and the causes and effects that impacted his decision. Charles went to college in southwest and completed his teacher preparatory courses in his undergrad school in southwest. He then completed his student teaching in an urban high school where he was hired as a full-time employee and continued to teach as a full-time teacher. Data included autobiographies, annual interviews, written reflections, semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews with his old teacher preparatory course cohort, and all the data were collected over the course of 7 years.

This study found that self-reflection is a key component when it comes to novice teacher's growth in the classroom and in the teaching profession (He et al., 2015). Charles decided to stay in his school and continue to teach there due to various opportunities for him to be involved and grow. Charles enjoyed receiving quality training from his assigned mentor post-hire and also enjoyed discussing his experience with his

colleagues through professional development. Self-reflection allows new teachers to think about their current practice and learn from best practices. Self-reflection must be in forms of a mentoring program or PLC program. Any platform through professional development will set the stage for new teachers to discuss their practice and encourage self-reflection (He et al., 2015). Induction program with a mentoring program built in will allow new teachers to listen, experience and share best practices as well as ineffective practices or mistakes made by new teachers. As Bandura (1977) explains self-efficacy theory, a major component that impacts a person's belief is self-reflection. Self-reflection allows an individual to reflect on what is working and what is not with their practice. If appropriate training and mentoring is provided afterwards, that person's self-confidence will increase and result in an increase in their overall performance (Bandura, 1977).

Teacher attrition continues to be a major concern across the nation and this issue is impacting students academically and financially costing school districts and communities millions of dollars. Research shows that several key components had a positive impact in retaining quality teachers and professional development through an induction program is one of the components that works well. Incorporating PLC model, co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring model will enhance induction programs and create a sustaining support system for new teachers which in turn will provide quality training and increase teacher retention.

Relationship Between Prior Research and Present Study

Induction programs and professional development have evolved overtime as evidenced by the literature review discussed in this chapter. Prior research shows that PLC, co-teaching model and on-going mentoring are essential components toward quality

professional development. However, the present study demonstrates that incorporating these three essential components into an induction program creates a major support system for all new teachers. The biggest hurdle for all new teachers is the lack of support towards classroom and student related challenges that teachers face in their first-year. Current research shows that creating an induction program and implementing PLC, co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring will help increase teacher performance in the classroom, create a collaborative team structure among new faculty and existing faculty, and also help with teacher retention. The main purpose for this research was to collect data and information from untenured teachers on their perceptions and experiences with their district's induction program. The information collected was used to compare against what current research shows and add to the literature.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the theoretical framework that shaped this research, and review of literature on teacher attrition rate, quality professional development, and district induction program. Furthermore, the review of literature is narrowed down to three subcomponents, professional learning communities, co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring. This chapter concluded with the relationship between prior research and present study. The next chapter discusses the methods and procedures used to complete the research.

CHAPTER 3

Introduction

Quality Professional Development allows for a new teacher to have a strong foundation to continuously grow in their teaching profession. Induction program is a great way to offer quality professional development early to all new teachers since it targets first-year, second-year, and third-year teachers. In the previous chapters we defined how induction programs serve as a great platform to offer quality professional development to new teachers, we identified various components that add value and effectiveness towards induction programs, and we discussed the direct impact induction programs have on teacher retention. An extensive amount of research was presented on three components that help build a strong induction program, and those three components are PLC, Co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring.

In this chapter there is an in-depth discussion on methods and procedures that were used to study a group of teachers that completed their district's induction program.

Methods and Procedures

This descriptive case study is used to discover untenured teachers' perceptions towards their district's induction program and explore their overall experiences. The researcher chose to conduct a descriptive case study through interpretive inquiry because it is important to understand a group of participants' experiences towards a certain phenomenon. The descriptive approach allowed the researcher to describe the intervention, in this case, the induction program in a given school district, using focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Yin, 2002; Stake, 1995).

The researcher committed to spending an extensive amount of time investigating

the program, explored thoughts and ideas shared by participants that experienced the phenomenon and collected data, engaged in the complex and time-consuming process of data analysis, and synthesized the information to help connect the findings to the theory and research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Banks, “Researcher should strive for objectivity even though it is an unattainable, idealized goal.” (Banks, 1998). This approach allowed for researchers to narrow down the facts and even though at times it may be unreachable, we must gather participants’ experiences in order to define and interpret them to the best of our ability through various coding and data analysis.

Methods included focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. There were three focus group interviews and participants were grouped based on their years of service with the current school district. There were seven protocols in total, six interview protocols (See Appendix C through Appendix H) and one document analysis protocol (See Appendix I). Focus group interviews consisted of three protocols, first-year protocol for first-year teachers, second-year protocol for second-year teachers and third-year protocol for third-year teachers. The focus group interview protocol contained ten questions. Individual semi-structured interviews have three protocols, first-year teachers, second-year teachers, and third-year teachers have their own protocol, and the individual interview protocol contained eight questions. The questions in the protocol were guided by the theoretical framework and research questions. The interview protocol questions started with basic questions to explore how much participants knew about PLC, co-teaching, and mentoring. Questions then became more specific to participants’ experiences with the induction program. The last set of questions required participants’ to explain their feelings and interpretation of the

induction program. The questions were intentionally designed broadly; this allowed the researcher to avoid leading participants to directly describe self-efficacy.

The first-year focus group interview protocol (See Appendix D) started with an introduction question that allowed each participant to introduce themselves. Questions two, three, and four were developed to explore how much each participant knew about PLC, co-teaching model, and on-going mentoring. Questions five and six were developed to engage participants in discussing their perceptions about the induction program. Questions seven and eight allowed participants to reflect on activities from the induction program and align them with PLC, co-teaching, and mentoring. Questions nine and ten encouraged participants to reflect and provide feedback about their overall experiences with the induction program. In addition, questions nine and ten allowed the researcher to probe each participant's experience with the induction program again to ensure they shared as much information as possible. Questions two, three, four, seven, and eight were developed to collect information from participants to compare and contrast against Chapter 2's review of literature. Although all the questions were developed to explore self-efficacy, but questions eight, nine, and ten focused on each participant's experience and the support they've received from the induction program. This information allowed the researcher to discover each participant's feelings and the overall confidence level and use the information to interpret and align with the theoretical and conceptual framework.

The second-year focus group interview protocol (See Appendix E) was similar in structure except question two, nine and ten were different. Questions two, nine and ten were developed to explore second-year participants' experiences as well as compare them

to previous year. The participants were also encouraged to discuss events or items from the induction program that changed their perceptions and overall experiences. The third-year focus group interview protocol (See Appendix F) encouraged participants to compare their experiences from previous years and discuss the differences. Questions two, six, nine and ten particularly focused on each participant's differences in experience and help with defining their self-efficacy.

The individual interview protocols (See Appendix G through Appendix I) contained questions that encouraged participants to reflect on their own individual experiences with the induction program. Questions one and two were developed to allow each participant to introduce themselves and share their perceptions about the induction program. Questions three, four, and five were developed to explore each participant's experiences and whether their perceptions changed due to those experiences. These three questions also allowed the researcher to explore how much each participant knew about PLC, co-teaching model, and mentoring. Questions six, seven, and eight were developed to engage participants in specific experiences from the induction program that helped them with their practice and instruction. Questions three and four differed for second-year teachers and third-year teachers; it allowed both groups to compare their experiences from previous years in order to determine how their overall experiences and perceptions changed. Questions four through eight allowed the researcher to collect information regarding each participant's experiences with specific agenda items from the induction program and use the information to align with Chapter 2's review of literature and the theoretical and conceptual framework.

Document analysis protocol contained ten criteria; if a document met any of the criteria, it was then included in the study. The data was organized to answer the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. What are untenured teachers' perceptions of District Induction Programs?
2. How do these perceptions vary by years of experience?
3. How do new teachers describe their experiences in their institution's induction program?
 - a. Do these experiences align with best practices in professional development or induction programs?

Setting

This case study took place in a large diverse school district in the suburbs of New York. The study was completed right after COVID-19 took place, and the school district reopened with a hybrid schedule for all students. The school district had over 8000 students and 19% are African American, 27% Hispanic or Latino, 4% Asian or Native Hawaiian, 46% White, and 4% Multiracial. The school district had seven K-12 school buildings in total. The district had over 900 employees and approximately 630 of which were teachers. A total of 111 teachers were untenured, 25 teachers were in their first-year, 39 teachers were in their second-year, and 47 teachers were in their third-year. This district was selected for the study because it is a large district with a large untenured group of teachers. The researcher is also an administrator of the district, which enabled the researcher to receive full clearance to conduct the study within the district. The

researcher received consent to conduct the study in this school district from the Superintendent of schools as well as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

Participants

All untenured teachers are required to participate in their district's induction program which is held prior to the beginning of the school year. All untenured teachers were a mixed group of male and female teachers from Kindergarten through Grade 12. The group included full time classroom teachers, teaching assistance, and learning specialists. On average, approximately 110-120 untenured teachers partake in the district's induction program every school year out of 630 teachers total across the district. All teachers that participated in this year's induction program received a general recruitment invite in order to participate in this study. A convenience sample of 22 volunteer participants were randomly selected and grouped based on their teaching year. All participants received a detailed invitation letter that defined the purpose of the study, the process and methods that will be used, and that they were able to withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to. Out of 22 volunteers that signed up to participate in the study, 21 participants successfully participated, one participant did not show up even after confirming to participate in a focus group interview, and one participant could not participate in the focus group but only participated in an individual semi-structured interview (See table 1 for participants description)

The first focus group interview included 6 participants that were all first-year teachers, the second focus group interview included 7 participants that were all second-year teachers, and the third focus group interview included 7 participants that were all third-year teachers. At the completion of each focus group, 2 participants from each focus

group were invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview in order to collect more in-depth data. In addition, one of the participants that missed the focus group interview ended up volunteering to be part of the semi-structured individual interview. In total there were 7 participants that participated in the semi-structured individual interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

Focus group interviews allowed the researcher to collect data on teachers' perceptions and experience with their district's induction program. The main purpose of the focus group interview approach is to draw from participants' experiences, feelings, beliefs, and reaction through a group discussion, which would not have the same effect through any other means (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Focus groups also create an opportunity for participants to listen to each other, and remember information that participants' might have missed or did not include in their discussion (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each focus group interview took approximately 60 minutes and it was conducted virtually through Google Meet where video and audio were recorded. All new teachers that participated in the district's induction program this school year were invited to participate through email which contained a detailed invite letter explicitly describing the purpose of the study. All participants received a basic questionnaire which they completed first, and it allowed the researcher to obtain their contact information, level of interest on whether candidates were interested in participating in focus group interviews, individual interviews or both. The entire recruitment process took exactly 2 weeks, and the letter of consent was emailed to all interested participants immediately after they signed up to partake in the study. Once they signed, scanned and emailed back their letter

of consent, every participant received an email with a date and time of their interviews. Participants were also provided with a number, for example participant 1 and onward.

At the completion of each focus group interview, the researcher invited seven participants for an individual semi-structured interview. The individual semi-structured interview allowed for an up-close and personal interview sessions and allowed each participant to share their more in-depth information about their experience. Individual semi-structured interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and it was conducted through Google Meet where audio and video were recorded. Participants scheduled for individual interviews were notified after they participated in the focus group interview and participants were selected based on how active they were during their focus group interviews. Only participants that shared the most amount of information were selected to partake in the individual interviews. The entire interview process took approximately 3 weeks to complete.

Documents that were collected included induction program agenda, minutes from planning meetings, attendance and sign-in sheets, invitation letters and emails, program participants confirmation emails, communication that were sent to the coordinators through email, guest speakers' invitations and confirmation, digital handouts of all information packets that were distributed during the induction program, all documents or handouts that were distributed before, during, or after the induction program. Document analysis allows researchers to interpret meaning around documents, and create a better understanding of topics, agenda items, or even literature that participants received and experienced (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Trustworthiness of the Design

The researcher uses several techniques to ensure the data is trustworthy. First, the participant list was reviewed for representativeness. In checking for representativeness, it is important to keep three pitfalls, sampling non representative participants, generalizing from non-representative events or activities, and drawing inferences from non-representative processes (Miles et al., 2014, p. 295). Representativeness is important because many times participants that are not available may have critical information that may impact the study versus having participants being available but not fully interested in sharing their true thoughts, the only reason they end up participating is because of availability. All participants that volunteered were asked for their availability first. Based on their availability, interview date and time were scheduled. All participants requested to have their focus group interviews to be scheduled at the end of their workday. All focus group interviews were scheduled to take place after-school when teachers' contractual workday ended. Participants were eager to contribute to the study and did not want to miss the opportunity. Several participants emailed the researcher to communicate about their busy schedule and their involvement with other building related activities and clearly stated that they're excited to participate after their workday ended. This demonstrates the teacher's willingness and motivation to be part of the research study.

The researcher's case study design allowed for the development of a thick, rich description that helps to ensure transferability where appropriate. While the study is limited to a single school district, the questions are driven by theory and related literature and are not dependent on additional context outside of the perceptions of the district induction program.

Additionally, member checking was used to ensure the credibility of the results. All participants received a copy of their transcript which they reviewed and confirmed. The researcher also offered to answer any concerns or questions participants may have regarding their transcript; however, none of the participants had any questions. Only one participant emailed the researcher regarding a sentence that had a misprint of words from a focus group interview transcript. The researcher corrected the misprint and emailed back the updated version to the participant for confirmation. The participant then confirmed that all information were accurate. Once transcripts were reviewed and confirmed by participants, data was coded and analyzed. This ensured that all data was accurate and assisted in trustworthiness of the design.

The researcher then triangulated data by reviewing all the sources. Triangulation is a very unique and strong way to prove that the data from three different measurements successfully confirms the findings or does not conflict with the findings. This approach allows a researcher to support their findings (Miles et al., 2014, p. 299). The researcher triangulated the data by using transcripts from individual interviews, transcripts from focus group interviews, and various documents collected from various staff and faculty that were part of the induction program for document analysis. Documents were collected from members that were part of the planning committee. Documents collected from the induction program included agenda, power point presentations, invitation emails, and handouts that were distributed before, during, and after the induction program. All documents were used to extract detailed information that served as a vital part of data analysis. All information collected from all three areas were coded and became part of

the categories and themes that emerged from conducting data analysis. This enabled the researcher to successfully triangulate the data and support the findings.

Research Ethics

At first, the researcher met with the district's Superintendent and fully discussed the purpose of the research and why this district makes sense to be part of the research. In addition, the researcher provided the district's Superintendent with a written notice that elaborated the purpose of the research, methods involved on collecting data, and the process of recruiting participants. In order to ensure that the interview questions are appropriate for the district, the Superintendent was provided with the interview questions for review. This approach will enable the Superintendent to see the type of questions that his faculty will receive prior to starting the research. The final paperwork required the Superintendent to sign an approval notice (see Appendix J). The Superintendent will be provided with a copy of the research and its findings once the research is completed.

Each participant received a copy of the letter of consent. When the letter of consent was emailed to each participant, a description about the research was also included in the email. The description clearly defined the purpose of the study as well as how the information will be used keeping everything confidential and completely secured. The letter of consent also clearly stated that participation is completely voluntary, and participants may stop and end the interview at any time. The mission was to ensure that we addressed any concerns our participants may have prior to starting interviews (Miles et al., 2014). The researcher disclosed how much time and effort was involved, how and where each interview will be staged, how the information will be synthesized, how it will be included in the research report, what will happen to the

information and their transcripts at the conclusion of the study, what the next steps are at the conclusion of the study, and how their information will be beneficial to them as well as all educators. The most important part that was highlighted and reminded to all participants was no harm and no risk, this study and the participants will not harm anyone and will not place anyone at risk, everything is voluntary, and they have the ability to walk away at any time should they choose to do so.

Data Analysis Approach

All interviews were transcribed and labeled correctly with the appropriate participant number. All data collected were converted into Microsoft Word and/or PDF documents for consistency purposes. The researcher explained the context of the study and the setting of the case through explicit details that allowed the audience to fully comprehend this study and understand the phenomenon. The researcher provided a detailed description of each individual instance of the case and its settings, conducted a categorical aggregation where a collection of themes from the data emerged, conducted direct interpretation where single instance was thoroughly analyzed in order to draw meaning, then conducted within-case analysis in order to draw meaning from identified themes and see the relationship among all themes identified, and finally conducted the interpretive phase in order to develop naturalistic generalizations where the researcher reported out on the lesson learned from the case study. This approach allowed the researcher to fully dissect the data and create various categories and group them into particular themes that emerged from analyzing all the data (Stake, 2006). In addition, all data were analyzed by the researcher and organized through a digital software called Dedoose where all information collected was uploaded and stored.

Once data was uploaded into Dedoose, the researcher conducted several cycles of coding until repetition started to occur in order to identify categories then synthesize the information into themes. The first cycle of coding was used to conduct two elemental methods, descriptive coding and in vivo coding. Descriptive coding was used to first summarize data recording of participants' language into a word and/or very short phrases and assisted with creating categories. In vivo coding was used to identify short phrases and/or words that defined the whole idea from the data recording of participants' language. Lastly, the researcher used holistic coding since the researcher had a general idea as to what to investigate in specific in the data.

The second cycle of coding included pattern codes. The main purpose for using pattern was to condense large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units, it created an opportunity for the researcher to analyze data during data collection, and it helped with creating a cognitive map to better understand the local incidents and interactions. Additionally, the researcher included narrative descriptions weaving in pattern codes as data was analyzed. At the completion of the second cycle 41 total codes (see appendix O) were used and other codes were emerged, combined, re-worded, or removed completely. Codes were also labeled and separated into three groups and those groups are 1Y, 2Y and 3Y. 1Y defines the first-year teacher's experiences, 2Y defines second-year teacher's experiences, and 3Y defines the third-year teacher's experiences. During the third cycle of coding, the researcher noticed repetition which concluded the coding cycles. All codes were analyzed to create 10 categories to help group each code (see appendix O). All categories were analyzed to form 4 themes (see appendix O). Below are the list of categories and themes:

Categories:

1. Collaboration
2. Networking with faculty and staff
3. Professional Development
4. Positive Experience
5. Negative Experience
6. Positive Perception
7. Negative Perception
8. Lack of Best Practice
9. Best Practice
10. Resources

Themes:

1. Untenured teachers seeking collaboration
2. Induction program agenda and untenured teachers' preferences and values on specific items
3. Untenured teachers' differences in experience with induction program
4. Untenured teachers understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going Mentoring

An exploration of the data showed the thought process of our newly hired untenured teachers and what they highlighted as a priority based on their teaching year. At the conclusion of analyzing focus group interview transcripts, individual interview transcripts, and all collected documents from the induction program, the following themes emerged: Collaboration, Professional Development, Experiences, and Best

Practices. Each emergent theme described our participants feelings and experiences before, during and after they participated in the induction program. Each sub-theme magnified those feelings and experiences into a better and clearer understanding and helps to experience the phenomenon through their lens. The four themes that emerged from data analysis are; Theme 1 is *untenured teachers seeking collaboration*. Theme 2 is *untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items*. Theme 3 is *untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program*. Theme 4 is *untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*. Each theme captured participants' expressions as it was defined through their experience and created a clear understanding for the researcher.

Researcher Role

My role as a researcher would be the indigenous-outsider.

Indigenous - outsider is defined as an individual socialized within his or her indigenous community but has experienced high levels of cultural assimilation into an outsider or oppositional culture. The values, beliefs, perspectives, and knowledge of this individual are identical to those of the outside community. The indigenous-outsider is perceived by indigenous people in the community as an outsider. (Banks, 1998)

My role as a researcher is very unique because of my past experiences in all the different titles that I have served under. I believe that induction programs are necessary for all new teachers. It serves as a vital learning experience for new teachers, and creates an opportunity to learn and fully understand the district's culture. I have been in education for over 18 years and I started as a student teacher right after high school. I joined a New York City teacher preparatory program called Success Via Apprenticeship

(SVA). The SVA program allowed me to receive student teaching experience in the classroom for three years while working with a mentor and learning best practices. The SVA program also paid for my Undergraduate Degree at CUNY New York City College of Technology where I received my degree in Career and Technical Education. I was able to complete three years of student teaching then receive a full-time teaching position as an engineering teacher at a CTE High School in Brooklyn New York. I also obtained my Master's Degree in Building Administration while I taught and eventually became a Department Coordinator for the CTE Department. Once I obtained my administrative certifications, I became the Assistant Principal of that building school. I eventually transferred to a school district in Long Island, New York as an Assistant Principal and became the district Director of Special Programs and Data Reporting. As a district director my current roles and responsibilities include overseeing all special programs such as academic intervention services, transition programs, camps, and other relevant programs. I'm also the administrator in charge of the entire district's student management system, student data, State Assessments, districtwide local assessments, staff and faculty data and all data that are reported from our district to New York State. My newest responsibility is the district's induction program which I will start overseeing starting next school year. Currently I am an observer and working towards collecting information regarding the program without supervising it. This will allow me to conduct my research and explore what our teachers' experiences have been thus far with the induction program, understand their perceptions and identify strengths and weaknesses. This research enabled me, along with other district administrators across the nation to use the findings to improve induction programs.

According to Banks, “Researcher should strive for objectivity even though it is an unattainable, idealized goal.” (Banks, 1998). For example, in my study, the goal is to figure out how untenured teachers perceive induction programs and what has been their experience thus far based on their years of experience. Much of the data were subjective, but as the researcher, I focused on objectivity. Teachers’ interpretation is what was used to study which is part of the phenomena. My concern is how do I connect or tie in what is subjective to what is objective? My position as a researcher should be as neutral as possible for the main purpose of having relevant and true data compared to bias data. My questions, including research questions and interview questions, should also be as universal as possible. As a researcher, my intentions are not to sway my participants in any direction through influence. As a district administrator, I have my own thoughts and perceptions on teacher induction programs, but the mission was to keep my personal perceptions out of the study and out of the mix. I believe it is a necessity for all new teachers to partake in their district’s induction program during the first three years of their teaching career. Participating in their district’s induction program would help with learning the culture, building collaborative relationships with staff and faculty, network with other faculty across the district, and most importantly, provide opportunities to collaboratively work on shared responsibilities.

My current title could have hindered participants from contributing in-depth valuable information that might be extremely useful for my study. Oftentimes when you are dealing with administration in a school system or school district, there is always that level of hierarchy and tension of where is this information going to land? However, while they agreed to participate, they might withhold information or might not share their true

experiences because of the results or outcome. My mission was to make my participants as comfortable and as supportive as possible and help them understand my vision and end goal. The mission is to enhance and improve our induction program and their contribution will help tremendously. I truly believe that I was able to communicate that and did not have any ethical issues and concerns.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the research method and thoroughly described the process of selecting participants, data collection, and how data was analyzed through coding. In addition, this chapter described how the research methods were used to answer the research questions and connect the theoretical framework through data that was collected. A descriptive case study through interpretive inquiry was used to explore how untenured teachers perceive their district's induction program and how their experiences vary by their years of experience.

CHAPTER 4

Introduction

District induction programs are a common orientation method used by many school districts to help new teachers and untenured teachers acclimate to their new district and learn more about their district, building, classroom and overall teaching practices. In previous chapters, we were able to understand the research that defined values and best practices toward induction programs and explore the components that make an induction program effective. We also discussed various components of our study including setting, participants, methods, data collection procedures, data analysis approach, the trustworthiness of the design, ethics and researcher's role. In this chapter, we will learn more about our participants, explore results and findings of the vast experiences our participants had with their district's induction program, and answer our research questions.

Results / Findings

Participants in the study included teachers, teaching assistants, and learning specialists across the entire district. All participants are currently untenured and hold a full-time employment with the district. All participants had previous teaching experience before being hired by this district except for two participants. Two of the participants are in their first-year and this is the first full-time teaching position they have held. Table 1 includes the following information about each participant. The participant number assigned to each participant, the participants sex, and the building where they teach. The teaching certification column includes the type of certification each participant is teaching under. Time in the district is the number of year(s) they have been employed by

the district, and time in education is the amount of year(s) participants have been in education overall. The last column defines the type of interview each participant was part of.

Table 1

Description of Participants

| Participant Number | Sex | Building | Teaching Certification | Time in the District | Time in Education | Type of Interview |
|--------------------|-----|---------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Participant 1 | F | Elementary | Reading K-12 | 1st Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 2 | M | Secondary | 7-12 Mathematics | 1st Year | 1 Year | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 3 | F | Elementary | Literacy | 1st Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 4 | F | Elementary | BA Music education | 1st Year | 1 Year | Individual Only |
| Participant 5 | M | Secondary | Mathematics initial | 1st Year | 3 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 6 | F | Middle School | Music | 1st Year | 2 Years | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 8 | F | Elementary | Students with Disabilities 1-6 | 1st Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 9 | M | Secondary | Visual Art K-12, Business and Marketing 5-12 | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 10 | F | Middle School | Elementary Education (PreK - 6)/ Literacy Studies (B-6) | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 11 | F | Elementary | 1st-6th grade Literacy | 2nd Year | 2 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 12 | F | Elementary | General and Special Education B-6th grade and Literacy | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |

B-6th

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|---|----------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Participant 13 | F | Secondary | Mathematics | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 14 | F | Secondary | 7-12 Social Studies | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 15 | F | Elementary | General and Special Education, Literacy | 2nd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 16 | F | Elementary | Speech and Hearing | 3rd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 17 | F | Elementary | Childhood Education, Literacy birth-6th, TESOL | 3rd Year | 4 Years | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 18 | F | Middle School | Music K-12 | 3rd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 19 | F | Middle School | Math 5-9, Childhood 1-6, SWD 1-6, Middle School Generalist 5-9, ESOL K-12 | 3rd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 20 | M | Secondary | Special Education / Mathematics | 3rd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |
| Participant 21 | F | Secondary | ELA 5-12 | 3rd Year | 4 Years | Focus Group & Individual |
| Participant 22 | M | Middle School | TESOL | 3rd Year | Over 4 Years | Focus Group |

Once all the data were coded and analyzed, various themes and subthemes emerged. Theme 1 is *untenured teachers seeking collaboration*. Theme 1 emerged from grouping various team building and collaborative activities that participants defined based on their experience with the induction program. Many of the networking activities were also included in this theme since many participants defined their experiences as

impactful and effective. Theme 2 is *untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items*. Participants described their experiences with various training and workshop sessions that were provided to them during the induction program and the specific training and or workshops they found to be valuable.

Participants expressed their feelings, shared their opinions and provided ideas to enhance the induction program. Theme 3 is *untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program*. Theme 3 captures the overall experiences of all participants and defines how participants' perceptions changed after experiencing the induction program. Theme 4 is *untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*. Theme 4 captures participants understanding and experience with PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring during the induction program.

Table 2

Interpretive Themes

| Themes | Sub-Themes | Data Source | Trustworthiness |
|--|--|--|---|
| Theme 1: Untenured teachers seeking collaboration | Networking opportunities, team building group activities, collaborative activities | Document analysis, Focus group interviews, individual interviews | Representativeness, member checking, data triangulation |
| Theme 2: Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items | Sharing of resources, variety of PD, instructional support | Document analysis, focus group interviews, individual interviews | Representativeness, member checking, data triangulation |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Theme 3: Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program | Teachers' perception towards induction program, positive experiences, negative experiences | Focus group interviews, individual interviews | Representativeness, member checking |
| Theme 4: Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring | Best practices / training / classroom support, lack of best practices, co-teaching, mentoring, PLC | Document analysis, focus group interviews, individual interviews | Representativeness, member checking, data triangulation |

All participants were excited to contribute to the study; however, the first-year teachers were ecstatic because they felt empowered. Participants indicated that was the first time they were given an opportunity to express their opinion and feedback which made them feel part of a team, and more importantly, they felt valued and appreciated. When asked a question, all participants answered then proceeded to offer suggestions. The level of excitement was felt through their voice, willingness to speak, and their level of contribution of information. The second-year teachers were more leveled and answered questions with enough excitement to contribute valuable information. They discussed and listed many positive experiences they've had as well as made many suggestions to help improve future programs. However, their biggest criticism was that it was not in person this year, instead it was virtual due to COVID-19. The second-year teachers also had more suggestions to help improve the program than the first-year teachers. The third-year teachers also had the same issue of the program being virtual instead of in-person, but the third-year teachers had more suggestions and requests than any other groups. During focus group interviews, the third-year teachers were more

reserved than second and first-year teachers. Several times the researcher had to ask the question twice or three times to receive answers from the third-year teachers.

Data analysis enabled the researcher to explore participants' overall experiences with their district's induction program and it tells a story of their overall perceptions toward the program, whether it changed for the positive or negative, their takeaways, and what they're requesting to further support their practice. An exploration of the data shows the thought process of our newly hired untenured teachers and what they highlight as a priority based on the teaching year they are currently in. At the conclusion of analyzing focus group interview transcripts, individual interview transcripts, and all collected documents from the induction program, the following themes emerged: Collaboration, Professional Development, Experiences, and Best Practices. Each emergent theme describes our participants feelings and experiences before, during and after they participated in the induction program. Each sub-theme magnifies those feelings and experiences into a better and clearer understanding and helps to experience the phenomenon through their lens.

Theme 1: Untenured teachers seeking collaboration.

Theme 1 emerged as participants discussed their want and need for collaboration during focus group and individual interviews. The sub-themes that helped to develop theme one were networking opportunities, team building activities, group activities, and collaborative activities. Collaboration is defined by the participants as any series of activities, sessions, or workshops that allow two or more participants to work together. Collaboration creates an environment or opportunity for a person to feel comfortable and share thoughts, practices, and experiences with another peer or colleague and creates a

judgement free zone to learn from each other. This opportunity enables many to learn directly from others and also encourages all members to ask questions. The term collaboration emerged when the researcher asked participants if they were aware of the term PLC (Professional Learning Community). Participants responded with a “no” and a few participants stated they were unsure, and the researcher described the term PLC for all participants. As the researcher continued with focus group interviews, many participants mentioned team activities and group activities when discussing the induction program. All participants associated networking activities, team building activities, and group activities with collaboration. It was their own interpretation of what they thought collaboration includes. Participant 4 (first-year teacher) stated “when we got to sit in a circle and interact with one another, that was great.” Participant 6 (first-year teacher) stated “The only thing I can remember about team building was when we sat in a circle and we played like two games. The first game enabled us to get to know each other. The second game was related to questioning.” Participant 6 explained that the second game was designed more towards helping teachers develop better questions for their lesson plan. Both participants described the activity that allowed them to meet and network with other teachers in the program in a very positive way. The activity required small groups to gather and introduce themselves and the content area they teach. The game was that once you’ve introduced yourself, you had to select another teacher to go after you. It is an icebreaker activity in order to warm up the crowd and participants were thrilled to experience the activity. This activity also served as a resource to take back to the classroom because teachers may incorporate it into their lesson and have their students practice it in the first week of school.

The second game required participants to develop questions that they thought were effective in the classroom. This activity also required participants to work together. Most of the participants described this as a team building activity that they thought were appropriate. Participant 2 (first-year teacher) mentioned “For team building it was more in the social aspects. For the first-year it was in-person and they had us do an activity that you could use on the first day of school with your students.” Participant 2 also associated team building activity to be part of collaboration and mentioned that there should be more activities that incorporate working in teams. Most participants mentioned that learning and practicing a new idea is great but then they are eager to discuss how it would apply in their classroom.

When asked about first-year teachers’ knowledge about PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring, participants did not have any experience or discussion on any of the items during the induction program. The first-year teachers were not sure about PLC or what the term meant clearly, and instead, associated group activities with PLC. When the researcher asked if participants knew what the term PLC meant, Participant 1 (first-year teacher) stated “I think I might know what it is but can you explain?” The researcher defined and explained the term PLC, co-teaching and mentoring prior to asking any questions. Participant 2 (first-year teacher) explained “So there were different activities that we would have to do amongst the different tables, whether it was group discussions or, you know, kind of moving around. I would say that that was probably the biggest thing I couldn't remember.” There were no direct activities related to PLC or co-teaching or mentoring that participants were able to discuss. Several participants inferred small team activities as some type of PLC activity but were not sure.

Participant 2 (first-year teacher): “I can't remember specifically; everyone had a certain question. Like you had to ask a question. It was a questioning activity or something they have questions for everyone? And then everyone had a chance to answer that table with the other teachers that were first, second- and third-year teachers. Someone else remembers that they might be able to elaborate a little more, but that was definitely a PLC or collaborative teaching model that we had.”

Participant 2 tried to define a small group activity as PLC, however, had a difficult time explaining the activity or its content. Participant 4 (first-year teacher): “I know that we did an activity as a group where we all sat in a circle and that's something that we did as a team. We had to write a letter about ourselves and I felt like, since we had to speak about it to each other I felt like we all kind of bonded because of that.” This also exemplifies how participants interpret PLC and collaboration as group activities where having a platform to bond and work together serves as a type of collaboration.

The first-year teachers did have past mentor experience where many of the participants were mentored by experienced teachers. Many of them were mentored when they were student teachers. Participant 5 (first-year teacher) stated “But the other coach had been my teacher. He had been a teacher for 10 plus years already, and he was kind of a guiding force for me to get into the educational field.” Participant 5 agreed when discussing past experiences stating: “it was not official by any means like there was no hey this is your mentor, this is, but it was a, you know, six, seven-year mentorship almost where we worked together but I also got to learn from someone who had been doing it for quite some time.” Many of the participants did not have a direct mentor but received

guidance and training from senior teachers that unofficially acted as their mentor.

Participant 2 (first-year teacher) explained a similar experience, sharing “So I never had it wasn't like an official thing by any means but one of the teachers that had kind of inspired me to be a teacher when I was in college, and was contemplating going down this route or whether just taking math and going a different route.” According to participant 2, any teacher may serve as an adviser or guide without being labeled as a mentor. It's the type of guidance and training a teacher may provide to an individual that would serve as a mentor.

The second-year teachers' experience was a bit different compared to the first-year. When asked to describe their perception from the previous year's induction program to this year's induction program, Participant 11 (second-year teacher) stated “I really felt like I was just sort of sitting there.” Participant 13 (second-year teacher) explained:

“My perception only changed just because it was all online this year. And I really missed being around everyone getting to see all the new faces and last year we did a lot of where we got to sit with first-year teachers and got to ask questions that I wanted to ask my first-year and you know see new faces old faces and not that I didn't appreciate the experience this year because I did learn a lot from it and I love the professional development part of it, but just the making connections and seeing everyone was definitely a bummer not to do that this year.”

Both participants explained how their overall experiences were different this year due to the fact that it was online, and they did not have the opportunity to work with their

colleagues. Both participants also explained that professional development was a great way to train new teachers, it's the presenter led instead of participant led approach that discouraged the audience. Instead of working collaboratively to construct or design the implementation aspect of PD, participants listened and observed. During the focus group interview all participants were eager to answer, however, certain participants including Participant 11 and 13 were able to articulate exactly how they felt without hesitation. Participant 10 (second-year teacher) stated "I found one of the most valuable sessions of this year's orientation to be when we shared out as a group." Any kind of group activity or group feedback was highlighted as one of the most valuable experiences since it enabled all participants to listen to their colleagues.

When asked about participating in any kind of PLC, co-teaching or mentoring activities, all participants said no. A few participants were able to describe their experience. Participant 9 (second-year teacher) explained that the previous district prior to joining this one had provided PLC activities, however, nothing from the current district. Participant 13 (second-year teacher) explained "I did a breakout room in one of my training, but I wouldn't say it was like people of my area that I could converse with about things in my department or things that I related to in my teaching." Although this was a training that Participant 13 had received, it was not related to PLC, co-teaching or mentoring. The researcher confirmed by asking the same questions again, and all participants nodded and said no for confirmation purposes.

The third-year teachers were extremely vocal regarding their experiences. When asked to share their overall experience with this year's induction program, Participant 21 (third-year teacher) stated "so I felt like I was unprepared in a way that I've never been

unprepared or felt unprepared before, and I felt very helpless because I didn't feel like there was a way to address that.” Participant 21 explained that due to COVID-19, many schedules and procedures changed to heighten health and safety as a priority, there was an expectation to receive more information regarding these changes. However, Participant 21 also explained that the timing could have been way too early and perhaps not enough information was available for distribution. Participant 21 (third-year teacher) “I was really hoping to get specific information on how the school year would go in terms of the hybrid learning or remote teaching and I don't believe that that information was available at that time.” The same information was also echoed by Participant 17 (third-year teacher) “As teachers we are always focused on planning and especially as a new teacher, we wanted to have everything prepared in advance and we really had no idea what we were walking into with the hybrid model.” Their expectation was to receive information from the district during the induction program then have collaborative opportunities to develop a plan to prepare for their classroom. Participant 19 (third-year teacher) mentioned;

“I think it also would have been helpful if they had broken us down into either by subjects or grade level across the school because I could have framed my discussion with the team I would be with to talk about what worked last year so that we can incorporate it into this school year.”

Collaborative approach to any kind of training or professional development seems to be a top choice for all participants. As Participant 22 (third-year teacher) mentioned “I feel like if we had done a PLC with many of us with the same or similar interest and background would have helped better and we could have benefited better.” Participant

22's intentions were to work together with colleagues in order to develop and learn from each other.

Theme 2: Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items.

Theme 2 is defined as untenured teachers' expectations toward the induction program, their opinions toward certain agenda items, and suggested ideas to help enhance the overall program. Most participants experienced various PDs that they thought were important and useful in the classroom and in instruction. Most participants described their PD experiences as valuable towards the classroom or practices, and others described it as redundant information. Theme two emerged from participants defining their PD experiences and the value placed on certain agenda items by the Participants. The sub-themes that helped develop theme two are sharing of resources, variety of PD, and instructional support. Most participants explicitly discussed their experience during the induction program in respect to sharing of resources, variety of PD that were offered during the induction program, and the type of instructional support they received for classroom and teaching practice. At the conclusion of coding all data and creating categories and sub-themes, all data led to a single emergent theme labeled as Professional Development.

Professional Development (PD) was part of the induction program, however, the type of PD offered to the teachers varied based on the years. First-year teachers received PD that differed slightly from second and third-year teachers. Participants' experiences varied depending on the group they were part of, and all PD agenda items were selected by the induction program planning committee and were approved by the district's central

office administrators. Participants did not have any opportunities to select their PD or workshop. Document analysis showed that first-year teacher’s agenda items were different compared to second-year teacher’s agenda items and third-year teacher’s agenda items. Table 3 indicates various PDs that were offered and the group of teachers it was offered to. The first column is labeled as PD and the agenda items were all extracted from document analysis. The documents that were analyzed were planning meeting notes, agenda for the first-year teachers, agenda for the second-year teachers and agenda for the third-year teachers. The purpose for table 3 is to display whether certain agenda items were experienced by all groups or certain groups based on the years of experience. Additionally, table 3 also shows whether certain groups of teachers received more or less PDs based on their years of experience in the district. Document analysis showed first-year teachers experienced 16 different PDs, second-year teachers experienced 11 different PDs, and third-year teachers experienced four different PDs.

Table 3

Professional Development Agenda Items

| PD | 1st Year Teachers | 2nd Year Teachers | 3rd Year Teachers |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| APPR | X | | |
| Frontline PD | X | | |
| Mentoring | X | | |
| MTSS | X | | |
| Preparing the learners | X | | |
| Safety Training | X | X | X |
| Active Shooter PD | X | X | X |
| Reflecting and Setting Goals | X | X | X |
| Aligning Restorative Practices & PBIS | | X | X |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Reflecting on your first-year | X | X |
| Student Success Initiative | X | X |
| Positive Expectation | X | X |
| Success in the classroom | X | X |
| Classroom Management | X | X |
| Student Empowerment | X | X |
| Questioning in the classroom | X | X |

When asked about first-year participants' experience with the induction program during the focus group interview, majority of the participants stated they had a great experience and PDs were great. Participant 8 (first-year teacher) stated “So I thought it was really helpful. And then, of course, like doing all the other logistics and expectations, and then going further and having, you know, great PDs, I thought it was really nice.” This was a positive remark towards having a great experience and enjoying the PDs that were offered. Participant 2 (first-year teacher) was pleasantly surprised by the amount of PD mentioning “I kind of thought I was just gonna be a lot of paperwork. I was wondering what the three days of orientation will be like when I first heard about it. I didn't think there's going to be like some professional development stuff involved at all.” The basic expectation of completing paperwork and filling out forms by first-year teachers were all very similar and having to participate in different PDs were beyond expectation. During the hiring process, new teachers are not given enough information about the induction program. They're simply told that they will receive invitation before the summer ends and the invitations are usually sent out a week before the actual

program is held. Additionally, the invitation only states the date, time, and location of the induction program; no other information is attached to the invitation.

Teachers were able to gain knowledge from all the PDs that were offered and share and implement their experiences into their classroom. Many participants were able to share their experience and discuss how they implemented the shared resources in their classrooms. Participant 4 (first-year teacher) explains “I’ve implemented all the safety items that were discussed, and I follow them well.” Safety PD and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) PD both were mentioned by first- and second-year teachers’ various times and both were implemented by many teachers that participated. The MTSS PD trained teachers to observe student’s behavior closely and identify key behaviors in order to better support them by involving a building level support team. This was well received where participants incorporated it in their classroom as stated by Participant 15 (second-year teacher) “there was like an empathy video that I used with our students to kind of get them to know the difference between, you know sympathy empathy. She showed it to us in PD and we used it in our classroom this year.”

According to Participant 12 (second-year teacher) “District conducted a PD, and there were opportunities to ask general questions on how to start the restorative practice circle, as well as the video. So that was something that I wanted to implement in my classroom.” Restorative practice was another segment of the MTSS PD which teachers mentioned several times as well as implemented in their practice. Participant 21 (third-year teacher) also mentions the benefit of MTSS PD “I also liked the MTSS presentation. Okay. And I particularly enjoyed that one because it was related to students' emotional needs and how it’s tied to their academic and behavioral needs.” Anytime teachers

mentioned any type of resources or training they received related to students or classroom, they were motivated and had a positive high energy. MTSS, safety, and even questioning was all mentioned multiple times by different participants across all three groups. When asked what was implemented in your classroom as a result of the induction program, Participant 20 (third-year teacher) recalled helpful resources: “I do remember receiving a handout and PD from a director, the director of special education about restorative practices.” Document analysis included the following from the presenter’s power-point slides:

“Restorative Justice

1. Create a restorative and inclusive school climate rather than a punitive one.
2. Decrease suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals by holding youth accountable for their actions through repairing harm and making amends.
3. Include persons who have harmed, been harmed, and their surrounding community in restorative responses to school misconduct.
4. Re-Engage youth at risk of academic failure and juvenile justice system entry through dialogue-driven, restorative responses to school misbehavior.”

This created an understanding of the materials that were discussed at the presentation during the induction program and why so many participants referred to the restorative practice and MTSS presentations so many times. Participant 21 (third-year teacher) followed the conversation by saying “I can really remember that directly being helpful in

the classroom was material on levels of questioning.” The PD on questioning was something that Participant 21 truly enjoyed and mentioned several times during focus group interviews as well as during individual interviews.

During the focus group interview with the second-year teachers and third-year teachers, many participants mentioned expansion of choices when it came to PD offering. Both groups wanted more choices and options instead of the limited amount of PD offering they experienced. The second and third-year teachers did not clearly identify which PDs they found to be valuable. Instead, they mentioned certain PDs such as technology and instructional software would have help more during the induction program. When asked to discuss participants expectations compared to actually experiencing the induction program, Participant 12 (second-year teacher) expressed some disappointment “I thought because of the whole you know because of everything go online that there may, there may be more offered in the sense of technology training. I thought that that was going to be, you know, there would be a little bit more in that sense.” The expectation was a variety of PD on technology since students attend school virtually 2 - 3 days a week. Participant 12 expected to receive more in-depth training on technology to assist them with instruction.

A few participants felt thin and the lack of options led to frustration and anxiety. As expressed by Participant 20 “You know I’m sure everybody felt very thin. For example, one stick of butter to three dozen bagels. Like how much butter, could you actually get on 36 bagels. Maybe a sense of a more definitive direction to go in terms of technology. There are so many online platforms that are available. Why not offer different options?” There was a sense of frustration that came from Participant 20 and a

few more participants joined in when Participant 20 requested more PD options.

Participant 17 (third-year teacher) stated “Especially with all the knowledge that we have now and training that we've had on breakout rooms, I think that that could have been something that just aided in the overall effectiveness of the new teacher orientation this year.” The overall frustration was evident by participants’ responses as more participants chimed in and made requests to improve future orientation sessions.

Theme 3: Untenured teachers’ differences in experience and understanding of the induction program.

Theme 3 is defined as many participants’ differentiates their experiences with the induction program and elaborates on their understanding of all the components and activities of the program. The sub-themes that helped develop theme three are teachers’ perception towards induction program, positive experiences, and negative experiences. All participants described their feelings in such a way that selection of words allowed the researcher to identify and code their responses into a category that would define their experiences. When asked about their perception or change of perception, participants were able to clearly label whether their perception changed for positive or negative at the conclusion of the induction program. Positive experiences were defined with high energy where participants used personal examples on how their experiences were implemented and how it reflects in their current practice. Negative experiences were followed up with requests and suggestions on the importance behind certain ideas participants shared.

Teachers’ Perception towards Induction Program.

Perception is a sub-theme that surfaced from analyzing all the data from focus group interview transcripts, individual interview transcripts, and document analysis.

Many participants were able to articulate their overall feelings and experiences and describe how their perceptions changed in either a positive or negative way. Participant 3 (first-year teacher) stated “So it was, you know, a lot bigger, there was a lot more information than I was really anticipating. So that was a very eye opening experience for me.” Participant 3 elaborated on the sheer size of the program and the district, which was very big compared to the smaller district Participant 3 worked for in the past. The amount of information shared had also been a very positive experience for Participant 3 where the perception changed for the positive. Participant 2 (first-year teacher) explained “I was so impressed. I was definitely impressed. I came out of new teacher orientation. I felt like I was more prepared, but I also felt like I made some good relationships with other people.” The overall experience was very positive for Participant 1 where the Participant felt prepared and also able to network with other teachers.

One of the most common experiences described by many second- and third-year participants was that the program was completely virtual. Participant 12 (second-year teacher) mentioned “I thought you know oh my goodness sitting on a computer for you know from 830 until 330 that's going to be torture.” The induction program was completely virtual for second- and third-year teachers due to COVID-19 safety guidelines. Participant 12 explained the importance of sitting with others in order to be able to network and share experiences which did not happen this year. Participant 13 (second-year teacher) stated “My perception only changed just because it was all online this year.” This further confirms why second-year participants’ perceptions changed for the negative and it was due to the induction program being completely virtual. As Participant 21 (third-year teacher) stated:

“So in previous years when it was in person we really felt like it got us back into the mindset of the school year. We really felt inspired and like being in those groups and being with just people who do the same thing that we do and are excited about it. we actually enjoyed those orientation days, and then because of the whole COVID situation this year, and it being remote, and we just spent the day in front of a computer screen and building up our anxiety for the upcoming school year and it felt almost counterproductive.”

A few participants defined their perceptions with explicit examples. According to Participant 21, the biggest setback was the fact that it was online which led to building anxiety and being counterproductive. The overall perception changed for the negative after experiencing the induction program. Participant 21 had also suggested during the interview “perhaps breakout sessions or activities that enabled virtual team building sessions would have worked better and allow for participants to collaborate.”

Positive Experience.

As stated by Participant 8 (first-year teacher) “this district is really large, but we never had an orientation when I worked prior. So, it was nice to kind of get those expectations and logistics. In a more controlled environment, instead in the beginning of the school year.” Participant 8 explains the importance of having an induction program especially being that the district is so large. Participant 1 (first-year teacher) explains, “Being on the other side of my career now, I could definitely see the difference and how it does impact someone. It kind of inspires you and

invigorates you a little bit more, because you kind of go into your building on the first day with some understanding instead of trying to figure it all out those first couple of weeks.”

Participant 1 also mentions the importance of having expectations and understanding of each individual prior to the start of the first day of school. When asked if their perception changed afterwards, Participant 1 also stated “I think it did change for the better. I think I got more out of it than expected.” Participant 10 (second-year teacher) mentioned “And just hearing from other colleagues I think about you know what's working for them is one of the most valuable parts of the, you know orientation experience.” Listening to each other was explained by Participant 10 as a valuable item since they were able to learn from each other. Participant 11 (second-year teachers) stated “And this year, it worked out much better with the timing. We ended up with extra days to be able to come into the school building.” The overall timing on when the induction program is scheduled has an impact on teachers. The timing of the induction program this particular year allowed teachers to have a week between the time when the induction program ended and first day of school. In previous years the first day of school is usually a day after the induction program ends, this year teachers had one full week to prepare after the induction program ended. Multiple participants mentioned the importance of having a few days to themselves to prepare for their students. Participant 11 also stated,

“But once again as an elementary school teacher and then I switched grade levels, so I just switched classrooms, it was still like that kind of nail biting feeling but it was much better. So, it would be great to keep in mind

that teachers need to set up their classroom and if they are provided with some time, it would be great.”

Although Participant 11 suggested providing additional time to teachers for preparation purposes, but the Participant had an overall positive experience with the timing of the induction program.

Participant 6 (first-year teacher) mentioned “I definitely enjoyed the ending, where we were being presented to the Board. I think that was a nice ceremony that the district brought to us and getting to meet everyone beforehand during lunch.” Participant 6 felt it was important to meet the Board of Education (BOE) members and being introduced to the BOE members was an excellent way to start the school year. Participant 6 also enjoyed the bus tour facilitated by the induction program where all first-year teachers were provided a tour of the entire district. This enabled all first-year teachers to see where their students come from and where all the different neighborhoods were located. Participant 4 (first-year teacher) stated “I was very impressed. It was beyond my expectations and perceptions in a positive way. I experienced far more than I thought I would.” Participant 4 was able to elaborate on the positive experience and was enthusiastic about the overall experience with the induction program. The main takeaway from the induction program was the group effort to work together and listen to each other as stated by Participant 4 (first-year teacher):

“We had to write a letter about ourselves and I felt like, since we had to speak about it to each other I felt like we all kind of bonded because of that. Because we all put ourselves out there and spoke about ourselves. I think just experiencing it together. Overall, kind of made us more of a

team, because I remember even seeing someone from new teacher orientation in my building was great where we talked to each other about our students and classroom.”

The team aspect of it was mentioned several times by Participant 4 and the overall feeling about the induction program was beyond expectation in a positive way. Participant 4 also hopes that the induction program will continue this way moving forward.

Negative Experience

This sub-theme emerged when many participants explained their overall experiences not meeting their expectations. Participant 6 (first-year teacher) mentioned “No because I teach a special area, so a lot of the activities did not apply to my content or class.” Participant 6 is a music teacher and due to the nature of the activities that were implemented in the induction program, it was not content based, and Participant 6 did not find a way to incorporate many of the activities in the classroom. Participant 15 (second-year teacher) stated “And the fact that everything was redundant from last year and repeated from last year.” and Participant 15 also stated.

“My least favorite was not being able to have that social interaction with other colleagues and being able to really get to know them and talk to them and kind of get their experiences. We didn't really get to do that so I kind of missed that and that was my least favorite. And the fact that everything was redundant from last year and repeated from last year.”

Group activity was mentioned again, and the lack of small group activity was labeled as something that the Participant missed since the second-year teachers participated virtually. However, as mentioned by Participant 15 several times, many of the activities

and information were repetitive. When asked what the Participant implemented into their practice or classroom from the induction program, Participant 15 mentioned nothing from this year. Participant 13 also mentioned “I didn't appreciate the experience this year.” Participant 13 explained that the lack of team building activities led to just listening and observing presenters. Participant 13 also mentioned that being virtual took away from the overall experiences of meeting other teachers.

A few third-year teachers mentioned that virtual orientation was something that dampened their overall experience to be negative. Participant 21 (third-year teacher) stated “So we were still getting excited about the orientation days, in the spirit of returning to school, and then they told us it was remote and all day of just the online sessions and that was kind of disappointing.” The biggest challenge was sitting in front of a computer and observing information being presented as explained by Participant 21. Participant 17 (third-year teacher) mentioned “Many of the information shared were repetition from the year before.” This was also mimicked by second-year teachers where information was repetitive. Participant 17 stated that the same information was given to them during the last year's induction program. In addition, many of the procedural and safety training were also provided during Superintendent Conference Day (SCD). SCD are reserved days in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year for the district to provide full-day training, workshop, or professional development to teachers.

Theme 4: Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring.

Theme 4 is defined as many untenured teachers' interpretation and overall understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring. The sub-themes that helped

to develop theme four are best practices, lack of best practices, teacher training, classroom support, co-teaching, mentoring, and PLC. The most common experience that was evident and described clearly by all participants in both, focus group and individual interviews, was the lack of discussion or engagement in PLC, co-teaching, and mentoring. Document analysis showed that there were no signs of co-teaching discussion or activity that took place during the induction program. However, document analysis showed that mentoring was part of an agenda item (see table 3), yet participants said they did not experience or have any discussion on mentoring. This was categorized as a negative experience since several participants explained how mentoring was such a valuable item and that it would have been beneficial to have discussion about it. Many participants said no when asked if they experienced anything about PLC, co-teaching, and mentoring.

When asked by all groups, first-year teachers, second-year teachers, and third-year teachers, if they had any kind of follow-up discussion regarding the induction program or orientation after it ended, all focus group participants stated no. Participant 9 (second-year teacher) stated “nothing related to new teacher related or induction program related after the orientation ended.” After Participant 9 answered, all participants nodded and said no. When asked the same question during the focus group interview with first-year teachers, most participants responded with feedbacks and suggestions. Participant 1 (first-year teacher) mentioned “Okay. So now, that would be a good thing to add in to check in? Do like a check in with the new teachers.” This was a suggestion for the researcher to add into the best practice list in order to enhance the program next year. Participant 1 continued to explain “maybe do a check-in throughout the year with new

teachers just to see how they're doing by the same administrators or members that conducted the induction program." All participants seemed to agree with this comment and followed up with an "I agree" comment.

Participant 4 (first-year teacher) stated, "As far as co-teaching or mentoring, we did not have any discussions or activities around that." This was also stated by many participants where none of the discussions or activities entailed any co-teaching or mentoring related items. Participant 15 (second-year teacher) also stated "we did not receive anything team-building or mentoring or anything like that." and the same message was repeated by Participant 21 (third-year teacher) "we had presentations and stuff but nothing team building related or PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring related." A similar comment was also stated by Participant 17 except Participant 17 also added "I didn't like the teacher-led presentation where the presenter speaks and everyone listens, I wish we had more team-building exercises." Participant 17 requested to have activities related to networking and team building where teachers learn from each other.

Mentoring is another best practice that was brought up by participants when asked about their past experience or current experience on being mentored. Participant 8 (first-year teacher) mentioned "So I had my mentorship a very long time ago, but through New York City, my first-year, and it was a wonderful experience." Participant 8 did not receive any mentor related experience at the orientation but did have past experience from New York City. Participant 5 (first-year teacher) stated "seven year mentorship almost where we worked together but I also got to learn from someone who had been doing it for quite some time." The overall impact of being mentored was very positive and Participant 5 explained the benefit of having a mentor. Document analysis showed

that the first-year teacher induction program agenda listed mentoring as one of the items. However, Participant 6 (first-year teacher) mentioned “The second thing is that I wish I had met my mentor during new teacher orientation.” As explained by Participant 6 that there was no other discussion at the induction program other than a reminder that all first-year teachers will be paired up with a mentor at some point once school year starts. The second- and third-year teachers did not mention anything in particular regarding mentoring other than the fact that there was not any discussion regarding mentors. All first-year teachers must have mentors on their first-year as it is required by New York State. Mentors for second- and third-year teachers are optional and not a requirement.

A few participants requested a variety of professional development instead of the pre-selected ones that they all had to participate in. Participant 11 (second-year teacher) mentioned “I wish that the offerings that had been put out maybe had a little bit more variety for exposure and skill level to those platforms.” Participant 11 explained the importance behind offering PD based on skill level such as introduction, basic, advance, would enable participants to benefit more from PDs. Participant 17 (third-year teacher) stated “So I wish they had offered more PDs on technology based training.” Technology being the forefront of education, Participant 17 along with other third-year participants elaborated on the benefit of having options to attend more technology related PDs. Participant 4 (first-year teacher) stated “I wish we had more PD options and I also wish we had an opportunity to speak to experienced teachers for guidance and to learn best practices from.” Participant 4 wanted to hear and understand veteran teachers’ feedback on best practices in the classroom. Participant 17 (third-year teacher) mentioned “I wanted to speak to the first-year teachers and share my experiences with them.”

Participant 17 wanted to share best practices in order to better prepare first-year teachers. Both, Participant 4 and Participant 17, wanted to have collaboration between different groups of teachers in order for both groups to benefit from sharing experiences and best practices. Both explained the benefit of using this information as classroom resources. According to Participant 17, this practice would have been fulfilled with PLC opportunities, co-teaching, and mentoring.

Theme 4 captured how most participants from each focus group truly felt about their experiences with the induction program in respect to PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring. Many participants explained that they did not have any experiences with PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring throughout the induction program. Instead, participants discussed the importance of PLC and team building activities, the importance of having mentors, and the benefits for new teachers to have someone available for support. Various suggestions were made by a few participants from all three focus groups. To further understand the study, all three research questions were answered using information from the themes that emerged from data analysis.

Research Question 1:

What are untenured teachers' perceptions of District Induction Programs?

The overall perceptions of the district induction program were defined as a positive platform to learn, grow, and share from each other. As defined by Theme 1: *Untenured teachers seeking collaboration*, and Theme 2: *Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items*, all participants explained that the perception was positive when they heard about the induction program. Many participants expected to only complete paperwork or receive procedural

discussions and resources, while other participants anticipated a slew of professional development opportunities, training and workshops. All participants elaborated on the positive perception they all had when they first received the invitation letter. The purpose of the induction program was clearly defined by participants as an opportunity to kick-start the school year and to relieve anxiety. The feeling of anxiety was defined by participants from all three groups, and it was explained as something that participants developed towards the end of the summer as they were preparing to return back to school. Overall, participants described these feelings of anxiety as lasting until the beginning of the induction program. For example, two participants explained that they were excited to receive the invitation letter because they anticipated having opportunities to speak to their colleagues, administrators, and other participants about instruction, curriculum, and all the changes that will be in place for this school year which would help with their anxiety.

The participants described their perceptions of the induction program as an opportunity to meet other teachers from different buildings, different content areas, different years of experience (veteran teachers and or newly hired teachers), and different backgrounds. Overall, the participants described their expectations of the program as a collaborative approach to training, workshop, and sharing of resources by teachers for teachers. All participants mentioned that they were looking forward to networking with others, to listen to each other and learn from one another. Untenured teachers mentioned that the district induction program is a great start of their year and they always look forward to it, especially those participants that were in their second- and third-year as a teacher.

Research Question 2:

How do these perceptions vary by years of experience?

Participants' perceptions did vary based on the years of experience they have had in the district. All four themes discuss how untenured teachers' perceptions vary by years of experience. The first-year participants' induction program was in-person and it was over the course of 3 days. The first-year participants described their overall expectations as positive and after participating in the district's induction program they were even better. Their overall perception either did not change from being positive or changed to a positive beyond expectations due to a superb experience they had with the induction program. According to the code cloud (See Appendix L) extracted from data analysis, it shows that the most repeated and reoccurring code was Positive Experience 1Y, which was used to label all the positive experiences that the first-year participants mentioned about their district's induction program. The first-year participants were also eager to volunteer and provide detailed information. They were enthusiastic and had a high level of excitement to participate. Several participants stated that they were honored to share their experiences and opinion and feedback. They felt valued and the fact that they were able to offer help and be part of a district level research made them feel very special.

The second- and third-year participants' perceptions started positively but changed to negative perceptions due to several reasons. The second-year participants' induction program was completely virtual, and it took place over the course of 2 days. The second-year participants had high expectations from the previous year which led to having positive perceptions. However, at the completion of the program, many of the PDs and information sessions were repeated from the previous year. This redundancy caused

the participants to have a negative perception towards the program. The second-year participants also had a negative perception due to the program being completely virtual. There was a big demand for networking opportunities and collaborative activities as the participants had experienced it in previous years. Overall, the second-year participants shared many positive experiences and were excited to participate in the study. At the same time, they also shared many recommendations and feedback on their needs and wants for future programs. The second-year participants also had high energy towards both, positive feedback and negative feedback.

The third-year participants' induction program was completely virtual as well and it took place over the course of 1 day. There was a level of frustration with the third-year participants. The third-year participants also stated that one of the biggest drawbacks that changed their perception from positive to negative was because it was virtual. As described by the participants, virtual orientation takes away from the overall experience, specifically as it relates to working in teams, networking, and even building relationships with teachers. For the participants, these community building elements are what makes the whole program come together. In one example, third-year participants described how they wanted to see and work with the first-year participants in order to discuss best practices and experiences. Another drawback that led to a change in perception was the lack of variety in professional development. In previous years participants had the option to choose from a list of PDs and attend the PDs that suited them the best; however, this year, there was a limited amount of PDs, and it was mandated for them to attend. According to the third-year participants, PDs on technology and the digital platform were a critical component since COVID-19 impacted instruction delivery, and teachers will

have to digitize their lessons and curriculum. Participants explained how expanding PD topics would have greatly benefited the third-year participants and providing collaborative workshops would have enabled all participants to share ideas for planning purposes.

Research Question 3:

How do new teachers describe their experiences in their institution's induction program?

The induction program in this school district is defined as a wonderful opportunity that is provided to untenured teachers by the vast majority of the participants. Theme 3: *Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program*, explicitly describes participants' experiences and their understanding of each induction program segments that were highlighted by the participants. The concept of an induction program is accepted by all participants, and it is an event that many of the second- and third-year participants look forward to at the end of the summer before school starts. The first-year teachers described the event to be a positive experience, and it was beyond their expectations. All groups described the event to be a method where "teachers are able to network and learn from each other." A few highlighted items from the induction program are bus tour, being able to network with other teachers, administrators, and board members, professional development sessions, and procedural and safety training. When participants discussed their experiences with the induction program, the following PDs were mentioned by them; MTSS & PBIS, Restorative Practices, Questioning students during a lesson, and goal setting. These were

specific agenda items that were offered to the participants as part of their PD during the induction program.

The biggest experience during the induction program, as defined by participants from the first-year group, was able to meet other teachers. Participant 4 described it as, “even seeing someone from new teacher orientation in my building was great.” However, the reverse experience of this was defined by the second- and third-year group and it was defined as negative; participants defined not able to meet other teachers and not able to network with others as a negative experience. This experience was caused due to the induction program being offered to them virtually instead of in-person. According to the participants, this “took away from the orientation” and made the entire experience dull and less engaging. In addition, second- and third-year participants also described their experiences to be redundant where many of the PDs were repeated and they’ve experienced it in previous years. Lastly, second- and third-year participants also described that their experiences with PDs were less favorable due to lack of choices and options. In previous years, there were options and choices that they were able to choose from, this year it was selected for them and they were required to attend each scheduled PD despite whether they needed it or not. Participants stated, “A variety of PD in technology would have been great.” Then explained that since teachers are required to provide instruction virtually, it would have been beneficial for teachers to receive PDs on technology related instructional practices.

Research Question 3a:

Do these experiences align with best practices in professional development or induction programs?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the research identifies PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring to be the most critical elements for new teachers when it comes to being successful in the classroom. Theme 4: *Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*, helped to answer this research question. Theme four narrowed down on untenured teachers' interpretation and understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring, and whether they experienced these three things in their district's induction program. Incorporating PLC into an induction program creates an opportunity for teachers to experience shared best practices and improve pedagogical performance in the classroom (O'Malley, 2010). Early exposure to co-teaching enables teachers to grow and have a stronger collaboration with their colleagues (Soslau et al., 2019). These research based teacher development strategies serve as best practice when planning for an induction program or any type of professional development session. When it comes to mentoring opportunities, we must involve both new and experienced teachers in order to initiate meaningful discussions (Chan, 2014, p. 50).

All participants described the lack of discussion or activities related to PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring. The first-year participants described their past experiences with having a mentor and being a mentee was a valuable experience. Mentoring was thoroughly discussed by first-year participants and they described the importance of having a mentor, especially during untenured years, as a necessity for new teachers. Participants that experienced on-going mentoring described how that experience allowed them to grow and learn from the discussions with their past mentors. Participants from second- and third-year group did not mention having any kind of mentoring discussion or activities related to mentoring during the induction program. Some

participants from that group mentioned they were mentees during the previous school year but did not mention anything in particular regarding their experience.

All participants described their wants and needs for small group activities, and they defined it as part of PLC, which the participants wanted more of. Many participants provided feedback and recommendations for future events to have more PLC related activities where they are provided with opportunities to collaboratively work with other colleagues. All participants mentioned working collaboratively as one of their favorite practices during the induction program as well as during any kind of PD. Participants described it as a great learning experience where they are able to learn, share experiences, and share resources with each other. It was also mentioned that PD provides them an opportunity to also share best practices related to instruction and classroom management. When asked about co-teaching or having any kind of discussion or experiences with shared responsibilities, all participants answered with a no. There were no discussions or mentioning of co-teaching throughout the entire induction program.

Conclusion

In conclusion the researcher explored and analyzed all data that were collected through focus group interviews, semi structured individual interviews, and documents that were collected. The four themes that emerged from data analysis are Theme 1: *Untenured teachers seeking collaboration*, Theme 2: *Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items*, Theme 3: *Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program*, and Theme 4: *Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*. Each theme describes participants' feelings, and experiences, and perceptions of the district's

induction program. In doing so, the teachers, described their preconceived notions about the role of induction programs, and how those ideas changed after participating in the induction program. Teachers also provided suggestions and made requests for additional support in areas they felt were lacking, and explained how the induction program impacted their teaching practice. The resulting data yields a description of the district's induction program wherein all research questions were answered.

CHAPTER 5

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher explored, synthesized, and analyzed data that were collected from participants through interviews and document analysis. All data collected were analyzed to help answer three research questions, as well as describe the overall experiences and perceptions of participants. There are ample amounts of research done on professional development and its impact on untenured teachers; however, the purpose of this research particularly focuses on how untenured teachers perceived their district's induction program. In doing so, the researcher was able to determine how the induction program impacted untenured teachers and uncover the strengths and weaknesses.

In this chapter the researcher will construct an understanding by interpreting the data and by aligning the findings with what research has shown in Chapter 2. Additionally, the researcher will discuss the alignment of the theoretical framework and conceptual framework to the discoveries made through data analysis. This comparison and alignment of data against research and theoretical framework will allow the researcher to reach an evidence based conclusion about untenured teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of their district's induction program.

Interpretation of Findings

The study shows that induction program serves as a great platform to develop new teachers. All untenured teachers that volunteered to participate in the study shared certain experiences that exemplified and magnified the need to receive training and support to improve practices. The induction program was received very well by the first-year

teachers because it was their first time in a district level training and their experiences were beyond their expectations. However, for the second- and third-year teachers it was a different experience since they had last year's induction program to compare against.

Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) defines how human behavior changes as experiences create a new meaning in self-perception and self-confidence. According to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) an increase in self-confidence will allow a person to change their behavior to increase performance despite the situation or task. Perceived self-efficacy is a system where one's capabilities to perform are heavily based on their own confidence level and beliefs (Bandura, 1977). A person must have positive perception towards a task in order to be motivated, which will build confidence and enable the person to improve performance through practice (Bandura, 1986). Motivation is a key element that is often controlled by social model, especially in education. A teacher's motivation may increase or decrease based on the level of support or interaction with other teachers, administrators, students, or parents (Pajares, 1996). When a person observes someone or a group of people, they are observing and creating an experience that will eventually impact the level of motivation for that person (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), basic human behavior entails observing a model, then comparing what was observed to ourselves, and if we are motivated enough or find the experience to be exciting, we eventually practice it. Based on the level of impact each experiences may have, it will either result in an increase in self-efficacy and increase the level of self-confidence, or decrease self-confidence level and lower our self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

All four themes that emerged from the study, directly relates to Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977). Theme 1: *Untenured teachers seeking collaboration*, and Theme 2: *Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items*, both encompasses how participants of the study interpret the term collaboration and what their expectations and experiences were with collaborative workshops and training. All participants were seeking opportunities to work together and network. They wanted to learn from each other as well as share resources. Observing other colleagues and discussing challenges and obstacles would create a sense of confidence for untenured teachers. In doing so, it will also create a level of motivation to improve practice through trying new ideas. Theme 3: *Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program*, and Theme 4: *Untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*, both directly aligns with Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) because participants experience and understanding of each elements of the induction program drives their motivation and self-confidence. If the experience is poor and not well received, then the intention to try new ideas would suffer and result in a continuation of old practice. If the experience is rich and creates an ambiance of collegial and collaborative support, then teachers are more prone to trying new initiatives and improve their practice.

The findings from the study are as follows:

- Participants' experiences varied based on the group they were part of.
- Participants interpreted the term collaboration in their own way.
- Participants requested team building activities, group activities, and networking opportunities.

- First-year participants were much more motivated and enthusiastic compared to second- and third-year participants.
- Second- and third-year participants associated their negative experience with the program being virtual instead of in-person.
- Second- and third-year participants expected more PD options, and a lack of PD options made them feel uncomfortable and anxious.

The overall experiences of participants varied based on the group they were part of. For example, the second-year teachers and third-year teachers had a poor experience due to their expectations being higher than what they've experienced in the program, mainly because they were able to compare this year's experiences to previous years' experience. Additionally, the planning of PD, training, and workshops was not well received by the second and third-year teachers. However, all participants made several requests for networking opportunities, collaborative and group activities, team building activities, and smaller group activities in order to learn from each other. This aligns directly with Bandura's self-efficacy theory of increasing confidence through observing other people through social modeling, each participant's motivation and encouragement to learn and improve practice relied on working in teams and partnership. Participants wanted to share and listen to each other's ideas and practices.

The first-year participants had an unbiased positive perception towards the induction program from when they learned about the orientation. According to the participants, they were under the impression that "it would involve completing paperwork and receiving PD." However, at the completion of the induction program, almost all the participants had a great experience. They were able to receive PDs that they thought were

useful and receive materials and resources that they were able to implement in the classroom. This was also their first actual induction program in this district, and they did not have anything else to compare it to. Perceived self-efficacy encompasses more than just belief; it creates a level of determination and motivates a person to increase effort in order to increase performance (Bandura, 1995, p. 621). Additionally, a person learned best from their surrounding peers and is influenced heavily by their overall surroundings (Bandura, 1955). The first-year participants were highly motivated by the induction program. Several participants mentioned that they implemented resources in their classrooms that they have received from the induction program.

The first-year participants shared a positive energy that encouraged the participants to build on each other's responses. During the first-year focus group interview all participants were eager to answer questions; as soon as a participant finished responding, another participant would respond in order to add to what was said. All participants contributed information that was positive, uplifting and extremely motivating. Many participants shared how they implemented resources and shared practices into their classrooms and their daily practice. This in and of itself was concrete evidence of Bandura's learning theory of self-efficacy because all participants shared the positive energy from each other and were extremely confident in their responses and practices. The only drawback was that the participants are not provided with the same level of collaborative sessions throughout the school year.

The second-year and third-year participants also enjoyed the induction program but started with a negative perception due to the sessions being virtual instead of in-person. During the focus group interviews, both groups mentioned that lack of in-person

made the entire experience dull and less interesting. As described by a second-year candidate “we look forward to networking and seeing our colleagues to work collaboratively with each other.” The lack of collegial sessions and small group workshop model created a negative experience for the majority of the 2nd participants. However, second-year participants did mention that they enjoyed certain PDs and they were able to use some of the resources in their classrooms, but the overall energy was not powerful or encouraging. The second-year participants shared many positive experiences that they felt helped them personally with their practice as well as in the classroom. They also shared many negative experiences that they thought were not effective and not a good use of their time. Both groups shared that they were eager to participate in this study in order to share their overall experience with this year’s induction program so that feedback may be used in order to improve next year’s program.

The third-year participants demonstrated frustration as they were responding to the researcher’s questions during the focus group interviews and individual interviews. The third-year participants at first did not share too much information and answered questions with just enough information. During the focus group interview, not all third-year candidates participated initially; the researcher had to repeat certain questions and call on individual participants to obtain more information. Once the researcher did that a couple of times, participants then started volunteering information on their own. The researcher observed and noticed a level of frustration in each participant’s answers and voice. They were eager to compare their experiences with past experience and were filled with recommendations and suggestions to help change the program. Control over life events allow people to be in charge and the ability to control can make situations

predictable (Bandura, 1997). “Inability to exert influence over things that adversely affect one’s life breed apprehension, apathy, or despair” (Bandura, 1997, p. 32). According to Bandura’s self-efficacy theory (1977) a teacher’s overall behavior will change as self-confidence changes, the stronger the confidence level the stronger their practice will become. In this case, participants felt unprepared and frustrated since their experience with the induction program did not prepare them for the classroom this school, especially since there were so many changes that were in place for all teachers due to COVID-19.

Self-doubt serves as a major detriment to self-efficacy when it comes to battling challenging situations. Self-perception is a great contributor when it comes to motivation and the way a person may tackle a challenging situation (Bandura, 1977). The researcher was able to clearly observe this theory in action as it was evident in the data. The second- and third-year participants stated several times that they felt unprepared and anxious about returning to school as the school year began since they did not have any discussions or PDs on anything related to hybrid learning, distance learning, or technology. There were two participants from the second-year group and 1 participant from the third-year group that stated that the unpreparedness gave them anxiety and that is why this entire experience was so negative for them. Other participants from the second- and third-year group expressed that much of the information they’ve received was redundant and repeated from previous years.

Additionally, during individual interviews, second-year participants and third-year participants stated that they wanted to participate because they wanted to be heard and wanted to provide feedback for future improvements. Self-efficacy is a very big contributor to growth and improvement in a person’s attitude, abilities, and cognitive

skills (Bandura, 1986). A lack thereof may lead to a person's lack of motivation, poor judgement and may hinder a person from performing well; in this case it would lead to teachers not underperforming in the classroom.

According to Bandura (1977), modeling and observing another individual is the best way to learn cognitive skills and this method allows an individual to copy the behavior and replicate it to produce either the same or better results. All participants mentioned collaborative workshops, team building workshops, and networking to be something that they wish they experienced more of at the induction program. The common request among all three groups was networking and collaborative session opportunities. Untenured teachers are willing to learn from each other, the first-year participants were highly motivated and interested to hear what second- and third-year teachers experienced and how they were able to overcome their obstacles and challenges. The second- and third-year participants wanted to share their past experiences with the first-year teachers to better prepare them for this school year. Untenured teachers are open to learning from each other and sharing best practices and resources to help increase teachers' performance in the classroom. There was a strong unity among teachers and a big demand for a collegial professional learning community (PLC). Initially participants were not completely well versed on the term PLC, after the researcher explained the term and provided various examples such as common planning time, participants demonstrated a high level of interest towards on-going PLC's. However, participants were unable to discuss any kind of examples related to PLC development from their experiences with the district's induction program.

This study adds to the body of literature on teacher induction program and clearly aligns all findings of this research to the existing research. Untenured teachers are eager to participate in induction program every school year, and looks forward to networking with colleagues, participate in meaningful professional development, work collaboratively to prepare for the classroom, share resources, and build from each other's experiences. It is important to untenured teachers to have a structured and well prepared induction program before starting a new school year because it helps with preparation and anxiety for many new teachers. Untenured teachers are willing to participate during the planning phase, and contribute with ideas and creativity. This study's conclusions are essential to teacher development because it primarily focuses on what untenured teachers need in order to be successful in the classroom. The end goal is to create an effective model through induction program for all untenured teachers to receive support and training. A well-structured induction program will create a strong foundation for untenured teachers to receive meaningful PD, and a collaborative environment where teachers are better prepared for the classroom.

The study demonstrates the importance of creating a collaborative environment for all untenured teachers. Although participants' experiences varied based on the group they were part of, but there needs to be a consistent system where all induction program participants are valued and receive meaningful PD. Participants requested team building activities, group activities, and networking opportunities to build a stronger collegial support group. Untenured teachers feel more confident when there are collegial support and opportunities to learn from each other. This system of support allows untenured teachers to receive immediate feedback from their peers when faced with an obstacle or a

challenge. First-year participants were much more motivated and enthusiastic compared to second- and third-year participants, the key is to keep the positive energy going and continue to build on the enthusiasm. Second- and third-year participants associated their negative experience with the program being virtual instead of in-person. COVID-19 pandemic was the reason why the induction program was offered virtually. Overall in-person activities add to the positive effect and creates a completely different experience compared to virtual sessions. Lastly, second- and third-year participants expected more PD options and they wanted each session to be meaningful. There were certain PDs that were unnecessary, and participants felt it was repeated from previous year. Creating a menu with various PD options would allow untenured teachers to attend workshops or sessions that they felt would help them better prepare for the classroom.

Relationship to Prior Research

This study illustrated four different themes and various supporting evidence that relates to teacher preparation and induction programs. The four themes are *untenured teachers seeking collaboration, untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items, untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program, and untenured teachers' understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring*. All four themes impact the overall teacher retention rate due to the preparation or lack of preparation that teachers experience in a particular district leading to either being content or frustrated. According to Zhang & Zeller (2016), teachers who face too many obstacles and frustration in a district will leave the district to either transfer to a different district or leave teaching completely. Teachers will make that decision at the beginning of their teaching career and based on the type of

training that they receive (Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The first level of training that all untenured teachers receive is through their district's induction program. Ronfeldt & McQueen (2017) showed that the number one variable that impacted teacher retention rate was teacher induction programs. Teacher induction programs either provided untenured teachers the structure and system they needed to be successful in the classroom or frustrated teachers due to the lack of support for the challenges they were faced in their first or second-year (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017).

This study demonstrates that the first-year teachers were content with the structure and system of the induction program while more experienced teachers demonstrate some frustration. The third-year teachers demonstrate the most frustration and felt that the induction program did not prepare them for the school year. According to Kelly (2004), when untenured teachers face frustration due to the lack of support from their district or administrators, untenured teachers often search for positions outside of their district and transfers. Frustration adds to the nation's attrition issue that is causing school districts' problems financially, hindering them from developing quality educators. According to Latham et al. (2015), there is a greater demand to discover what other causes lead to teachers leaving their district in their first three years of entering the classroom. A major contribution is the lack of preparation and a lack of on-going practical training through professional development (Latham et al., 2015).

Quality Professional Development (PD) is a major contributor to developing highly effective teachers. The research showed that all participants mentioned PD as their common language when describing their district's induction program experiences. The reason being all participants wanted on-going PD on all the changes that took place this

year. On-going PD on certain instructional areas such as technology tools is important and serves as great support for all new teachers. According to Lester (2003), teachers enjoy participating in PDs as long as there is a genuine concern and care to improve instruction, teachers' voices were valued in the planning process, each PD is structured and planned carefully, teachers were held accountable for the content that the PD covered, and most importantly teachers wanted collegiality and collaboration. Our participants exclusively requested collaborative and team building activities to learn and share resources with their colleagues. Our participants also mentioned that they wanted PD choices with several selection options instead of a single option that everyone was required to attend. Lutrick & Szabo (2012) discussed that PD must be on-going and should start early, include collaboration, and must be data driven. It is imperative to design effective PD that would be beneficial to untenured teachers in order to help them in the classroom with their practices (Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). The research collected from all participants clearly supports this as our participants mentioned networking and collaborative activities to be the number one demand and request from all groups. According to Siko & Hess (2012), teachers will implement and try different practices if they receive appropriate training through PD or grad level courses. As mentioned by our participants, they implemented MTSS and restorative practices into their classroom as they found them to be effective with their students.

According to O'Malley (2010), teachers are willing to learn best practices in their first-year as teachers either through PDs, training, workshops or even collegial discussions. Induction programs and professional learning communities (PLC) serve as the perfect opportunity to provide this training and develop new untenured teachers into

effective educators (O'Malley, 2010). The research conducted by Perry & Hayes (2011) also supports that providing help and support to teachers early allows for a much higher student success rate. Research also shows that providing support to a specific subgroup or minority teachers will result in a direct success rate for minority students in the classroom (Perry & Hayes, 2011). As mentioned by Segraves & Reid (2019), induction programs must have the following; belief of intended purpose, positive school culture, mentorship, and building relationships. This was supported by the research since second- and third-year participants discussed the importance of PLC and team building activities during the induction program. Incorporating PLC and team building activities allow teachers to share their challenges and discover different ways to overcome obstacles and challenges directly from their colleagues. As shared by third-year participants, untenured teachers may feel alone when faced with challenges; having collegial support creates a sense of confidence and security. However, when asked about first-year teachers' knowledge about PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring, participants did not have any experience or discussion on any of the items during the induction program. The first-year teachers did not have any knowledge about PLC or what the term meant, and the associated group activities with the term. The researcher defined and explained the term PLC, co-teaching and mentoring prior to asking any questions. After doing so, first-year teachers were unable to identify PLC opportunities through their district induction program or from PD. According to Chan (2014), the two key components of a successful induction program are collaborative interaction through professional learning communities, and mentoring opportunities involving both the new and the veteran teachers. This presents an opportunity for the school district to integrate both.

On-going mentoring is another proven method when developing untenured teachers. As discussed by Sowell (2017), there must be a level of trust and comfort between the mentor and mentee in order for it to work effectively. According to He et al. (2015), on-going mentoring allowed for self-reflection and resulted in increasing self-efficacy. This was evidenced by first-year teachers where many participants elaborated on their past mentee experience and the impact it had on them. The first-year teachers discussed the importance of having a mentor to consistently receive support. They defined it as a support system that they are able to use in order to bounce ideas from and receive support when faced with challenges in the classroom. The first-year teacher also mentioned that it would have been beneficial to meet or work with mentors during the induction program. This would allow them to understand expectations and prepare better. However, the first-year teachers did not have any direct mentoring experience or discuss any experience they've had related to mentoring within the induction program. The first-year teachers only discussed their experiences prior to joining this district.

According to Little (2020), PLC leads to an increase in self-confidence and increases a teacher's performance, which results in an increase in students' performance. When teachers are surrounded by their colleagues, there is a level of urgency and comfort to share best practices that teachers are willing to learn and try from each other (Little, 2020). The same results were discovered by Lomos (2010), where effective PLC models led to an increase in student achievement and performance because teachers were able to share what works best in their daily practices and help support their colleagues. According to Robert et al. (2017), teachers learn best and work creatively and effectively when working in a group or team due to the increased level of collegial support. The

research showed that all participants displayed a great level of positive energy when they discussed their past experiences with collaborative activities which required them to work in groups or teams. The first-year teachers described their experience with group work to be beneficial and allowed them to share resources which they were able to implement in their own classrooms. The second- and third-year teachers expressed their frustration of not receiving enough collaborative activities because they were eager to listen to each other's concerns and share best practices, especially with the first-year teachers. However, according to DuFour et al. (2008), PLC is a culture that needs to be developed slowly and in return it will enhance problem solving skills for buildings and districts in a collaborative manner.

Co-teaching is another successful component that increases an untenured teacher's performance and effectiveness in the classroom. According to Diana (2014), first-year teachers with co-teaching experiences from a teacher preparatory program resulted in a higher success rate in the classroom versus teachers without it. It creates a level of shared responsibilities and encourages collaboration between teachers and departments (Diana, 2014). As described by Soslau et al. (2019), co-teaching creates a level of trust and a positive collegial relationship between untenured teachers and veteran teachers. According to Guise et al. (2017), it is important to have co-teaching experience when new teachers go through student teaching instead of on their first-year because there is a major learning curve. It is difficult for untenured teachers to learn the co-teaching tactics and methods while facing other challenges as a first-year teacher (Guise et al., 2017). Data showed that none of our participants experienced anything related to PLC, co-teaching, or on-going mentoring from their district's induction program.

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations that stemmed from this particular study which ties in with the trustworthiness of the study. The first limitation is the researcher's current role in the district, the researcher serves as a district administrator in the same district that was used for the study. As a district administrator, there could have been a possibility of participants withholding information because the researcher has recently been charged with the management of the induction program. In addition, all participants were untenured teachers, despite the numerous times that the researcher reminded all participants that the information shared by participants will only be used strictly for the study, and it will not be used against them in any way, it is natural for untenured teachers to feel uncomfortable sharing too much information.

The second limitation is that the study focused on the perceptions of participants from a single school district located in a suburban location in New York. The selected population of this study was geographically limited, and their geographical location could have influenced their information and responses. The geographical limitation could have impacted the responses and data that were collected. For example, participants from a school district that is located closer to other urban school districts such as New York City or Westchester County could have had different responses than the participants that are limited to the suburban areas of New York.

Recommendations for Future Practice

There are many best practices that surfaced from this particular study, many of which were recommended by the participants, and discovered by the researcher as data were analyzed and themes were developed. The first recommendation for future practice

would be to incorporate collaborative and team building activities into every professional development seminars, workshops, and sessions. Team building activities would serve as an introduction to PLC and slowly make PLC as a natural practice across the entire district (DuFour et al., 2008). However, the study demonstrated that participants did not understand what the term collaboration truly means. Many participants used team building activities and networking opportunities as examples for collaboration and PLC, which demonstrated a level of confusion. Although participants requested PLC opportunities, there needs to be basic training on the definition, purpose-and-structure of PLC's for all untenured teachers in order for them to truly benefit from it. The district's induction program should be a full school year program instead of just an orientation before school year starts. Positive self-efficacy progress may be easily achieved under certain conditions of motivation and success, however, effective behavior change is dependent on consistency and sustainability (Bandura, 1977). Even if the induction program was highly successful this school year, there must be a continuation of discussion and training throughout the school year in order to sustain the effectiveness.

In addition, there needs to be a major focus on the following items from the PD agenda items (see Table 3); 1) mentoring 2) MTSS 3) Aligning Restorative Practice and PBIS 4) Questioning in the classroom. Focusing on these four particular agenda items and expanding them throughout the school year would allow motivated untenured teachers to continue to enhance their practice. These four items were discussed and mentioned the most by all participants. Many of the participants did not recall the content of the PDs they attended during the induction program. These four items were the exceptions, whenever a participant mentioned one of these items; they were able to recall

them clearly with vivid descriptions. Another consideration is to arrange meetings with the same untenured teachers several times during the school year to monitor and discuss progress as well as to check-in. This will allow untenured teachers to receive additional support from administrators, teachers, and especially their colleagues to overcome the new challenges and obstacles that they face.

A needs assessment for all untenured teachers, especially second- and third-year teachers would help induction program leaders to design content that aligns with teacher's needs and wants related to their classroom and practice. This will help to plan the PD sessions for the induction program and offer exactly what new teachers need versus providing them with generic PDs. The mission is for untenured teachers to receive training and develop them to be effective in the classroom. Providing them with PD options that they are deficient in would serve as a great investment (Ebert-May et al., 2011). Additionally, incorporate discussion and workshops related to co-teaching and mentoring. Creating opportunities for untenured teachers to discuss co-teaching strategies and tactics would also encourage untenured teachers to work collaboratively. To build community and continue collaboration, on-going mentoring is another necessity, especially for first-year teachers. On-going mentoring should be introduced and discussed thoroughly during induction programs because it will allow both, untenured and veteran teachers, to come together and share best practices. On-going mentoring opportunities allow mentees to receive immediate feedback on their day-to-day practices and receive immediate support and help when faced with a challenge or struggle. Of those who shared previous mentoring experiences, data showed that untenured teachers greatly

benefited from having mentors in the past where they could have support whenever they needed it.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several areas of interest that tempted the researcher to explore more while conducting this research study. The researcher makes the following recommendations for future research:

1. The findings of this study do not cover mentoring in this school district. There is a greater need to define what mentoring is and explore what mentors feel is effective mentoring and what mentees feel is effective mentoring, especially among untenured teachers. A qualitative study could be done to explore the perception of mentors and mentees on effective mentoring.
2. A study to explore perceptions of untenured teachers on virtual professional development versus in-person professional development. A clear comparison between how untenured teachers perceive virtual professional development and their experiences with all the virtual components compared to in-person. The study should clearly define the advantages and disadvantages of each.
3. A qualitative case study on the perception of untenured teachers on the effectiveness of induction programs across a larger geographical area. A comparison on what untenured teachers from other school districts across urban areas and suburban areas perceive to be effective induction programs.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to explore how untenured teachers perceived their district's induction program and to explore their perceptions on what they

thought to be effective about the induction program. A descriptive case study using data from various sources such as focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews, and various document analysis were used to answer three central research questions. Participants were chosen randomly, and sample participants represented untenured teachers from Kindergarten through grade 12. For trustworthiness, the researcher checked for representativeness and completed member-checking. The researcher triangulated the data by using transcripts from individual interviews, transcripts from focus group interviews, and various documents collected from various staff and faculty that were part of the induction program for document analysis. All data were analyzed and coded; four key themes emerged, and the themes are: 1. *Untenured teachers seeking collaboration* 2. *Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items* 3. *Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program* and 4. *Untenured teachers understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring.*

Untenured teachers had a different perception and a different experience based on the year they were in. All first-year untenured teachers had a positive perception and a very positive experience with the induction program. All second- and third-year untenured teachers had a negative perception and negative experience due to several factors that impacted their overall experience. Some of those factors include the induction program being virtual, repeated professional development sessions and training, lack of networking opportunities, lack of collaborative activities, and a limited number of options and choices for professional development training. Additionally, there weren't any discussions or activities on PLC, co-teaching, or on-going mentoring.

Teachers indicated that it would be extremely beneficial for them to continue to engage in collaborative activities either through PLC or common planning time. They indicated that the induction program should be continued throughout the school year and untenured teachers should be able to meet several times during the year to share resources and best practices. This would allow untenured teachers to feel supported and also seek collegial support when necessary. Participants were extremely excited to participate in the study in order to have their voices and experiences heard and documented for the study.

In conclusion, induction programs should be on-going and continuously engage untenured teachers in discussions and activities related to teacher development. Creating a supportive environment for tenured and untenured teachers would allow teachers to grow and become effective educators and leaders. There should also be opportunities for experienced teachers to contribute to teacher development by offering mentoring and sharing resources and best practices with teachers that are in need.

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

Date: 12-15-2020

IRB #: IRB-FY2021-99

Title: PERCEPTIONS OF UNTENURED TEACHERS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTRICT INDUCTION PROGRAM.

Creation Date: 9-7-2020

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Sam Ahmed

Review Board: St John's University Institutional Review Board

Sponsor:

Study History

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Submission Type Initial | Review Type Expedited | Decision Approved |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|

Key Study Contacts

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Member Ceceilia Pamther | Role Co-Principal Investigator | Contact pamthec@stjohns.edu |
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| Member Sam Ahmed | Role Primary Contact | Contact sam.ahmed17@stjohns.edu |
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APPENDIX B

The 14 TQM concepts:

1. Create constancy of purpose
2. Adopt the new philosophy
3. Cease inspection, require evidence
4. Improve the quality of supplies
5. Continuously improve production
6. Train and educate all employees
7. Supervisors must help people
8. Drive out fear
9. Eliminate boundaries
10. Eliminate the use of slogans
11. Eliminate numerical standards
12. Let people be proud of their work
13. Encourage self-improvement
14. Commit to ever-improving quality

APPENDIX C

The 9 NSDC standards:

1. Content knowledge and quality teaching
2. Research-basis
3. Collaboration
4. Diverse learning needs
5. Student learning environments
6. Family involvement
7. Evaluation
8. Data-driven design
9. Teacher learning

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Interview Questions 1st Year Teachers

1. Please tell us a little bit about yourself starting with the grade level you teach and the subject you teach.
2. Are you familiar with the term Professional Learning Community? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
3. Are you familiar with the term Co-teaching? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
4. Have you ever had a mentor before that helped or assisted you with your teaching career? If yes, please explain your overall experience and how did the experience help you?
5. When you first heard about new teacher orientation, what were your thoughts and expectations? What was your perception about new teacher orientation prior to experiencing it?
6. Did your perceptions change after completing the orientation?
7. Have you participated in any kind of PLC, co-teaching or collaborative teaching model during new teacher orientation? If yes, please explain your overall experience and how did the experience help you?
8. Have you received any kind of classroom resources at the new teacher orientation program? If yes, what were the resources and how did it assist you in the classroom?
9. Have you participated in any other meetings or received any information for future meetings as a follow up from new teacher orientation?

10. How was your overall experience with all the activities that were conducted during new teacher orientation? Can you describe them in a summary as we wrap up the interview?

APPENDIX E

Focus Group Interview Questions 2nd Year Teachers

1. Please tell us a little bit about yourself starting with the grade level you teach and the subject you teach.
2. How has your experience been so far as a second-year teacher?
3. Are you familiar with the term Professional Learning Community? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
4. Are you familiar with the term Co-teaching? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
5. What were your perception about this year's new teacher orientation? Did your perceptions change from last year's orientation compared to this year?
6. Have you participated in any kind of PLC, co-teaching or collaborative teaching model during new teacher orientation this school year? If yes, please explain your overall experience and how did the experience help you?
7. Have you received any kind of classroom resources at the new teacher orientation program? If yes, what were the resources and how did it assist you in the classroom?
8. Have you participated in any other meetings or received any information for future meetings as a follow up from new teacher orientation?
9. How did your experience in new teacher orientation change this year compared to last year's new teacher orientation? What were some differences and how did it impact your overall experience?
10. Was there any particular information or support you expected to receive from this year's new teacher orientation?

APPENDIX F

Focus Group Interview Questions 3rd Year Teachers

1. Please tell us a little bit about yourself starting with the grade level you teach and the subject you teach.
2. How has your experience been so far as a third-year teacher?
3. Are you familiar with the term Professional Learning Community? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
4. Are you familiar with the term Co-teaching? (If the participant says no, provide the definition and examples).
5. What were your perceptions about third-year new teacher orientation and did the experience change your perception?
6. Was there any particular information or support you expected to receive from this year's new teacher orientation?
7. Have you participated in any kind of PLC, co-teaching or collaborative teaching model during new teacher orientation this school year? If yes, please explain your overall experience and how did the experience help you?
8. Have you received any kind of classroom resources at the new teacher orientation program? If yes, what were the resources and how did it assist you in the classroom?
9. Have you participated in any other meetings or received any information for future meetings as a follow up from new teacher orientation?
10. How did your experience in new teacher orientation change this year compared to last two year's new teacher orientation? What were some differences and how did it impact your overall experience?

APPENDIX G

Individual Interview Questions 1st Year Teachers

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers and I am only interested in your experience and perceptions. All information you share with me will stay confidential and it will not be traced back to you in any way. Your identity will also stay confidential and only the pseudonym will be used to present the information in the study. I will remind you of your pseudonym and will refer to you as that throughout the entire interview.

1. Please state your pseudonym and the grade level you currently teach and how long you have been teaching at your current district?
2. Please describe how you have perceived new teacher orientation to be when you first received an invitation to attend new teacher orientation.
3. When you were first hired, were you informed about new teacher orientation or provided with any information regarding the orientation?
4. How long was the new teacher orientation?
5. What kind of team building activities did you experience during new teacher orientation? Were any of the activities relevant to PLC, co-teaching or mentoring? Were there any discussion about PLC, common planning time, co-teaching models, lesson sharing, best practice sharing, or any kind of collaborative activities?
6. What were your three top favorite items that you've experienced and enjoyed about the new teacher orientation?
7. What were your three least favorite items that you've experienced and were not too thrilled about?

8. Please list three things you've learned or experienced at the new teacher orientation that you would implement or already implemented in your classroom by now.

APPENDIX H

Individual Interview Questions 2nd Year Teachers

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers and I am only interested in your experience and perceptions. All information you share with me will stay confidential and it will not be traced back to you in any way. Your identity will also stay confidential and only the pseudonym will be used to present the information in the study. I will remind you of your pseudonym and will refer to you as that throughout the entire interview.

1. Please state your pseudonym and the grade level you currently teach and how long you have been teaching in your current district?
2. Please describe your perception about new teacher orientation from last year to this year. Did your overall experience change your perception of how you viewed new teacher orientation?
3. How long was the new teacher orientation this year?
4. What kind of team building activities did you experience during new teacher orientation this year?
 - a. Were any of the activities relevant to PLC, co-teaching or mentoring?
 - b. Were there any discussions about PLC, common planning time, co-teaching models, lesson sharing, best practice sharing, or any kind of collaborative activities?
5. During new teacher orientation, did you meet any tenured or experienced faculty, staff, administrators or central office administrators?
6. What were your three top favorite items that you've experienced and enjoyed about the new teacher orientation?

7. What were your three least favorite items that you've experienced and were not too thrilled about?
8. Please list three things you've learned or experienced at the new teacher orientation that you would implement or already implemented in your classroom by now.

APPENDIX I

Individual Interview Questions 3rd Year Teachers

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. There are no right or wrong answers and I am only interested in your experience and perceptions. All information you share with me will stay confidential and it will not be traced back to you in any way. Your identity will also stay confidential and only the pseudonym will be used to present the information in the study. I will remind you of your pseudonym and will refer to you as that throughout the entire interview.

1. Please state your pseudonym and the grade level you currently teach and how long you have been teaching at your current district?
2. From the time you have learned about the new teacher orientation to now, has your perceptions about new teacher orientation changed in any way? How has it changed? It could be positive or negative.
3. How long was the new teacher orientation this year?
4. Has anything changed in the agenda items or activities from when you started participating in new teacher orientation to this year?
5. What kind of team building activities did you experience during new teacher orientation this year? Were any of the activities relevant to PLC, co-teaching or mentoring? Were there any discussions about PLC, common planning time, co-teaching models, lesson sharing, best practice sharing, or any kind of collaborative activities?
6. What were your three top favorite items that you've experienced and enjoyed about the new teacher orientation?

7. What were your three least favorite items that you've experienced and were not too thrilled about?
8. Please list three things you've learned or experienced at the new teacher orientation that you would implement or already implemented in your classroom by now.

APPENDIX J

Document Analysis Protocol

All documents collected must be aligned and associated with the 2020-2021 school year's induction program. All documents collected must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be eligible to be used in the research study for document analysis purposes.

1. Document was shared with all participants and/or presenters during the 2020-2021 new teacher induction program.
2. Document was part of a presentation during the induction program.
3. Document had information regarding agenda items.
4. Document had safety, procedural, or instructional guidance related information.
5. Literature distributed during the induction program.
6. Document was shared before, during or after the induction program.
7. Document may be in hard copy format or digital format.
8. Emails that were sent to presenters, attendees, participants and/or administrators.
9. Pictures that were taken during the induction program for PR purposes.
10. PowerPoint Presentations that were used by the presenters.

APPENDIX K

Teachers' Letter of Consent



Research Title: Perception of untenured teachers on the effectiveness of district induction program.

My name is Sam Ahmed and I am currently a doctoral student at St John's University conducting research on the effectiveness of induction programs. Research shows that teachers that are provided with quality professional development along with the right tools to be successful in the classroom from the beginning of their teaching career are highly likely to be effective teachers in the classroom and will continue to professionally grow. School District has an induction program for all new teachers that are untenured. The purpose of my study is to explore and gather data on how our participating teachers perceive our District's induction program and what they feel is necessary to improve it. I will then compare our teachers' perceptions against what research shows to be effective and identify areas that need improvement. Your participation in this research will play a significant role not only for our school District but also for all educators that will have access to the findings and results.

This research method will be a case study and include focus group interviews as well as semi-structured individual participant interviews. The process will include a semi-structured individual interview which will last approximately 30-45 minutes per interview, one focus group interview which will last approximately 60-90 minutes. All interviews will be conducted virtually through Google Meeting. There will also be a basic questionnaire for participants to complete if they decide to volunteer to participate. The questionnaire will include basic questions such as name, grade level the participant is currently teaching, and the teaching year.

There is no risk involved in participating and contributing to this study. All information that will be collected including your name will be safeguarded and stay completely confidential. All information that I collect, I will use to code/decode, synthesize and analyze to identify gaps that exist in the School District's induction program. Information will be used to highlight and identify what untenured teachers' perceptions are and what they need in order to make this program successful. Your participation is completely voluntary and if you decide to participate, you are also agreeing to keep all the information that you witness during focus group discussion completely confidential. I look forward to hearing back from you and please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Sam Ahmed
St John's University
Principal Investigator



Research Title: Perception of untenured teachers on the effectiveness of district induction program.

Consent: *(Please check one of the statements below and sign)*

_____ I agree to participate in the study (**individual interview and focus group interview**) and I understand that the interviews will be recorded using Google Meeting. I also agree to keep all the information confidential and will only discuss it with the focus group participants if necessary.

_____ I agree to participate in the **individual interview only** and I understand that the interviews will be recorded using Google Meeting.

_____ I agree to participate in the **focus-group interview only** and I understand that the interviews will be recorded using Google Meeting.

Participant's Name (Please Print)

Date

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX L

Superintendent's Permission Letter



Dear Dr. _____,

I am currently a Doctoral student at St. John's University in Queens, NY. I am writing to request your support in conducting a research study that I firmly believe will have an impact on teacher training and teacher performance. Research shows that teachers that are provided with quality professional development along with the right tools to be successful in the classroom from the beginning of their teaching career are highly likely to be effective teachers and continue to grow professionally. Additionally, those effective teachers are more likely to stay within a school District long-term. District's induction program is a great way to start developing teachers early and continue to embed the process through additional professional development sessions and workshops.

My current research topic is Perception of untenured teachers on the effectiveness of district induction program.

I am reaching out to request permission to interview our first year, second year and third year teachers that participated in our New Teacher Orientation. I will conduct individual semi-structure interviews and focus group interviews. If permission is granted, I will provide you with the invitation that all first year, second year, and third year teachers will receive to participate in my study. All interviews will be recorded using Google Meet and transcribed. All participants will be given a pseudonym in order to maintain anonymity. The results of this research study will be shared with the Superintendent of Schools.

Copies of the interview questions are attached to this letter for your review.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. If you would like to grant permission, please email the approval to _____ . If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at _____ . Or my faculty mentor, _____, at _____.

Sincerely,



Principal Investigator / Researcher: Sam Ahmed

Institution affiliated: St. John's University

Research Topic: Perception of untenured teachers on the effectiveness of district induction program.

I grant permission to conduct the research study here at _____

I deny permission to conduct the research study here at _____

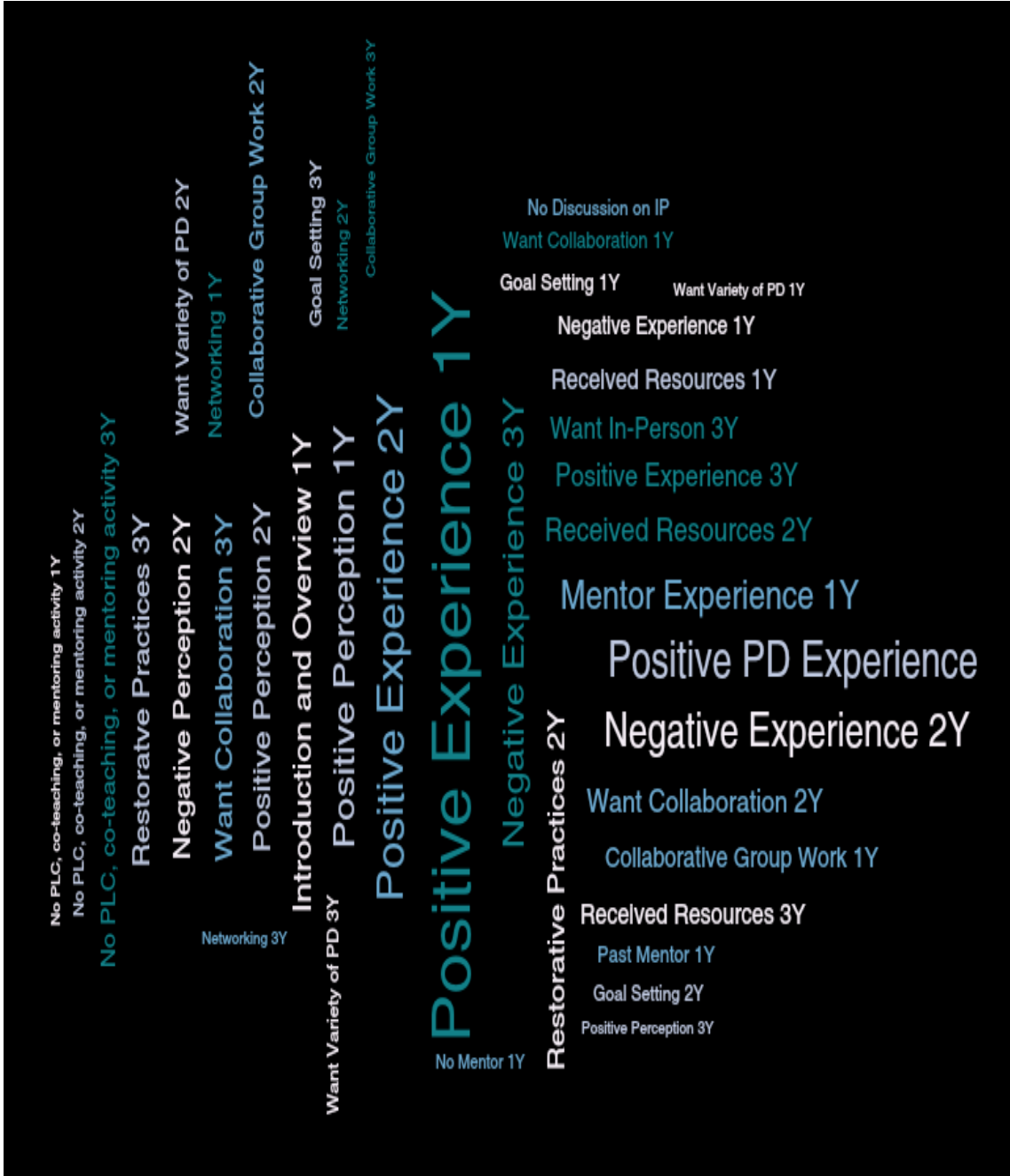
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Sam Ahmed", written over a horizontal line.

9/9/20
Date

*Looks forward
to results
you want!*

APPENDIX M

Code Cloud



APPENDIX N

Codes and Descriptions

| Title | Description |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Collaborative Group Work 1Y | Collaborative group work that 1st year teachers participated in during the induction program. |
| Collaborative Group Work 2Y | Collaborative group work that 2nd year teachers participated in during the induction program. |
| Collaborative Group Work 3Y | Collaborative group work that 3rd year teachers participated in during the induction program. |
| Goal Setting 1Y | 1st year participants' activities and experiences related to creating, sharing, and understanding district goals. |
| Goal Setting 2Y | 2nd year participants' activities and experiences related to creating, sharing, and understanding district goals. |
| Goal Setting 3Y | 3rd year participants' activities and experiences related to creating, sharing, and understanding district goals. |
| Negative Experience 1Y | 1st year participants and their overall negative experience with the district's induction program. |
| Negative Experience 2Y | 2nd year participants and their overall negative experience with the district's induction program. |
| Negative Experience 3Y | 3rd year participants and their overall negative experience with the district's induction program. |
| Negative Perception 2Y | 2nd year participants and their overall negative perception towards the district's induction program. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Networking 1Y | 1st year participants enjoyed networking with other teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff during the induction program. |
| Networking 2Y | 2nd year participants enjoyed networking with other teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff during the induction program. |
| Networking 3Y | 3rd year participants enjoyed networking with other teachers, administrators, faculty, and staff during the induction program. |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 1Y | 1st year participants that did not experience or have any discussion on PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring during the induction program. |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 2Y | 2nd year participants that did not experience or have any discussion on PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring during the induction program. |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 3Y | 3rd year participants that did not experience or have any discussion on PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring during the induction program. |
| Positive Experience 1Y | 1st year participants and their positive experiences with district's induction program. |
| Positive Experience 2Y | 2nd year participants and their positive experiences with district's induction program. |
| Positive Experience 3Y | 3rd year participants and their positive experiences with district's induction program. |
| Positive Perception 1Y | 1st year participants positive perception towards their district's induction program. |
| Positive Perception 2Y | 2nd year participants positive perception towards their district's induction program. |
| Positive Perception 3Y | 3rd year participants positive perception towards their district's induction program. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Positive PD Experience | Participants positive experience with all the professional development sessions that were part of the induction program. |
| Received Resources 1Y | Various resources related to classroom and instruction that 1st year participants received during the induction program. |
| Received Resources 2Y | Various resources related to classroom and instruction that 2nd year participants received during the induction program. |
| Received Resources 3Y | Various resources related to classroom and instruction that 3rd year participants received during the induction program. |
| Restorative Practices (Parent code) | Professional development presentation on restorative practice offered to all participants during the induction program. |
| Restorative Practices 2Y (Child code) | Professional development presentation on restorative practice offered to 2nd year participants during the induction program. |
| Restorative Practices 3Y (Child code) | Professional development presentation on restorative practice offered to 3rd year participants during the induction program. |
| Want Collaboration 1Y | 1st year participants that are interested in receiving more collaborative activities, more networking opportunities, more group work, and a lot more team building activities during induction program. |
| Want Collaboration 2Y | 2nd year participants that are interested in receiving more collaborative activities, more networking opportunities, more group work, and a lot more team building activities during induction program. |
| Want Collaboration 3Y | 3rd year participants that are interested in receiving more collaborative activities, more networking opportunities, more group work, and a lot more team building activities during induction program. |
| Want Variety of PD 1Y | 1st year participants requesting variety of professional development opportunities instead of having PD selected by the district. |

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Want Variety of PD 2Y | 2nd year participants requesting variety of professional development opportunities instead of having PD selected by the district. |
| Want Variety of PD 3Y | 3rd year participants requesting variety of professional development opportunities instead of having PD selected by the district. |
| Want In-Person 3Y | 3rd year participants that completed the induction program virtually requesting the program to be in-person for networking purposes, preparation purposes, and for effective PD purposes. |
| Introduction and Overview 1Y | Activities and experiences of 1st year participants on introduction and overview of districtwide protocols and rules and regulations. |
| Mentor Experience 1Y (Parent code) | Past mentoring experiences that 1st year participants had prior to being hired in this district. |
| No Mentor 1Y (Child code) | 1st year participants that never had a mentor prior to being hired by this district. |
| Past Mentor 1Y (Child code) | 1st year participants that had mentors in the past prior to being hired. |
| No Discussion on IP | There were no discussions, meetings, or check-in on any of the induction program participants after the orientation. |

APPENDIX O

Codes, Categories, and Themes

| Codes | Categories | Themes | |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Collaborative Group Work 1Y | Collaboration | Theme 1: Untenured teachers seeking collaboration | |
| Collaborative Group Work 2Y | | | |
| Collaborative Group Work 3Y | | | |
| Networking 1Y | Networking with faculty and staff | | |
| Networking 2Y | | | |
| Networking 3Y | | | |
| Want Collaboration 1Y | Resources | | |
| Want Collaboration 2Y | | | |
| Want Collaboration 3Y | | | |
| Want Variety of PD 1Y | Resources | | Theme 2: Untenured teachers' expectations, opinions, and ideas on induction program agenda items. |
| Want Variety of PD 2Y | | | |
| Want Variety of PD 3Y | | | |
| Introduction and Overview 1Y | PD | | |
| Want In-Person 3Y | Resources | | |
| Negative Experience 1Y | Negative Experience | Theme 3: Untenured teachers' differences in experience and understanding of the induction program | |
| Negative Experience 2Y | | | |
| Negative Experience 3Y | | | |
| Positive Experience 1Y | Positive Experience | | |
| Positive Experience 2Y | | | |
| Positive Experience 3Y | | | |
| Positive PD Experience | | | |
| Negative Perception 2Y | Negative Perception | | |
| Positive Perception 1Y | Positive | | |

| | | |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Positive Perception 2Y | Perception | |
| Positive Perception 3Y | | |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 1Y | Lack of best practices | Theme 4: Untenured teachers understanding of PLC, co-teaching, and on-going mentoring |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 2Y | | |
| No PLC, co-teaching, or mentoring activity 3Y | | |
| No Discussion on IP | | |
| Goal Setting 1Y | Best Practices | |
| Goal Setting 2Y | | |
| Goal Setting 3Y | | |
| Restorative Practices (Parent code) | Best Practices | |
| Restorative Practices 2Y (Child code) | | |
| Restorative Practices 3Y (Child code) | | |
| Mentor Experience 1Y (Parent code) | | |
| No Mentor 1Y (Child code) | | |
| Past Mentor 1Y (Child code) | | |
| Received Resources 1Y | Resources | |
| Received Resources 2Y | | |
| Received Resources 3Y | | |

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