

COORDINATING SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS IN A TITLE I MIDDLE SCHOOL

By

JENNIFER KNUTOWSKI

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2014

© 2014 Jennifer Knutowski

To our son, Brett and our future children. As you are the light of my life, the guiding light of my research and doctoral journey was the hope that I may make schools better for you and your generation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my husband, Jason Knutowski, for his unyielding coaching and support throughout our life journey together. He works tirelessly for our family in countless ways: whether it is offering verbal encouragement or taking care of all the household chores so I can spend quality time with our son. Words cannot describe the deep gratitude I have for all he does to take care of our family. In addition to my husband, I was incredibly blessed to have been born into an encouraging support system that includes my mom, dad and sister. My mom taught me to always be kind and my dad taught me to always work hard. Along with my parents, my sister has always been there to show me unconditional love and support. I would like to thank our family members we have loved and lost, especially my grandfather, Jim, who was a constant example of hard work, perseverance, and optimism. I am also grateful for my husband's parents and all of our extended family of friends. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to explicitly state my appreciation for my advisor, Dr. Alyson Adams for her encouragement and scaffolding throughout my entire doctoral journey. Her continuous encouragement and critique sharpened my writing skills and confidence beyond the belief of my own potential. For that, I will always be grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES	8
ABSTRACT	9
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	11
National Context	11
Factors Influencing Retention	12
New Teacher Induction Programs	13
State and Local Context	15
Purpose	18
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	20
Factors of Teacher Attrition and Retention	20
Teacher Induction Program Components	21
Vision	22
Structural Framework	22
Collegial Support	23
Mentoring	24
Classroom-Based Teacher Learning	27
University Partnerships	28
Action Research	29
Variations of Teacher Induction Programs	29
Conclusion	30
3 METHODOLOGY	32
Research Questions	33
Background and Context	33
Participant Selection	35
Participants	35
Data Sources	36
Implementation Plan	38
Categories of Support	38
Data Analysis	39
Researcher Role	41
Establishing Trustworthiness/Credibility	42
Summary	43

4	FINDINGS.....	44
	Structure for Support	45
	Intentional Planning of Supports	45
	Resources for New Teachers	48
	Regular Meetings for Support	50
	Intentional Placement and Organization of Teachers.....	54
	Conditions for Support	55
	Foundation of Administrator Support	56
	Approachability of Staff.....	58
	Willingness to Provide Support.....	59
	Opportunities for Support.....	62
	Needs-Based Assessment	63
	Professional Development Sessions	65
	Observations	66
	Goal Setting	70
	Findings Summary.....	71
5	DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	73
	Discussion.....	74
	Relationships to Prior Research.....	75
	Administration.....	75
	Mentoring	76
	Professional Development.....	77
	Implications of Research	78
	Implications for Design of New Teacher Induction Programs.....	78
	Implications for District Leaders.....	79
	Implications for School Leaders.....	80
	Study Significance	81
APPENDIX		
A	INITIAL ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	83
B	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	84
C	INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	85
D	MENTOR/MENTEE CHECKLIST	86
E	MONTHLY CALENDAR SAMPLE.....	88
F	STUDENT CONCERN FORM.....	89
G	INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS PROTOCOL.....	90

LIST OF REFERENCES92
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH94

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>page</u>
1-1	2011-2013 Percent of newly hired teachers	17
2-1	Timeline	40

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

COORDINATING SUPPORT FOR NEW TEACHERS IN A TITLE I MIDDLE SCHOOL

By

Jennifer Knutowski

December 2014

Chair: Alyson Adams
Major: Curriculum and Instruction

Teacher attrition has a negative impact in schools across the nation. Attrition rates are highest among teachers in their first years of teaching and among teachers in schools with high poverty. Efforts should be put into learning more about how to retain and support teachers, especially those new to the profession. New teacher induction programs are a prominent factor of retention because they are designed to offer specific supports to new teachers. Induction programs vary greatly by intensity and duration among districts and schools. The literature suggests the most salient support and most effective induction program for new teachers is from the school level.

The purpose of this study was to examine the needs of new teachers at my Title I middle school. I wanted to learn how a system of support for new teachers could be coordinated to meet their needs. This was a practitioner research study where I served as both a participant and researcher. I began with a thorough review of literature to give me insight on the needs of new teachers and information to inform my plan for support. The main sources of data were my weekly journal notes, initial and formative needs assessment data and individual teacher interviews.

The analysis of my data led me to three themes for new teacher support at the school level: Conditions for support, structure for support and opportunities for support. The conditions for support refer to the approachability and willingness of administrators and veteran staff members to provide support for new teachers. The structure for support details how structures (such as a variety of meetings, school organization, and resources) were intentionally planned and provided by many colleagues and supervisors. The opportunities for support describe the professional development sessions and opportunities for new teachers at Packer Middle School.

This study has implications for all stakeholders wanting to increase retention of new teachers including those who design new teacher induction programs, district leaders and school leaders.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

National Context

Teacher attrition is a national issue that ultimately has negative results for students. In particular, attrition is highest among new teachers. Shernoff, Maríñez-Lora, Frazier, Jakobsons, Atkins, and Bonner (2011) found the high percentage of attrition alarming: up to 23% of public school teachers leave within their first 5 years of teaching. The percent is even higher in high poverty schools: one third to one half of teachers leave within their first five years. Job dissatisfaction, salary, working conditions, poor administrative support, and student discipline problems are among the most frequent reasons teachers give for leaving the profession (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2005).

New teachers are entering schools in high numbers. According to the National Council on Teaching and America's Future, between 2004 and 2008, 300,000 veteran teachers left the workforce for retirement. This trend is continuing as the Baby Boom generation continues to retire. This has contributed to a decrease in classroom teaching experience in schools. In 1987-1988 the average teacher had 15 years of experience, but by 2007-08 the average teacher had just 1 to 2 years of experience (Carroll & Foster, 2010).

Students ultimately suffer the consequences of attrition. Many research studies show student achievement declines when students are taught by a succession of new teachers (Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher, 2010). Attrition is highest in high poverty areas, which widens the achievement gap. Teachers who are better trained with more experience are more likely to be teaching in higher income schools (Berry, 2008). Educators in schools with high percentages of students living in poverty must overcome obstacles that educators in other areas may not encounter. These students are often farther behind than their peers and require

extra support in reading and math. The consistency and experience from teacher retention enhance the support that a veteran teaching staff is able to provide.

In addition to the educational costs for students, there is a considerable financial cost associated with attrition. The research reveals that when teachers leave the classroom, the effect on both student performance and the school and district fiscal operations is significant (Watlinton et al., 2010). Costs include, but are not limited to: Costs of separation, cost of replacement staffing, net replacement pay, cost of training, lost productivity, incentives, new employee induction, and professional development. The National Council on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) estimates every year the United States loses approximately \$2.6 billion to teacher attrition (Gujarati, 2012).

The "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB) act has prompted efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers for every classroom; however, efforts might be better directed toward retaining highly qualified teachers (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). As teachers continue to leave the profession within the first years of entering, educators and administrators must identify factors that contribute to teacher retention as well as the factors that lead to attrition (Inman & Marlow, 2004). We need to find out why some teachers leave and why some teachers stay. Knowing is the first step; however action must be taken with the knowledge to create conditions in schools that support teacher retention.

Factors Influencing Retention

Studies consistently show that teachers value and consider autonomy, professional development, a positive climate, and supportive administration factors important in retention. Over 200 teachers in North Carolina were surveyed regarding their needs for job satisfaction (Petty, 2007). The teachers reported recognition for accomplishments, autonomy, administrative support, and more control over their schedule as important factors in their success and

satisfaction. The survey also specifically addressed professional development. The needs rated most important were direct experiences, control over topics, technology training, and opportunities to attend professional conferences and workshops.

The effects of a monetary incentive program were studied in Hillsborough County in Florida (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Teachers were offered 5-10% of additional pay to work in schools where at least 90% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. Even with this compensation, attrition was still high with an overall average of 33.4% of their instructional staff newly hired. Financial incentives alone are not a sufficient means of enticing teachers to remain in their schools. When asked about the factors that attracted them to a school, the teachers in the study reported autonomy in curriculum, decision-making authority, and improved professional development opportunities. The teachers also said that in order for them to remain in a challenging school, they needed principals who facilitated a positive climate, created an environment where staff could grow in their field, and implemented a shared vision with the faculty and staff input.

Given that a large percentage of attrition is from new teachers and the factors teachers desire are mostly found at the school level, it is important to create a support structure for new teacher within schools. The purpose of my study was to examine how I could structure a support system to meet the needs of new teachers at a Title I Middle School in Florida, and to what extent the new teachers found the system helpful. Structures specific for new teachers are often referred to as new teacher induction programs and are described below.

New Teacher Induction Programs

The key to retaining qualified teachers in schools is to provide a comprehensive induction program that supports new teachers and enhances their performance at the school level. As cited above, teachers want a collaborative environment with support from faculty and

administration. The results of the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey indicate that new teachers who received a mentor from the same subject area and who participated in induction activities such as planning and collaborating with other teachers were less likely to change schools or leave the profession after one year of teaching (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

We need to strive to retain the highly effective teachers we have, especially in our low income schools. New teachers often leave schools because they feel unprepared or unskilled in their positions (Gujarati, 2012). New teachers often cite classroom management, student motivation, lack of administration support, assessing student work, and relationships with parents as reasons for leaving (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Graduation from a teacher preparation program cannot be considered the end of training for teachers because it does not allow sufficient time to develop the skills and experiences necessary for successful independent teaching practice (Gujarati, 2012).

Careful consideration and planning should go into teacher preparation programs and new teacher induction programs. Ideally, induction programs last a minimum of two years because when it comes to giving new teachers support, longer is better (Gujarati, 2012). The period of induction can make the difference between a teacher who succeeds and one who does not. Lack of new teacher support is one of the primary reasons teachers leave the profession. Teachers who do not participate in an induction program are twice as likely to leave during their first three years of teaching (Gujarati, 2012).

Induction programs require creativity and effort. Lack of time and money are the resounding challenges in any profession. Time and money are components of quality induction programs and may help or hinder success. Time is needed to provide quality professional development, opportunities for observation and feedback and critical reflection. Money is

needed for resources and compensation (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). In a review of policies, Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009) found out of 28 states, only 16 received state funding for their induction programs. Districts are left to fund induction and are left wondering if the potential benefits are worth the costs.

State and Local Context

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the national attrition rate for teachers was 16% in 2008-2009. Attrition rates vary from the state and district levels. The School Public Accountability Report published by the Florida Department of Education indicates the percentage of teacher attrition in the state of Florida was 18% during the 2012-2013 school year. Though not proven as a direct causation, retention may be due to an increase in new teacher supports as cited by the study below.

The potential benefits are worth paying for, especially given the potential costs and consequences of attrition. The costs associated with replacing a teacher were calculated for two districts (Watlington et al., 2010). In St. Lucie County School District, the cost of replacing a teacher was estimated to be \$4,651 in the 2004-2005 school year. During that year, the district replaced 320 teachers out of a total of 1,952 teachers in the school system, for a total percentage of 16.4%. In the Broward County School District, the cost of replacing a teacher was estimated to be \$12,652 per teacher in the 2004-2005 school year. During that year the district replaced 1,206 teachers out of 16,648 in the school system, a percentage of 7.25%.

When looking at the figures and percentages, the study shows St. Lucie County had a high attrition rate, but a low replacement cost. Broward County had a lower attrition rate, but a higher replacement cost (Watlington et al., 2010). Broward County expends a greater financial cost per teacher to enhance the new teacher induction and support system, which leads to a lower percentage of attrition. As the Broward County model indicates, by implementing the right

programs, factors, and incentives, teachers can be retained. Contrary to national findings that attrition is higher in high poverty areas; Broward County has a higher population of minority students and students from low incomes than St. Lucie County and has been more successful at retaining teachers.

According to the 2012-2013 School Public Accountability Report published by the Florida Department of Education, the state average of number of new teachers entering districts each year is 18% and the average of new teachers entering the School District of Green County (a pseudonym for the district involved in this study) is 24%. This is substantially above the state average. According to the same report, the average of new teachers in the School District of Broward County is 15%, which is below the state average for new teachers. As previously mentioned, Broward County expends a significant amount of resources on providing a comprehensive induction system for new teachers.

Though most data are calculated from the state or district level, it is the school level that has the most impact on retention. Given that teachers value a collaborative environment and support from administration and peers as prominent factors of retention, induction at the school level is the most salient and perhaps the most economical. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that a mentor from the same subject area and common planning time for collaboration with other teachers were the most prominent and desired factors in teacher induction as reported by new teachers. These two factors do not require extensive use of funds or time, but do require careful planning and selection.

Obstacles can be overcome with creativity and use of existing resources in schools. For example, a school may not have full time mentors, but may have several content-area coaches. Coaches could be assigned to either model a lesson for the teacher in the class or conduct an

activity with the class while the teacher observes another teacher or participates in professional development. This is one important component of support to retain teachers.

Schools must have supports in place that provide beginning teachers with a seamless transition from teacher preparation programs into the teaching profession. Beginning teachers benefit from induction programs that provide a culture of collaboration and support from peers and administrators (Inman & Marlow, 2004). According to Wong (2002), “An induction process is the best way to send a message to your teachers that you value them and want them to succeed and stay” (p. 14).

Given this information, it is imperative for schools to examine their induction programs. As the Intervention Support Specialist at Packer Middle School, a Title I Middle School in Green County, I felt urgency to examine our current support system for new teachers and to find ways to enhance it. According to the School Public Accountability Report from the Florida Department of Education for 2012-2013, the percent of newly hired teachers in the State of Florida and at Packer Middle School has increased in the past year (data retrieved from <http://doeweb-prd.doe.state.fl.us/eds/nclbspar/year1213/main1213.cfm>). As shown in Table 1-1, the percent of new teachers at Packer Middle School is well above the average for both the district and the state. In addition, the percent of new teachers has increased in recent years, indicating that attention should be paid to the conditions and supports for new teachers since the problem is persisting over time.

Table 1-1. 2011-2013 Percent of newly hired teachers

School Year	Percent of newly hired teachers in Florida	Percent of newly hired teachers in Green County	Percent of newly hired teachers at Packer Middle School
2011-2012	17.9	23.7	35.3
2012-2013	22.7	20.2	41.0

Purpose

The purpose of my study was to examine how a support system to meet the needs of new teachers at a Title I middle school could be coordinated by using existing resources. The current proportion of new teachers in Green County School District is 23%. This is 5 percentage points higher than the state average of 18%. Green County School District currently provides district-level orientation, mentoring and networking opportunities for new teachers. However, support offered within schools varies and remains undefined.

Research and literature on new teacher induction shows the most powerful and salient support comes from the school level and that new teachers require differentiated and intensive support. However, the research does not provide a definition or clear illustration of the support needed in schools. As stated in the problem of practice, lack of time and funding often affect the support new teachers receive. The study was guided by the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. How can a support system be coordinated using existing resources to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?
2. To what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

To inform this study, I drew upon research and literature related to teacher attrition, factors of teacher retention and teacher induction programs. Specifically, I studied the benefits of teacher induction programs and the components that contribute to quality induction programs. I reviewed the literature as it relates to induction and then synthesized the information gleaned to report the components of quality and comprehensive induction programs. The literature review

guided me to the most critical components and served as the framework for my study. I used the information from the literature review to determine how I would conduct action research in my context. This literature review will be presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology for my study, Chapter 4 will contain the findings and Chapter 5 will discuss possible implications.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of my study was to examine how a support system to meet the needs of new teachers at a Title I middle school could be coordinated by using existing resources. In order to study how supports could be organized, I first had to review relevant literature to find what supports to possibly coordinate by studying factors of attrition and retention. Finding the reasons and factors for teachers who chose to leave or remain helped shape my study and answer my research questions and sub-questions:

1. How can a support system be coordinated using existing resources to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?
2. To what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

To inform my study, I reviewed the literature related to factors of attrition and retention, components of new teacher induction programs and variations of new teacher induction programs.

Factors of Teacher Attrition and Retention

Frequent attrition creates an unstable environment and makes it challenging for students and teachers to form a working relationship. Attrition rates are larger in schools with high poverty. In addition, these schools tend to have fewer resources, less adequate facilities, and fewer opportunities for teachers to experience autonomy (Greenlee & Brown, 2009). Much of teacher attrition is due to migration to schools with better resources, more professional opportunities, a higher baseline of student achievement, and a low population of economically needy students (Greenlee & Brown, 2009).

Knowledge of why teachers leave schools and efforts to ameliorate existing conditions can improve retention. Job dissatisfaction, salary, working conditions, poor administrative support, and student discipline problems are among the most frequent reasons teachers give for leaving the profession (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2005). Studies consistently show that teachers value and consider autonomy, professional development, a positive climate, and supportive administration as important factors in retention.

However, simply knowing the factors that contribute to teacher retention is not enough to actually increase retention. Action must be taken at the national, state, district, and school building levels. New teachers who do not have support through induction programs are twice as likely to leave their position (Gujarati, 2012). Thoughtful planning should go into the design and implantation of teacher induction programs.

Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009) estimate the cost of a teacher leaving is roughly \$12,000.00 in rehiring expenses; however the per-teacher cost of a quality induction program is about half of that amount. The following sections will describe explicit ways districts and schools can provide support to new teachers through new teacher induction programs.

Teacher Induction Program Components

The key to retaining qualified teachers in schools is to provide a comprehensive induction program that supports new teachers and enhances their performance. The purpose of a teacher induction program is to acculturate new teachers to the school and district (Wong, 2002). A thoughtfully designed comprehensive induction program can improve teacher practice and help new educators apply theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher preparation programs to the rigor of real-world teaching (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Induction programs vary across the world in intensity; however, they share characteristics. The following sections are a synthesis of the literature regarding components of new teacher induction programs that include but are not

limited to vision, structural framework, collegial support, mentoring, classroom based learning, university partnerships and action research.

Vision

Teacher induction programs must embody a vision that promotes leadership and prepares teachers to strive for quality instruction throughout their careers (Moir & Gless, 2001). High professional and academic expectations, organizational systems, and a belief that every teacher affects student learning must be at the heart of every induction program (Moir & Gless, 2001).

Structural Framework

Districts and schools must work together to create a framework for new teacher support. This may include but is not limited to: early identification for support, setting expectations, planned release time for new teachers, reduced teacher workload and responsibilities. The framework for district and schools will be described separately; however, it is important to note quality induction is not a simple task and involves states, districts, schools and unions working together. States work to ensure schools are filled with teachers; districts work to keep these teachers; schools work to train these teachers; and unions work to protect these teachers (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). Ultimately, school culture and context have the most influence on the success of induction. Poor leadership and isolating working conditions in a school will block any glimmer of quality induction and the growth of both veteran and new teachers.

District structures. Many districts have quality screening systems in place that would eliminate underprepared teachers from applying. When a new candidate is hired, the district should take note and use an early identification process to plan orientation programs (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

New teachers are often given more challenging teaching assignments than veteran peers. By establishing policies and procedures that protect new teachers during their induction, focus

can be given on development (Moir & Gless, 2001). Optimal performance is desired, but evaluation systems should allow new teachers to manage their learning curves (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). Clear lines of communication among all the district departments such as human resources, curriculum and instruction, and school administrators will contribute to consistency and keep new teacher supports a priority (Moir & Gless, 2001).

School structures. Task oriented support helps new teachers navigate through obstacles with tangible problem solving skills. Veteran teachers and administrators can offer support by providing staff development that provides tangible strategies and problem-solving skills to new teachers. In addition, veteran teachers and administrators can provide new teachers with detailed information and procedures that can help ease transition into a new setting (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

Planned release time for new teachers to observe veteran teachers or to attend professional development sessions will help ensure new teachers are afforded these opportunities. The times and coverage should be established before the school year begins in order to avoid conflicts (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). This time would allow new teachers to observe veteran colleagues and participate in valuable opportunities to enhance their practice.

Collegial Support

New teacher support should be approached and designed as a continuum of support that begins with personal and emotional support. Designing lessons, navigating new curriculum, trying to manage a classroom can emotionally drain even experienced teachers. Veteran colleagues and administrators can offer support through advice, perspective, and the assurance that new teacher anxiety is often experienced by others. Though this support may do little to improve performance, it may increase the likelihood that a new teacher may stay the course to improve performance (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

The school context is the most influential environment during induction. Principals and other administrators must provide a collegial environment and framework where all teachers and staff are comfortable to reflect upon practice and feel safe to grow (Wayne, Youngs & Fleischman, 2005). Administrators must extend their role of performance evaluator to a role of instructional support to both veteran and new teachers. This may include, but is not limited to: ensuring quality mentoring by carefully selecting mentors and providing ongoing training opportunities; providing school-wide learning opportunities for new teachers; and embedding learning opportunities into evaluation (Wayne, Youngs & Fleischman, 2005).

Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) studied the effects of the principal's role in two middle schools. New teachers who have opportunities to interact both formally and informally with administrators feel supported and valued for their work. A lack of interaction with administration makes new teachers question their competency because they do not feel valued. Conversely, when the principal is involved in induction activities and makes time for casual classroom visits and collaboration, the new teachers feel valued and report positive perceptions of their work environment. According to the study, the principal's personal interactions with new teachers enhanced a feeling of competency, respect, belonging, and self-esteem. These are all qualities that attribute to retention and enhanced performance. A principal's positive interactive role is integral to successful induction.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the most common component associated with induction and varies across contexts. The idea of mentoring is used in many fields: the experienced help the novice assimilate into the new context. Mentoring has proven beneficial outcomes on teacher retention and performance. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) studied the effects of mentoring on teacher retention and found that having a mentor in a new teacher's assigned subject matter area reduced

the risk of attrition by 30%. Having a mentor outside of a new teacher's subject area reduced the risk of attrition by 18%. Multi-faceted mentoring programs and teacher retention are positively correlated. This section will describe models, pedagogy, organization and evaluation for mentoring.

Models. Hellsten, Prytula, Eubanks, and Lai (2009) studied the effects of various mentoring models and found that though the literature was plentiful, the number of contexts that used an established comprehensive mentoring model was few. This may be due to lack of research focusing on design and process of mentoring. The majority of mentoring programs use an apprenticeship model where the veteran teacher passes on knowledge to the new teacher. This model fails to give credence to the knowledge and experience of the beginning teacher. One model, the learning community model places student achievement in the center and new teacher and veteran teachers working in tandem around the common goal of student achievement. With this model, learning is not restricted, but rather a fluid process within a community. Through analysis of transcripts, the authors found the learning community model to be the most effective model for mentoring and the model most favored by participants.

Harrison, Dymoke, and Pell (2006) conclude that given the wide skill set and responsibilities, the mentor role may be best filled by several people, since it is unlikely one person can provide all support a new teacher needs. Professional learning communities have long been cited as a dynamic means for professional development and collegiality, but the potential effects for mentoring and induction are particularly salient (Hellsten et al., 2009). In a learning community, teachers learn alongside one another and reduce the responsibility of one individual mentor. A learning community enables teachers to have multiple influential guides who may serve as informal mentors; thus contributing to a collegial climate where all educators

can enhance and grow in their practice (Hellsten et al., 2009). Everyone is teaching and learning to effect positive change in student learning. No one educator is more important than the other. The focus of conversations is on student goals and learning and allows for multiple perspectives to be shared and discussed.

Pedagogy. The pedagogy of mentoring involves an in-depth understanding of teacher development, professional standards, teacher assessment and coaching techniques (Moir & Gless, 2001). Mentoring must be learned and cannot be assumed to come automatically to veteran teachers (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). A mentor must have a specialized skill set in working with adult learners. Many mentoring training programs front-load the information with little to no ongoing professional development. This approach neglects valuable opportunities for growth in leadership and opportunities for reflection. Mentors need opportunities to reflect in, of and for practice while they are mentoring, just as in teaching (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009).

Organization. The time provided for mentoring in induction programs varies and is dependent on financial resources. Some districts are able to fund full-time mentors who are released from the classroom for a period of two to three years and some districts are able to release teachers for small portions of the day. However, the majority of mentors are full-time classroom teachers who must find time to support their new peers (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). The amount of time is significant, but how the time is spent is more significant. Mentors and new teachers should be co-planning, co-teaching, observing lessons, reflecting on practice and exploring through inquiry (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). Schools and districts need to make time for mentors and new teachers a priority during induction regardless of finances. In settings where the mentor is a full-time teacher, creative scheduling can enable mentors and new teachers to have common planning time and lunch throughout the day. Structured time for new

teachers and mentors sends a message about quality support for new teachers from schools, districts, and states (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009).

Evaluation. Though many programs have mentors in a non-evaluative role in order to build trust with new teachers, Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009) found accountability was highest in programs where mentors had responsibility for assessing new teachers' performance. For example, in Connecticut, the mentor is non-evaluative, so the degree of professionalism varies and is dependent upon the mentor's commitment to make time to assist the new teacher. As a result, mentoring practices in the state are inconsistent. However, in California, mentors have an evaluative role and use specially designed standards to guide their formative assessment and support of new teachers. This contributes to a climate of consistency and provides a path for support and feedback.

Classroom-Based Teacher Learning

Teacher learning that occurs in the classroom context is one of the most significant forms of professional development (Moir & Gless, 2001). Induction programs should provide an abundance of opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers and reflect upon their own practice. Collaborative lesson design, observation of modeled lessons, analysis of student work, reflection upon practice, and goal setting are integral components of classroom-based teacher learning (Moir & Gless, 2001).

Encouraging new teachers to critically reflect on their teaching practice is another type of support administrators and veteran teachers can provide. This type of support has the potential to have the most exponential influence on effective teacher practice for both veteran and new teachers. When teachers critically reflect on their practice, they are creating opportunities for growth and improvement. Critical reflection can be fostered in many forms. The most common

forms are through observation and feedback, guided inquiry, and lesson study. These supports foster growth among new and veteran teachers alike (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

University Partnerships

When universities partner with states, districts and schools to enhance the induction process, the positive effects are exponential for all stakeholders. Universities serve as the initial training ground for new teachers and then create a cycle of learning by providing continued support when teachers are hired. University partnerships are not a requirement of induction programs and occur infrequently. However, it is noteworthy to showcase how the partnerships work and to report the effects.

Gilles, Davis and McGlamery (2009) studied the effects of the Comprehensive Teacher Induction Consortium; a group of similar teacher induction programs that have university partnerships. The consortium has four key components that new teachers receive: a full year of mentor support by certified teachers who are full-time; coursework leading to a master's degree; a cohort group of beginning teachers; action research projects that serve as the capstone for the program. These programs are not funded by grants; instead, each district pays the university and receives two to three new teachers per building. The effects on teacher retention are sensational. Eighty to ninety percent of new teachers in the program have remained in teaching at least five years after beginning.

Hammerness and Matsko (2013) studied the impact of The University of Chicago Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) and found many positive attributes. The program specifically prepares teachers to work in the urban schools of Chicago and then continues to support the teachers in a formal induction component.

The Career Advancement and Development for Recruits and Experienced Teachers (CADRE) was created in 1994 and is a consortium of efforts between school districts in Omaha,

Nebraska and the College of Education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (McGlamery, Fluckiger, & Edick, 2002). The program provides new teachers with quality mentors, continued coursework through the university, and a group of peers to share experiences and support. The effects on teacher retention and practice are remarkable. In a random sample, CADRE teachers improved their effectiveness compared to teachers not in the program. A five-year study showed 9 out of 10 CADRE teachers remained in the profession. The United States Department of Education recognized CADRE as an exemplary teacher induction program.

Action Research

A key component in the consortium discussed by Giles et al. (2009) was inquiry work. As part of the program, each new teacher conducts an action research project as a capstone at the end of the year. The action research made the teachers more systematic observers of students and more reflective of their practice. With an inquiry lens, the teachers were able to refine their teaching which led to improved practice and increased student achievement. They also used the problem solving methods after leaving the induction program.

Variations of Teacher Induction Programs

Induction programs vary by intensity and duration. An induction program could be one orientation at the beginning of the year or a comprehensive program that includes multiple supports for several years (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). New teacher induction programs may be operated by the state, district, school, or a consortium of the three agencies (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). The resources available to new teacher induction programs vary due to availability of funds. For example, the State Department of Education in California provides implementation and funding for new teacher induction programs in schools. The majority of schools across the United States are supported by district funds. Some schools are given only minimal support from districts. Induction programs can be categorized into two types: Low-

intensity and high-intensity based on funding and amount of programming. Intensity refers to the rigor of opportunities provided (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

In a study, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found the rate of attrition diminished as the number of induction supports increased. The percent of teachers who received no induction supports was about 3% and a predicted attrition rate of over 40%. The percent of teachers who received a mentor and positive communication from administrators was 56% and a predicted attrition rate of 39%. The percent of teachers who received a mentor, positive communication from their administrators and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues was 26% and a predicted attrition rate of 27%. The percent of teachers who received a mentor, positive communication from their administrators, opportunities to collaborate, staff development, reduced work load and extra resources was less than 1% and a predicted attrition rate of 18%.

Conclusion

Teacher attrition negatively impacts schools across the nation. Schools must find ways to retain teachers in order to provide consistency to students and colleagues. Teacher induction programs are a support system for new teachers and increase teacher retention rates.

Districts have an obligation to provide overall supports; however, schools should be providing specific, optimal supports for teachers. This includes, but is not limited to: a reduced workload, a supportive and collaborative culture, and curricular guidance and resources (Birkeland & Moore-Johnson, 2002).

Components of comprehensive induction programs include: Vision, structural framework, collegial support, mentoring, classroom-based teacher learning, professional standards, university partnerships, and action research. An induction program does not need all components in order to support new teachers. The most salient form of induction support occurs at the school level with a collaborative and positive climate. Currently, there is little research

regarding the specific types and protocols for support at the building level. My study will contribute to research in hopes to inform what supports new teachers want, what supports new teachers find helpful, and how these supports can be organized and provided in a school setting.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

As presented in the literature review in Chapter 2, research on new teacher induction shows that teachers require differentiated and intensive support, and the most powerful and salient support comes from the school level. However, this research does not provide a definition or clear illustration of the support needed in schools or how this support is provided. The purpose of this inquiry was to study how a support system to provide differentiated support to meet the induction needs of new teachers at a Title I middle school could be coordinated by using existing resources.

The principles of action research provided the conceptual/theoretical framework that guided my study. According to Herr and Anderson (2005),

Action research is inquiry that is done by or with insiders to an organization or community, but never to or on them. Action research is oriented to some action or cycle of actions that organizational or community members have taken, are taking or wish to take to address a particular problematic situation. The idea is that changes occur either within the setting and/or within the researchers themselves. (pp. 2-3)

I designed my study to take action as an orchestrator of support to address the needs of new teachers in the Title I middle school where I served as the Intervention Support Specialist.

Action research places the investigator in control of the research, as they are active participants in the setting where the research is conducted (Herr & Anderson, 2005). Practitioner research is a term under action research that recognizes the researcher as a participant in one's practice. Specifically, I used the term practitioner research and its principles for my study. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) highlight the critical relationship between the role of being a teacher and the role of being a researcher: "...inquiry and practice are understood to have a reciprocal, recursive, and symbiotic relationship, and it is assumed that it is not only possible, but

indeed beneficial, to take on simultaneously the roles of both researcher and practitioner” (pp. 94-95).

The inquiry cycle proposed by Dana, Thomas, and Boynton (2011) provided the framework for my methodology. The cycle suggests the following process: develop a wondering; collect data; analyze data; take action and share with others. I first developed a wondering and then looked to literature to inform my study. After designing my literature-based study, I collected data to gain knowledge regarding my topic. I analyzed the data to gain knowledge of my practice and guide the action I took regarding this practice. Finally, I shared the results with others to inform how a school support system can be organized to meet the needs of new teachers. Because inquiry requires the analysis of one’s practice, special care should be taken to protect the identity of research participants. For the purpose of this study, pseudonyms will be used for the school, the district, and all participants to maintain confidentiality.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. How can a support system be coordinated using existing resources to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?
2. To what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

Background and Context

During the study, I was the Intervention Support Specialist at Packer Middle School in Florida. My responsibilities included, but were not limited to: serving as the Local Education Agency (LEA) representative for all Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings; serving

as chair of the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Department; writing IEP goals with progress monitoring plans for students with disabilities; developing and implementing interventions with progress monitoring plans for targeted groups of students; facilitating Data Team meetings with departments and grade level teams; and providing and organizing staff development opportunities and collaborating with teams to develop effective practices. After the data were collected for my study, I moved into a new position as a manager for the Migrant Education Program in the Department of Federal and State Grants for Green County Public Schools. This change in position occurred during the 2013-2014 school year.

I was both a participant and a researcher within this action research study. I served as an orchestrator of supports for new teachers during the 2013-2014 school year. As the Intervention Support Specialist, my professional role was to orchestrate supports for students by working with instructional coaches, administrators, faculty and staff to provide support to all students. In addition, I also provided many professional development opportunities for teachers by offering various trainings for curriculum and instruction. During the 2013-2014 school year, I strategically worked with administrators, instructional coaches, faculty and staff to provide support to new teachers. I also provided staff development opportunities for new teachers based on need. By coordinating support for new teachers I was also supporting students, because strong core instruction boosts student achievement and reduces the need for interventions.

Packer Middle School was part of the School District of Green County in Southwest Florida. Packer Middle School received Title I funding because 90% of the 864 student population were identified as economically needy. The ethnic demographics included: 65% Hispanic, 26% Black, 8% White and 1% Multiracial. Historic and current school grades (using

the Florida school grading system implemented state-wide) for Packer Middle School from 2010-2014 have been B, C, C, C (data retrieved from school district website).

Participant Selection

Teacher induction programs are intended to support new teachers to the field. This study only focused on teachers in their first three years of teaching. During the 2013-2014 school year, Packer Middle School had eight teachers in their first, second or third year of teaching. As faculty members of Packer Middle School, each of the eight new teachers received the same opportunities for support. On an individual basis, I explained the purpose of my study to each of the new teachers and invited them to participate. I explained to each potential participant that participation was voluntary and had no effect on the amount of support he or she would receive as a new teacher. Six teachers agreed to participate and I obtained informed consent to interview them and use their formative assessment data throughout the year.

Participants

Susan was an eighth grade inclusion teacher. She was a white female in her early 20s who earned her bachelor's degree in social studies education and her master's degree in special education from an out-of-state university. She had Florida professional teaching certification in the areas of English for Speakers of Other Languages (endorsement), Exceptional Student Education (grades K-12), and social science (grades 6-12). This was her first year teaching.

Caroline was a seventh grade language arts teacher. She was a white female in her early 20s who earned her bachelor's degree in English and communications from a state university. She had Florida temporary teaching certification in the areas of English (grades 5-9) and English (grades 6-12). This was her first year teaching.

Lee was a sixth grade social studies teacher. She was a white female in her early 20s who earned her bachelor's degree in education from a state university. She had Florida

professional teaching certification in the area of social science (grades 6-12). This was her first year teaching.

Anna was a seventh grade science teacher. She was a white female in her early 20s who earned her bachelor's degree in biology from an out-of-state university. She had Florida temporary teaching certification in the area of biology (grades 6-12). This was her first year teaching.

Lisa was a sixth grade inclusion teacher. She was a white female in her late 30s who earned her bachelor's degree in business management and master's degree in education from an out-of-state university. She had Florida professional teaching certification in the areas of business education (grades 6-12), computer science (grades 6-12), English for Speakers of Other Languages (endorsement), Exceptional Student Education (grades K-12). Education was a second career for her. This was her third year teaching but her first year teaching in Green County.

Patty was a sixth grade science teacher. She was a female from Russia in her early 40s who earned her bachelor's degree and master's degree in biology from an out-of-country university. She had Florida temporary teaching certification in the areas of biology (grades 6-12) and chemistry (grades 6-12). Education was a second career for her. She was in her third year of teaching but her first year teaching in Green County.

Data Sources

I collected a variety of data to inform my research questions. Some of these data were designed to get me to reflect on my own practices and some were designed to provide insights of teachers as support was coordinated for them. More detail on data sources are provided below.

Needs-based assessment. I used a needs-based assessment to gather initial information about current needs for new teachers at Packer Middle School. This was in the form of a non-

anonymous survey with Likert Scale and open-ended questions. The initial needs-based assessment is available in Appendix A. The results of the assessment let me know the three most desired areas by new teachers for improvement of practice. The data collected from the initial assessment helped me organize individual support for new teachers using staff and resources.

In addition to the initial needs-based assessment, I provided an exit slip during monthly new teacher meetings (See Appendix B) to plan support for new teachers. I used the formative assessment data from exit slips to work with academic support coaches and mentors to provide individualized support to each teacher. I used resources available at the school and district based on the needs of new teachers. The exit slips asked the following open-ended questions:

- What is one area you would like more support in this month?
- Are there any barriers that are impeding the learning of your students?
- What professional development opportunities would you like to participate in this month?

Journal. I wrote reflective weekly journal entries to illustrate the support provided for new teachers. This included a variety of forms. For example, some entries were in the form of an email to an instructional coach asking him or her to model a lesson for a new teacher who asked for more support in teaching. Some entries were in the form of a conversation with a new teacher about how to set up grades in the computerized grade system. Each week I answered the following questions:

- What specific support did I provide to new teachers this week?
- What went well and what did not go well?
- What supports do I hope to provide next week?

Teacher interviews. I conducted individual interviews with new teachers at Packer Middle School during the spring of 2014. The interviews occurred during the month of March. The interview protocol is available in Appendix C. The interviews took place toward the end of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), but before the end of the year. I

conducted the interviews at this time because the stress and rigor of high stakes testing was over, and the end of year, school-closing stress had not yet begun. This gave the teachers time to thoughtfully reflect on the year. Through participant interviews, I learned what the needs of new teachers were at Packer Middle School and how components could be structured at the school level to support the needs.

Implementation Plan

This study began with a review of relevant research on teacher attrition, including factors that contribute to teacher retention/attrition and the effectiveness of induction programs. Research and articles from peer-reviewed journals regarding new teacher induction served as the base for my study. As written in Chapter 2, the literature review showed me the most effective and salient components of new teacher induction.

I began by administering a needs-based assessment to gain knowledge on initial supports desired by new teachers. I kept a self-reflecting weekly journal throughout the school year, used formative surveys and conducted interviews during the spring of 2014 as data to inform my overall research question and sub-questions. The following categories of support will detail how support was provided to new teachers.

Categories of Support

New Teacher Morning Meetings. Upon the advent of the 2013-2014 school year, I began facilitating monthly 30-minute meetings as a touchstone opportunity to provide pertinent information for new teachers.

Instructional Staff Support. As the orchestrator of support, I was not always the person providing the direct support in an area. I worked with instructional staff (coaches, department chairs, guidance and support staff) to provide specific support for teachers based on expertise. My expertise was working with students with disabilities. This was not applicable in all settings.

As referenced in Chapter 2, the literature suggests using a learning community model where support is provided by multiple means and not just by one mentor (Hellsten et al., 2009).

Packer Middle School had department chairs in the following areas: math, language arts, science, social studies, related arts, and Exceptional Student Education. In addition to department chairs, grade level content area team leaders were appointed to lead groups of teachers within the same grade level and content. We also had instructional coaches in the following areas: reading, math, science and technology. In addition, Packer Middle School had a teacher and guidance counselor as contacts and support for our English Language Learners.

Professional development. The School District of Green County offered a variety of professional development opportunities including online courses and sessions at the district office and school sites. As a professional development organizer for Packer Middle School, I used initial needs-based survey and the monthly formative data to plan site-based professional development opportunities for new teachers. The site-based professional development included opportunities for new teachers to observe veteran teachers through coaching cycles and instructional rounds. These two strategies will be explained more thoroughly in Chapter 4; they are variations on observation and coaching techniques used to help teachers improve instructional practice.

Data Analysis

I used tools from qualitative methods (Creswell, 2013) to analyze my initial needs assessment data, formative assessment data, reflective journal data, and interview data with each of the new teachers. The timeline for my data collection and analysis is illustrated in Table 2-1. Practitioner research served as the theoretical framework for my study, and the data analysis process offered a sound method to categorize and analyze data. I first read through and made notes about the data. After I made my initial memos, I created a coding chart with 5 columns:

Participants Words/Fractured Data; Open Coding; Memo Hypothesis/Meaning; Axial Codes/Categories; Selective Codes/Themes (Creswell, 2013).

After reading through my data several times, I placed prominent responses in the first column, Participants Words/Fractured Data. I included my memos in the Memo Hypothesis/Meaning column. After reading through the data several more times, I assigned open codes to my prominent pieces of data (Creswell, 2013).

Once my initial set of open codes was developed, I identified a category or categories from the open coding list. From the categories, I used selective coding to find themes among my data, which is the broadest level of analysis (Creswell, 2013). Through the coding process, the themes of conditions, structures and opportunities for support emerged from my study.

Table 2-1. Timeline

Time Period	New Teacher Support and Data Sources
August 2013	New teachers begin
Fall 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly 30 minute Teaching Tuesdays Meetings • Used data from the needs-based professional development survey to plan support • Used formative assessment data obtained from monthly new teacher meeting to plan support • Maintained weekly journal notes detailing support needed for and provided to new teachers
Spring 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained research approval from the Institutional Review Board and the School District of Packer County • Obtained informed consent from six participants • Use formative assessment data obtained from monthly New Teacher Meetings to provide support to new teachers • Maintained weekly journal notes detailing support needed for and provided to new teachers who provided informed consent • Conducted individual interviews with six new teachers who provided informed consent
April 2014- June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began to analyze data to inform research questions • End of 2013-2014 school year
June 2014- October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to analyze data to inform research questions • Continued to write analysis of data to inform research questions • Made recommendations for school based induction based on data analysis

Researcher Role

I have been an educator for nine years. Throughout my career, I taught in a private school, taught in a Title I elementary school, facilitated Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Support in a Title I middle school and served as a staffing specialist for Exceptional Student Education in a Title I middle school. My most recent role, Intervention Support Specialist was a combination of facilitating interventions and serving as a staffing specialist for Exceptional Student Education. In addition to directly supporting students, I have always supported teachers in my various roles by facilitating staff development opportunities and serving as a new teacher mentor. When I first became a mentor in 2011, I recognized a need to provide concentrated support to our new teachers. Besides being assigned a mentor, there were no other support systems in place at the school level for new teachers. I first looked to the district to seek enhancement of the district wide induction program; however the literature brought me to examine the school level.

Throughout my recent four years at Packer Middle School, I worked with administrators, counselors, resource teachers and academic coaches to provide strategic support to new teachers. During the 2013-2014 school year, a focus was placed on supporting new teachers. The support provided by the coaches, counselors, academic coaches and me was non-evaluative. As required by the district, administrators (Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean) were required to communicate the evaluation process in the beginning of the school year and make it clear that they were the only personnel conducting evaluation. The evaluation process for teachers in Green County is based solely on classroom observation directly by administrators. Any communication from coaches, resource teachers, or me could not impact a teacher's final evaluation because the final evaluation was solely based on what administrators directly observed. This was important in my study because it assured new teachers that they could be

honest with me about their struggles without wondering if it would impact their job security or teacher evaluation results.

Establishing Trustworthiness/Credibility

Validity criteria for practitioner research differ from other types of research. For some types of research, validity and reliability criteria are established to maintain objectivity for outside researchers. However, in practitioner research, the purpose is to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of study findings to readers outside the context. I designed my study to include five types of validity criteria: Dialogic, process, outcome, catalytic and democratic (Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Dialogic validity is monitored through peer review dialogue. I participated in validation meetings with my advisor. Through scheduled meetings, she posed questions to me to offer multiple perspectives by acting as critical friend. In addition, she pushed me to explain and provide evidence of the emerging themes during my data analysis. I also met with a fellow doctoral student in my district to discuss our findings. These conversations helped me clarify my thoughts throughout the analysis.

Process validity is concerned with how the study is organized to allow ongoing learning. I used multiple data sources over time: initial survey data, formative survey data, journal notes, and interviews with teachers.

Outcome validity acknowledges that action research is not simply concerned with solving a problem, but rather it is a study of the steps taken to reframe questions to sustain the study over a period of time. My overall question, “How can a support system be coordinated to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?” is multilayered and opened-ended.

Catalytic validity is concerned with both the participants and researcher knowing their role and being open to change. The second sub-question “How can existing practices be

modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?” specifically asked how I can change existing practices based on data. The data from my research journal enabled me to track my own change process over time.

Democratic validity is concerned with the collaboration of all stakeholders in the study. Specifically, the monthly formative assessment data collected from participants, the reflective journal notes of my actions, and participant interviews ensured I provided opportunities for input by stakeholders and then took appropriate action to give credence to their input.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I outlined the design for my practitioner research to examine how I first designed the study, collected data and analyzed the data to allow for prominent themes to emerge. Chapter 4 will detail the results of this study. Chapter 5 will present a discussion and implications for the study.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

The purpose of my study was to examine how a support system can be coordinated to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School by using existing resources.

After documenting support given and conducting interviews with new teachers, I analyzed the data in order to respond to the research questions and sub-questions:

1. How can a support system be coordinated to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?
2. To what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

In this study, my goal was to examine how experiences and opportunities could be structured in order to help new teachers feel support at Packer Middle School. Overall, I have evidence all six of the interviewed teachers reported feeling supported during their first year at Packer Middle School. Although, cliché, the first lesson I learned in this process was that it truly takes a village to support new teachers. As cited in Chapter 2, a support system requires people working together with a shared vision to help new teacher learn their way. In addition to vision, I drew from the other six components (structural framework, collegial support, mentoring, classroom based learning, university partnerships, action research) to frame the support for new teachers.

In this chapter, I will first outline efforts to structure support for new teachers in Packer Middle School and then describe the supports new teachers reported as the most helpful. I will present my findings in three themes: Structure for Support, Conditions for Support and Opportunities for Support. The first two themes are related to establishing structure and climate and the third theme is related to specific actions for support such as professional development.

Within each theme, I will describe the needs of the new teachers and how the support system worked to meet their needs.

Structure for Support

The types of support structures were very important in school-based induction for the teachers in my study. Support structures must be intentionally planned in order to be successful. They cannot just occur organically. As cited in Chapter 2, the literature discusses the importance of school-based supports, but there is little guidance about what the support is or how to establish the support. This section will inform my research sub question, “How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?”

This section will describe how a support system was structured by many educational professionals in order to benefit both veteran and new staff. Because this section focuses on changes to existing practices in order to support new teachers, the primary data source for this section is my research journal where I documented the support structures that were in place. While the new teachers often mentioned these supports in their interviews, they did not have knowledge of how those supports differed from previous years or how those supports were put into place this year. The support section is broken down into the following subsections in order to describe the multiple supports in place: Intentional planning of supports, resources for new teachers, regular meetings for support, and intentional placement and organization of teachers.

Intentional Planning of Supports

In order to describe how existing practices were modified, I will outline the process I took to open up discussions at the district and school sites to adapt existing practices. My initial wondering began when I first became a mentor teacher in year 2012. I felt a considerable amount of responsibility placed on me to provide support that could easily be distributed throughout the district and through other staff in the school. I contacted the district supervisor of

the new teacher induction program and learned the district had a mandatory 2-day induction program, including an overview of district initiatives and policies. Part of the induction program also included a mentor teacher assigned by the school principal during the first year of teaching in the district. I shared my idea about mentors and new teachers conducting an action research project together. However, I learned that due to limited funding and staffing, little could be done at the district level to increase support for new teachers or to distribute support from mentors. My initial review of literature prior to starting this study suggested school based support as the most salient support; however the support remained undefined in my district other than providing a school-based mentor.

During the week of July 29, 2013, I sent an email explaining my ideas to enhance support for new teachers to the Principal and Assistant Principal of Packer Middle School. My ideas for the 2013-2014 school year included: Working with academic coaches to provide release time for mentors and mentees to observe each other; a weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) with only first-year teachers; and new teachers and mentors creating an inquiry project together. The Principal said she liked my ideas, but she also said they sounded quite ambitious (Journal Entry 6). She said she looked forward to meeting about these ideas when I returned for the school year during the second week of August (Journal Entry 6). During the 2013-2014 school year, the majority of the components of induction were implemented. Academic coaches were able to arrange for classroom observations for most new teachers. Due to scheduling constraints, meetings solely for new teachers could only occur monthly, not weekly. The idea for new teachers and mentors to create an inquiry project together as the action research component to induction was never approved by administration. This was most likely due to time constraints for both new teachers and mentors.

During the 2013-2014 school year, our leadership team evoked a specific thoughtfulness to improve and strengthen the conditions, structure and opportunities for all teachers. This included, but was not limited to: resources for new teachers, regular meetings for support, teacher and student goal-setting and intentional placement and organization of teachers. It is important to note not all structures described were specifically cited by teachers as a support. The structuring often involved planning of support for new teachers, so some of it went unnoticed by the teachers who were the beneficiaries of this support.

On August 7, 2013, I officially began the 2013-2014 school year at Packer Middle School (Journal Entry 7). As suggested by the Principal, we had a meeting to discuss new teacher support. The meeting included the Principal, Assistant Principal, reading coach, science coach and technology resource teacher. It is important to note this meeting occurred two days before the teacher contract began, so the Principal used Title I funds to pay for the academic coaches and resource teachers to come in before the regular contract to plan supports for the school. During the meeting, the Assistant Principal showed us the calendar for the school year and pointed out the monthly new teacher meetings. She explained monthly was the maximum amount of time we could meet with the new teachers due to district policies and need for other meetings. The Principal showed us the mentor/mentee pairings and explained how everyone was paired with someone of the same subject area. For example, a new math teacher was partnered with a veteran math teacher.

In looking at the list, I suggested we have a checklist of items to help guide mentors and new teachers of items to review. I also suggested we create a guide for new teachers that included pertinent information regarding school-wide policies and procedures (Journal Entry 7). These resources are outlined the in the following section.

Resources for New Teachers

As mentioned from the August 7, 2013 collaborative meeting, I created a mentor/mentee checklist and a guide for new teachers that outlined the policies and procedures of Packer Middle School. The idea was planted and quickly came to fruition due to the collaborative efforts of the reading coach, science coach, technology resource teacher and me (Journal Entry 7). We created the resources after our meeting on August 7, 2013 because we wanted to be able to greet the new teachers with the materials when they arrived the afternoon of August 8, 2013. The district new teacher induction program allows for new teachers to spend the hours of 12:00pm-3:30pm at the school on the Friday before the teacher contract begins (Journal Entry 8).

The Mentor/Mentee Checklist (see Appendix D) featured about 20 topics divided into 2 sections: Beginning of the year and ongoing. In addition to the topics, two to three bullet points of content were listed to the right of the topics. The beginning of the year sections contained topics that needed to be reviewed immediately. Topics included email access, placing production requests for making copies, entering grades and access to student data. The ongoing section referred to topics that would be revisited throughout the year and included the teacher evaluation model, lesson planning and grading procedures. This resource was designed to give mentors suggested support topics to discuss with their mentees. In addition to providing a copy of the checklist to new teachers to show the areas their mentor could provide support, the Reading coach distributed copies of the checklist to mentors during our faculty meeting on August 11, 2013 and explained the purpose and focus for new teacher support at our Title I school (Journal Entry 7 and 8).

In an effort to follow up with mentors and new teachers regarding topics discussed, the checklist was revisited during the week of March 3, 2014 with new teachers and mentors during the monthly new teacher meeting. We also hoped to gain feedback to make changes for the

2014-2015 school year. During the meeting we heard new teachers remark “yes” and “we do that all the time” (Journal Entry 34). During the interview, I asked Lee if she found the Mentor/Mentee Checklist helpful and she explained that she and her mentor did not formally review the list; but she said “everything could be checked off.” As originally stated, this was a resource created for mentors to support new teachers. Even though Lee and her mentor did not review the list, it is evident Lee’s mentor made an effort to cover topics relevant to the new teacher’s needs.

The New Teacher Orientation Packet was created through a collaborative effort with the academic coaches. We included information regarding department chairs, team leaders, procedures, common acronyms, vending, lesson planning, grading, supplies, classroom maintenance and discipline policies. The six-page document detailed how to comply with specific school and district procedures as well as who to contact for help. For example, on page 6, the document described how and when to contact parents and notes to contact me for translation assistance. It is important to note this was an example of one of my many orchestration roles at Packer Middle School. I could not provide the translation assistance, but I received the forms and worked within our translators’ schedules to provide the translation promptly (Journal Entry 7-8).

When creating this packet, I envisioned each new teacher citing it as a support during the end of year interviews. From the teachers who remembered receiving it, they said it was helpful, but it was only after I prompted them. None of the participants voluntarily brought it up as a support. For example, in regards to planning for next year, I asked Susan if she thought the packet was helpful. She answered, “That was good because I think it was condensed and it was a quick go to guide.” I asked if she had any feedback to contribute to improvement of the packet

and she replied, “I don’t know what was exactly in it. I guess maybe more. I know the bell schedule was in there, but maybe more of an idea on how it was working.” Based on the feedback, it is clear that the packet did not provide memorable support. I thought it would be something the new teachers could reference throughout the year; however, they preferred to ask staff members. The following sections detail how the structure enabled multiple opportunities for new teachers to receive support from staff members.

Regular Meetings for Support

Regular meetings for support created planned opportunities for administrators and teachers to collaborate on support for students and teachers. Two types of meetings will be discussed: meetings for teachers to plan support for students and meetings for leadership members to plan support for teachers. The meetings for teachers occurred in the morning (8:30am-9:00am) before the school day while teachers were on contract. The leadership meetings to plan support for teachers included weekly Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings and weekly meetings for academic coaches and occurred during the school day.

Each teacher meeting was strategically planned on a calendar by the Assistant Principal (see Appendix E). The calendar came out each month before the 1st of the month. The calendar showed dates for: Leadership, department data teams (language arts, social studies, related arts, science, and Exceptional Student Education), faculty, grade level teams (6th, 7th, and 8th), new teachers and committees.

Meetings to help teachers and support their students. There were a number of meetings that fit into the category of support for teachers and students: team meetings and department meetings for teachers to plan support for students; new teacher meetings to provide direct support to new teachers; and Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings to structure support for students.

Team meetings and department meetings gave teachers an opportunity to collaboratively plan student support and were cited by each of the six new teachers as venues for their own support. During these meetings, teachers shared ideas and resources. In addition, teachers also collaborated by reviewing data and making decisions based on the data. For example, teachers brought their assessment data; the team reviewed the data and discussed strategies to enhance instruction (Journal Entry 17, 22, and 28).

Monthly new teacher meetings were designed to purposely provide support to new teachers. The purpose of the required meetings was to provide an opportunity for new teachers to ask questions and for new teachers to learn about professional resources veteran teachers were already familiar with (Journal Entry 13, 14, 17, 23, 24, 28, 30, 34, 39). Susan, Lee, Anna, and Patty directly commented on how they appreciated the collegial and comfortable atmosphere of these new teacher meetings. In regards to format, Susan and Patty made suggestions on how to improve the monthly meetings by increasing hands-on opportunities. Susan noted: “If we’re talking about something in Data Warehouse or Grade Book, rather than just seeing it, maybe we ought to be doing it at the same time.” In the 30-minute time slot of the monthly meetings, it was difficult to try to plan hands-on professional development. However, I could have created detailed directions with screenshots for participants to use while they were interacting with the resources. This would have eliminated the need to show how to use the resource separately, which took up more time.

Patty (a teacher in her third year of teaching) was the only participant to explicitly state some of the new teacher meetings were not helpful. During the interview, she explained she often looked to research and articles to improve her practice. She would have preferred a more collaborative structure: “instead of having us just meeting because we need to meet, we could

prepare something together” (Patty). Due to the short monthly meeting time (30 minutes), the meetings were primarily information dissemination as opposed to information generation sessions. Topics of each meeting included: Strategies for teaching students identified as gifted, how to prepare for midterm exams, strategies for teaching students who are ELL, school-wide discipline procedures, and statewide testing (Journal Entry 13, 14, 17, 23, 24, 30, 34, 39).

Weekly Response to Intervention (RtI) meetings enabled staff members to strategically plan support for students and teacher. The RtI team consisted of the school psychologist, the two school counselors, the Assistant Principal, Principal and me. We met every Tuesday morning to review academic and behavioral data and to make decisions regarding the data and to strategically structure supports for students.

During weekly RtI meetings, we focused on creating systems for school-wide support as well as structuring support for groups of students. In an effort to create school-wide support, we thoughtfully planned protocols and agendas for the monthly grade-level team meetings. During the prior school year (2012-13), the focus of the grade level team meetings was on student behavior, but since an organized protocol did not exist, the meetings were overtaken by teachers discussing one or two students. The two school counselors and I facilitated the Grade Level Meetings. The meetings included a review of student behavior and opportunities to collaborate through the use of protocols (Journal Entry 17, 22, 28).

To improve the productivity of these meetings, during the 2013-2014 school year we created the Student Concern Form (see Appendix F) to streamline support given and to create a venue that was comfortable for teachers to share student concerns both academically and behaviorally (Journal Entry 10, 16, 18, 26). The forms enabled me to have a comprehensive view of support needed for both teachers and students (Journal Entry 10). The most frequent concern

cited by teachers was lack of work completion. As a whole, the faculty at Packer Middle School were concerned that students were not completing homework and in-class assignments. As a result, I developed and facilitated the following programs:

- **Packer Watch Mentoring:** Mentoring program during the intervention time. Students are selected for the program based on data reports and Student Concern Forms (Journal Entry 12).
- **Lunch Bunch:** Optional program during lunch for students to work on missing assignments. Students are selected based on GPA (Journal Entry 18).
- **Packer Hall:** Mandatory program during lunch for students who have a GPA lower than 2.0 (Journal Entry 27, 29).

Leadership meetings to plan support for new teachers. Planning student support was the common purpose for all meetings conducted at Packer Middle School, however Coaches Meetings differed from the meetings to help teachers support students, as described above, because they specifically involved intentionally planning the support provided for teachers, both veteran and new. Weekly Coaches Meetings were the heart of the school-based structure of support for teachers and included the Principal, Assistant Principal, reading coach, science coach, math coach, technology resource teacher, media specialist and me. These meetings served as opportunities to structure and schedule support for new teachers.

During Coaches Meetings, we planned deliberate support including Instructional Rounds, Coaching Cycles and professional development opportunities. The third theme, Opportunities for Support will describe the professional development opportunities in great detail; however it is important to note the Coaches Meetings served as the blueprint for planning and providing the support. We also discussed the needs we observed from teachers, both new and veteran, by analyzing progress of school-wide, teacher and student goals (Journal Entry 20, 28, 32, 35, 36, 38).

Intentional Placement and Organization of Teachers

The Principal of Packer Middle School strategically organized the grade level teams into smaller department teams, each with a team leader. For example, a team was created for 6th grade Language Arts, 7th Grade Language Arts, and 8th Grade Language Arts. This created smaller and more cohesive teams. In addition, teachers of the same grade level and department were placed within close proximity. For example, 6th grade math teachers were located near each other. This created an atmosphere for support and collaboration for all teachers; however the organization specifically supported new teachers given their needs (Journal Entry 7).

Proximity to peer teachers was cited as a support by four of the six participants. Four of the six participants reported being located next door or within a close proximity to a mentor teacher or peer teacher whom they received frequent support (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna).

In addition to close proximity, teachers of the same department and grade level also had the same planning period. This was intentionally structured by the Principal and Assistant Principal to enable teachers to collaborate. As previously mentioned, every participant mentioned common planning time as a support. Even though teachers were required to meet once per week during their common planning period, many teachers chose to meet more frequently. It is important to note these meetings were in addition to the regularly scheduled morning meetings discussed in the previous subsection. The academic coaches attended and facilitated weekly common planning periods with teams. This was an idea suggested by the Principal during weekly coaches meeting and agreed as beneficial by the academic coaches (Journal Entry 7).

The preceding section explained the structure to support new teachers and veteran teachers that were thoughtfully put into place by several skilled orchestrators. Some of these structures were recognized as helpful by new teachers, but others were not mentioned

specifically, but led to the overall intentional school support structures. In the next section, I will outline specific opportunities for support that directly targeted new teacher learning

Conditions for Support

After analyzing my interview data from all six participants, I found new teachers have a myriad of questions and need people to answer them. In order to ask the questions, they need to have a comfortable and safe environment, which includes approachability and willingness by veteran staff members. Administrators are chiefly responsible for setting up this type of environment for support. The following subsections will illustrate how this environment existed at Packer Middle School by describing the origin of support and the approachability and willingness of staff members. Each participant (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna, Lisa, Patty) named specific people who were helpful in answering questions. For example, Anna explained the support of her mentor by stating, “Any questions I had, she would answer them for me, which was great.”

Even though new teachers have questions, they do not always feel comfortable asking the questions. Several teachers reported a feeling of imposition when seeking help (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna). It is important to note the feeling of imposition came from their own feeling of empathy (anxiety about over-imposing on others’ time) and was not a direct result of anything a teacher said or did toward them. For example, Susan remarked, “As a new teacher, you may feel like you don’t want to be bothering this person because you know how much they have going on, because you have so much going on.”

Given that new teachers have questions but may not feel comfortable asking the questions, it is vital to create conditions where administrators and staff are approachable and willing to provide support. Approachability and willingness to provide support are two important characteristics the administrators and staff displayed at Packer Middle School in order

to create conditions for support. These characteristics enabled new teachers to seek the help and support they needed in order to be successful. It is important to note these characteristics will be discussed separately to discuss the distinctive conditions for support. Not only was the staff of Packer Middle School readily available and easy to talk to (approachability), they were also cited as willing to provide helpful support (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna, Lisa, Patty).

During the interview, each participant remarked on the positive climate and support of Packer Middle School. For example, Caroline remarked, “The support I get here, I could go to anyone. I know I could. That’s great leadership I believe, and that’s been passed down to other people.” Lisa stated, “It’s just an overall comfortable setting.” Positive conditions do not happen accidentally. Creating the right conditions for support involve thoughtful planning and shared responsibility among all stakeholders. As Caroline suggested, conditions originate with administrators. The following subsections will specifically describe how the administrators and staff of Packer Middle School were approachable, available and willing to create the conditions for support.

Foundation of Administrator Support

Administrators are chiefly responsible for creating the conditions of support because they set the expectations and tone for others to follow. Expectations, in this case, refer to guidelines about how faculty will collaborate and work together. They can be communicated either explicitly or implicitly by leaders about the way they want their schools to operate. Tone refers to the attitude with which people act toward one another. At Packer Middle School, the principal clearly set expectations for how faculty would work with new teachers, and modeled those expectations, setting a foundation for support.

It is evident from the interviews teachers felt support from the administrators in Packer Middle School. Five of the six participants cited administration as a support during their first

year. The specific support cited by teachers included the approachability of the open-door policies (Caroline), affirming body language (Caroline, Lee, Anna, Patty) and the willingness to provide feedback and encouragement (Caroline, Lee, Anna, Lisa, Patty).

The administrators at Packer Middle School had an open-door policy that was perceived as welcoming by Caroline. She commented how the principal frequently reminded her of the policy and made her believe it, “The Principal has many times said just, my door is open. You want to talk, I’m here. Yeah, that’s probably said a lot, but with her, I just believe it” (Caroline). The open-door policy extended past the administrators’ offices. Anna remarked, “If you see them in the mailroom, they would always say, ‘if you ever need anything, just let us know.’ It made you feel comfortable.”

Affirming body language contributed to a feeling of approachability and support from administrators. When I asked Patty to elaborate on how our assistant principal made her feel comfortable during observations, she said, “just the way she comes into your room smiling.” Patty described a situation when she had a formal observation scheduled for evaluative purposes, but she forgot her flash drive at home with the lesson on it. When the assistant principal arrived for the observation, Patty cried and explained what happened. Patty was grateful when the assistant principal said, “I will come tomorrow or next week. That will be okay.” Patty remarked that not all administrators would have had the same empathy: “She’s so smiley, so supportive. She will come up and say ‘wonderful, I like this’. It’s just her style.”

The willingness to provide feedback and encouragement were cited as examples of how new teachers felt supported by administration. Caroline remarked how she appreciated the way the Principal provided feedback, “Every time she has something to say it’s positive. Even if it is

a criticism, she [turns it around], ‘But, look at what you could do’. I just think that’s how you should be taught as well.”

When I asked if administrators had specifically done or said anything to make Caroline feel authentically supported, she said, “The Principal’s taken notes before. I think that’s kind of cool. They come up and ask me again about it, which makes me feel like they remember the conversation.” Follow-up conversations contributed to a feeling of support for Caroline. Caroline also cited explicit words of encouragement by the Principal, “She’s told me she’s thankful I came here.”

When I inquired about specific actions by administration that also contributed to the feelings of support and comfort, Anna said, “The administration was really happy and supportive of me to take the field trip and things like that.” This example was cited by Anna because she felt supported in organizing the large task of taking over 300 seventh grade students to a local wildlife preserve.

Approachability of Staff

As previously mentioned, Caroline commented on how she believes the approachability and willingness to provide support is passed down to others by great leadership. Data from the interviews supports this perspective as all of the participants reported support coming from a variety of roles. Counselors, academic coaches, the Intervention Support Specialist, resource teachers, mentors, department chairs, team leaders and peer teachers were all mentioned by new teachers as providing optimal support.

Approachability refers to how easy a person is to talk to and how available a person is. This was a distinguishable characteristic cited and illustrated by each participant in the interviews. Participants remarked on the frequent informal and unscheduled support provided by staff members including phone calls, emails, impromptu meetings, and open door policies.

When I asked Patty how she solicited support, she stated immediately and confidently, “Oh, I just call [grade level colleague] or [the science coach]. I’ll ask, ‘How do I approach this?’ and they will help.”

Lee cited frequent email communication to administrators and coaches as a factor of approachability and support, “...just being able to shoot you an email...knowing you guys are super busy... [but] you will help us help the students.”

Open-door policies contribute to approachability as continuous invitations to seek support. It is evident open door policies for administrators and support staff members at Packer Middle School created an environment for continuous support. I specifically asked Lisa, whom I mentored, if she felt my open door policy was effective. She quickly responded, “You know that. I’d always pop my head in and run things by you.” The term “always” is an exaggeration, but it does suggest she felt frequent support and comfortable approaching me. I asked Caroline if she had scheduled meetings with her mentor, whom she cited as providing extensive support. She explained, “It’s not like I have 20 things I want to ask her. It’s more like I have a question and if I want to after school; I can just run over there. It’s more like she has an open door.” It is important to note that the contract for all staff ends five minutes after the students are dismissed. When Caroline was approaching her mentor after school, this was off contract time in a district where a union contract sets strong expectations for when a work day ends.

Willingness to Provide Support

In addition to approachability, veteran staff had a willingness to provide support. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked each new teacher to think ahead to next year and what Packer Middle School could provide in terms of resources to support the 2014-2015 new teachers. Caroline stated, “I genuinely feel like I could go to anyone here. I think that would be what the support is. I don’t think the support is necessarily pencil and paper or a template. I

think it's being willing to talk to someone." The concept of "willing to talk" included a wide array of supports provided by veteran staff members and also support sought out by new teachers.

As cited in the interviews of new teachers, the supports that staff members were willing to provide included the sharing of advice, experiences, ideas and resources. Staff members also provided support to new teachers by supporting students and directly addressing the concerns of students from new teachers (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna, Lisa, Patty).

Lisa reported great support from hearing the advice and experiences colleagues were willing to share. She explained that it was particularly helpful to get the advice of teachers who had been at the school for a long time. She explained their advice helped her keep things in perspective when the realities of working in a Title I school seemed overwhelming. Though Lisa had previous teaching experience in the Northeast Region of the United States, this was her first year in Packer Middle School. She explained veteran teachers helped her have empathy for her students, "you would get that friendly reminder that we see them for a large portion of the day, but every night they go home. You don't know what they go home to."

The willingness of colleagues to share ideas was a support explicitly stated by Caroline and Patty. It is included separately from the subtheme of resources later in this section because the sharing of an idea is a verbal and cognitive exchange; different from the sharing of physical materials or resources. Caroline explained how grateful she was that her subject matter teammate readily and frequently shared ideas with her including what she would be doing each day. Caroline said she did not always use the ideas, nor did her teammate expect her to implement the ideas, but it was still an important and appreciated support cited by Caroline. Patty appreciated the ideas provided by the science coach, "She came into my classroom a lot of

times and she gave me some ideas how to improve, how to change something. Every time I need any help, related to science or not, I will ask and she will help.”

In addition to the verbal exchange of experience, advice and ideas, new teachers appreciated the physical resources shared by staff. The resources willing to be shared and cited by the new teachers as most helpful at Packer Middle School included: lesson plans, activities, Power Point presentations, worksheets, and templates. Lesson plans were cited by each new teacher as a helpful support. Beyond simply sharing ideas, participants were particularly thankful for this sharing of concrete resources such as lesson plans. Lesson plans were cited by all the six participants as helpful. One teacher, Patty, stated that it felt like she was at ground zero, and the lesson plans helped her get started. In particular, grade level team meetings were cited as a place where much of the resource sharing occurred.

The resources shared did not necessarily need to be used or relevant to be cited as a support. The act of sharing was appreciated. For example, Caroline remarked on her team, “They will not only help me, but then they will send things and say ‘This is what I do. You don’t have to use it’.” Caroline also remarked on supports provided from the district, “They’re things that the district is pushing or things I’ve already found, but it’s still awesome.”

New teachers commented how the feedback and advice provided with the resources were also helpful. When I asked what her mentor specifically did to support her, Anna said “She would share certain plans or labs, for example, and then she would kind of say, ‘this is what worked and this is what didn’t work’.”

Each participant cited “showing” as a helpful support and component of the willingness to share resources. Anna mentioned the helpfulness of the demonstration of resources. She explained how the science coach would show the resources and then meet with Anna and her

mentor. Lee mentioned my support and the support from her mentor in showing her how to use our district-wide electronic resources, “I know you helped me out with Data Warehouse and going into the grade book and checking that out and she did the same thing with me.”

In addition to being willing to support new teachers, veteran staff members were also willing to provide direct support to their students. This support was cited as helpful by new teachers. Caroline provided an example of how her mentor provided support to her by providing support to her students. Caroline told her mentor she was concerned about a few of her students not feeling confident enough to pass the statewide assessment. Caroline explained how her mentor met with her students and provided resources on how to talk about testing and data with students. In addition to providing support to the students, the mentor teacher also provided valuable resources to help scaffold the teacher’s facilitation of data-chats (Caroline). Anna and Patty said the school counselor provided support by supporting students. Both participants explained how they talked to the school counselor about students who needed support either behaviorally or academically and he would meet with the students.

As noted in the evidence, it would be impossible for one person to provide the level of support cited by each participant. Each person cited as providing support had a specialized content area and role in assistance; similar to playing an instrument in an orchestra. The next section will detail how multiple orchestrators structured the support at Packer Middle School.

Opportunities for Support

While the first two themes related to structures and conditions that were intentionally planned ahead of time, school-based induction at Packer Middle School also included important opportunities for support, which occurred during the school year. Teachers described types of support opportunities particularly important to their learning and growth: collaborative professional development and classroom observations. In addition to the opportunities described

by teachers as important to their learning and growth, I will also describe an area that was not necessarily cited as important (goal-setting) by most teachers.

Professional development (PD) opportunities for new teachers were created based on needs. A needs-based assessment was provided to new teachers in the beginning of the school year and monthly formative assessments continued. This section will detail the opportunities of support and to what extent new teachers found the opportunities helpful.

Needs-Based Assessment

The initial and monthly formative surveys were an important part of organizing opportunities of support for new teachers. The surveys allowed me to see the needs of new teachers so that I could plan professional development experiences and support to meet their needs.

During the first new teacher meeting in September, I asked new teachers to fill out a needs assessment for professional development. (Journal Entry 13 and 14). The purpose of the initial survey for new teacher support (see Appendix A) was to obtain information on the areas where new teachers needed the most support. Teachers were asked to rate their comfort level in the following areas: classroom management, subject matter, lesson planning, instructional technology, student technology use, teaching students who are English Language Learners, and teaching students with disabilities. The three most common areas where teachers asked for more support were: teaching students who are English Language Learners (ELL), using district technology resources, and student use of technology (Journal Entry 15). Identification of these three areas helped us plan professional development opportunities (explained in the following section).

In addition to the initial survey at the beginning of the year, I also asked for monthly feedback from teachers in order to understand their current needs. The most common needs they

cited changed a little over time, with English Language Learner support and technology being mentioned in the fall and statewide standardized testing being mentioned most frequently in the spring. Also, over time, the monthly feedback process became less formal and more like an exit ticket at the end of the new teacher meetings. We found that the responses were quite repetitive and duplicated other means of gathering requests for support already in place (Journal Entry 28, 30, 33, 34, 39).

It is important to note that during the interview, participants cited they would have liked more professional development in classroom management (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Lisa, Patty); however it was not cited as a need on the initial survey (Journal Entry 15). Five of the six participants explained this was an area they struggled in and would have appreciated more opportunities to learn strategies to manage student behavior. This could have been due to students and teachers still adjusting during the first month of school.

When I first created the initial survey and formative surveys, I thought they would be a major component of my study; however they turned out to be a simple check-in system for me to make sure we were on the right track. In fact, none of the participants mentioned the needs assessment or formative surveys specifically as important supports. However, it is apparent that these two methods did help us understand and react to new teacher needs. Anna remarked how we happened to choose very relevant and timely topics as if the leaders knew “what questions [new teachers] had. For example, ELL or FCAT training that was especially for new teachers.” So, our reasons for selecting PD based on needs assessment were not always clear to teachers, yet they appreciated the timely and relevant topics that were geared directly to them and their needs. The initial survey and monthly formative surveys were tools to help us decide the topic for professional development. In addition, the weekly coaches meetings were an opportunity for

the academic coaches and administrators to discuss possible topics as result of our continuous needs assessment (Journal Entry 20, 28, 32, 36). The preceding subsection explained how some of the topics were chosen and the following subsections will describe how the specific opportunities for support were organized.

Professional Development Sessions

In order for professional development to be effective, careful attention must be paid to both the content and delivery of PD. As mentioned previously, the content of our PD for new teachers was derived mainly from our needs assessment and formative assessments collected monthly. These methods helped us plan PD that addressed the needs teachers expressed. However, we also knew it was important to design high quality PD that included active learning and follow up. In this section I will outline both the content and delivery of the PD for new teachers.

Content. The areas of technology and support for English Language Learners (ELLs) were the professional development content most desired by new teachers. In order to support the needs of support for professional development in the areas of ELLs and technology, we drew upon the existing support structure. During 2013-2014 school year, the Principal of Packer Middle School used Title I Funds to partially fund a teacher to provide support to ELLs and to help teachers provide instruction to ELLs. In addition, a technology resource teacher was fully funded using Title I funds to provide support to teachers and students. The ELL resource teacher and technology resource teacher designed frequent professional development opportunities all teachers. Technology and support for ELLs were the two most frequent topics, but other topics included classroom management, school-wide procedures, the teacher evaluation model and curriculum and instruction.

Delivery. Professional development was delivered monthly both before school and in the afternoon on days when students were released early. Monthly “Tech Wednesday” sessions occurred in the morning before school and were built into the schedule. All six participants cited the technology professional development sessions as a support. The technology resource teacher organized the hands-on sessions and often asked teachers to plan ahead of time by downloading the application on to their own device (Journal Entry 12, 16, 19, 26, 30, 34).

In addition to the monthly morning sessions for technology, all teachers had the opportunity to participate in monthly professional development sessions on days when students were released early. Each of the professional development sessions were facilitated by academic coaches or teachers. On occasion, district staff members would facilitate a session, but the majority of sessions were facilitated by Packer Middle School staff.

The professional development sessions were cited by new teachers as valuable opportunities to collaborate with and learn from one another. Caroline commented on how she appreciated the follow-up provided by the technology resource teacher. Caroline explained that she tried to implement the app learned after the professional development session and appreciated how the technology resource teacher came to her room to follow up: “She came in and watched. I thought that was awesome, that she took the time to do that.”

Observations

In addition to the professional development sessions, all of the teachers mentioned the importance of opportunities to observe one another. The three types of specific opportunities for observation cited by new teachers included time to observe peer teachers, the coaching cycle, and instructional rounds.

Peer Teacher Observations. Lee was able to observe her mentor teacher and remarked how her observation experience impacted her management style. This opportunity was arranged

by the Principal and the reading coach. The reading coach facilitated an activity for Lee's class while she had opportunities to observe. She explained, "I observed her class and she's always so patient with them, so that made me realize [I should] not let [students] see me frustrated and I should just be calm." She continued, "Since then, I never tell students to do something. I always ask them to do things and I think that really helps."

Caroline commented on how valuable the observation process was to her assimilation into teaching. Caroline was hired later in the fall to replace a teacher who accepted another position. The Principal and the reading coach organized a week of observation opportunities for Caroline that included opportunities to observe, reflect, and discuss observations with the veteran teacher and reading coach. Caroline remarked, "I think observations are the best support you can get and best immediate tips and advice." When asked if any supports were least helpful, she cited filling out the observation form, a one-page sheet provided by the district as part of the evaluation system, as least helpful: "Instead of me watching the whole time and observing, I felt like it was busy work filling it out."

Anna and Patty said they would have like more opportunities to observe other teachers. The only opportunity Anna had to observe was initiated herself with a peer teacher. Anna explained that she was speaking to a peer teacher during the after school program and explained her difficulty with differentiating for the students who were identified as Gifted in her class. The veteran teacher invited her to come to her class anytime to watch her differentiate for the learners who were identified Gifted. Anna observed the veteran teacher during Anna's planning period and explained it was beneficial, but she wished she could have done more. Patty explained she would have liked to have observed other teachers for classroom management to see "the methods used to manage behavior."

Observations by University Mentors. As mentioned in Chapter 2, university partnerships are a component of strong induction programs. A local university has a program designed to support new teachers with who do not have a degree in education. It included eight courses (three credits each) and an internship. New teachers are assigned a mentor from the university who conducts observations and provides feedback. Both Caroline and Lisa were part of this program and mentioned the program as a support. Specifically, they each cited the feedback by their mentor provided during observations to as having positive implications to their practice.

Coaching Cycle. Patty did not have the opportunity to observe other teachers in their classrooms; however, she did have the opportunity to participate in a specific form of observational professional development called the Coaching Cycle (Journal Entry 20). In our district, the Coaching Cycle represents a non-evaluative practice where academic coaches provide individual support through modeling, co-teaching and guided discussion. The Coaching Cycle was completed with several teachers at Packer Middle School (Journal Entry 20, 28, 32, 36, 38). As previously stated, the weekly coaches meetings served as a venue to determine teachers who might benefit from coaching. For example, after reviewing both behavioral and academic data, support was planned for Patty (Journal Entry 20). The science coach facilitated the Coaching Cycle with Patty and it was cited as an important part of the support she received at Packer Middle School.

Patty explained how the science coach made her feel at ease because she at first thought she was in trouble. The science coach assured Patty that she was only there to support her and would not be evaluating her. This is another illustration of how the structures and conditions for support lead to the opportunities for support. The science coach was approachable and

encouraging. In reviewing data, we were able to structure support during the weekly coaches meetings (Journal Entry 20).

The two-week Coaching Cycle with Patty began with the science coach modeling strategies and teaching one period per day while Patty took notes. After observing, the science coach and Patty discussed what they observed. Patty recalled how she would emulate the way the science coach interacted with the students, “Even the words she used, the way she approached the students, I tried to also do the same. It was really nice.” Patty explained how the scaffolding process helped her enhance her practice, “I was learning with her, seeing her do some activities and implementing some of the methods, that was really helpful. Then I was like, ‘Okay, I can do it myself’.” The Coaching Cycle was cited as a support by Patty.

Instructional rounds. Another type of observational professional development new teachers had the opportunity to participate in was called Instructional Rounds. Instructional Rounds is type of observation where a group of two or more teachers observe a specific practice of a teacher or teachers. After reviewing and discussing data, the reading coach and I saw a need to conduct Instructional Rounds with Susan and her co-teacher. The practice we wanted to observe was the organization and implementation of learning centers. The teachers we observed were co-teachers, just like Susan and the co-teacher. The reading coach and I accompanied Susan and the co-teacher to observe the co-teachers facilitate learning centers. We used a specific protocol I tailored for co-teaching (see Appendix G). This protocol used guided questions to facilitate the thinking of the observers (Journal Entry 34 and 35).

An important aspect of Instructional Rounds is the debriefing session after the observation. During this session, the reading coach and I lead Susan and the co-teacher through a review of the protocol. We specifically discussed the practice we saw and possible

implications for the practice of Susan and the co-teacher (Journal Entry 35). Susan stated positive implications for practice from this activity: “The Instructional Rounds [were] helpful. We saw that it can work and it has gotten better.” To specify how conditions improved, she said she feels “a little more effective with the kids by just working with each other and respecting what each other want.” For example, Susan shared, “We saw one (teacher) does have the main teaching role but the other support in the room can go around and help the kids.”

The opportunities for support allowed new teachers to practice their skills and to reflect and discuss possible implications with a veteran staff member. All professional development sessions and observations outlined here also involved veteran staff members at Packer Middle School. Veteran staff members would lead the professional development sessions and new teachers observed veteran staff members. Since the staff at Packer Middle School were teaching and learning together, this contributed to the positive and supportive atmosphere cited by study participants.

Goal Setting

The evaluation model for the district mandates that every teacher write a Professional Growth Plan in the beginning of the year, which includes goal setting. During the month of September, the academic coaches facilitated an Open Lab for teachers to receive assistance in goal setting (Journal Entry 11). During the interviews with new teachers, I specifically asked each of the six participants to remark on the impact the professional growth plan had on their practice. Out of the six participants, two did not write the plan because they were hired after September. Only one participant stated it was helpful and she stated it was due to her personality, “I definitely think the growth plan and goal setting is beneficial. Even if I wasn’t told to goal set, I would still personally goal set. Again, that’s my personality” (Lisa).

Anna would have preferred short-term goals, “I feel like the SMART goal is helpful, but at the same time, it is kind of broad” (Anna). Susan, Anna and Lisa remarked on their need for frequent feedback and reassurance. They explained how wondering if they were “on the right track” was a struggle and how they appreciated reassurance from their peers (Caroline, Anna, Lisa).

Findings Summary

The purpose of my study was to examine how a support system can be coordinated to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School by using existing resources. The most important aspect I learned through my inquiry process was one person could never have coordinated a system to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School by using existing resources to the extent the team of Packer Middle School did during the 2013-2014 school year. The conditions, structure and opportunities for support created a comprehensive wraparound support system that made it impossible for teachers to be isolated. Anna stated, “I think what they are doing here at Packer Middle School is great, I really do. Overall, I think it is awesome. I don’t think I was ever drowning or underwater with anything.” This quote and the data from interviews described in this Chapter 4 made it clear that the coordinated system of support was, in fact, helpful to new teachers.

The structure for support created a thoughtful and deliberate support system. The structure for support described how Packer Middle School used existing resources to meet the needs of new teachers and included: resources for new teachers, regular meetings for support, teacher and student goal-setting, intentional placement and organization of teachers and collecting formative feedback from new teachers.

The conditions for support worked in tandem with the structure for support to create the specific characteristics of the staff of Packer Middle School that new teachers cited as support.

The new teachers each explained how the administration and staff of Packer Middle School were approachable and willing to provide the resources they needed to be successful. Administrators made them feel comfortable and set the tone and expectations for the other staff to follow (Susan, Caroline, Lee, Anna, Lisa, Patty).

The structure and conditions for support fueled the opportunities of support for new teachers. Since specific structures and conditions were in place, the opportunities were easily organized and effective. New teachers received on-going professional development opportunities in areas they requested. Review of data enabled academic coaches and I to structure observational opportunities for new teachers who needed strategic support. New teachers cited the professional development and observational opportunities as effective. Some teachers offered great suggestions for further opportunities.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss how these findings relate to the literature and possible implications for new teacher support at the school and district levels.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As an Intervention Support Specialist and new teacher mentor, working in a Title I Middle School, I recognized a need to define support for new teachers at the school level. I designed this research study in order find out the needs of new teachers and then structure supports with existing resources to meet their needs. I first conducted a literature review during the summer of 2013 to research the needs of new teachers and systems of support (new teacher induction programs). My literature review led me to seeing the most salient support for new teacher comes from the school level through administrators and mentors; however few articles or studies explicitly defined how to structure the support. After I conducted my literature review, I met with the administrators and academic coaches frequently to develop structures to support new teachers throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Near the end of the school year in April 2014, I conducted interviews with six new teachers in order to collect data and answer the following research questions and sub-questions:

1. How can a support system be coordinated to meet the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School?
 - How can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School?
2. To what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

This study was grounded in action research since I was the practitioner supporting the new teachers and students daily as the Intervention Support Specialist. As the researcher and participant, I used the inquiry framework to develop my wondering, plan and implement a plan to address the wondering, collect and analyze data, and then write up my findings to share widely (Dana, Thomas & Boynton, 2011; Herr & Anderson, 2005).

Discussion

As I was conducting my study and analyzing my data, the concept of providing support through people and not programs became clear. The most prevalent support came from peers, administrators, and support staff. The support new teachers found the most helpful was provided through their peers. Some districts expend large amounts of money on new teacher induction programs; however, I learned it may not be necessary. When I began my literature review in 2013, I sought to find the components of new teacher induction programs to enhance the induction program for our district. In September 2013, I presented my literature review at the Florida Association for Staff Development (FASD), titled, “Tips for Teacher Induction Programs (TIPs): What research and experience tell us about new teacher induction programs.” The presentation was for district leaders and explained what programs districts should have in place. If I could make a follow up presentation, I would explain that the support cannot be bought and must occur at the school level. However, the support at the school must include certain conditions and thoughtful structures as described in Chapter 4.

I learned one person cannot possibly provide all the support needed by new teachers. I learned this throughout my study, but it was not always easy for me to grasp. I initially designed my study to reflect my own actions, not the actions or support provided from others. During an inquiry study, it is not uncommon for research questions to change. My initial questions asked how “I” could coordinate a support system. From the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, it was evident support was going to come from other areas that may or may not have been directly related to my coordination. However, I quickly put my ego aside to reveal the exponential power of collaborating support with multiple staff members.

As cited in Chapter 2, research clearly indicates supports from administrators can positively impact an induction program and ultimately create the conditions needed for support.

This study helped me to see what specific actions contribute to a positive program.

Administrator support includes frequent conversations and opportunities for interactions. Support also includes words of encouragement during conversations and interactions.

The 2013-2014 school year marked my fourth year at Packer Middle School and each year was a learning process. Through my study I learned the importance of thoughtful and deliberate planning and how it can take years to evolve. When examining the support structure, I looked to see the evolution from prior years. Prior to using inquiry to study my practice, I would end each year lacking a sense of accomplishment because I would lose track of progress over time. By systematically studying this situation, I was able to keep improvements and progress in perspective while documenting changes over time. Each participant reported feeling supported during their first year at Packer Middle School. If I had conducted the interviews four years ago, I do not believe I would have heard the same positive comments. The structures put in place at our school for new teachers were thoughtful and based on years of experience and growth.

Relationships to Prior Research

Before I designed this study, I reviewed the literature to inform the induction structure. I wanted to find out what the literature supported as factors and components for new teacher induction programs. Positive administrator support, mentors from the same subject area and opportunities for professional development were all cited in the literature as effective components of new teacher induction programs and teacher retention. Thoughtful planning went into ensuring these supports were in place for the 2013-2014 school year by multiple orchestrators. This section illustrates how the literature was put into action.

Administration

Administrators have the ability to create a positive and encouraging atmosphere for growth through their interaction with new teachers. As the lead orchestrators, administrators are

where the support begins. The administration including the Principal, Assistant Principal and Dean at Packer Middle School were the pillars of support for all teachers, but especially new teachers. It was evident through the planning of supports and frequent opportunities for communication.

The collaborative and collegial environment administrators can provide includes thoughtful mentor pairings and learning opportunities for new teachers (Wayne, Youngs & Fleischman, 2005). The Principal at Packer Middle School deliberately paired new teachers with mentors of the same content area; which has been suggested to increase retention for new teachers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The Assistant Principal and Principal created a master schedule that allowed for new teachers and mentors to have the same planning time as part of a school-wide plan to have common planning for departments in the same grade level. Monthly new teacher meetings were planned in advance by administrators as important learning opportunities for new teachers.

Bickmore and Bickmore (2010) found new teachers who interacted both formally and informally with administrators felt supported in their work. Caroline and Anna remarked that they appreciated the informal interactions with administrators whether it was a casual classroom visit or an impromptu conversation in the mailroom. The informal interactions were appreciated by new teachers and contributed to a feeling of support.

Mentoring

The literature frequently suggests mentoring is linked to teacher retention. Most mentoring programs use an apprenticeship model where the veteran teacher passes knowledge to the new teacher; however other models have proven to be more effective (Hellsten et al., 2009). One model in particular, the learning community model, has veteran and new teachers working in tandem for student achievement. This describes the format and vision for the monthly

department data teams where teachers met monthly to discuss student data and implications to practice. The learning community model also creates a shared responsibility among teachers and reduces the individual responsibility for one mentor. Given the wide skill set needed to support a new teacher, it is unlikely the role can be filled by one mentor (Harrison, et al., 2006; Hellesten et al., 2009).

The practice of mentoring must be learned and it cannot be assumed that every veteran teacher will be an effective mentor because they have successful experience (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). A mentor must have a specialized skill set and be able to articulate their own practice to others. In order to become a mentor in the Green County School District, each mentor must participate in a Clinical Educator training that totals about eight hours of instruction. In order to receive the district stipend for mentoring in the subsequent years, mentors must participate in an online refresher course for clinical education. Though mentor quality or training was not a significant part of my study, I include this information to show perhaps the district mentor policies are working given the positive remarks from participants regarding their mentors.

Opportunities for mentors and new teachers to interact together contribute to a positive school-wide climate (Moir & Gless, 2001). Frequent interactive opportunities for new teachers and mentors were structured by the administration and staff of Packer Middle School. This included but was not limited to: close proximity of classrooms, common planning time and monthly morning meetings.

Professional Development

One of the most powerful forms of professional development involves teachers learning in the classroom context (Moir & Gless, 2001). Opportunities for new teachers to observe veteran teachers in the classroom context enable new teachers to watch theory become action as

they view other teachers and think critically about implications to their practice (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002; Moir & Gless, 2001). The administration and coaches thoughtfully organized opportunities for new teachers to observe veteran teachers using organized protocols that encouraged reflection. The observation protocols structured by Packer Middle School included opportunities for new teachers to discuss their observations, reflections and possible implications to practice.

In addition to observing veteran teachers, new teachers at Packer Middle School had frequent opportunities to participate in professional development provided at the school. Algozzine, Gretes, Queen and Cowan-Hathcock (2007) found new teachers preferred opportunities to reflect in their own context as opposed to district wide workshops in a study conducted. The majority of staff development opportunities provided at Packer Middle School were facilitated by faculty members. Faculty members shared effective practices from their own experience, which contributed to the learning community atmosphere.

Implications of Research

This study was framed as action research to study my own practice; however, potential implications exist beyond my own practice. Findings from my study may help those designing new teacher induction programs, as well as district leaders and school leaders as they provide support to new teachers in their own context.

Implications for Design of New Teacher Induction Programs

New teacher induction programs vary by the amount and intensity of various components. Many of the research articles cite lack of time and funding as challenges. In fact, the majority of states receive very little, if any, funding for new teacher induction programs. Carver and Feiman-Nemser (2009) studied induction programs in 28 states and found only 16 received funding. I hope my study will shed new light on structuring support with existing

resources. The supports the participants cited as most helpful did not require additional funding: observing other teachers, new teacher meetings, common planning time, and peer support.

Support from mentors is an important component of induction. Accountability structures need to be in place by districts and schools to ensure support is provided. Mentors in Green County initially participated in the state Clinical Education training. This required training was facilitated by school leaders. After the initial training, mentors were required to take a yearly refresher course. In addition to mentor accountability at the district level, administrators may want to consider accountability measures at the school level. For example, this could be accomplished through the use of a monthly protocol that new teachers and mentors use to focus on setting goals, taking action steps and documenting any areas of need. This would be turned in monthly and reviewed by administrators to inform the support structure.

Implications for District Leaders

Mentors and new teachers should have opportunities for frequent interactions together that include planning and observing (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). Given that new teachers benefit and desire opportunities for observation, district leaders may want to incorporate observation requirements for all new teachers. This would ensure all new teachers had the opportunity to observe a veteran teacher, which was an opportunity cited by each participant as helpful. The requirements could specifically state that all teachers with fewer than 3 years of experience have the opportunity to observe at least one teacher of the same content and grade level and one of the observations must be of the mentor. In addition to the actual observation, a time to discuss the observation and possible implications to practice would be a requirement for the new teacher and mentor.

Like many school districts, the School District of Green County offered frequent trainings and professional development opportunities in the areas of curriculum, instruction and

technology. As new teachers request more opportunities for professional development, it would be beneficial for veteran staff members to direct new teachers to a set list of professional development opportunities provided by the district. The list would be organized by topic so if a new teacher wanted to learn more about the district reading series, they would go to the reading series on the list and see the dates and times.

Implications for School Leaders

Participants in my study remarked how they appreciated the informal interactions with administrators. Administrators should make time for casual classroom visits and collaboration. This will lead to an enhanced feeling of support and belonging (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). The time for casual visits may also include the hallways, mailroom and other impromptu opportunities for conversation. Even a simple acknowledgement may lead to an enhanced sense of belonging and value for new teachers.

As discussed in Chapter 4, thoughtful planning led to thoughtful structures in place. This included proximity of teachers, common planning time, team structure, purposeful meetings and professional development opportunities. These actions alone may enhance new teacher induction programs at the school level.

School leaders may want to consider placing teachers of the same grade level and content within close proximity of each other. This allowed for ease of communication and increased access for new teachers to seek support. Caroline, Lee and Anna commented how they enjoyed being able to go right next door for support. In addition to the location, teachers of the same content and grade level had the same planning period. Common planning periods enabled new teachers to seek support and collaborate with colleagues.

Team structure and purposeful meetings within teams may contribute to a positive learning environment for new teachers. Specific grade level and content teams created a sense of

shared responsibility and leadership for a greater number of teachers. Many schools have just one team leader per grade level. At Packer Middle School, the administrators organized a team leader for each grade level and content area. In addition to team meetings throughout the month, weekly common planning meetings were a school-wide expectation to plan lessons and support for students.

Professional development opportunities facilitated by school staff and delivered at the school site was cited as beneficial by participants and may want to be considered by school leaders. Specifically, teachers desired hands-on opportunities in the topics of technology, English Language Learners and classroom management. School-based professional development facilitated by staff members increases the access to follow up teachers, which was appreciated by Caroline. In addition to opportunities for professional development session, school leaders may want to consider providing time for new teachers to observe veteran teachers and time for the new teacher to discuss observations and possible implications on practice with the veteran teacher.

Study Significance

Teacher attrition is an issue that affects schools across the nation. The percent of attrition is highest for teachers within their first five years of teaching and higher for teachers in schools with high poverty (Shernoff et al., 2011). Efforts must be put forth to not only identify factors of retention, but to also find ways to implement the factors of retention (Greenlee & Brown, 2009; Inman & Marlow, 2004). As the Intervention Support Specialist in a Title I Middle School, I recognized the need to study literature to become informed on the factors of retention and then use the literature to help create a structure of supports at the school level. I designed my study to specifically ask: What are the needs of new teachers at Packer Middle School; how can existing practices be modified to coordinate support for new teachers at Packer Middle School; and to

what extent do new teachers at Packer Middle School find the coordinated support system helpful?

This action research study details the needs of new teachers and how opportunities for support can be structured. It is important to note out of the six participants in the study, five remained at Packer Middle School for the 2014-2015 school year. The reason for the one participant not returning was due to performance, not teacher choice. If retention rates are to rise nationally, districts and schools must recognize the specific needs of new teachers and thoughtfully plan to provide support based on needs.

APPENDIX A
INITIAL ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Survey for Professional Development

Please rate your level of comfort with the following areas using the Likert Scale:

- 0: Not applicable to my context
- 1: Not very comfortable; I would like more support
- 2: Comfortable
- 3: Very Comfortable; I can help others in this area

1. Classroom Management
2. Subject matter
3. Lesson Planning
4. Using district uploading site to post content
5. Grading using computer software
6. Using Data Warehouse to find student information
7. Using Data Warehouse to analyze data to drive instruction
8. Differentiated Instruction through Content, Process, and Product
9. Teaching students with disabilities using accommodations
10. Teaching English Language Learners using SIOP strategies
11. Teacher Evaluation: Marzano Placemat, Professional Growth Plans, Pre and Post Conference forms
12. Teacher use of technology in the classroom
13. Student use of technology in the classroom

Open-ended Response

1. Please choose the top 3 areas for professional development that you would like to receive during the 2013-2014 school year.

2. What supports from Packer Middle School do you feel you need in order to be successful?

3. Are there any current barriers that are impeding the learning of students in your classroom?

4. Please include any comments that would be helpful to know about your needs and skills in planning professional development for the 2013-2014.

APPENDIX B
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

New Teacher Support System Monthly Survey

Name:

What is one area you would like more support in this month?

Are there any barriers that are impeding the learning of students?

What professional development opportunities would you like to participate in this month?

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviewer: Thank you for participating in today's interview. The purpose of the interview is to gather information to best support new teachers at Packer Middle School.

1. Briefly tell me where you went to school and why you chose to become an educator.

2. Of all the things you have worked on so far as a new teacher, what do you think has been the area that you have:

-been most successful?
-experienced the most growth?
-struggled with the most?

(prompt for details for each area above)

3. How did you get better at some of the things you mentioned in the previous question?

- What supports did you draw on?
- Which supports were most helpful?
- Which supports were least helpful? Why?

4. In the beginning of the year, you wrote a professional growth plan that included a SMART goal. Please explain how your professional growth plan has or has not impacted your practice. In other words, was this helpful to you or not? Explain.

5. Are there other people at school (or in the district) who have been particularly helpful to you this year? What exactly did they do to help you?

6. Please tell me how I could possibly help meet your needs for the remainder of the 2013-2014 school year.

APPENDIX D
MENTOR/MENTEE CHECKLIST

Mentor/Mentee Checklist – 2013-2014 School Year

Beginning of the School Year	✓ Guest Teacher Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Correct procedures for securing a guest teacher and submitting a Leave Form ▪ Proper guest teacher lesson plans ▪ Importance of submitting Emergency Lesson Plans
	✓ Online Uploading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson Plan Submission ▪ Curriculum links
	✓ Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to take attendance each period in computer program
	✓ Classroom Set up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Board Configuration ▪ Location of Bulletin Board Paper ▪ Needed Furniture/Furniture Removal
	✓ Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Marzano Placemat ▪ Scale of Understanding Examples ▪ How to access Observation website (omitted for appendix)
	✓ Online District Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to log-in and the available resources – test data, demographic data, etc.
	✓ Online Gradebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting up assignment categories ▪ Fair weighting of classroom assignments and a uniform grading policy
	✓ HERO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to log-in
	✓ Intervention Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data Chats – correct procedures ▪ Silent Sustained Reading – How to manage ▪ “Homeroom” Teacher duties – Lockers, student paperwork, etc.
	✓ Outlook Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PMSGroup ▪ “PMS Notification Group”
	✓ PBS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the PBS system and discuss the classroom teacher’s role in implementation
	✓ Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain how to make copies/submit for lamination
	✓ Online students passes and referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review discipline procedures ▪ Discuss possible classroom management strategies/buddy classroom ▪ Locating parent contact information
	✓ Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessing list on mailroom door
	✓ Work Orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share how to access work order submission system (on computer desktop) and uses for technology and building/classroom issues

On-Going	✓ Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updating word walls/data walls/exemplar work
	✓ Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mentors should accessible on a daily/weekly basis ▪ Provide ongoing support
	✓ Computer Labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to sign-up – through department chair/coach ▪ Proper student/staff procedures while in the lab
	✓ Teacher Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional Growth Plans ▪ Pre/Post Conference Forms
	✓ Data Driven Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online District Data – especially after each Benchmark assessment
	✓ Grading Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interim/Report Card – How to submit grades on online gradebook ▪ Follow-up on fair grading/weighting practices periodically ▪ 2 assignments weekly and current/updated grades ▪ Academic Practice expectation
	✓ Intervention Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Led Conferences preparation ▪ Data Chats – ongoing ▪ Silent Sustained Reading – How to manage ▪ “Homeroom” Teacher duties – PBS, ongoing paperwork, interim/report card signatures, etc.
	✓ Lesson Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Including non-negotiables and a department wide template ▪ Higher Order Questioning – Webb’s and Blooms
	✓ Parent Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to access parent contact information ▪ Translation assistance – proper procedures ▪ Positive Referrals
	✓ PLC Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calendar – updates ▪ Supporting concerns and sharing ideas
	✓ Student Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student Concern Form – Proper procedures for submission

APPENDIX E
MONTHLY CALENDAR SAMPLE

PMS Meeting Schedule September 2013

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 Labor Day No school	3 Department Data Team LA/SC 8:30-8:55 am *	4 Leadership 8:00-8:45 am	5 Department Data Teams Math/SS 8:30-8:55 am	6
9 *	10 Tech Time 8:30-8:55 am *	11 FACULTY MEETING 8:30-8:55 am	12 Grade Level Team 8:30-8:55 am Academic Night- all teachers	13
16 *	17 Department Data Team LA/SC 8:30- 8:55 am * Early Dismissal	18 Leadership 8:00-8:45 am	19 Department Data Teams-Math/SS 8:30-8:55 am SAC Meeting 5:30 PM	20
23 *	24 Teaching Tuesday 8:30-8:50 am *	25 Committee Mtgs. 8:30-8:55 am Interims Go Home	26 Grade Level Team Meeting 8:30-8:55 am	27
29 *	30			

*IEPs & Parent Conf.-invitation ONLY basis

Teaching Tuesday is REQUIRED for NEW Teachers/ All others are welcome to attend

APPENDIX F
STUDENT CONCERN FORM

Student Concern Form

Student Number: _____ Date: _____ Teacher: _____

Consistently not meeting expectation(s):

- Respectful
- Organized
- Accomplished
- Responsible
- Other

Please Specify: _____

Description:

Parent Communication:

- Phone Call
Date(s): _____
- Email
Date(s): _____
- Other
Date(s): _____

Please describe parent communication:

Would you like a parent-teacher conference? _____

***If translation assistance is needed, please contact Jenny Knutowski**

Please describe prior actions taken:

Ex: Reinforcement of positive behavior, individual conversation, seating change, etc.

*** Please return form to Jenny Knutowski ***

APPENDIX G
INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS PROTOCOL

<u>Co-Teaching Instructional Rounds Procedure Sheet</u>	
General Information	Name: _____ Date: _____ Classroom Observed: _____ Period: _____
Learning Goal:	✓ What are you looking to observe in the classroom and how do you plan to take what you have learned and implement it in your classroom?
General Notes	The General Education Teacher was: The Special Education Teacher was The students were: The task was:
Observation Notes	How is the gradual release model utilized in this classroom? How do the teachers execute follow through on rules/procedures in their classroom?

Self-Reflection	<p>What Differentiation Strategies did you observe today that you plan to utilize in your classes?</p> <p>What ideas did you observe today that you plan to utilize in your classes?</p> <p>How do you plan to implement these strategies in your classes?</p>
Resources Needed for Implementation	<p>What assistance/support do you need for implementation to happen?</p>
Questions	

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Algozzine, B., Gretes, J., & Queen, A. J. (2007). Beginning Teachers' Perceptions of Their Induction Program Experiences. *Clearing House*, 80(3), 137-143.
- Berry, B. (2008). Staffing High-Needs Schools: Insights from the Nation's Best Teachers. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(10), 766-771.
- Bickmore, D. L., & Bickmore, S. T. (2010). A multifaceted approach to teacher induction. *Teaching and teacher education*, 26(4), 1006-1014.
- Birkeland, S., & Johnson, S. M. (2002). Q: What keeps new teachers in the swim? A: Schools that support their work. *Journal of Staff Development*, 23(4), 18-21.
- Buckley, J., Schneider, M., & Shang, Y. (2005). Fix It and They Might Stay: School Facility Quality and Teacher Retention in Washington, D.C. *Teachers College Record*, 107(5), 1107-1123.
- Carver, C. L., & Feiman-Nemser, S. (2009). Using Policy to Improve Teacher Induction. *Educational Policy*, 23(2), 295-328.
- Carroll, T. G., & Foster, E. (2010). Who will teach? Experience matters. Washington, DC: *National Commission on Teaching and America's Future*. Retrieved March, 2, 2011.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation*. Teachers College Press.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. (3rd Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publishing, Inc.
- Dana, N. F., Thomas, C., Thomas, C. H., & Boynton, S. (2011). *Inquiry: A districtwide approach to staff and student learning*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publishing, Inc.
- Gilles, C., Davis, B., & McGlamery, S. (2009). Induction programs that work. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 91(2), 42-47.
- Greenlee, B., & Brown, J. (2009). Retaining Teachers in Challenging Schools. *Education*, 130(1), 96-109.
- Gujarati, J. (2012). A Comprehensive Induction System: A Key to the Retention of Highly Qualified Teachers. *Educational Forum*, 76(2), 218-223.
- Harrison, J., Dymoke, S., & Pell, T. (2006). Mentoring beginning teachers in secondary schools: An analysis of practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1055-1067.
- Hammerness, K., & Matsko, K. K. (2013). When Context Has Content: A Case Study of New Teacher Induction in the University of Chicago's Urban Teacher Education Program. *Urban Education*, 48(4), 557-584.

- Hellsten, L. M., Prytula, M. P., Ebanks, A., & Lai, H. (2009). Teacher Induction: Exploring Beginning Teacher Mentorship. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 32(4), 703-733.
- Herr, K., & Anderson, G. L. (Eds.). (2005). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publishing, Inc.
- Inman, D., & Marlow, L. (2004). Teacher Retention: Why Do Beginning Teachers Remain in the Profession?. *Education*, 124(4), 605-614.
- McGlamery, S., Fluckinger, J., & Edick, N. (2006). The CADRE Project: Looking at the Development of Beginning Teachers. *Educational Considerations*, 33(2), 42-50.
- Moir, E., & Gless, J. (2001). Quality induction: an investment in teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28(1), 109-114.
- Petty, T. (2007). Empowering Teachers: They Have Told Us What They Want and Need to be Successful. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 73(2), 25-28.
- Shernoff, E., Maríñez-Lora, A., Frazier, S., Jakobsons, L., Atkins, M., & Bonner, D. (2011). Teachers Supporting Teachers in Urban Schools: What Iterative Research Designs Can Teach Us. *School Psychology Review*, 40(4), 465-485.
- Smith, T. M., & Ingersoll, R. M. (2004). What Are the Effects of Induction and Mentoring on Beginning Teacher Attrition?. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), 681-714.
- Stansbury, K., & Zimmerman, J. (2002). Smart induction programs become lifelines for the beginning teacher. *Journal of Staff Development*, 23(4), 10-17.
- Watlington, E., Shockley, R., Guglielmino, P., & Felsher, R. (2010). The High Cost of Leaving: An Analysis of the Cost of Teacher Attrition. *Journal of Education Finance*, 36(1), 22-37.
- Wayne, A. J., Youngs, P., & Fleischman, S. (2005). Improving Teacher Induction. *Educational Leadership*, 62(8), 76-78.
- Wong, H. K. (2002). Induction: the best form of professional development. *Educational Leadership*, 59(6), 52-54.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jennifer Knutowski is a student in the Curriculum, Teaching and Teacher Education (CTTE) doctoral program at the University of Florida. Prior to the doctoral program, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from the University of Florida in 2004 and a Master of Education degree from the University of Florida in 2005.

This year marks her tenth year as a professional educator with experience varying in elementary schools and secondary schools. She taught fifth grade for five years in both a private school and a Title I school. For four years she was in the same Title I middle school designing and facilitating lessons as a Response to Intervention (RtI)/Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Facilitator and Intervention Support Specialist. The latter included serving as a staffing specialist for students with disabilities. In the spring of 2014, she began a new position as a manager for the Title I Migrant Education Program where she writes and implements all components of the Title I Migrant Education Program Grant.