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**New Teacher Induction: Locating New Teacher  
Needs to Co-Construct Induction Programs**

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of  
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

THOMAS M. D'ELIA  
Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

May 2021

Dissertation Chair: Emily J. Klein

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

**New Teacher Induction: Locating New Teacher**

**Needs to Co-Construct Induction Programs**

of

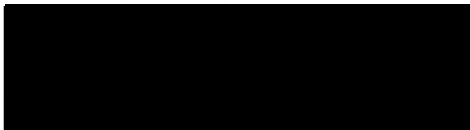
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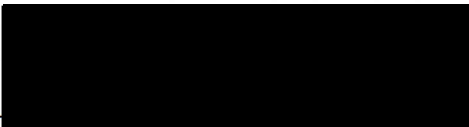
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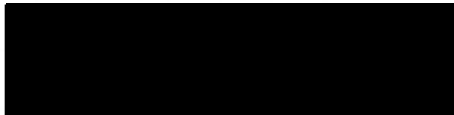


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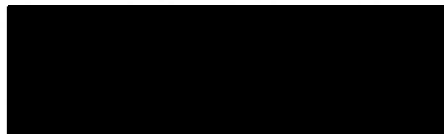


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May 6, 2021  
Date



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**ABSTRACT****New Teacher Induction: Locating New Teacher  
Needs to Co-Construct Induction Programs**

by Thomas M. D'Elia

This study focused on the transition period from pre-service to teaching known as new teacher induction. Using new teacher voices within third space qualitative interviews to better understand how new teachers made sense of their induction period within a school district, the findings from this study suggest that new teachers are not only faced with immediate and long-term needs that they must fulfill, but also new teachers must make sense of their school environments and the micropolitical atmospheres they must work in. Using the voices of new teachers and teacher coaches within a school district, this study examined how districts can better understand what new teachers experience as they transition into a school or district. The understanding of this liminal stage in a teacher's career is essential for policymakers, pre-service educators, pre-service teachers, administrators, and perhaps most importantly, veteran teachers if we hope to curb high attrition rates and the effects such have on our students and schools.

*Keywords:* new teacher induction; micropolitics; third space; new teacher needs

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Finally, I want to thank my parents, Tom and Theresa, and my brothers, Danny and Mark, for always providing me with love, support, and courage. Mom and Dad, you have taught me to be strong, stand up for others, and to never negotiate my values. This work is a testament to your love and support and I am eternally grateful to have such wonderful role-models in my life. Thank you all for always believing in me.

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my beautiful wife and daughters, Nicole, Gianna, and Jocelyn. I could not have done it without all of your love, support, and sacrifice. Gianna and Jocelyn, Daddy is done with his “homework.”

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## Chapter One: Introduction

I was proud of becoming a teacher; however, being a teacher was something I was completely unprepared to do. I recall my first teaching assignment nearly twenty-years-ago as having been a moment of sheer joy immediately followed by an experience that resembled Rick Smith's (2004) description of teaching as trying to build an airplane while trying to fly it. I quickly realized that teaching was a very complex and chaotic profession with a lot of learning taking place while you are on-the-job. However, I did not truly reflect on the problems I encountered until years later when I began my doctoral studies at Montclair State University. During doctoral coursework, I read and discussed an article by Ritchie et al. (1999) about the power relations in schools, specifically between pre-service teachers and their supervising teachers. In their article, Ritchie et al. mentioned a specific term, "craft knowledge" (p. 167), that sparked an interest in me as both a doctoral student and school administrator.

As an overarching theme in their work, Ritchie et al. (1999) explored how pre-service teachers struggled through their learning of what Shulman called "wisdom of practice" (as cited in Ritchie et al., 1999, p. 168). The struggle that Ritchie et al. captured in their study was of power relations within the pre-service/supervising teacher relationship. In the search for craft knowledge, pre-service teachers must learn to navigate through power differentials to accumulate the wisdom of practice possessed by veteran teachers (Ritchie et al., 1999). The knowledge sought by new teachers, in this context, was separate and apart from any knowledge gained during pre-service coursework (Ritchie et al., 1999). Instead, such wisdom of practice must be accessed within the context of working as a teacher. This notion of on-the-job wisdom is often called "wisdom in practice" and is associated with the work of Feldman (1997) and suggests that such wisdom is gathered through personal interactions with others (as cited in Ritchie et al.,

1999, p. 168). What Ritchie et al. (1999), eventually called for in their work was for pre-service teachers to take an active, not passive, role in their learning through the development of questioning strategies that “cause a disruption in the dominant school-based cultures that exist in the pre-service/supervising teacher relationship” (p. 176). Although Ritchie et al. (1999) focused on pre-service teachers and their struggle to obtain wisdom in practice, I believed that new teachers also experienced similar struggles obtaining wisdom in practice when transitioning into a school or district. As an administrator that was once a new teacher, access to information that may be beyond classroom needs for new teachers was a topic of study that spoke both personally and professionally to me. Although I recalled many classroom struggles (i.e., student relationships, pedagogical practices, content mastery), I also vividly recalled struggles that existed outside of my classroom, such as navigating through the collegial power structures to successfully access information that veteran teachers appeared to possess. Now that I am an administrator, I wanted to know more about new teacher needs that may exist beyond the classroom. I was also interested in how new teachers met such needs through the resources that were available to them. I believed that understanding such needs, and the ways new teachers met such needs during their transition into a school or district, may allow me to better design induction programs for new teachers that potentially mitigate such needs and ultimately allow new teachers to concentrate on what should be the focus of their roles i.e., the students.

Reflecting on my own experiences during my transition into education, I now understand that what I struggled with during this liminal period were the personal interactions that allowed access to craft knowledge. I also now understand that craft knowledge is not only knowledge that pertains to classroom knowledge, but rather encompasses the school or district environments, and relationships contained within such, that allow a teacher to flourish in their craft. As a new

teacher, the power differentials that Ritchie et al. (1999) spoke of during pre-service work very much existed in the schools and districts in which I worked. Such power differentials in peer relationships called for a need beyond the classroom as I felt that access to resources and opportunities were limited until I learned to navigate such interpersonal and environmental situations. Essentially, I wanted to gain wisdom in practice but was not afforded the learning environment to safely ask questions to obtain such wisdom. Instead, I felt my induction program was a top-down program of expectations without room for exploration or active participation. Without being afforded the opportunity to actively engage in my induction program, this passive learning of expectations limited my ability to ask questions about what I had experienced during my transition and ultimately did not allow for me, as a novice teacher, to gain wisdom in practice. I felt I was never given the chance to be an active participant in my learning (Ritchie et al., 1999). Additionally, I felt that if the opportunity to have had a voice during my transition into teaching was presented, I would have asked not only about the classroom, but also about the practices or norms of my school. Through both research and course study I can now identify the questions that I had during my transition into teaching that were outside of the classroom as “cultural codes” (Christensen, 2013; Schempp et al., 1993). Schempp et al. (1993) described the cultural codes within a school setting as the codes that informed the members of the school as to what can be said, and what is left unsaid, as well as what practices were acceptable and what practices were unacceptable. Such cultural codes pre-existed my arrival and certainly had an impact on me during my transition. It was only after the identification of such pre-existing codes that I realized that what I struggled for as a new teacher was not only an opportunity to ask questions about what I was experiencing in the classroom, but also what I was experiencing

outside of the classroom. If I yearned for such an active participation and voice during my transition into teaching, perhaps others did as well.

It was only after years of practice as a teacher, and a decade in administration that I could identify with the term *wisdom in practice* as it was seen in Ritchie et al. (1999). Now, I believe the struggle to obtain such wisdom in practice does not solely exist during the pre-service phase of a teacher's career, but rather begins during pre-service and continues indefinitely during a teacher's career. The dynamics of the cultural codes of schools and districts effectively shape who a teacher is and access to codes may allow for teachers to shape who they want to become. I further believe that wisdom in practice is a particular experience for each individual and that access to knowledge, especially cultural knowledge, is anything but equal for all. Therefore, the introduction of cultural codes as a part of the teaching environment (Christensen, 2013; Schempp et al., 1993) speaks to a part of new teacher needs during transition that I believe adds to new teacher induction research as much of the research on beginning teachers tends to focus on classroom teaching (Jokikokko et al., 2017).

Understandably, transition into any new job is bound to bring with it questions of environment and access to resources, along with a dose of shock. However, transitioning into education after pre-service preparation may neglect to include certain social realities that may need to be further explored. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) described what new teachers were experiencing during this particular phase in a new teacher's career as "praxis shock" (p. 105). The term itself captures the very essence of chaotic, on-the-job learning that new teachers often experience as they have to deal with issues not only at the classroom level, but also with socialization into a new school culture. However, such localized knowledge of school cultures, and in-turn access to such culture, can only be learned once teachers are on the job (Clark, 2012;



Schempp et al., 1993). If culture and on-the-job learning are problems that new teachers face during induction, the question now becomes, if new teacher induction programs are designed to support new teachers' transition into a school or district (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), are researchers, policymakers, and district administrators even aware that culture can be a topic to include in new teacher induction programs (Cherubini, 2009)? Additionally, are comfortable environments where new teachers can speak about their needs and ask questions about what they are experiencing being created by schools or districts to assist with new teacher transitions (Cherubini, 2009)? Where pre-service teaching programs can prepare future teachers in their content knowledge and pedagogical practices, should new teacher induction programs include environments where new teachers may freely ask about access to needed materials and navigate through cultural codes that cause praxis shock (Gardiner, 2012)?

As a district administrator, I was fascinated with the information that new teachers search for during their transition into teaching as I felt that such information was infrequently discussed by research and field colleagues. I was further fascinated with the notion that such important information for new teachers may lie beyond content and pedagogy, as the two topics are the typical focus of new teacher induction programs. As a district administrator, I felt compelled to create environments where new teachers can learn about any information they need to learn about. This includes information, such as a school or district's culture, that may lie beyond traditional induction practices and is essential to know so that new teachers may learn the culture of a school or district to potentially change the culture, if necessary (Curry et al., 2008).

The transition period from pre-service to teaching lends itself to the teacher education and teacher development learning continuum and warranted more research to better understand new teacher needs during this very specific time in a teacher's career. I wanted to know more

about new teacher needs during their transition into a teaching position, especially needs beyond the classroom, as I felt that the pursuit of such information would better inform researchers and induction program designers to address such needs. Therefore the research question driving this dissertation proposal was “How can induction better include the voices of the novice teacher it serves?”

### **Problem Statement**

The transition into a new occupation can present challenges for anyone. For teachers, the experiences during this special time of their careers can be extremely difficult as they learn to make sense of their pre-service work as it applies to their roles as educators (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a; Klein, et al., 2013). Adding to the complex nature of this transitional stage, new teachers may encounter social and educational challenges that exist in the workplace (Christensen, 2013; Rinke, 2014). Faced with such challenges, new teachers must learn to navigate through this liminal period with varying degrees of support and resources depending on the district and school in which they find employment (Anthony, et al., 2011; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Schempp, et al., 1993). Essentially, this unique phase in a teacher’s career is a crucial phase as what new teachers experience during their induction period can ultimately determine their commitment to the teaching profession, classroom instructional practices, and possibly student achievement (Algozzine, et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Desimone & Phillips, 2013; Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

As formal induction programs enter their fourth decade of existence in the United States, schools and school districts are still plagued with attrition rates for new teachers as high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Rinke, 2014). A staggering 90% of the nationwide demand for teachers is created by teachers leaving the

profession; two-thirds leaving for reasons other than retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Unfortunately, the highest turnover rates are found in Title I schools that traditionally serve low-income students; and 70% rates have been reported in schools serving the largest concentration of students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). High attrition rates in education not only cause teacher shortages, but are also costly to the districts plagued by high teacher turnover rates as replacing a single teacher could cost a district an excess of \$20,000 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Additionally, the most detrimental effect of high turnover rates in teaching are the effects on the children, especially in urban districts, where high attrition rates have been linked to lower achievement for students in classrooms that are directly affected by teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Despite 40 years of research on new teacher induction, the need to reexamine the form and format of new teacher induction appears to be more necessary now than when formal induction programs emerged in the early 1980s. Traditionally, research on new teacher induction has focused on classroom practices (Curry, et al., 2008; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). However, this may be inadequate practice, and it might be time to examine the topic of new teacher induction from a less traditional stance as merely having an induction program does not necessarily ensure that new teachers' needs are being met (Clark, 2012). A small body of research suggests that, in addition to learning about teaching within a classroom, new teachers must also become aware of the culture of the schools in which they must operate (Cherubini, 2009; Christensen, 2013; Conway & Rawlings, 2015) and should have a voice, or say, in their induction programs as they wade through the local context of their new surroundings (Anthony et al., 2011; Cherubini, 2009; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Petersen, 2017; Rinke, 2014; Williams & Gillham, 2016).

However, if new teachers are going to find a voice in new teacher induction programs to ask, and therefore learn about topics such as the culture of their work environment, researchers and practitioners need to reexamine current practices so that they might better inform policymakers and practitioners engaged in this work (Cherubini, 2009; Christensen, 2013; Gardiner, 2012; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a,b).

The need to examine the quality of new teacher induction programs is not a new topic of educational research; in 1999 Feiman-Nemser et al. conducted a conceptual literature review that examined what was being studied in teacher induction. In their conceptual review, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) concluded that two prevailing themes dominated the topic of new teacher induction: 1. New teachers need individualized assistance, emotional support, and help in developing routines and procedures. 2. New teachers learn best in communities of practice where they work with experienced educators for the purpose of teacher reform. Ultimately, this conceptual framework would inform later empirical studies on new teacher induction practices.

In addition to Feiman-Nemser et al.'s seminal conceptual review of new teacher induction research, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also examined the research on teacher induction programs by conducting an intense critical review of the research focusing on the impact of induction and mentoring programs. Although Ingersoll and Strong (2011) concluded that most of the studies reviewed provided empirical support that some kinds of support and assistance for beginning teachers had a positive impact on new teacher retention, instructional practices, and student achievement, the research did not necessarily identify the salient characteristics of successful programs (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Nonetheless, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) were able to point out concerns that such programs hoped to address, such as high teacher turnover which may lead to teacher shortages, and the isolation teachers experience when they begin their

first teaching assignment. Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also discussed the growing attention that policymakers have given to induction programs stating that “participation in induction programs has nearly doubled in a twenty-year period;” (p. 203), however there appears to be vast variations of how induction programs are run, especially when it comes to duration and intensity, as well as mentoring.

With decades of new teacher induction practice and research not adequately addressing such high new teacher attrition rates, there is clearly a problem with new teacher induction practices and the research to support such practices. However, the solution to new teacher retention, and the induction practices intended to combat such high attrition rates, may not be so easy to arrive at. Given the research gaps in identifying specific induction programs that consider the complex and various needs of new teachers based on their own voices and concerns, it may be necessary to adopt alternative lenses when examining new teacher induction practices to better inform induction practices. One such lens may focus more on the cultural and relational aspects of new teacher induction, rather than the traditional focus on classroom practices (Conway & Rawlings, 2015; Curry et al., 2008; Rinke, 2014). To illustrate an alternative lens on new teacher induction study that informs researchers and policymakers on induction practices and new teacher needs beyond the traditional classroom needs, the study of micropolitics lends itself to new teacher induction study to emphasize the importance of new teacher needs that are not traditionally researched or discussed during induction.

### **Looking Beyond Classroom Needs During Induction: Adopting a Micropolitical Lens**

The notion that new teachers may need to obtain certain knowledge beyond classroom needs is a very under-examined topic in new teacher induction research (Achinstein, 2006; Conway & Rawlings, 2015; Magudu & Gumbo, 2017). This is especially true when new

teachers' beliefs and actions may conflict with “existing organizational norms” as they encounter issues of power, interests, and negotiating through such in their new roles (Achinstein, 2006, p. 123). To better understand this new teacher need, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) looked at the cultural aspects of induction, using a micropolitical lens to analyze new teacher reflections during their induction phase. In their study, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) defined micropolitics as the “strategies and tactics used by individuals within an organization to further their interests within the organization” (p. 107). According to Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a), schools have certain traditions and habits with subtle power relations between different groups, or individuals, with different interests. Much like the power relations introduced by Ritchie et al. (1999) earlier in this dissertation, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) suggested that new teachers must face such power relation realities upon entering the organization as “teachers and principals will strive to establish working conditions to safeguard them when they are threatened or to restore them if they are removed” (p. 108).

Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) further suggested that new teachers become aware of school micropolitics, or develop micropolitical “literacy,” to be able to not only understand the micropolitical realities of schools to fulfill their own needs but also to be able to enact change once they are aware of the micropolitical landscape (p. 117). A similar message can be derived from Curry et al.'s (2008) work on micropolitical literacy in the development of professional inquiry communities. Curry et al. (2008) illuminated a small body of new teacher educators and researchers arguing the need for new teacher induction to address new teacher needs beyond the classroom. That is not to say that micropolitical literacy or school culture are the only challenges new teachers face, but that unawareness of such illustrates an aspect of new teacher induction that has been largely ignored by traditional new teacher induction research (Christensen, 2013).

Another example of research that took micropolitics and the culture of new teacher induction into account was Schempp et al. (1993) where the researchers examined challenges new teachers faced during induction and placed such into three categories: Biography (i.e., who they are, experiences they bring, what coursework they undertook); Role Demands (i.e., what are they supposed to do and how they are supposed to do it); and School Culture (i.e., the rules that define what is normal, acceptable, and legitimate in terms of actions). Schempp et al.'s categorization of new teacher experiences allowed for the discussion of school culture to enter into new teacher induction as a stand-alone topic, separate and apart from the traditional role demands (i.e., classroom practices) that are part of new teacher induction programs (Christensen, 2013). Although Schempp et al. (1993) set out to study micropolitics in schools during new teacher induction, their work lends itself to new teacher induction study by capturing new teacher voices into categories that help understand and define new teacher learning experiences. This is especially true for Schempp et al.'s discussion of school culture. Although all three of the participants in Schempp et al.'s qualitative work came from different schools in different communities; they all experienced similar transitional demands in their respective jobs. This points to some commonalities in new teacher experiences. Schempp et al.'s study also illustrated the importance of looking outside of educational practices to help with educational issues.

While viewing new teacher experiences during induction, Schempp et al. (1993) used a cultural lens to explore the power relations in schools. From a cultural perspective, relying on Foucault (1970), they were able to view new teacher transition into a school or district as a challenge against the "fundamental codes of culture that govern a society's discourse, modes of interaction and values" (p. 449). From such codes of culture, new teachers are charged with the task of determining which practices are acceptable in their schools or districts. Such social

complexities are often studied in teacher socialization studies, but do not currently appear to be a focus in new teacher induction studies. However, closely aligned with micropolitics is the localized context and new teacher voices that are also largely absent in new teacher induction research (Clark, 2012). Again, as new teacher induction practices have traditionally focused on classroom practices (Christensen, 2013; Rinke, 2014), perhaps researchers on new teacher induction practices should look beyond classroom needs to help new teachers transition into a school or district?

Using alternative lenses, such as micropolitics, as a lens for understanding new teacher induction provides researchers with the opportunity to include culture and environment into new teacher learning beyond the classroom. Such new teacher learning, including the culture of schools or districts, serves to better inform practitioners and policymakers of new teacher needs that are vital to new teacher retention and are part of the teacher learning continuum (Gardiner, 2012). This is especially important for induction research as new teachers are often considered “vulnerable” in their school sites (Achinstein, 2006, p. 124). Perhaps it is time for researchers to turn their attention to what new teachers have to say about their induction phase to see if new teacher induction programs offer space for new teachers’ voices to be heard regarding needs outside of the classroom, such as micropolitics. If researchers and practitioners listened to new teacher needs beyond the classroom, perhaps the teaching profession would see a decrease in new teacher attrition rates.

### **Induction Study Situated in Teacher Education and Teacher Development**

As previously described in the problem statement, new teacher induction practice, and studies to inform such, require a different approach to address high new teacher attrition rates. For nearly 40 years new teacher induction programs have been formally used to offer support



and foster commitments to the teaching profession during this important time in a new teacher's career. However, despite such efforts to address this transition period into teaching, schools and school districts are still plagued with attrition rates for new teachers as high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Jokikokko et al., 2017; Rinke, 2014). Separate from the student-teaching pre-service phase, this unique period of transition may offer insight into the study of teacher learning and development as new teachers find themselves struggling to find a foothold in both the culture and practice of the schools they now belong to (Schempp et al., 1993; Petersen, 2017). As new teachers wade through social and procedural complexities, new teacher induction programs may serve as a means of making sense of the experiences and challenges presented to new teachers as new teachers are experiencing such challenges (Gardiner, 2012). Assisting new teachers through the transitional shock from their pre-service programs to teaching requires recognition of this very unique period of teacher education to be acknowledged and supported (Feiman-Nemser 1999; Gardiner, 2012). However there appear to be vast variations of how induction programs are run, especially when it comes to duration, intensity, and content (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Given the various duration and content of new teacher induction programs that are offered among districts, further research into new teacher needs may help better inform policymakers and practitioners as merely having an induction program does not necessarily ensure that new teachers' needs are being met (Clark, 2012; Gardiner, 2012). Therefore, the need to study and refine teacher induction programs is an essential area of teacher education and teacher development that may be used to address teacher retention and ultimately, teacher quality (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gardiner, 2012).

### **Positionality as Both a Researcher and Administrator**

As a public school administrator, I realize that new teachers entering a district or school may encounter challenges that must be overcome in order to successfully transition into their role as educators. For new teachers to overcome such educational challenges, they need to be able to understand the challenges they are facing, as they are facing them (Gardiner, 2012). To be able to identify the needs of new teachers, and therefore make such necessary resources available to them, I needed to know exactly what needs new teachers have to be able to assist them during their transition. Therefore, I felt a different perspective on new teacher induction was needed to better inform new teacher induction study and practice. In order for this to be done, researchers needed to listen to new teacher needs and examine induction practices through different lenses as the past and current practices of classroom needs are not adequately addressing new teacher turnover.

As an administrator that conducted research on new teacher needs beyond the classroom, I felt I must adopt a non-traditional approach to my research to locate such needs. To do this, I felt that I must give new teachers a voice by asking them what their needs are, rather than relying on the assumption that their needs only exist in the classroom. I did believe that new teachers, if and when asked, would be able to identify their needs as new teachers also carry with them a past, a personal biography of experience that informs their practice (Schempp et al., 1993). Giving way for new teacher voices to be heard allowed me, as an administrator, to better understand and potentially meet new teacher needs. To further emphasize the use of new teacher voices, and concerns beyond the classroom, Rinke (2014) conducted a longitudinal study on teachers that either stayed in teaching, transferred to other districts, or left teaching as a whole. While researching why new teachers are leaving teaching, what Rinke (2014) found was that

teachers do have a voice and, when asked, were able to identify their needs and career goals. Rinke (2014) also suggested that actively listening to teachers can add value to the teaching profession and allows for individual teachers' needs to be addressed, especially if they do not intend to stay in teaching.

Given that much of the research on new teacher induction does not include culture, new teacher voices, needs beyond the classroom, or spaces for new teachers to make sense of what they are experiencing, I felt that more research on new teacher induction was necessary to better inform policymakers and practitioners, such as myself, on new teacher needs to redefine induction practices (Fantilli & McDougal, 2009; Gardiner, 2012; Schempp et al., 1993). To do this, I planned to give new teachers a voice during my research. Additionally, I planned to give teacher coaches, who have been working with new teachers during their transition, a voice as well to better identify new teacher needs.

As such, I believe the use of new teacher voices, and the learning of their needs to further inform induction practices was vitally needed to combat high teacher attrition rates and address new teacher needs as they encounter them. To address such new teacher needs, further research on the needs of new teachers, from their perspective, was necessary and may add to the study of new teacher induction practices. Therefore, it was the purpose of this dissertation to emphasize the importance of looking beyond traditional new teacher induction study and further research the needs that may lie beyond the classroom to combat high attrition rates.

### **The Study**

As previously discussed, this study provides researchers and practitioners insight into new teacher needs as described by new teachers and the peer support staff assigned to assist new teachers during their transition into teaching (i.e., teacher coaches). The purpose of this study

was to add to research on induction using new teacher voices to identify needs beyond the classroom so that future induction practices can be designed to accommodate such identified needs to mitigate any such challenges faced by new teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Furthermore, as an administrator that had influence over new teacher induction practices, I found the need to locate new teacher needs beyond the classroom to be essential to new teacher induction program formation and practice. For the purposes of this study, new teachers will be defined as teachers within their fourth or fifth year of teaching within a school district (Anthony et al., 2011; Cañón-Rodríguez et al., 2017; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011) as research shows that teachers within a five-year period have the highest attrition rates, as high as 50% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Rinke 2014). Specifically, I interviewed teachers that were at the end of their induction phase (i.e., currently in year four) or had recently completed their induction phase (i.e., currently in their fifth year of teaching) in this study. The reason it was important to interview teachers towards the end of their induction phase was that new teachers are often considered “vulnerable” in their school sites during such years (Achinstein, 2006) as new teachers have not obtained tenure status in New Jersey until they have reached four years and one day (TEACHNJ, 2012). Thus, by the time this study was completed, all participants were free from the constraints of nontenured teacher status and the vulnerability that often accompanies such phases in a new teacher's career (Achinstein, 2006; Enrion, 2016). Through participant interviews, new teacher needs beyond the classroom were explored to advance current thinking on how induction practices were carried out. Therefore, teacher induction practices are collectively defined as a variety of events or activities meant to assist new teachers during their transition into teaching, such as: orientation

sessions; collaborative time with other faculty; developmental workshops; and mentoring (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

The purpose of studying this specific group of teachers (i.e., new teachers and teacher coaches) was to not only provide new teachers a voice to better inform induction practices (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), but also to learn from both the new teachers and the teacher coach participants more about this specific transitional period in a teacher's career. I believed that listening to both groups of participants would better inform researchers and practitioners on new teacher needs and help fill in some of the research gaps that exist in new teacher induction practices regarding such needs. After collecting the voices of the participants, in this study, I was then able to use their voices to modify our new teacher induction program for the fall of 2020 within my district.

The overarching research question driving this study was “How can induction better include the voices of the novice teachers it serves?” Expanding upon prior research in new teacher induction studies, specifically Fantilli and McDougall's (2009) study on first-year teacher needs as expressed by the new teachers themselves (i.e., using new teacher voice), the underlying research questions forming this grounded theory study were the following:

- How do fourth/fifth-year teachers make sense of their first years of teaching?
- How do teacher coaches make sense of the needs of the novice teachers they work with?
- How does this inform my work as a district administrator?
- How can using a micropolitical literacy framework help me make sense of induction practices with coaches; new teachers; new teacher needs; new teacher transition?

### **Background of New Teacher Induction**

As formal induction programs enter their fourth decade of practice in the United States, schools and school districts are still plagued with attrition rates for new teachers as high as 50%

within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Despite 40 years of research on new teacher induction, the need to reexamine the form and format of new teacher induction appears to be more necessary now than when formal induction programs emerged in the early 1980's. The term "new teacher induction" can be used to describe a variety of events or activities for new teachers which may include orientation sessions, collaborative time with other faculty, developmental workshops, reduced workloads, and mentoring (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

As a bit of a history on induction practices, formal induction programs offering activities for new teachers began to appear in or around the 1980s and the number of states with formal induction programs has drastically increased since then to respond to the dramatic increase in the new teacher force (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Early induction programs originally emerged as a response to a need for greater teacher professionalism and accountability. The first of such programs appeared in Florida in 1978 as the *Beginning Teacher Program* and offered mentoring and assessment around a set of state standards (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood and Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). From there, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) describe the induction movement following the Florida Beginning Teacher Program as hitting the educational world by "waves," Florida having started the "first wave." Such waves were also discussed by Wood and Nevins-Stanulis (2009) by specific time periods. The four waves of induction were categorized as such: First-wave programs were established prior to 1986; Second-wave programs were implemented between 1986 and 1989; Third-wave induction programs were administered between 1990 and 1996; and Fourth-wave programs were implemented between 1997 and 2006 (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). This first-wave consisted of induction programs that focused mainly on teacher evaluations and began

to formally use experienced teachers as mentors. However ground-breaking at the time, the concept of formal induction programs often went unfunded due to budget restraints (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999).

The second-wave of formal induction programs began in the mid-eighties with an emphasis on both internships and induction programs through mentoring (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). The third-wave followed in the 1990's due to concerns of teacher retention and teacher quality which led to the resurrection of induction programs that had lapsed in the 1980's and creation of new programs that addressed quality and retention (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). The third-wave of new teacher induction programs brought formative assessments of new teachers into induction programs to address teacher quality (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Accordingly, a fourth-wave of new teacher induction arrived in education between 1997 and 2006. The fourth-wave, as described by Wood and Nevins-Stanulis (2009), opened the scope of induction practices to include a wide array of services. Although induction literature appears to be silent on the current wave of induction programs, based on Wood and Nevins-Stanulis's (2009) categories, it does appear that induction is currently in the midst of a fifth-wave, although it is difficult to say what exactly our current wave of induction practices looks like since there appears to be no standardized form of practice. Needless to say, as the induction waves hit the education world, the design and purpose of formal induction programs experienced a growth period of support and redefining through research. As such, the definitions of induction programs and the purposes they were to serve received research attention. Two major definitions arose from this research.

As formal induction programs received attention and support from educators and policymakers, the focus of the programs came into light. With such attention now focused on the

intention of the induction programs, two prevalent definitions emerged (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). The first definition placed an emphasis on assisting beginning teachers in their first year of teaching and used a responsive approach to meeting new teacher needs through formal induction programs. The second definition of induction not only extended the concept of “new teachers” beyond the first year of teaching, but also placed an emphasis on training and assessment. According to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), the latter definition and expansion of program focus was in response to alternate route teachers entering the teacher workforce. Such alternate route teachers would not have received the pre-service program training experienced by traditional route teachers. Additionally, alternate route teachers without pre-service training were prevalent in urban districts where they were placed in classrooms and then provided professional coursework and support (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999).

### ***Induction Programs: Characteristics of Quality Programs***

Although formal induction programs have increased in popularity and funding, one persistent debate is the definition of “quality” induction programs. What should induction programs look like? Many different frameworks have emerged with their own set of criteria for quality induction should look like (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). What has developed from these various definitions of induction are a set of characteristics that enter into the discussion of induction and drive recommended practices of induction programs. One such recommendation, according to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), was that programs acknowledged and regarded novice teachers as learners rather than experienced professionals. This developmental stance towards new teachers assumed that learning to teach unfolds over time and requires highly individualized support to meet the unique needs of new teachers. Induction programs adopting a developmental model of induction would emphasize a multi-year



program as opposed to a one-year program (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). The duration of the induction program naturally leads to the question of context. How should the context of new teacher induction be structured to meet new teacher needs?

Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) stated that a second common characteristic found in quality induction programs is supportive context where socialization is considered. Here, the settings where new teachers work were emphasized and specific supportive resources were identified (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Such supportive resources were knowledgeable and supportive administrators; fewer classes to prepare for; limited extracurricular activities; trained mentors; and a collaborative school culture (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Within this list of contextual support mechanisms, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) emphasized, again, the importance of mentors and specifically mentor accountability. This led to the final characteristic of quality induction programs; personnel and fiscal resources.

Personnel and fiscal resources referred to not only financial commitments from districts and states, but also the buy-in and compensation of personnel that were to serve as support for new teachers during induction. According to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), a call for collaboration among school districts, state departments, and institutions of higher learning can be heard throughout induction research. As such, quality induction programs were run formally, with compensation, and undergo periods of evaluation and modification based on stakeholder input (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). However, throughout the defining and debating of induction program quality and purpose for almost 40 years now, new teacher attrition rates remain high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

As educators muddle through the current fifth-wave of induction practices, perhaps it is time to analyze induction program practices and purpose through a different lens. Emergent

themes through coursework study, district analysis, and new teacher research appeared to suggest that support for new teacher socialization, as suggested by Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), may be at the heart of new teacher learning. Along with role demands, new teacher socialization, or learning about the school culture, may factor into new teacher transitional experiences (Schempp et al., 1993). Therefore, where prior research on new teacher induction had sought to learn about new teacher induction from an educational lens (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011), perhaps it is time to look through a different lens of study to address new teacher induction practices? A cultural lens would offer an alternative to new teacher induction practices to assist during such transitional periods (Schempp et al., 1993). In the literature review that follows, I will discuss the research on new teacher induction through a cultural lens; specifically looking for new teacher voices and the spaces created by districts during induction to listen to such.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

To address the issue of new teacher induction programs, I specifically used my position as a district administrator in a public school district serving a community of 400 teachers. In any given year we may have as many as 35 new, first-year teachers in our district. Needless to say, the issue of teacher induction has come to the forefront of both my professional and doctoral studies. My positionality in this study is one of intersecting interests as both an administrator and a researcher interested in new teacher induction. In this study, I drew on research literature that focused on new teacher induction programs and the perceptions of new teachers in such programs. As a conceptual framework for literature analysis, I applied the concept of creating “third space” conversations to the selected bodies of work to ultimately draw conclusions and recommendations for this study. I addressed the selected literature on new teacher induction programs and new teacher perceptions in the first section of this chapter. I then analyzed the literature through a third space lens in a separate section as the research gap identified through literature analysis will show that the subjects of new teacher induction and third space application do not appear in the same studies. Thus, new teacher voices are largely absent during induction research.

### **New Teacher Induction**

As previously discussed during the introduction to this work, the study of new teacher induction programs is not new to educational research. Educational researchers and reforms have explored the challenges new teachers face upon entering the teaching profession for nearly four decades (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The complexities that face new teachers upon entering their classrooms, and the support structures that are meant to assist new teachers in facing such complexities, are at the root of research on induction programs (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999;

Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The support, guidance, and orientation programs that surround this liminal stage of new teachers has collectively defined the term new teacher induction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Peterson, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to briefly discuss several of the individual characteristics of induction programs (i.e., Mentoring; Purpose and Duration; and Quality Characteristics of Induction Practices) before analyzing the research on new teacher induction as although such characteristics may not be the focus of this review, they certainly have a place in new teacher induction research.

### ***Mentoring***

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) defined mentoring as “the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools” (p. 203). Furthermore, the objective of mentoring, as explained by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), is to offer a “local guide” to new teachers during their transition to teaching (p. 203). However, the way that such local guidance is provided to new teachers in this early stage of a teacher’s career can vary widely and range from a single meeting to frequent meetings in highly structured induction programs (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Mentoring programs also vary in the selection and training processes of mentors. Some mentoring programs may train, pay, and devote attention to the matching of mentors when other programs may not.

Mentoring, as the term relates to new teacher induction, can also take on different meanings depending on how induction is conceptualized (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). According to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), researchers on the topic of mentoring have divided the function of mentoring into two categories: educative mentors and conventional mentors. The educational mentor is focused not only on the immediate needs of the novice teacher, but also on the enhancement of teaching practices that would move the novice

teacher forward (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). According to Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999), conventional mentors have more of a focus on new teacher emotional support, occupational socialization, and short-term assistance (p. 19). Whatever the conceptual focus may be of mentoring, research has shown that quality induction programs include some form of mentoring, therefore mentoring has a place in the discussion of induction (Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Langdon & Alansari, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2017; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

### ***Formal Programs-Purpose and Duration***

The term “new teacher induction” can be used to describe a variety of events or activities for new teachers which may include orientation sessions, collaborative time with other faculty, developmental workshops, reduced workloads, and mentoring (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Formal induction programs offering activities for new teachers began to appear in or around the 1980s and the number of states with formal induction programs has drastically increased since then to respond to the dramatic increase in the new teacher force (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011, Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). As previously discussed in the introduction section of this study, induction practices have appeared in “waves” over the past 40 years (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Stanulis, 2009); the first wave (described as arriving prior to 1986) appearing in Florida in 1978 as a response to a need for greater teacher professionalism and accountability in and offered mentoring and assessment around a set of state standards (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Second-wave programs were implemented between 1986 and 1989 and are identified in induction studies as having an emphasis on internships and mentoring (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Third-wave induction programs were administered between 1990 and 1996 and brought formative assessments of new

teachers into induction programs to address teacher quality (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). The fourth-wave programs were implemented between 1997 and 2006 and offered a wide array of services including mentoring, professional development, and formative assessment activities (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009, p. 3).

Although induction literature appeared to be silent on the current wave of induction programs, based on Wood and Nevins-Stanulis' (2009) categories, it can reasonably be inferred that induction is currently in the midst of a fifth-wave. However, the current state of induction appears to be open for independent interpretation among school districts, thus creating the possibility of different, more intimate, approaches to meeting new teachers' needs to be developed. Regardless of when new teacher induction waves appeared, the design and purpose of formal induction programs experienced a growth period of support and redefining through research. As such, the definitions of induction programs and the purposes they were to serve received research attention. Two major definitions arose from this research.

As formal induction programs received attention and support from educators and policy makers, two prevalent definitions regarding the intentions of induction programs emerged (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). The first definition emphasized the importance of assisting beginning teachers in their first year of teaching and applied a responsive approach to meeting new teacher needs through formal induction programs. The second definition of induction purpose extended the concept of "new teachers" beyond the first year of teaching and placed an emphasis on training and assessment.

### **Characteristics of Quality Induction Programs**

As new teacher induction programs gained popularity and attention in educational research and practice, a persistent debate around what quality induction programs emerged.

Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) offered recommendations to the debated topic of quality induction programs, first suggesting that programs acknowledge novice teachers as learners rather than experienced professionals. This perceptual shift towards a developmental stance assumed that learning to teach unfolds over time and requires highly individualized support to meet the unique needs of new teachers. By suggesting such a developmental stance towards new teacher learning, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) identified multi-year programs as a mark of quality induction rather than a focus on the first-year alone. In addition to identifying quality programs by duration, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) suggested that supportive context where socialization is considered is another mark of quality induction programs.

In providing new teachers with a supportive context during induction, identifying specific supportive resources in the particular settings where new teachers work becomes part of quality induction practices (Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Such supportive resources are knowledgeable and supportive administrators, fewer classes to prepare for, limited extracurricular activities, trained mentors, and a collaborative school culture (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Wood & Nevins-Stanulis, 2009). Within this list of contextual support mechanisms, Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) emphasized, again, the importance of mentors and specifically mentor accountability. Multi-year programs that offer supportive context during induction require a third quality marker of induction programs. The third characteristic of quality induction is that of personnel and fiscal resources (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999).

Personnel and fiscal resources refer to not only financial commitment by districts and states, but also the buy-in and compensation of personnel that are to serve as support for new teachers during induction. When afforded both personnel and fiscal resources, quality induction programs are run formally, with compensation, and undergo periods of evaluation and

modification based on stakeholder input (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). However, throughout the defining and debating of induction program quality and purpose for almost 40 years now, new teacher attrition rates remain high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017). Perhaps it is time to analyze induction program quality and purpose through a different lens. Application of third space theory may offer a different perspective on the creation and context of induction programs.

### **Examining New Teacher Induction Through a Third Space Lens**

The concept of “hybridity” or “third space” can be traced back to the work of Homi Bhabha where hybridity was used as a process of celebrating dynamic spaces of cultural change which were characterized by shifting identities (Kalua, 2009). Bhabha’s uses the concept of cultural “liminality” to create new, third spaces, of cultural existence through discourse when power structures are rejected and new meanings of culture were co-constructed. In 2004, Bhabha referred to this space as the “realm of the beyond” and cautioned that such spaces are “disorienting” and cause a “disturbance of direction” (as cited in Kalua, 2009, p. 25). This new, third space of confusion allows for new learning environments. As such, third space discourse can be seen in preservice programs where educators were urged to create learning environments that bring traditionally hierarchical knowledge, such as university professor and practicing teacher, to an equal and more dialectical relationship for preservice learning environments (Klein et al., 2013; Zeichner, 2010). This “nonhierarchical interplay” between the college and university professors and in-service teachers allowed for a richer learning experience for preservice teachers as the exchange of academic knowledge transformed from an either/or to an and/also learning environment (Zeichner, 2010, p. 89). As described by Klein et al. (2013), third space learning environments are “neither easy nor quick, nor is it ever a completed project” (p. 28).



In their application of third space learning environments, Klein et al. (2013) described how they extended the work of Zeichner (2010) to develop an urban teacher preparation project called the Newark Montclair Urban Teaching Residency (NMUTR). Drawing on concepts emphasized by Zeichner (2010), such as using a third space to create a more democratic and inclusive learning environment in new, less hierarchical ways, Klein et al. (2013) placed an emphasis on creating environments where no group's knowledge (i.e. faculty, school-based mentors, or students) was privileged over others. As such, all stakeholders in the NMUTR program would have an equal say in the co-construction of the program. Klein et al. (2013) used third space in a way that allowed the residents that took part in the NMUTR to have a say in their learning. However, the residents did not just have *a say* in their program, they had *an equal say* in their program (Klein et al., 2013). The difference is the application of third space.

The goal, according to Klein et al. (2013), of the NMUTR program was to allow for “traditionally passive receivers of knowledge to have active roles as constructors of knowledge, posers and investigators of problems” (p. 38). As such, the curriculum for the NMUTR was continually negotiated and modified based on the input by all stakeholders. The dynamic shift of such learning environments occurs in the learning itself. With such stakeholder input, the inquiries from stakeholders become the new basis for the scope and sequence of the curriculum (Klein et al., 2013). This type of learning environment takes on a new form of meaning to the resident teachers as the lived experiences become the focus of the curriculum, rather than a lock-step approach to what should be learned and when. It is in this very non-hierarchical, co-creative space that third space learning takes on the theoretical lens that was applied to the research on new teacher induction collected during the analysis portion of this study. It was the hope of this

study that through such third space analysis researchers and practitioners may better understand induction program design and function.

### **Literature Review Methodology**

To identify the studies for this review, I conducted a search using Montclair State University's Sprague Library online articles search engine. The filter categories of "full text" and "peer-reviewed" were used along with the initial search term of "new teacher induction programs" in academic journals offered by the Montclair State University Sprague Library Collection. The specific databases used for this inquiry were ERIC, Education Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, PsychINFO, Teacher Reference Center, SAGE Knowledge, Directory of Open Access Journals, ScienceDirect, and JSTOR Journals. From here, I further limited the volume of articles by the publication date range of 2000 to 2018 to give a more current article selection for this review. After yielding 1,744 articles, I further limited the results using the search term "new teacher experiences" and articles that appear in the English language. The pool of articles was reduced to 353 search results. I further narrowed the search results by adding the term "new teacher perceptions." This field was added to the search to include what opinions new teachers shared on their induction programs in an attempt to locate new teacher voices in the research. This yielded 30 articles.

Upon a preliminary review of articles in the initial pool, I excluded those that were not empirical studies focused on new teacher perceptions during their induction programs. I decided to not limit the search further to studies only conducted in the United States to allow for a wider view of new teacher induction programs and the experiences and perceptions of new teachers involved in such. Using these exclusion rules, I used 15 studies for this review.

In the studies selected the researchers examine novice (new) teacher experiences through their induction programs from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches. Of the 15 studies selected, five studies use qualitative methods, seven use quantitative design methods, and three used mixed study design methods in their research. I read and categorized these studies by not only their research methods, but also by the emergent themes that spoke to new teacher experiences or perceptions during induction (Saldaña, 2009). The emergent themes were then coded and categorized (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The categories that emerged will be the focus of the next section.

## **Results**

During the analysis of the articles for this study, emergent themes presented themselves that warranted both individual and larger contextual discussions around new teacher induction experiences. As a larger context, the particular themes will be tied together in the analysis portion of this paper as they all relate to the experiences new teachers have during induction from their own perspective, thus, providing new teachers with a voice. However, individually the emergent themes that presented themselves during the article analysis were: (a) Shock of Teaching, (b) New Teacher Isolation, (c) Complexities of Teaching and/or Organizational Complexities, (d) Local Context of Teaching, and (e) New Teacher Voices. Many of the articles reviewed discussed more than one theme, therefore they will appear in multiple subsequent sections. A discussion of the results for each type of theme follows.

### ***Shock of Teaching***

Of the fifteen articles reviewed for this paper, six spoke about the apparent “shock” new teachers experienced when moving from preservice to in-service teaching (Algozzine et al., 2017; Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Hunter

et al., 2011; Petersen, 2017). To explain the shock that new teachers may experience as they enter the world of teaching, the transition period from preservice to teaching was explored in a semi-structured qualitative study by Petersen (2017). During Petersen's (2017) introduction to her study, she uses the term "liminal stage" to describe the stage between student teaching and teachers entering the workforce. As she interviewed 10 new teachers about their experiences during this liminal stage of their careers, Petersen (2017) reported that new teachers appeared to be "unrealistic and/or unprepared" in what they expected they would encounter during this period. In her study, Petersen (2017) found that new teachers experienced a shock as they moved from being students to becoming teachers responsible for students. This same *shock* experience was also seen in the study of Algozzine et al. (2017) where new teachers reported in this mixed-methods study of third-year teachers in North Carolina that the first year of teaching was especially tough and that they needed very specific types of assistance to get over the culture shock from moving from the university world to teaching. Although the specific types of assistance were not discussed, the overall picture of new teachers experiencing a culture shock when beginning teaching was certainly emphasized.

Adding to the theme of culture shock during this liminal stage of a teacher's career, Hunter et al. (2011) looked to find a safe space for new teachers to go to aid in the transition from preservice to teaching. As a potential space to discuss transitional worries that new teachers may experience, Hunter et al. (2017) offered the staffroom as a location for new teachers to seek answers to the questions they may have had during their transition. Although Hunter et al. (2017) offered the use of the staffroom as a safe place for new teacher learning, they emphasized that a particular location was not as important as was the creation of an environment of assistance where students were assisted with the realities of teaching. The stark realities of being alone in a

classroom as a new teacher versus the support during the preservice teacher experience were also explored by Clark and Byrnes (2012).

In this quantitative study of 136 new teachers and their perceptions of mentoring during induction, Clark and Byrnes (2012) highlighted the transition from pre-service to teaching as it related to the support from one to the other. The authors pointed out the shock that beginning teachers experienced while in transition to the classroom based on the many layers of support offered to pre-service teachers; i.e. faculty, classmates, cooperating teachers, and college or university supervisors (Clark & Byrnes, 2012). However once a new teacher began to teach, the support mechanisms that were offered as a pre-service teacher candidate were largely absent, causing a feeling of “shock” for the beginning teacher (Clark & Byrnes, 2012). The same transitional “shock” was discussed in the research of Cañón Rodríguez et al. (2017) where the connection between initial training and initiation were identified as very important times in a new teacher’s career to minimize the shock new teachers experienced when the ideals that brought them into teaching conflicted with the realities of teaching. To assist in dealing with such new teacher shock, Clark and Byrnes (2012) asked new teachers about their experiences with mentors under a sociocultural theoretical framework as opposed to Cañón Rodríguez et al. (2017) where the participants (502 teachers) took part in a survey that illustrated the problems faced by new teachers upon entering the profession. The results from the Likert scale survey used in Clark and Byrnes (2012) were a report on specific mentoring qualities that new teachers found helpful during induction i.e. being a good listener and mentors encouraging the novice during times of self-doubt.

The feelings of new teachers, specifically the feeling of shock, were also explored by Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) who conducted a case study on a Spanish teacher in a high

school in Chicago. Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) were specifically studying the challenges new teachers faced and how they coped with them. They acknowledged that teaching was stressful, in general, and that all teachers had to deal with changes in education, such as curriculum and/or policies. However, Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) highlighted that new teachers may also have a more difficult time dealing with changes and that the adjustment from a teacher candidate to a teacher can be overwhelming. Like Clark and Byrnes (2012), Dias-Lacy and Guirguis (2017) emphasized that the transitional shock from preservice to teaching may be caused by the lack of support new teachers had as opposed to when they were in preservice programs.

In brief, the articles previously discussed mentioned new teacher shock as they transitioned from preservice to working teachers. This shock may come, as the research suggested, from a lack of support during the transition period or liminal stage of a new teacher's career as such supports were present while the teachers were in preservice programs, but were not offered once the new teachers began in-service teaching. As such, all articles mentioned looked to induction components, such as mentors and formal programs, to address the shock experienced by new teachers. Closely related to new teacher shock, but in a stand-alone-theme of its own, is the feeling of isolation that new teachers may have felt during this liminal stage of teaching.

### ***New Teacher Isolation***

Of the fifteen studies analyzed, three studies spoke directly to the theme of new teacher isolation (Anthony et al., 2011; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In their quantitative study of the effects induction programs have on teacher retention, Smith and Ingersoll (2004) described the induction phase of teaching as a "boot camp" for new teachers where they are cast into the educational waters in a "sink or swim" environment (p. 682). In such

environments, the new teachers worked, according to Smith and Ingersoll (2004), in isolation from colleagues where they were often “left to their own devices to succeed or fail within the confines of their own classroom” (p. 682).

This large-scale quantitative study used the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to assess induction practices, participation in induction programs, turnover rates among new teachers, and the effects of mentoring and other induction activities on retention. Not surprisingly, some of the findings from Smith and Ingersoll’s (2004) study suggested that some activities, such as having mentors from the same field, common planning time with other teachers, and being part of an external network of teachers helped with issues of new teacher isolation which led to higher teacher retention. The importance of comprehensive induction programs that support new teachers and address new teacher isolation was also stressed by Anthony et al. (2011) where they used qualitative grounded theory inquiry to study new teachers in New Zealand during their first years of teaching.

Anthony et al. (2011) studied new teachers at the end of their first year through semi-structured interviews that targeted topics around the experience of being a new teacher. They identified key aspects of becoming a teacher through socio-cultural theory which included the experience of being a new teacher, new teacher learning, the induction experience, and career pathways. The interviews took place in three-parts, one after the first six months of teaching, one after 12 months of teaching, and one after 18 months of teaching. The findings support what Smith and Ingersoll (2004) found that new teachers had experienced isolation upon entering their schools, but through comprehensive induction and support practices, they were able to “fit in.” The “fitting in” of new teachers in Anthony et al. (2011) was predicated on frequent accounts of collaborative relationships that valued the new teachers’ contributions (p. 865). A similar finding

was reported by Clark and Byrnes (2012) to address teacher isolation where mentors, again, played a major role in new teacher support.

Clark and Byrnes (2012) studied 136 new teachers through quantitative surveys to determine the forms of mentoring support that new teachers found most supportive during their induction programs. Not surprisingly, Clark and Byrnes (2012), like Smith and Ingersoll and Anthony et al. (2011), found that mentors that were good listeners, common planning time, and release time were helpful during induction, as opposed to not being provided. As such, research has certainly demonstrated that new teachers feel isolated when they begin teaching (Anthony et al., 2011; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

As new teachers find themselves isolated in their new positions, the structures and supports of induction programs that bring new teachers into the folds of their schools or districts certainly illustrate the complexities of the teaching profession. As such, complexities of teaching and the institutional complexities that new teachers find themselves navigating through their first years of teaching are acknowledged in several articles that were reviewed for this paper.

### ***Teaching and/or Institutional Complexities***

In review of the literature on new teacher induction and the perception of new teachers during such phases, eight articles mention either the complexities of teaching or the institutional complexities that exist as a matter of concern for new teachers during their transition to the teacher workforce (Anthony et al., 2011; Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017; Hammerness & Matsko, 2013; Ingersoll, 2001; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2017; Petersen, 2017; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Specifically, Petersen (2017) mentioned the “strong pull” towards teaching that new teachers experience during their pre-service years, but then find it difficult to actually attend to the children given the complex nature and demands of teaching (Petersen, 2017). However,



Petersen (2017) argued that this transition period is a “rite of passage” for new teachers as they become enculturated into a school (p. 2). It is within this rite of passage that new teachers must learn to deal with complexities such as attending to many children within their charge, learning in such formal classroom situations, and traversing the climate and cultures of school environments (Petersen, 2017). In her South African study, Petersen (2017) set out to understand the challenges of new teachers during this transitional (liminal) period by conducting 10 interviews with novice teachers. The overarching theme in her findings was that teachers felt they were not prepared for the complexities of teaching. Specifically, the new teachers blamed their undergraduate institutions, their lack of induction and support during their transition, and administrative burdens placed on them while performing their teaching duties (Petersen, 2017). The last finding of additional administrative burdens and the complexities of the teaching profession were also addressed by Kang and Berliner (2012).

Kang and Berliner (2012) used the SASS survey, as seen in Smith and Ingersoll’s (2004) work, to examine the impacts of induction activities on beginning teacher turnover. However, Kang and Berliner (2012) purposely excluded teacher participants that moved or left schools for unavoidable or involuntary reasons, where Smith and Ingersoll (2004) treated all teachers leaving the profession as a “homogeneous group of teachers” (p. 270). As such, Kang and Berliner (2012) narrowed the reasons for teachers leaving the profession down to the population of teachers that “otherwise might decide to change schools or leave the profession” and what affects new teacher induction has on this population, if any (p. 272). During their introduction to induction programs and the importance of teacher retention, Kang and Berliner (2012) mentioned the dissatisfaction new teachers may feel about teaching that may potentially lead to new teachers leaving. Specifically, Kang and Berliner looked at avoidable, voluntary turnover

factors that include better pay, better working conditions, effective leadership, and well-run organizations. Favoring quantitative research, Kang and Berliner (2012) suggested that results from their survey reveal four induction activities that were commonly practiced to support new teachers during induction. Activities that were revealed during this study were: (a) extra classroom assistance, (b) participation in seminars or classes specific to new teachers, (c) and common planning time with teachers in the same subject (Kang & Berliner, 2012, p. 276). Kang and Berliner further suggested that participation in such induction activities had an impact on reducing the likelihood of teachers leaving the teaching profession, especially when leaving the profession was avoidable and voluntary (p. 279). The institutional factors that contribute to avoidable teacher turnover are specifically associated with organizations (Kang & Berliner, 2012, p. 270). However, to further the institutional complexities of teaching, what happens when curricular and programmatic demands conflict with new teacher needs for immediate help? This very layer of complexity and competing goals was explored by Mitchell et al. (2017).

In a qualitative study of 18 novice teachers participating in an online induction program in California, Mitchell et al. (2017) found that the preliminary needs of the classroom outweighed the induction program needs i.e. formative assessments. Participants in this study were to respond to the “seven cycles of inquiry” used as the curricular structure of the induction program. Participants also engaged in online discussion boards as part of their induction program. The first part of the data collection asked participants to answer a satisfaction survey where the questions sought to measure new teacher satisfaction with the induction program and various aspects of the program including their satisfaction with their coaching match, how frequently one-on-one meetings were held with mentors, and how frequently new teachers communicate with their mentors about issues related to their teaching practices (Mitchell et al.,

2017). The needs of the classroom coaches' experiences to guide new teachers through the complexities of teaching appear to trump the assessment needs. Again, the findings suggested that new teachers have needs that require specialized attention as the complexities of classroom teaching are prioritized concerns of new teachers (Mitchell et al., 2017). Specific classroom needs were also seen in a case study of a teacher program by Hammerness and Matsko (2013).

In a study of new teacher induction at the University of Chicago's Urban Teacher Education Program, it was found that local context within a teacher preparation program district has a place within the content of the induction program (Hammerness & Matsko, 2013).

Specifically, for new teachers to be able to navigate through the complexities of teaching in urban areas, such as Chicago, teachers must learn about the school, district, and children within local context to be able to navigate through such complexities (Hammerness & Matsko, 2013).

Similarly, Anthony et al. (2017) acknowledged the complex array of personal needs to the workplace that have an impact on individual teachers, especially new teachers. As was the case in Hammerness and Matsko's (2013) study, Anthony et al. (2017) emphasized the use of local context to assist new teachers through their transition period. Specifically, new teachers in Anthony et al. (2017) learned about school policies and procedures, standards of discipline, and the students. The various themes of complexities that arose during article analysis can be highlighted by Ingersoll's (2001) claim that schools need to address the organizational sources of low teacher retention.

In Ingersoll's (2001) analysis of teacher turnover through organizational analysis, he claimed that the teacher shortage problem must be solved by the organizations in which they work. This can be done, according to Ingersoll (2001), by examining the characteristics of the organizations that teachers work in and examining the turnover at the level of the organization.

Like Hammerness and Matsko (2013), Ingersoll's study turned to the institutions themselves and the complexities that exist within such institutions as they relate to new teacher retention. Here, Ingersoll (2001) used the SASS system to investigate new teacher retention from an organizational perspective, as opposed to the SASS system used by Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) and Kang and Berliner (2012) to look at the individual impact induction programs had on new teachers. Ingersoll (2001) also included the role of school characteristics and organizational conditions as both relate to the complexities new teachers face upon entering teaching. Specifically, Ingersoll looked at the "degree of conflict and strife" within an organization as a condition of an organization. In his conclusions, Ingersoll pointed to teachers leaving the profession, or migrating to other districts, due to organizational strife and conflict. Such strife and conflict can be considered organizational complexities for purposes of research analysis as they are intertwined with a final layer of complexity to new teacher induction; that of the performance of bureaucratic tasks as seen in Cañón Rodríguez et al. (2017).

In a quantitative study conducted in Leon Province of Spain, Cañón Rodríguez et al. (2017) set out to study the differences between newly qualified and experienced teachers in terms of their perspectives on initiation. Using ex-post-facto methods, a questionnaire was generated to 123 teachers, of which only 51.3% were new teachers. Results relevant to the complexities of teaching yielded that new teachers did not feel they were prepared to "face the heavy workload" of teaching (Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017, p. 106). However, over 80% of the new teachers responded that they did not feel they were trained well in "performing bureaucratic tasks," believing that they received "less than satisfactory" training and preparation (Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017). Other complexities addressed in the Cañón Rodríguez et al.'s (2017) study that new teachers felt underprepared to handle were: relationships with parents (78.3%),

liaising with the management team (76.6%), interacting with other colleagues in the school (71.7%), and engaging in the decision-making process at the school level (61.7%) (Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017, p. 107).

In all, the articles contained in the theme of teaching and organizational complexities speak to exposure to a new world for new teachers and how new teachers feel they are unprepared to navigate through such new terrains. As new teachers enter the workforce for the first time and are exposed to local and institutional demands that create a layer of additional entanglements. As such, how new teachers traverse such professional and institutional demands depends largely on the local context in which the complexities are situated. Therefore, the next theme that emerged during research analysis was that of new teachers operating within the local context of their positions.

### ***Local Context***

Of the articles selected, six articles spoke of using local context information during induction to assist new teachers in their transition to schools or districts (Anthony et al., 2011; Algozzine et al., 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2013; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016). The importance of new teachers learning within local context was emphasized in the findings of Anthony et al. (2011) where the authors identified the importance of offering the community itself as a resource of multifaceted induction programs as the communities may act in the support of goal achievement within a new teacher's transition to a school or district. Anthony et al. (2011) further pointed out that each school may represent a unique system, as supported by the data collected through their qualitative research of new teacher induction. Such recognition of unique learning environments was especially important

for new teachers while they were trying to fit into their new workplace (Anthony et al., 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Petersen, 2017).

During the social adjustment phase of induction, new teachers may find themselves traversing the power dynamics within a school or district (Petersen, 2017). Such learning has a place in new teacher induction as indicated by Fantilli and McDougall's (2009) study where they found that almost half of the new teachers that participated in their mixed-methods study on new teachers were ready to leave the profession due to lack of support at the local level and the challenges they faced as new teachers. Furthermore, most of the findings in Fantilli and McDougall's (2009) study suggested that new teachers encounter problems at the local level, such as challenges with student behavior, communication with parents, report cards, meetings the requirements of individual education plans (IEPs), and challenges communicating with colleagues and administration. To negotiate through such local issues, new teachers need to learn about the school and community in which they work (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012).

Hammerness and Matsko (2012) studied the importance of school context during new teacher induction in the Chicago Public School System. The research question in Hammerness and Matsko's (2012) work was "What does induction look like when it takes context into account?" (p. 559) Here, Hammerness and Matsko (2012) included the concept of multicultural education at the local level of schools to be part of the induction process for new teachers. Essentially, the new teachers were to understand the role that culture, ethnicity, and educational backgrounds play in the community they were going to teach in. In their case study, Hammerness and Matsko (2012) asserted that context has content when induction programs focus on settings and tailor support for new teachers within that specific context. Ultimately, the challenges faced by the teacher in Hammerness and Matsko's (2012) case study were addressed

through context-specific supports that were “built on and further developed” the new teacher’s knowledge of local contextual information i.e. local economics, geographical, cultural features, knowledge of routines and procedures, and curriculum specific to the school (p. 574).

Recognition of local context knowledge can be useful to new teachers in both a social and functional transition as each school is unique in both aspects.

To assist in the functionality of local context, Algozzine et al. (2017) found through their mixed-methods approach to studying new teachers’ perceptions of induction programs that new teachers found value in local guidance when locating materials, supplies, and equipment as well as implementing curriculum and working towards goals. Such functional features of local context knowledge, specifically following local policies and procedures, were also noted in the work of Williams and Gillham (2016).

In their work, Williams and Gillham (2016) quantitatively studied the effectiveness of the Ohio Resident Educator Program (OREP) from the perspective of new teachers. Ultimately, the results of the study showed that new teachers involved in the OREP found the induction program to not be helpful in terms of improving their abilities to meet the Ohio State Department of Education’s Standards, seven of which were asked about in the survey of 245 first to fourth-year teachers. Out of the predominantly negative responses, the positive responses that were recorded centered on local contextual knowledge and resources i.e. mentors, colleagues, and administrators, to improve their ability to meet the Ohio Standards (Williams & Gillham, 2016).

Whether the local context serves as a matter of social or functional navigation, new teachers certainly seem to find value in the offering of such knowledge during induction (Anthony et al., 2011; Algozzine et al., 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2013; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016). Overall, local context certainly has a

footing in the research on new teacher induction, especially when reported by new teachers. However, it is the reporting of such valuable resources during induction that is the fifth and final theme of this paper that serves as the anchor conversation to new teacher perceptions of induction programs.

### *New Teacher Voices*

In the selected articles for this literature review, only four articles emphasized the importance of new teacher voices and input during the induction phase (Anthony et al., 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016). Most notably, Williams and Gillham (2016) emphasized the importance of future studies that incorporate the perceptions of new teachers in the creation and implementation of new teacher induction programs. Petersen (2017) echoed the importance of new teacher voice where she describes the struggles of new teachers to find a voice, or “footing,” in their learning as the social structures that exist in schools place them in low rank among colleagues, essentially stripping new teachers of any status within the learning community (p. 2). Furthermore, the new teachers themselves reported feeling “powerless” when expressing their ideas to colleagues as they are expected to be silent during their first years of teaching (Petersen, 2017, p. 4).

In silencing the new teachers during the induction phase of their careers, Anthony et al. (2011) suggested that new teacher learning may be limited as features of comprehensive induction programs should have a “multivoicedness” approach to their creation. Anthony et al. (2011) suggested that, like Williams and Gillham (2016) and Petersen (2017), individuals may differ in their needs, especially new teachers in their interpretation of objectives within a learning environment. Adding a new teacher voice to this process may allow for stakeholders in the



induction program i.e. schools, district boards, administrators, to better serve the new teachers during induction (Fantilli & McDougal, 2009).

Fantilli and McDougal (2009) addressed the absence of new teacher voices during induction where they set out to use new teacher voices to inform stakeholders of new teacher struggles, rather than attempt to interpret new teacher struggles. In their mixed-methods study, Fantilli and McDougal (2009) attempted to gain individualized perspectives of novice teachers in Ontario, Canada through online surveys and follow-up interviews. Ultimately, Fantilli and McDougal (2009) used a sample of 56 participants in their survey which set out to ask about 15 challenges new teachers face during their first years of teaching. The two major findings reported by Fantilli and McDougal (2009) were the amount of time participants had to prepare for their first teaching assignments and the mentorship relationships formed within the first year of teaching. Fantilli and McDougal (2009) offered their findings and the use of new teacher voices to stakeholders as a means to inform and improve new teacher induction practices.

The use of new teacher voices to inform and improve upon new teacher induction practices, as seen in Fantilli and McDougal (2009) may serve a greater purpose in the overall conversation of new teacher induction. This is especially true when applying a third space lens to new teacher induction programs and practices; such are explored in more detail in the final sections of this chapter.

### **Analysis of Literature through a Third Space Lens**

All of the articles selected for this literature review of empirical research touch upon the subject of new teacher induction. Most of the articles report on what new teachers have to “say” about their induction programs through either qualitative or quantitative interpretations and results. However, the application of third space “hybrid” theory of learning environments to the

selected literature reveals a potential gap in the research as no studies on new teacher induction included new teachers in the co-creation of induction programs, as third space theory would dictate. The only studies that came close to even a suggestion of using third space in new teacher induction programs were Fantilli and McDougal (2009) and Williams and Gillham (2016).

Fantilli and McDougal (2009) used new teacher experiences to inform stakeholders of what new teachers were experiencing during induction. However, the data collected from Fantilli and McDougal's (2009) mixed-methods study was meant to serve as a megaphone for new teacher perceptions of induction programs, not as a microphone of co-constructed new teacher induction as seen in the preservice application of Klein et al. (2013). Fantilli and McDougal (2009) meant for the information collected in their research to impact future creation of induction programs by suggesting that districts and policymakers listen to what new teachers have to say. However, a third space application of such information would not suggest that such policymakers listen to what new teachers have to say, but rather deconstruct the traditional power structures to create an equal say in the formation of new teacher induction programs. The differences are not subtle, but are rather monumental in terms of new teachers actually being heard during a process rather than being considered as others create programs for them. Application of such co-creation methods to induction programs may allow new teachers to make sense of the world they are now living in by creating a responsive program based on what new teachers are experiencing, as they experience it. This concept of meeting new teachers where they are as they experience difficulties, rather than a prescribed learning curriculum, may help with new teacher attrition rates.

Such differences of new teachers being considered in the formation of new teacher induction programs and new teachers being involved in the creation of such programs were

mentioned in Williams and Gillham (2016). As suggested in their findings and recommendations section, Williams and Gillham (2016) questioned how organizations may use the perceptions of new teachers in the creation and implementation of new teacher programs, however, this is quite different than involving the new teachers in the creation of the induction programs. They used statistical analysis to conclude that many new teachers were largely disappointed with the Ohio State Induction Program. Again, the purpose of the study was to inform policymakers on the overall effectiveness of such induction programs. Noticeably absent from the process is the co-creation of induction programs involving new teachers with equal say.

Ultimately, the application of a third space lens to the research discussed reveals an absence in the application or use of new teacher voices in the creation of the very induction programs that are meant to assist new teachers during their transition into a school or district. A third space analysis of the literature further revealed that researchers appeared to find value in new teacher voices, however the value of the information appears to be used to inform those that have the power to create induction programs, not to co-create induction programs alongside new teachers (Anthony et al., 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016). If what new teachers had to say about their learning during induction carried any true value in the creation of such programs, the application of a third space lens would have revealed evidence of such during research analysis. This was not the case in this analysis, as at no point in the research did co-creation of induction programs surface.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This review of empirical research on new teacher induction, and the perceptions of the programs from the new teachers that were involved in them, revealed interesting findings within the conversation of new teacher induction. With nearly 40 years of formal induction practices

and programs to address teacher attrition rates and this particular time-period of transition, researchers and educational stakeholders alike should be curious as to why educational systems are still plagued with high teacher-turnover. With teachers leaving the profession as high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017), clearly something needs to be done to address the alarming number of educators leaving during this specific transitional stage.

The empirical research analyzed for this paper tells a unique story of new teachers as they experience transitional shock and isolation upon entering a complex teaching world filled with localized organizational procedures and demands. However, new teachers do have things to say about the induction programs that are meant to serve them, but is anyone listening? Calls by researchers to include what new teachers have to say about induction, even in the past 20 years or so, appear to be ignored as the prevalent literature prefers to offer characteristics of new teacher induction programs over the content and context of such. Perhaps what is needed to improve new teacher induction is not suggested practices sanitized by the researchers that wish to pass along a message to policy and program creators, but the distinct voices of the new teachers as equal stakeholder, with equal say, in program development.

Through the application of a third space conceptual framework, perhaps new teacher induction programs can be created *with* new teachers rather than *for* new teachers. Application of a cultural lens, such as third space, to inform the content and form of local context for new teacher induction programs may prove to be useful to address the high teacher attrition rates and assist new teachers during their transitional phase into teaching. As such, it appears that more research on including teacher voices to inform induction practices may be needed.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **Purpose of Study**

As qualitative researchers, our goal is to see the world through someone else's eyes, using ourselves as a research instrument; it thus follows that we must experience our research both intellectually and emotionally. (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009, p. 62)

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), it is important for practitioners to have “an interest in knowing more about one's practice” (p. 1). This interest into one's practice is often accompanied by the interest to improve one's practice, which leads to asking “researchable questions” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 1). My role as an administrator lends itself to such interests as I am in a position where I can potentially change new teacher induction practices to better accommodate new teacher needs within my district. However, to strategically make changes to our new teacher induction program, it was first necessary to identify what new teacher needs are, not just rely on what the district believes they should be. Therefore, I designed a qualitative study where I had an opportunity to engage both new teachers and teacher coaches in questions and dialogue about new teacher needs during induction. The purpose of the study was not only to improve my practice as an administrator through understanding new teacher needs, but also to have a better understanding of what new teachers were experiencing during their transition into our district so that induction practices could evolve to better meet new teacher needs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to advance new teacher induction research by exploring new teacher needs through new teacher voices and through the voices of the peers intended to assist new teachers during their transition into teaching. Using a qualitative research

approach to study new teacher needs (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patten, 2017), semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers that were in either their fourth or fifth year of teaching. The teachers, all of whom were at the end of their induction phase during this study, were asked a series of semi-structured questions concerning their needs during their induction into teaching. In addition to the group of new teachers, a group of teacher coaches were interviewed regarding new teacher needs as the teacher coaches have been in positions to help new teachers as they transition into the district. A focus group of participants was used to discuss new teacher needs and offered “opinions, attitudes, and experiences to the topic” (Patten, 2017, p. 165). Field notes and journals were kept throughout the study and internal documents pertaining to induction practices and participant interviews were analyzed to allow for constant comparative methods of data analysis to have taken place (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition to constant comparative analysis, two critical friends, who were also doctoral students, were utilized to review the data from the perspectives of administrators. The analyzed data was also reviewed by participants during follow-up interviews following feedback from the focus group consisting of all but one of the original participants from the initial interviews. Using such triangulation methods increased the credibility of the findings yielded from this study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question that drove this study was “How can induction better include the voices of the novice teachers it serves?” Expanding upon prior research in new teacher induction studies, specifically Fantilli and McDougall’s (2009) study on first year teacher needs as expressed by the new teachers themselves (i.e., using new teacher voice), the underlying research questions forming this qualitative study were the following:

- How do fourth/fifth-year teachers make sense of their first years of teaching?
- How do teacher coaches make sense of the needs of the novice teachers they work with?
- How does this inform my work as a district administrator?
- How can using a micropolitical literacy framework help me make sense of induction practices with coaches; new teachers; new teacher needs; new teacher transition?

### **Positionality: The Inside, Outsider**

In the introduction to this chapter, I specifically stated my role as an administrator in a school district. While serving in such a role, I have the ability to influence change to new teacher induction practices within my district. However, while serving as both an administrator in a school district and a researcher within the district, there are certain ethical considerations that had to be addressed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Chavez (2008) captured the internal tug-of-war that persisted within a researcher that examined a project as an insider. As such, she described the stigmas that plague researchers that position themselves in either role. Essentially, the criticisms of an insider are believed to hold biased positions when examining their work that may result in overly positive results that may impose their own beliefs, values, and perceptions on the lives of the participants (Chavez, 2008). As a researcher who also serves as a district administrator, positionality created an inherent dilemma in my work.

Drawing from Chavez's work on multigenerational Mexican American families, specifically her compelling arguments that insiders may possess both advantages and complications from their positions, I would like to describe my insider position during this study so that the readers better understand the importance of induction as it pertains to my positionality. In terms of the advantages of being an educator, my own experiences allowed me to draw on personal knowledge of induction, much like Chavez did in her study. This closeness to the topic allowed for deeper connections with the nuances of induction and stirred both

emotions and memories that allowed me to connect with the participants (Chavez, 2008). This connection through shared experiences offered a unique insight into field research in that I was able to draw upon personal experience to bring, otherwise underrepresented, experiences into the discussions. However, the advantages of being an “insider” are also complicated with the dilemma that Chavez describes as “shifting social identities” (p. 476).

Expanding on previous discussions by Labaree (as cited in Chavez, 2008), Chavez explains the shifting social identities dilemma as:

The advantage we have in knowing the community may be weakened or strengthened based on the ways in which our various social identities may shift during interaction with participants, or based on the degree of perceived or real closeness to participants as a result of shared experience or social identities (e.g., race, gender, age). (p. 476)

The inherent risk of such insider studies is that the researchers, since they are considered members of a community, may become both the subject and the object of the study. The realization of this dilemma added both advantages and disadvantages to the validity of my study as I have experienced the transition into the teaching profession and am, in essence, influential in the creation of new teacher programs within our district. This dual-role as an insider naturally stirred professional and personal emotions in my work and related to the shifting social realities Chavez spoke about in her work. As a district administrator, there was also the inherent risk of hearing situations from participants that had to be addressed. No such situations occurred during the interviews and focus group discussions, but the risk of using such research methods warrants discussion for future researchers.

As a researcher, I was curious as to what needs new teachers had that may be beyond classroom needs. However, as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggests, interviews with participants



carries with it “both risks and benefits” (p. 262). The inherent risks associated with asking such questions as a researcher in this study were that the participants may have provided answers that, as an administrator, I could not ignore. For example, if participants had violated any laws or endangered children in any way, as an administrator I would have to have acted on such information. Additionally, if the new teachers were subjected to any illegal or unethical acts during their years in the district, and divulged such during the interviews, I would have had to act on such information as well. Therefore, given the importance of this research, it was essential that I discussed and disclosed such dilemmas with all of the participants before the interviews and focus group began as I was obligated to act upon anything disclosed during the interviews, or make suggestions as to ways to address the disclosed situations as they may warrant such attention or actions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Realizing my role as both a researcher and an administrator within the district I studied, I was also sensitive to the vulnerable population I was studying (i.e., non-tenured teachers). This was especially true given the power imbalance associated with my position as a district-level administrator. As such, there were inherent risks for the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018) during our interviews as they may have reflected on situations that warranted administrative interventions. To verify if any administrative actions needed to be taken, I utilized critical friends to bridge the ethical dilemmas of my dual-role. The critical friends were doctoral students, one in my program at Montclair State University, the other in another institution. Both served in administrative roles, one of which was a colleague in my district. The administrative critical friends were to independently assess the need for administrative actions based on the information divulged or discussed during interviews. If needed, they were to alert me to any potential conflicts within my positions as an administrator and a researcher. No such situations arose during this study. Additionally, the participants were

made aware of my obligations as an administrator and were informed that if a situation presented itself that warranted actions, or advice on such, I would be making recommendations or taking actions based on the situation that was disclosed. Although serving as an insider/outsider may have necessitated administrative actions during this study, I also believe that there were distinct advantages to this dual-role during this study.

Chavez (2008) highlighted some of the advantages of being an insider during research, including the unique abilities to understand the participants on cognitive, emotional, and psychological levels. Additionally, Chavez emphasized the importance of being able to draw upon personal experiences to offer a more profound historical knowledge and practices in the studied field (p. 481); inside researchers may find a familiarity with the community to create instant access and rapport. Much like Chavez's experience within her community of study, I felt a connection with the interview participants throughout my work. Such paralleled feelings also emerged with Chavez's work where she shared her status as a researcher with her family. I found this relatable as my pursuit of a doctoral degree has very much been shared with my professional community. This interesting play on, and with, shifting identities placed me in a very interesting dilemma as a research practitioner as I am also a district administrator. This is especially true for non-tenured employees in the district. Therefore, my role in my research started with the realization that I am both very much an insider, having been a new teacher myself, and very much an outsider as I am currently serving as an administrator interviewing teachers in my district.

Ultimately, as much as Christina Chavez's work highlighted some of the advantages of positionality in insider research, such as expediency of access and insight, there were also complications of such status that may have played a role in my research. During the interviews

and document analysis of district employees and policies, my insider status may have jeopardized the free-flow of answers from participants, therefore limiting my access to information. Furthermore, during the data collection process, the selection of participants may have been biased due to prior relationships with participants. Although I do not believe the participants held much back based on our professional relationships, for disclosure purposes it is important to mention my positionality during this study as such disclosures strengthen my reflexivity as a researcher; the awareness of my “influence on what is being studied and how the researcher process affects the researcher” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 64).

### **Context of the Study**

In this study, I looked at new teacher needs in public schools during their transitional period (identified as nontenured) into a school or district. I began my study in March of 2020 and conducted my research through June of 2020 at a public school district in the Northeast United States, Auriolus (pseudonym) Public Schools (APS). APS offered a unique opportunity to study new teacher induction as at the time of this study the district served approximately 120 teachers that were under five years of teaching (i.e., non-tenured staff) representing roughly twenty-five percent of the total certificated staff at APS. Having a quarter of the certificated staff either new to the district, or new to teaching, offered a unique setting to study new teacher needs. This is especially important given that all of APS’ schools are designated Title I schools, thus serving a population of students faced with the highest turnover rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

### ***District Background***

The school district in which I conducted my research is located in the Northeastern United States and served a P-12 population of 4,495 students in seven elementary schools (P-6),

one middle school (7-8), and a senior high school (9-12) (Appendix A-District Summary Report, 2018-19). Of the 4,495 students, 52.6% were classified as “economically disadvantaged,” with a 6.1% “English learner population” and 16.7% population of “students with disabilities.” The student to teacher ratio was reported to be 13:1 where the average teacher experience in years was listed as 10.3 (*see* Appendix A). As reported in the 2018-2019 School Performance Summary Report—the most recent report available at the time of this study—the district fell below State testing standards in both English Language Arts and Math, scoring 50% (State standard of >57.9%) and 27% (State standard of >44.5%) respectively. The overall four-year graduation rate was 88.1% and the chronic absenteeism (students that were absent for 10% or more days enrolled) rate exceeded the State average by 3.6%.

With over 400 instructional staff throughout the nine buildings, the administrative representation was split into school-based and district-based personnel. Of the seven elementary schools, five had a principal assigned to their building full-time. Two of the seven elementary schools had a shared principal i.e. splitting time equally among both schools. The middle school had a principal and two assistant principals. The high school had a principal and three assistant principals. District administration consisted of three directors of curriculum and instruction, one serving the P-12 population, one serving P-6, and one serving 7-12. The director that served P-6 had a supervisor, as did the director serving 7-12. The special services department consists of a director and a supervisor. The 7-12 guidance department had a supervisor, who reported to both the middle school and high school principals. Central office administration consisted of the director of operations/chief talent officer and the district superintendent.

### ***Participants***

This study was conducted using semi-structured interviews with new teacher participants in either their fourth or fifth year of teaching within Auriolus Public Schools (APS) and teacher coaches that had full-time release from teaching duties to engage in coaching cycles with teaching staff within Auriolus Public Schools (APS). The overall target population for this study was ten to twelve participants. The actual participant populations were eleven first-round participants, ten second-round participants, and ten focus group participants. There were no new participants added during this study and only one participant stopped participating between the first and second interviews, including the focus group, due to a personal matter not related to the study.

### ***New Teachers***

The initial target number of new teachers to take part in this study was four to five participants. Using purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I was able to initially locate five new teacher participants that were in their fourth or fifth year of teaching at APS. This sample population was not only convenient in that the participants were accessible throughout the school year, but also typical in that the participants did not represent any extreme, atypical, or intensely unusual population of teachers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I was able to secure five new teacher participants for the first round of interviews and four new teacher participants for the second round of interviews and the focus group. One participant was unable to continue beyond the first round of interviews due to a personal matter unrelated to this study.

### ***Teacher Coaches***

The target number of teacher coaches to take part in this study was six to seven participants. I was able to secure six teacher coach participants throughout the various phases of this study. Using purposeful sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I was able to locate six teacher

coach participants that served as teacher coaches at APS at the time of this study. This sample population was not only convenient in that the participants were accessible throughout the school year, but also atypical in that the participants did not represent an extreme, atypical, or intensely unusual population of teachers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This rare group of individuals were teachers that have been chosen to assist other teachers throughout the APS system. The teacher coaches in APS were full-time employees that were also former classroom teachers at APS. They did not have classroom responsibilities while serving as teacher coaches and were charged with assisting all teachers in the APS system, especially the new teachers transitioning into APS. Given their full-time job responsibilities and experiences working with new teachers in various stages of their induction period (i.e., years one through four), the teacher coaches offered a unique perspective as they work directly with a wide variety of new teachers and are non-evaluative in their roles.

### **Data Collection**

The qualitative study I conducted used multiple data sources to not only capture new teacher needs, but also identify resources that were available to new teachers to meet such needs. The data sources used in this study were recorded and transcribed individual interviews, recorded and transcribed follow-up interviews, a focus group meeting that was recorded and transcribed, internal documents and artifacts, and field notes and memos. I triangulated the data collected from multiple sources to increase the credibility and internal validity of my research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Interviews**

Data was collected from participants through two, semi-structured interviews that were recorded with permission from participants. As the research of this study was conducted during

the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via virtual meetings (e.g., Zoom). The interviews were also transcribed as to not miss any information during analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patten, 2017). Each participant was interviewed twice during the data collection phase of this study. Each interview lasted 60 to 90 minutes. I was able to follow an interview protocol throughout the first round of interviews. The format of the first-round semi-structured interview questions were based on Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested use of categories of questions (i.e., Background and demographics, experience and behavior, opinions and values, feelings, and sense) (*see* Appendices B, C, & D). Responses from the first round of interviews were organized and discussed with the focus group (*see* Appendix F). The format of the interviews utilized semi-structured dialectic conversations that allowed for both the researcher and the participants to operate within third space co-construct of new knowledge and understanding of new teacher needs (i.e., First space: knowledge and experience of interviewees; Second space: administrative understanding of new teacher needs and resources; Third space: creation of new knowledge of new teacher needs and resources based on the discussions from the interviews). The responses from the first interviews and the focus group discussions were then used to develop the second-round discussions with the participants.

### **Focus Group**

Between participant interviews, a focus group of ten participants (including four new teachers and six teacher coaches) was assembled to discuss the findings from the first round of participant interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Patten, 2017). The focus group presentation was screened by a critical friend who was both an administrator in another district and a doctoral student in the Montclair State University Teacher Education, Teacher Development program for ethical conflicts and practical considerations, such as time.

The presentation to the focus group was modified to reflect suggestions from the critical friend to shorten the presentation (i.e., the number of slides in a PowerPoint presentation were reduced and a reflective exercise by participants was eliminated) and to allow for discussions to take place by sections, rather than at the end of the entire presentation. During the focus group meeting, I discussed the topics and results from the first round of participant interviews with the focus group using the format in the PowerPoint presentation to guide the focus group discussions (see Appendix D) (Patten, 2017). The format of the focus group utilized third space to co-construct new knowledge of new teacher needs based on the first-round participant questions and the focus group participants (i.e., First space: knowledge and experience of focus group participants; Second space: categorical responses from interview participants; Third space: creation of new knowledge of new teacher needs and resources based on the discussions from the focus group participants on interview participant data).

### **Research Journal and Memos**

Throughout this study, I maintained field notes and memos to capture my reaction to responses during the interviews (Luttrell, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2009). I also kept a research journal dedicated to this study that captured my thinking process while I was in the field of study (Luttrell, 2010; Saldaña, 2009). In addition to keeping a research journal/field journal, I also wrote research memos to reflect on decisions and observations made during my research to help discover patterns in my study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldaña, 2009). The research journal and memos recorded my research process and offered transparency to my study (Ortlipp, 2008).

### **Documents**

Throughout the study, I collected data through documents related to new teacher



induction practices at APS. Such ready-made sources of data were collected during the research process and were used to triangulate data from the focus groups and interviews with participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In addition to the collection of documents throughout the study, the authenticity of the documents collected was verified as to their accuracy and origins, to any extent possible (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 176).

### **Data Analysis**

I used the constant comparative method of data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) on data collected from interviews, focus group feedback, and field notes, beginning with open coding of the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 85). After searching for major categories of information, I then used axial coding to begin to relate categories and properties of results to each other (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Finally, I connected the discovered categories using selective coding methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 88). Relying on a systematic approach of grounded theory analysis, I developed a theory that looked to explain the “process, action, or interaction” of participants in this study on their experiences with new teacher needs and induction practices to meet such (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 84). I then presented the developed theory on new teacher needs and induction as a discussion at the end of my study.

### **Validation**

To further limit any bias in analysis, I engaged in two cycles of data analysis. The data in this study was analyzed from the perspectives of both an administrator and a researcher. The analyzed data was presented to not only the focus group, but back to the individual participants as well during the second round of interviews as means of member checking (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition to member checking with participants and a focus group meeting with participants, the data was also presented to an administrator outside of the APS district to serve

as an “external check” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 263). The individual that conducted the external check was not only an administrator in another district, but was also a doctoral student in the teacher education, teacher development program at Montclair State University. This individual was consulted throughout the various phases of data analysis to review the results. Finally, another doctoral student outside of Montclair State University analyzed the data as an internal reviewer. This individual served as an administrator within APS and was able to analyze the data from such a role.

### **Trustworthiness**

Maxwell (2010) speaks of two important threats to qualitative research conclusions; “the selection of data that fits the researcher’s existing theory or the preconceptions and the selection of data that ‘stand out’ to the researcher” (p. 281) and the influence the researcher has on the setting or the individuals studied (p. 282). According to Maxwell, the first threat to my study is that of researcher bias. For this research threat, Maxwell (2010) offers the advice of “explaining your possible biases” and how you will deal with such to researchers (p. 281). Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommend the use of a critical friend. I had previously discussed such a bias threat in my section on positionality and further felt during the study that my role as an educator did not carry any bias towards the data collected. Rather, I felt that my role as an educator served as an additional resource as I was able to relate to new teacher needs as a former teacher myself. However, as an extra measure of trustworthiness, I utilized two critical friends in this study. The peer reviews, both doctoral students, reviewed the data collection process and offered feedback from two different perspectives as one is an administrator outside APS and one is an administrator inside APS. Additionally, by carefully selecting the participants in this study that are tenured, or soon to be tenured, teachers I felt that the data presented showed no

subjectivity on behalf of myself as the researcher as the questions asked of the participants depended on their own personal experiences. Additionally, the data gathered from the first round of interviews regarding new teacher needs and how the district could have addressed such was triangulated by undergoing a presentation to the focus group.

The second threat that Maxwell (2010) addressed was that of influence over the setting or individuals in the study (p. 282). I realize that my position as an administrator may have had an influence on the participants in my study as they are all employees within the district of study. Therefore, as Maxwell suggested, “the goal in qualitative study is not to eliminate this influence, but to understand it and to use it productively” (p. 282). Taking into account such advice from Maxwell, I used my position as an administrator in the district in which the participants are employees to better understand new teacher needs so that I am able use my position as an administrator, and all of the resources that come with such (i.e., funding and program redesign), to mitigate such future needs as teachers transition into our district. Being forthright with the intentions of this study to the participants allowed for my position as an administrator to essentially be used in a productive manner.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of this study were the small sample size (i.e., 10-11 participants) and the use of a single school district. Another limitation was my personal bias and influence as the researcher as I work in the district of study as an administrator and interviewed staff that were essentially under my charge. However such limitations were addressed through study design, triangulation of data results, the use of critical friends, and transparent study intentions.

### **Timeline of Study**

#### **Initial Individual Interviews (March, 2020)**

Eleven participants responded to my email inquiry in 2020. I individually met with all participants and conducted semi-structured interviews designed to learn about their induction experiences at APS. The virtual meetings lasted between 60 to 90 minutes each. Given social distancing protocols necessary during the COVID-19 Pandemic, first-round interviews were conducted via a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom software. Zoom software allowed for both audio and video recordings of the interviews. I transcribed the audio recordings from the first-round interviews using Otter.ai transcription software.

### **Focus Group (June, 2020)**

Ten participants responded to my email invitation to participate in a focus group meeting to review the analyzed data results. One initial participant experienced a personal tragedy that did not allow for continued participation in this study. A focus group meeting was held in June of 2020 to review the analyzed data from the first round of interviews. Given social distancing protocols necessary during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the focus group meeting was conducted via a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom software. Zoom software allowed for both audio and video recordings of the focus group meeting. I transcribed the audio recordings from the focus group meeting using Otter.ai transcription software. The data was presented to the focus group using PowerPoint by categories that later formed the themes in the findings section of this study. The focus group participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the emergent categories and to comment on the accuracy of the categories in relation to new teacher induction experiences. Additionally, participants were encouraged to discuss categories they thought were either overrepresented or underrepresented, based on their personal experiences.

### **Follow-up Individual Interviews (June-July, 2020)**

Ten participants responded to my email invitation to participate in follow-up individual interviews. I individually met with all participants and conducted follow-up interviews designed to allow individuals to comment on the analysis of the data, the representation of their voice, and the focus group discussions that took place. The virtual meetings lasted between 30 to 60 minutes each. Given social distancing protocols necessary during the COVID-19 Pandemic, second-round interviews were conducted via a virtual meeting utilizing Zoom software. Zoom software allowed for both audio and video recordings of the interviews. I transcribed the audio recordings from the first-round interviews using Otter.ai transcription software.

In the next chapter, I present my findings and analysis of the data retrieved from the two rounds of interviews and the focus groups described in this chapter.

### Chapter 4: Findings

As a district-level administrator with influence on how the new teacher induction program is run, my intention in conducting a study on induction was to give a voice to new teachers' needs as they transition into teaching. Based on my personal experience as a new teacher nearly twenty years ago, I believed that new teachers had induction needs both inside and outside of the classroom. As such, the intended purpose of this study was to locate the wide array of needs to better inform future induction practices within our district. I hoped to accomplish this by inviting new teachers and teacher coaches to share their experiences during the first few years of teaching by creating an environment where traditional power structures assigned by title and/or position (i.e., my position as an administrator in the district in relation to teachers) are disrupted and brought to a less hierarchical and more dialectical relationship (Klein et al., 2013; Schempp & Graber, 1992; Zeichner, 2010).

The participants of this study and I shared preexisting professional relationships that spanned, in some cases, the entire careers of either myself as an administrator, the new teacher participants, or the teacher coach participants. Regardless of our preexisting relationships, there were different perspectives of induction practices that existed between me as an administrator and the participants as teachers. Additionally, there were different perspectives that appeared to exist between the veteran teachers and the new teachers. However, I believed that such preexisting professional relationships allowed for more dialectic conversations to take place that centered around a better understanding of new teacher needs between myself and the participants. According to Schempp and Graber (1992), "The word *dialectic* refers to a process involving the confrontation of contending propositions that ultimately resolve into a synthesis of perspectives and actions of a new and unique design" (p. 330). Within the context of this study,

the perspectives that were at play during such conversations were the administrative position of “Here is what new teachers should know when they come in to our district” versus the teacher position of “Here is what new teachers need to know about our district.” It is within such dialectic conversations of seemingly opposing perspectives that I believe new teachers may benefit once a better understanding of new teacher needs during induction is reached by both groups of stakeholders.

Having worked directly with the teacher coaches and both directly and/or indirectly with the new teachers through our new teacher orientation program or administrative assignments, dialectical conversations around new teacher needs took place before this study. Such prior conversations began to shape, reshape, and improve our new teacher induction practices. What I have realized after many years of practice as both a teacher and an administrator is that such dialectical conversations hold a lot of power in the shaping of future practice and systemic change. Within such conversations are the confrontations of “contending propositions that ultimately resolve into a synthesis of perspectives and actions of a new and unique design” (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Realizing that this may not always be the result of such relationships (Schempp & Graber, 1992), I considered the openness of the participants to share their stories, experiences, and opinions during this study the real success as I can say that not only have I learned from the participants, but they learned from each other. The result of such learning through this study was that “both sides became changed, at least to some degree, as the points of contention are negotiated in the actions of everyday life” (Schempp & Graber, 1992, p. 331).

Recalling my personal needs during my transition into education, I felt that not all of my needs were directly related to the classroom; I felt there were a lot of needs that fell outside of the classroom, but ideas about how to meet them were not available in a policy handbook or

guide. Although this may have been a unique experience due to my specific context, nonetheless, meeting such needs became an added layer of complexity to my transitional experience. The resources to mitigate such needs did not lend themselves to district manuals or policies (e.g., how to take attendance, how to dismiss students, location of the restroom, where to park, how to obtain classroom supplies). Rather, the location of such resources resided within experienced colleagues and were transmitted through informal discussions during hallway passings and social exchanges. The findings of this study suggest that my transitional experience into teaching nearly twenty years ago are not exclusive or unique to me, but rather the struggle to meet new teacher needs both within and beyond the classroom continues as teachers transition into schools or districts (Petersen, 2017).

The overarching research question that drove this study was “How can induction better include the voices of the novice teachers it serves?” Expanding upon prior research in new teacher induction studies, specifically Fantilli and McDougall’s (2009) study on first-year teachers’ needs as expressed by the new teachers themselves (i.e., using new teacher voice), the underlying research questions that formed this grounded theory study were the following:

- How do fourth/fifth-year teachers make sense of their first years of teaching?
- How do teacher coaches make sense of the needs of the novice teachers they work with?
- How does this inform my work as a district administrator?
- How can using a micropolitical literacy framework help me make sense of induction practices with coaches; new teachers; new teacher needs; new teacher transition?



To locate new teacher needs, and the resources for meeting them, new teachers (previously defined in chapter three as teachers in their fourth or fifth year) and teacher coaches (previously defined in chapter three as experienced teachers that work directly with new teachers) were interviewed in a manner that disrupted the traditional power relations (Rosenthal, 1967) that exist in schools/districts (i.e., administrator and teacher) to give a voice to new teachers and teacher coaches regarding new teacher induction and the experiences associated with such a specific time in a teacher's career. From such interviews, three major themes that emerged from the interview data analysis were: 1. Meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures within a district or school; 2. Locating resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction; and 3. Navigating the micropolitical environment during induction. This chapter is structured around the presentation of the major themes and the sub-themes that emerged within them. The final part of this chapter consists of a summary of the themes that emerged and how they answered my research questions that drove this study.

In chapter three, I described my research methodology, including the three phases of research (first-round interviews with participants, a focus group meeting, second-round interviews with participants). All of the interviews, including the focus group meeting, were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were analyzed for common themes among the participants. The emergent themes from the first-round interview analysis were then presented to the focus group where participants provided feedback and clarification as to the categorization of the themes. Fortunately, most of the participants (10 out of the original 11) were able to continue past the first-round interviews and participated in both the focus group and the second-round interviews. Participants were then given a second one-on-one interview to add or clarify any of the themes that were presented. What follows are the findings presented under the major themes

*of Meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures within a district or school; Locating resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction; and Navigating the micropolitics during induction.*

### **Meeting the Role Demands of Highly Localized Processes and Procedures within a District or School**

As can be expected while transitioning into any district or school, new teachers have role demands that are very unique to that particular location. Due to the uniqueness of the role demands, new teachers may find themselves without prior knowledge or practice to fulfil these new role demands. The participant in this study discussed roles and responsibilities that were unique to APS, however any district or school is sure to have their own unique roles and responsibilities as well. What was learned from this study was how important it was to fulfil such highly localized role demands, which offers a broader perspective to new teacher induction practice. A perspective that includes new teacher voice in the identification of such highly localized processes and procedures and how new teachers met such expectations.

The first major theme that emerged in the data was that of new teachers meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures during their transition into Auriolus Public Schools (e.g., attendance procedures; dismissal procedures; safety procedures; lesson plan submission). By inviting participants' voices into the research on induction (Anthony et al., 2011; Chubbuck et al., 2001; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016) they were able to help me identify highly localized needs (i.e., processes, procedures, and resources) that presented themselves to new teachers at APS. Additionally, the participants were able to clarify the importance of fulfilling such highly localized role demands as part of their transition into their roles as teachers. The highly localized needs identified by new teachers and

teacher coaches in this study are discussed in two categories that emerged from the new participant responses (*Immediate/Five-Minute Needs* and *Long-Term Needs*). Additionally, the teacher coaches' responses to new teacher needs suggested a third category of new teacher needs, that of *Misidentified New Teacher Needs*, when teacher coaches engaged in coaching cycles with new teachers. The first needs that will be discussed are the needs that tend to greet new teachers on their first day of teaching and can typically be met through brief, but elusive answers.

### **Immediate/Five-Minute Needs**

I frame my definition of immediate/five-minute needs around the concept of “role demands” presented by Schempp et al. (1993). Schempp et al. explained that role demands were the expectations that new teachers faced in their assignments; essentially what new teachers were supposed to do and how they were supposed to do it. Like Schempp et al., participants in this study identified specific, localized role demands (e.g., student attendance, emails, online curricular access, safety drill procedures, technology, individual education plans) that were expected of them (First-Round Interview, Alex, 3/20/20; First-Round Interview, Arianna, 3/20/20; Second-Round Interview, Arianna, 6/24/20). Additionally, participants in this study identified the importance of knowing such role demands upon entering their schools or classrooms; and emphasized the negative consequences that could occur if such immediate role demands are not met (e.g., student endangerment, employee reprimand/discipline, legal noncompliance). Arianna, a teacher coach, emphasized the rush of needs that new teachers have as she described her first day as a teacher:

You're thrown into your first teaching job and you're excited and you're thinking about all the things that you will be doing but when you step in it's SGOs and PGP's and [you] are

worrying about “Where's the bathroom.” It's “what do I do?”, or “how do I pick up my students in the morning?”, drop [them] off . . . all those procedures, you know, because those kids . . . were in my hands essentially so what do we do for emergencies . . . collecting lunch money . . . like there's so many things that obviously you can't learn in school until you're actually in a teaching position. (Second-Round Interview, 6/24/20)

The immediate needs that participants identified in this study, like the explicit role demands identified in Schempp et al. (1993), suggested that new teachers are greeted by a litany of highly localized responsibilities, procedures, or tasks, that not only have to be learned within the first few minutes of becoming a classroom teacher in a particular school or district, but must be immediately understood and carried out with accuracy. Furthermore, the participants in this study suggested that such highly localized role demands can only be learned on the job and can be unique to a particular school or assignment. In Schempp et al. (1993), the explicit role demands were clarified by the examples of classroom management and grading. Similarly, the participants of this study indicated that new teachers in APS have needs that liken themselves to explicit role demands such as lesson planning; classroom management fire/safety drills; student health needs; and grade books. Expanding on the findings of Schempp et al. (1993), this study separates role demands, expressed as new teacher needs by participants in this study, into two distinct categories of short term and long-term role demands. The short-term role demands are categorized in this study as immediate/five-minute needs as, according to the participants, such needs tend to be quick questions with quick answers, therefore participants described such needs as being “five-minute needs” as the needs only take up to five minutes to answer (Amy, Kelly, Lisa, Marie, Focus Group Meeting 6/18/20). As shared by teacher coach, Arianna, during the focus group meeting:

I really did appreciate the title of it being a five-minute need because something simple such as “where is the bathroom?” . . . “where can I find the copy machine?” . . . or how do I access something . . . some of those conversations are definitely five-minute hallway conversations. (Second-Round Interview, 6/24/20)

To further clarify such immediate needs that new teachers face, teacher coach, Arianna, explained that such basic, “bare minimum,” needs are identified by their immediacy and need for a particular quick answer to get beyond a quick dilemma or situation (Arianna, First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). She noted:

So when I say bare minimum I mean they're [new teachers] not asking above and beyond . . . when I say bare minimum I'm thinking, or recalling rather that they just want to know “How do I take attendance?” . . . “Where do I input my lesson plans?” . . . “How do I set up a grade book?” They're not really asking about how to go above and beyond. And when I say above and beyond, [I mean] looking into the curriculum, looking at differentiating their instruction. They're really just focusing on how I can kind of get through the week. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Alex, a new teacher participant, offered a similar explanation of immediate, five-minute needs by sharing his method of obtaining quick answers to quick questions by “just pulling a colleague in the hall or, you know, [going] across the hall for a quick question” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). However, it is necessary to express the participants’ emphasis on the importance of meeting such short, immediate needs as they are essential to job tasks and job-related consequences or student harm may come if such role demands are carried out incorrectly, or not at all. An example of such immediate, and important needs, are safety procedures where Maria, a new teacher participant, described the immediacy of having to know safety procedures as:

First day. I mean it's important for the kids' safety that a teacher needs to be fully aware of what to do and feel comfortable with what to do in case there is an emergency. . . . So it's something that seems so small and so silly and is very important to have everything down pat the first day. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

The importance of knowing such localized safety processes and procedures was a recurring need for the participants in this study. Alex, a new teacher, emphasized that the drills themselves are “different in every school and there’s too many of them” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20).

Alex’s perception of procedures was emphasized in Anthony et al. (2011) where the researchers described the unique system of inner workings that a new school might represent for novice teachers. To Alex’s point, policies and procedures may differ from school to school, therefore the only sources of knowledge for the policies and procedure may exist within such localized contexts. Akin to Alex pulling a colleague aside in a hallway, Williams and Gillham (2016) found that new teachers rely on local, contextual knowledge from colleagues, mentors, and administrators. This notion of collegial support at the local level is discussed further in the new teacher resources section of this chapter. However, the localized context of such procedural knowledge lends itself to new teachers’ immediate needs as such needs cannot be met until teachers are actually teaching in those schools. Although such localized procedural needs may typically find their way into traditional teacher education discussions, they appear to have a place in the minds of the participants in this study as essential knowledge that must be obtained within minutes of entering a teaching position. As new teachers transition into a school building or a school district, the importance of fulfilling such simple, five-minute needs may escape new teacher induction conversations. However, the participants in this study highlighted the importance of knowing how to fulfill such highly localized role demands as part of their roles as

teachers. Therefore, the need to better understand such seemingly simple role demands, demands that find themselves far removed from cognitive challenges, have a place in new teacher induction study.

In addition to the localized contextual role demands that new teachers encountered, the participants in this study expressed that there was an expectation to know how to perform certain tasks. As new teacher, Maria, stated:

It's hard for somebody coming in as a new teacher. You're coming into a school full of people that know what they're doing and you just graduated with your degree and you have all these expectations of knowing everything. When you know nothing. . . . and so it's hard for maybe a lot of people to not admit that they don't know it. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

The expectation of new teachers to know how to perform certain role demands appeared to be especially true of tasks that involved technology that were unique to the district or school. As participants noted in first-round interviews, accessing APS's online technologies (e.g., email, attendance, curriculum, Student Growth Objectives, Professional Growth Plans, lesson plans, and observations) were a layer of needs that involve both the (virtual) location and participant understanding of such to be met. This added layer of technological complexity related to Mitchell et al. (2017) where new teachers were found to have needs that required specialized attention. The findings in this study suggested that technology may require specialized attention as all teachers may have different technological knowledge and needs. As teacher coach, Ann, commented: "So some of the needs that they have are getting to know the platforms that we have . . . . for example like our reading program or math programs . . . . science and social studies

platforms” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Amy, another teacher coach, echoed Ann’s sentiments about technology and how it complicates new teacher access to programs:

First day of school, a lot of times it’s just really them accessing the websites for the books, which they may not have . . . everything’s [now] online. Sometimes they [new teachers] don’t even know how to access these websites in the very beginning of the year . . . even teachers, if they came from another district or did have that responsibility in another district, they may not have [our system], they had another platform that they’re working on so they just need to be really walked through it. (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20)

Hammerness and Matsko (2013) also found that such localized knowledge has a place in new teacher induction programs. They used the term “context-specific” to describe focused new teacher preparation as their work dealt specifically with what might be “different or unique about a particular setting” and how to support new teachers in such (p. 560). Hammerness and Matsko’s (2013) study on context-specific induction programs to help new teachers acclimate to their urban settings embedded specific, localized content into the induction programs to help new teachers better understand their working environment. Similar findings were reported in Anthony et al. (2017) where they acknowledged the complex array of personal needs new teachers have and emphasized the importance of learning about local context to help new teachers during their transition into a school or district. As reported in this study by the participants, many of APS’s basic classroom functions, such as lesson planning, grading, attendance, student growth objectives, professional growth plans, and observations were located on online platforms. Although locating and accessing the online platform may only take a few minutes to explain, without such localized knowledge to assist in the process it appears that such an explicit role



demand is actually quite elusive. Therefore, it is important to consider the potentially paralyzing effects of not providing new teachers with such information, thus making the elusive, quite explicit.

### **Immediate Needs to Long-Term Needs**

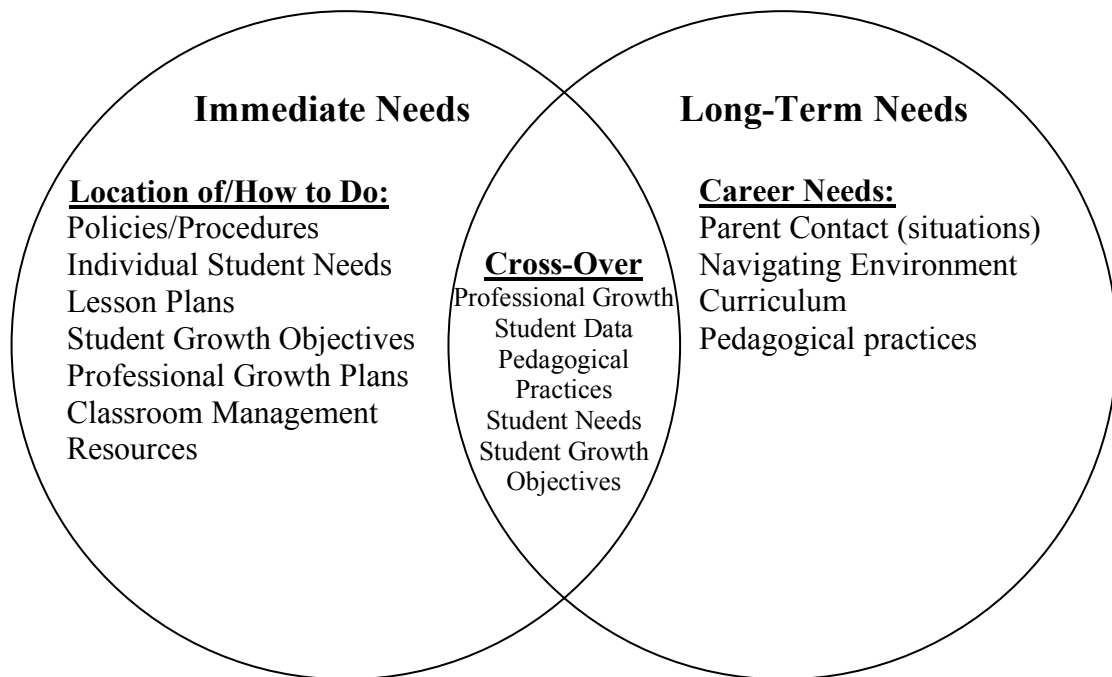
In contrast to these immediate, quick needs, participants also described needs that fell into the category of “long-term.” Long-term needs are identified in this study as needs that exist beyond a quick, five-minute solution. Participants related long-term needs to role demands that were continuous and ongoing throughout their career, such as Student Growth Objectives (SGO), lesson plans, and Professional Growth Plans (PGP). However, as previously mentioned, some of the identified long-term needs also appeared as immediate needs or role demands. Therefore, there appeared to be some professional role demands for new teachers that are both immediate and long-term.

As new teachers transition into schools or districts, immediate needs arise and are, hopefully, met through small, five-minute conversations on the local-level. However, some of the needs identified by participants in this study lend themselves to deeper conversations after the immediate need has been met. Again, some examples that fell into this transitional category (see Figure 1) that demonstrated both immediate and long-term needs were those of lesson plans; professional growth plans (PGPs); and student growth objectives (SGOs). Teacher coach, Arianna, alluded to such transitional needs when she previously described the way new teachers meet their immediate needs as “bare minimum.” Arianna used procedural needs, such as taking attendance and inputting lesson plans, to illustrate immediate needs or role demands. She then described new teachers asking to go “above and beyond” such needs (Arianna, 3/20/20). Essentially, once the immediate needs of locating or navigating a platform to access an

immediate role demand are met, the new teachers can then begin to learn more about such topics themselves.

**Figure 1**

*The Intersection of Immediate and Long-Term Needs*



Maria, a new teacher participant, described a deeper-dive into topics over time, when she spoke specifically to student accommodations (Individual Education Plans) during her initial interview:

So I think that things get a little bit more in depth as years go on . . . as you are a little bit more comfortable with the standard procedures and what happens with classrooms and then you start thinking forward to, “Well what do I do now, how do I become a better teacher with this?” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria further explained that her first experience with student accommodations was rather immediate and reactive: “it's more of ‘let me figure out what this piece of paper [individualized education plan] is’ to put into action of what's needed at the moment” (First-round Interview, 3/25/20). Meeting individualized education plans (IEPs) for students was presented as both an immediate and long-term need by Maria. Over time, Maria met her need of better understanding student accommodations through the proactive approach of going to colleagues, specifically where she stated she, “went to the teacher that had the students the year before” and asked about the accommodations that worked the best in the IEP (First-round Interview, 3/25/20). Therefore, Maria identified student accommodations as both an immediate and a long-term role demand. However, the role demand itself (e.g., student accommodations) remained the same. What had changed was how Maria dealt with the need (i.e., at first figuring out on her own, then asking a colleague later in her years of practice). This evolution of thought, after the immediate needs are met, is further clarified by Maria:

I guess I never thought about it and now talking [about] it makes a little bit more sense . . . I think that probably the quicker you have those immediate needs [met], the more effective teaching you're going to be because you'll be able to focus more on the students, and that first year won't go as just almost like . . . I don't want to say a wash but under the radar, because it's like you're learning at the same time you are doing. If those needs are effectively met immediately, that first year won't be so much under the radar. You'll be able to focus on helping the students progress. (First-round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria's expressed interest in becoming a “more effective teacher” suggested that she was unable to really concentrate on pedagogical practices until her immediate needs were met. Steve, another new teacher participant, identified curricular needs as both an immediate and a long-term

need as well. As Steve stated, “Something that I needed [immediately] was an understanding of the curriculum. . . where I was supposed to start [and] where I was supposed to finish. How detailed was I going to get?” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve had immediate concerns about the curriculum upon entering teaching. Although Steve had been part of a pre-service teaching program, he did not understand what the particular scope and sequence of the curriculum was in APS. It was not until Steve’s colleagues had pointed out where Steve should start teaching from in the curriculum that Steve felt he could understand the big picture of curricular scope and sequence. Like Maria, Steve had to overcome an immediate need (i.e., locating the curriculum) to be able to perform the long-term role demanded of teaching the curriculum. As Steve stated:

In order to get a firm understanding of what I needed, in order to successfully teach the curriculum, I needed a lot of support from my coworkers in my department. And so they pointed out where I could see the curriculum . . . sometimes they gave me things that I could teach with, in order to allow me to catch up to discover my own methods of teaching. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve needed to first locate the curriculum, something quickly satisfied by his colleagues, before he could find his own method of teaching. Steve’s immediate need of locating the curriculum and receiving support from his colleagues to begin the teaching process was later complemented by his personal exploration into teaching methods. Therefore, the course curriculum, and enacting this curriculum, lent themselves to both immediate needs and long-term needs. For Steve to become a better teacher and to find his own way to teach materials, he had to first locate and understand the materials in which he was supposed to teach.

As previously discussed, new teachers in this study were able to identify their needs as either immediate or long-term, with some needs falling into both categories. The immediate needs that were identified in this study tended to deal with role demands that were necessary to a school or district's bureaucratic demands (e.g., attendance, safety procedures, PGPs, SGOs, lesson plans). Cañón Rodríguez et al. (2017) also described such bureaucratic tasks that added to the complexities associated with teaching. In this study, new teachers reported that they did not feel they were trained well in "performing bureaucratic tasks," believing that they received "less than satisfactory" training and preparation. The participants in this study felt similar to those in Cañón Rodríguez et al.'s (2017) study regarding immediate, bureaucratic role demands such as student growth objectives and professional development plans. However, as Amy pointed out during the focus group meeting, where some of the role demands fell within the immediate category, there were others that required a deeper understanding of what was expected and why new teachers had to do them. Specifically, Amy, a teacher coach, stated during the focus group meeting that:

I also feel like SGOs and PGPs can be [both] as well. So definitely five minutes for first year to get to understand it. But I think as your knowledge grows, you dig deeper to put more emphasis into it. (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

This transition from an immediate need (get it over with) into a long-term need (I want to know more about) was additionally explained by Maria during the focus group meeting where she stated:

I think it depends on the aspect of what we're talking about. So like, procedures of classroom management. That's something that could be learned in five minutes, but then how to apply it to the group of students, that might be something a little bit more in

depth. Same thing with SGOs. . . like understanding how to organize SGOs might be a five minute conversation, but then how do you differentiate it to the group at some point that you're making [a] more in-depth conversation? And it depends on what aspects of these topics that we're talking about. (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

As participants shared in this study, the need to understand both the immediate and long-term role demands new teachers face as they enter a school or district is important. Some of the role demands new teachers face have an immediate impact on their ability to perform as a teacher. It is not until this immediate need is met that new teachers may begin to expand on their professional roles. However, as mentioned by participants, after the immediate need to fulfil the role demand is met, there are some role demands that resurface as long-term professional role demands.

### **Long-Term Needs**

Participants articulated long-term needs, such as skills of practice and collegial interactions, that would be developed over the course of a teacher's career rather than short five-minute fulfillment. Again, long-term needs were identified in this study as needs that exist beyond a quick, five-minute solution. Some of these long-term needs included parental contact; getting involved in the community; lesson plans; pedagogical practices (specifically co-teaching environments and differentiation); professional development; and administrator observations (First-Round Interview, Maria, 3/25/20; Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). The need to learn more about a particular subject or skill that new teachers expressed during this study aligned with the work of Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) who proposed that novice teachers should be viewed as learners.

Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) emphasized the notion that new teachers should be acknowledged as novice teachers, rather than experienced professionals. Understanding such a developmental approach to new teacher learning lends itself to the importance of a multi-year induction program to meet both the immediate and long-term needs of new teachers. The concept of learning over time emerged during the focus group meeting as participants discussed how their first reaction to a role demand was to complete it, not necessarily to understand it. As Maria explained during the focus group meeting, “the SGOs are due the first month or so of school and as a new teacher, you know, we're looking for the bathroom, never mind trying to take data of where these kids stand when they're coming into your classroom” (6/18/20). Maria later mentioned an aspect of role demands that has not been previously discussed in literature on new teacher induction and indicates a long-term need due to lack of frequency. Specifically, Maria’s conversation during the focus group meeting about SGOs being due at the beginning of the school year was accompanied by the statement that SGOs are only completed one-time-per-year. Therefore, as Maria, who will be in her fifth year of teaching at the time of publication, stated: “It's only going to be my fifth time doing SGOs, or my fifth time . . . doing data, even benchmarks. It's only a once-a-year thing” (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). Given Maria’s example of completing an annual role demand, such as an SGO, it is possible that the frequency of role demands factors into the overall understanding of the role demand itself. The infrequency of the role demand itself may be a factor in the shift from an immediate demand to a long-term demand. Therefore, a teacher may encounter an immediate role demand, complete the demand, and not concern themselves with such until the next time the demand is asked of them (possibly a year later). Given that a new teacher’s need may be met in the beginning of their first year, and the goal is apparently to just complete the need, it makes sense that such an immediate need

would turn into a long-term need as even a ten-year veteran teacher would only have completed, in Maria's example, ten SGOs.

### **Misidentified Needs**

The final category that emerged under the navigation of highly localized processes and procedures was that of misidentified needs. The teacher coach participants in this study shared instances where new teachers initially brought a need to a teacher coach for assistance with that need or role demand only to have the actual need later identified through a teacher coach/participant cycle. Amy, a teacher coach, offered an example of when she had worked with a new teacher in a teacher coach cycle where the new teacher asked for help with math. After Amy had a chance to visit the new teacher's classroom for peer observation, Amy identified the concern to be a classroom management issue, not content or pedagogy. To correct this, Amy had to first discuss the importance of good classroom management to then move on to actual pedagogical practices. In this case, the new teacher had misidentified the need and had permitted the veteran teacher coach to assist in the root of the struggles. Amy, as a teacher coach, was also able to bring an unbiased view of the situation to the conversation as she was able to "bring it back to classroom management" (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). It was only when classroom management was corrected that the new teacher and Amy could then address other concerns, such as the math lesson.

Kelly, another teacher coach, shared a similar experience with a new teacher and a misidentified need. Kelly was engaged in a teacher coach cycle with a new teacher that approached her for help with using learning centers in a classroom. Where the initial concern of the new teacher was centers, Kelly understood that the real issue was with math content:



I found that as I was in there, that they really needed support with content. So I was providing them with a lot of support, teaching them the content and the cycles would be continued from topic to topic within the math curriculum just because of their lack of knowledge of the content area. (First-Round Interview, 3/24/20)

Steve, a new teacher, also shared an experience that he had with a particular group of students and how a colleague helped him out. During the focus group meeting, Steve noted:

My first-year teaching, I had a class where my classroom management was completely non-existent. They were about to graduate high school. And then we went in all over me and I had no idea what to do, partly because they were so damn funny. But I couldn't teach them. I mean, at least I felt some days like I couldn't teach them a damn thing . . .

And I didn't know that I needed better classroom management until a senior teacher who was next door [said] "your classes are insane. Here's some things that you can do to make sure that never happens again." . . . they don't know what they need, I think is 100% correct. I didn't know. Now I know. (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

Within the context of misidentified needs, the participants emphasized the importance of gaining teaching experience before being able to properly reflect on practice to identify needs. Without such practical teaching experience, new teachers may misidentify their needs as they may not have enough experience in a classroom to understand what they need assistance with. As Rădulescu (2013) explained, new teacher training programs that provide "relevant knowledge that responded to trainees' needs within a familiar context" are beneficial to new teacher development (p. 15). However, what Rădulescu (2013) also found in her study of 14 new teacher "trainees" was that new teachers enter the profession with different background knowledge about

teaching and teacher education. Therefore, each new teacher may have different needs based on their personal experiences within teaching.

Schempp et al. (1993) also found that prior new teacher experience played a role in their transition into the teaching profession. For purposes of this study, the concept of new teacher “biographies” is discussed in the next section, *Locating Resources to Meet the Local Demands of Teaching during Induction*. However, biography, as Schempp et al. (1993) explained, entails “(a) experiences that exercised similar or related pedagogical skills, (b) university coursework, and (c) experiences as a school pupil” (p. 454) and plays an important role in the ability to identify needs as a new teacher. Within the context of misidentified needs, new teachers inherently lack experience in teaching. Although new teachers may bring with them prior knowledge, based on their specific experiences in education, such knowledge may not help new teachers identify all of their needs as they may actually exist. Therefore, engaging new teachers in reflective practices such as a coaching cycle, or even providing an environment for new teachers to discuss their professional problems or difficulties with colleagues, as seen with Steve above, appear to be beneficial in new teacher development and transition.

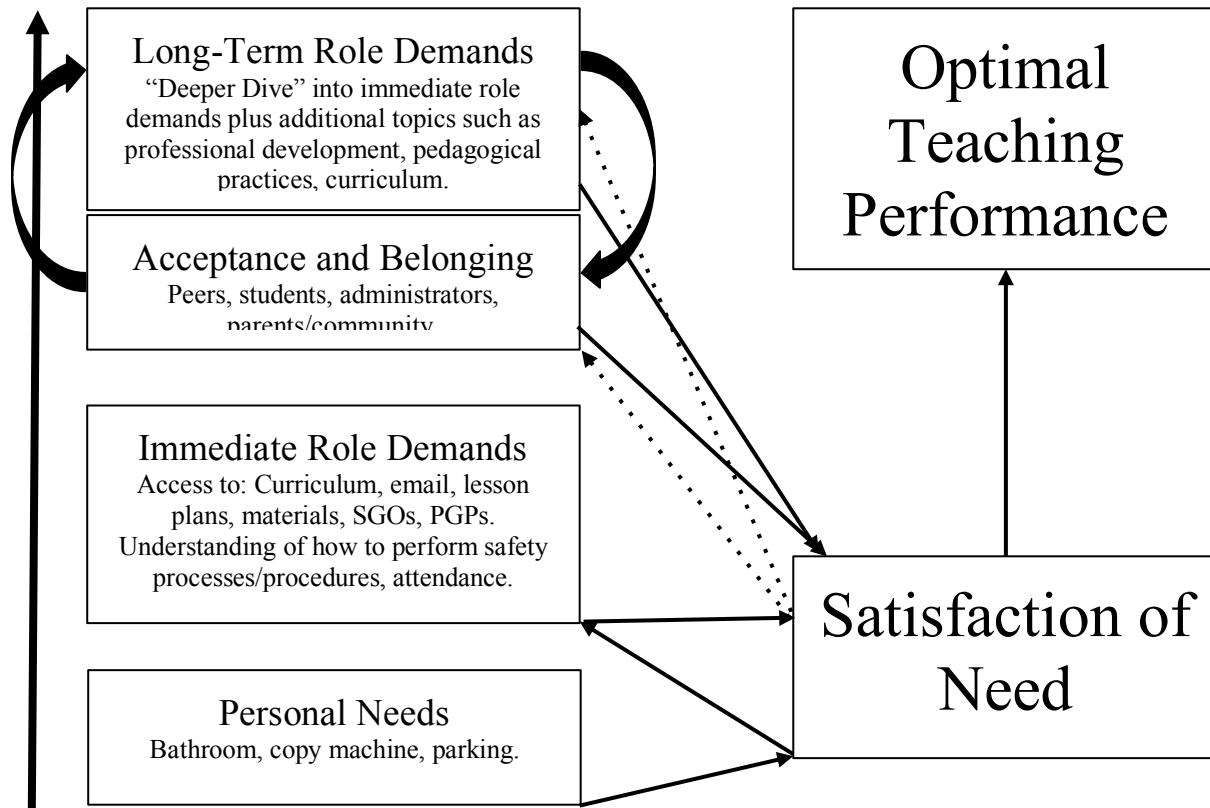
In this section I described the findings of this study regarding new teachers meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures within districts or schools. The findings suggested that new teachers are met with a litany of demands upon entering a school or district and such demands must be met for new teachers to be able to perform their teaching roles effectively. The participants in this study shared experiences that found new teachers addressing highly localized role demands that were both immediate and long-term. In addition to meeting such role demands, teacher coaches offered a category of misidentified needs as new teachers may lack the experience needed to accurately identify the assistance they may need to address a

perceived problem or issue. What emerged from this section was a form of new teacher hierarchy of needs that resembled Maslow's (1943) seminal work on motivation, *A theory of human motivation*. Maslow's theory of motivation included a hierarchy of needs that consisted of five levels or dimensions of motivation: physiological needs, safety, love and belonging, esteem and need for self-actualization. According to Maslow (1943), when a need is "fairly well satisfied, the next prepotent [higher] need emerges, in turn to dominate the conscious life and to serve as the center of organization of behavior, since gratified needs are not active motivators" (pp. 394-395).

Based on the findings of this study, I propose a similar hierarchy of new teacher needs that participants shared (*see* Figure 2). The ultimate goal in the new teacher hierarchy of needs is to achieve optimal performance of their teaching responsibilities. This goal is predicated on the lower level needs having been met. In this study, the lower level needs that new teachers expressed were personal needs; immediate needs; long-term needs; and acceptance and belonging. Specifically discussed in this section were the needs that new teachers experienced as they enter teaching. Not discussed in this section was the need for acceptance and belonging. Acceptance and belonging are discussed in a later section focused on navigating the micropolitical environment during induction.

**Figure 2**

*Illustrative Hierarchy of APS New Teacher Needs for Optimal Performance*



*Note.* The chart should be read beginning at the bottom with personal needs. Each level must be satisfied before moving to the next.

Applying the principles of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to new teacher needs discussed in this study suggests that individuals may have basic, lower-level needs that must be satisfied before the next need may emerge for new teachers to reach optimal performance in their job roles. What is not clear from the findings of this study is if all new teachers start at the same entry point of needs, or not. The participants acknowledged that needs were had during transition, but the principles of Maslow's hierarchy suggest that there is a lock-step approach to entry level needs (e.g., physiological needs transitioning all the way up to self-actualization). The

findings of this study were not clear as to where new teachers may begin in the hierarchy, suggesting that each individual teacher may begin at different points along the needs chart. However, regardless of where new teachers may begin, the participants also suggest that needs must be met to be able to achieve optimal performance and focus on the students' needs, rather than their own needs. According to Maslow, a need will "monopolize consciousness and will tend to organize the recruitment of the various capacities of the organism" (p. 394), thus similar to Maria's earlier statement regarding the meeting of immediate needs to be able to focus more on the students. Therefore, the participants in this study were able to communicate a leveling of needs, but, again, what remains to be identified is if there is a structured hierarchy of needs, as seen in Maslow (1943), especially between the long-term role demands and acceptance and belonging (*see* Figure 2). Regardless of their order, there does appear to be a relationship between satisfying new teacher needs and the ability to effectively address student educational needs. The relationship between such is discussed in later sections.

### **Locating Resources to Meet the Local Demands of Teaching During Induction**

As discussed in the previous section, the participants of this study suggested that new teachers are faced with a deluge of highly localized role demands upon entering the teaching profession. As with any profession, as new employees are faced with role demands the employees seek out resources to meet such demands (Björk et al., 2019; Demerouti et al., 2001). Expanding on the concept of new teacher role demands discussed in the previous section, the role demands within this section are framed around what Demerouti et al. (2001) called "job demands" in relation to the Job-Demand-Resource (JD-R) model. They defined job demands as the "physical, social or organizational aspects of the job that require effort and have physiological or psychological costs" (p. 501). The teaching profession is no exception when it

comes to job demands as they are a necessary component to becoming a teacher. However, what appears to be underscored by the participants in this study is how highly localized, or personalized, such job demands are and how seemingly unprepared new teachers were to meet such demands before entering the building or district.

Following this recount of highly localized needs and role demands as they are presented by the participants in this study, are the location of resources to meet such needs as they may not be universally accessible to new teachers. Demerouti et al. (2001) recognized the relationship that exists between job demands and job resources, defining the latter as “positively valued physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are instrumental in achieving work goals and that reduce physiological or psychological costs” (p. 501). Therefore, this section captures the participants' journeys in locating the highly-contextualized job resources to meet the physical, social, or organizational job demands within their transitional period to APS in hopes to mitigate both the physiological or psychological pressures presented during this time.

To address such needs, the participants in this study identified personal, social/emotional, and organizational experiences while locating resources to meet their needs. Capturing the experiences of new teachers, and the veterans that assist new teachers, allows for a deeper, more visceral, understanding of new teacher induction, an understanding based on actual experiences in a particular district that may help others better understand new teacher struggles in their own districts or schools. Therefore, the following section is organized around participant experiences and the location of resources as they transition into APS. The major sub themes that are discussed in this section are: *new teacher burnout*, *retention*, *internal resources*, and *external resources*.

### **New Teacher Burnout**

New teacher burnout is important to understand as burnout may be caused by the failure of districts to provide new teachers with the resources to meet physical, social or organization job demands, and as such may increase physiological or psychological pressures. Some of the needs that may lead to new teachers leaving the teaching profession (i.e., burnout) exist beyond the classroom and, furthermore, exist within the organizational environment itself. To better understand this relationship between new teachers and their environment, it is important to include what new teachers were feeling during this transitional period. Ultimately, a better understanding of how the environment outside of the classroom impacted new teachers may help districts prevent new teacher burnout. If we are able to better understand new teacher burnout, then we may be able to retain new teachers at a greater rate than we are now.

Gavish and Friedman (2010) studied the early phase (first year of teaching) of burnout among new teachers. They hoped to gain insight as to what led to new teacher burnout during their transition into the work environment. Narrowing their study of new teacher burnout down to this specific time period (i.e., first year), Gavish and Friedman (2010) specifically included new teachers' perceptions of their work environment and how such perceptions ultimately contributed to new teacher burnout. They explained that burnout, in relation to the organizational environment, "is the psychological manifestation of a nagging perception of professional failure" (p. 143).

Where studies on new teacher burnout once focused on difficulties with students and in the classroom, a broader theory of new teacher difficulties has emerged that includes the organizational system and the work environment (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). Not only did Gavish and Friedman (2010) include new teachers' perceptions of their environment into their study, but they also concluded that new teacher burnout may begin as early as the student-

teaching phase in pre-service programs. With the inclusion of new teacher perceptions of their environment, they identified an additional responsibility for new teachers in relation to their transition into an organization; that of becoming an “organizational person” (p. 144). Gavish and Friedman (2010) explained that a new teacher becomes an organizational person when they “fully understand the school organizational environment to be able to operate effectively within it” (p. 142). Furthermore, it was the new teachers’ perceptions of themselves within their work environment as an organizational person, or not, that “significantly predicts feelings of unaccomplishment and exhaustion” (Gavish & Friedman, 2010, p. 142). If we are to better understand how new teachers reach exhaustion or feelings of professional unaccomplishment, we must first capture such moments and examine the struggles new teachers encounter within their organizations, understanding what new teachers are feeling as they become organizational persons (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). Therefore, how the new teacher participants felt as they transitioned into APS is important to this study as all of the teacher participants in this study will have surpassed six years as teachers in APS by publication, thus effectively having overcome new teacher burnout. The participants in this study shared not only their perceptions of their work environment, but also their feelings about the work environment as they formed their teacher identities and became organizational persons (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). They also shared that the feelings began immediately upon entering a district.

### ***New Teacher Shock***

The concept of new teachers feeling a sense of “shock” is well-established within the study of new teacher induction (Algozzine et al., 2017; Björk et al., 2019; Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Hunter et al., 2011; Petersen, 2017; Veenman, 1984). The term “shock” is used to describe the



“collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of the everyday classroom life” (Veenman, 1984, p. 143). As new teachers transition from educational theories learned during pre-service work into teaching practices, they may experience what Koehler and Kim (2012) identified as disconnects from new teacher expectations. The disconnect that new teachers feel during this time were considered by Koehler and Kim (2012) to be “major barriers” during transition that need to be overcome by new teachers in order for them to be successful classroom teachers (p. 215). While researching how to improve new teacher induction programs through distance education, Koehler and Kim (2012) identified barriers new teachers face during their transition into a district as discipline, class preparation, time management, paperwork, and facilities and equipment. The barriers that Koehler and Kim (2012) identified represented the disconnect, or shock, that new teachers felt between pre-service and teaching as they were not prepared to navigate through such work demands. Like the barriers identified in Koehler and Kim (2012), the participants in this study expressed how underprepared they felt to deal with the realities of teaching as they transitioned into APS. This disconnect to actual teaching brought with it the reality that not only do new teachers have to teach, but they also have to learn how to teach in a particular setting (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). The shock experienced by the participants in this study, not unlike most well-researched studies on new teacher transition, began as new teachers tried to make sense of their new roles and responsibilities within the context of their positions.

To illustrate the feeling of new teacher shock with curriculum, novice teacher participant, Alex, offered a reflection of his transitional experience:

Thinking back on a lot of your unit plans and lesson plans that you did throughout your college courses . . . and they're all kind of like “do a history lesson or a lesson on the

Revolutionary War, unit on the Revolutionary War,”. . . I never had the opportunity to look at a year-long curriculum and say “okay well, how am I going to break this down and how am I going to teach this per week per month.”. . . obviously, a lot of things we’re going to talk about are trial and error and of just getting in the profession and learning from mistakes and successes, but that was one where, you know, I had to just kind of play by ear and learn as I went through [it]. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Alex experienced frustrations with the scope and sequence of his pre-service training, finding that the pre-service program concentrated on a lesson, in this case, a unit lesson, but not how the lesson fit into the overall curriculum spanning the academic year. Alex appeared to believe that the scope and sequence of a complete year was something that should have been covered during his pre-service preparation. Instead, Alex had to wade his way through his first year playing things “by ear” instead of being able to plan out his lessons in a connected way that made sense to not only Alex, but also to his students (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). If Alex’s pre-service program had included an entire year’s sequence of units, perhaps Alex would have been able to plan better and not rely on a moment-to-moment approach.

The shock of not having seen how an entire year’s curriculum comes together was a disconnect between his pre-service experience and his transition into teaching. However, teaching and student teaching are understood to be two different experiences, entirely. Here, Alex emphasized the difference between his student teaching experience and his teaching experience; the emphasis being guidance and experience. Alex’s student teaching was very specific (within a curricular area and topics) and heavily-guided, where teaching itself was largely an independent experience where Alex had to make sense out of an entire year of

curriculum. The shock Alex experienced appeared to be related to the lack of guidance when he was teaching on his own, versus his specific experience during student teaching.

Maria also felt she was unprepared for teaching, “I don't think you're as prepared coming from college into the real world of teaching” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria emphasized the importance of having to actually go through experiences as a teacher to really prepare for teaching, but also expressed her discontent with her pre-service curriculum. Maria further clarified her frustrations with her pre-service preparation sharing that she had an entire class on “body language in the classroom,” but never had any exposure to the use of data to measure student performance (i.e., Student Growth Objectives) (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria’s disappointment with her pre-service program having not covered actual role demands such as Professional Growth Plans (PGPs), and Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), while covering a topic on body language (for an entire semester) illustrated a potential misalignment between pre-service preparation and actual teaching responsibilities. Maria’s shock came when she was asked to complete such mandatory processes (i.e., PGPs and SGOs) and had not learned how to do so, or that they even existed, during her pre-service program. Maria underscored the importance of learning from her colleagues to fill in the gaps from her pre-service program, having shared, “If I didn't have a mentor plus the three other people that I turned to in school for my SGO and my PGP, I would have been a little bit more lost than I already was” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Veteran teachers also noted the disconnect between pre-service preparation and teaching as the teacher coach participants shared their experiences with new teachers and their lack of preparation to address responsibilities upon entering teaching.

Amy, a teacher coach participant, shared that during her experiences helping new teachers she had never heard a new teacher say that they remember having learned about Student

Growth Objectives (SGOs) in their pre-service program having stated, “Honestly, SGOs . . . I have never heard a teacher say . . . ‘oh yeah I remember learning about these.’ To my knowledge, I’m not sure that they were ever told about SGOs.” Although the use of student growth objectives (SGO) may be very particular to a state or district, the application of student data to drive instruction or measure growth was a concern for both new teachers and teacher coaches in this study. The misalignment from pre-service preparation to teaching appears to be especially evident as SGOs are required of new teachers within the first two months of beginning their teaching in APS (TEACHNJ, 2012). Having also appeared in the previous discussion on new teacher role demands, new teachers and teacher coaches in this study voiced their disappointment in teacher preparation programs for having not addressed the topic of data collection and use; rather relying on districts to instruct new teachers on the topic and process. However, the shock that new teachers feel as they transition into teaching was not the only reaction or emotion participants shared.

### ***Acceptance and Support***

Identifying emotions within the earliest phase of transition into APS, Henry, a new teacher participant, recalled feelings of acceptance and belonging in the district upon meeting with the superintendent at his time of hire. Henry stated:

When I got into the district I was welcomed by the superintendent. You know I did feel that initial connection . . . I felt a sense of belonging, acceptance and anytime you feel like that you're ready to go . . . and I was ready to go, that same day, actually.

Unfortunately, I couldn't start that same day, but, you know, I was ready to go. . . . it was that meeting with the superintendent where I felt that connection. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Henry's immediate feeling of acceptance appeared to motivate him as he felt ready to "get his hands dirty and get to work" after talking to the superintendent. Alex, another new teacher participant, shared feelings of acceptance when he first met his colleagues in his department. Alex shared that he felt "welcomed by some of [his] colleagues" adding that he also felt a sense of safety and belonging, describing such as, "I immediately felt that safety blanket of having someone to go to because I think that's what really overwhelms new teachers" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Additionally, new teachers, Maria and Steve, shared their feelings of support during their transition. Maria expressed gratitude that she had a "strong [group of] people" that included her mentor, colleagues in her building, and administrators. Steve shared his feelings of support during his transition period, recalling that he found "the transition very, very comfortable . . . my entire department was helpful . . . everybody from the administration down to the custodial staff was supportive in helping me transition into my position as a teacher, in Auriolus High School" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20).

In terms of the new teacher participants in this study feeling supported during their transition, and even during the recruitment and hiring process, the concept of design thinking (Plaskoff, 2017) lends itself to such "holistic perceptions" (p. 137) of the district. Design thinking, often applied to business organizations, centers on practices that, "treat work not as a mere employment, but as a life journey, with the employee as the hero" (Plaskoff, 2017, p. 137). As such, Plaskoff defined employee experiences as an employee's "holistic perception of the relationship with his/her employing organization derived from all the encounters at touchpoints along the employee's journey" (p. 137). Therefore, when the participants in this study describe feelings of support and acceptance, they included such holistic perceptions of the district at the very early stages of their career. Although, the new teacher participants described the positive

feelings of acceptance and support, not all of the feelings new teachers in this study experienced during their transition were so positive.

### *Anxious/Overwhelmed*

Despite feeling supported during their transition into APS, the new teacher participants also reported feeling overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed in any new job or profession is understandable. That said, the participants in this study identified their feelings with specific role demands that they apparently understood to be part of their new jobs. For instance, Alex had previously indicated that policies differ from school to school and accepted this as a role demand he had to meet. However, Alex also shared his fear of not knowing a policy or how to help a student when a questionable comment was made by the student regarding suicide. Alex stated, “I remember it wasn't black and white where I felt like, okay this is [not] easy . . . I need to call someone” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Alex, in this moment, recalled the confusion he felt as he was suddenly held to the same procedural standard as a veteran teacher. Having not had any prior experience with such situations, Alex knew he had to act, but was unaware as to what action he should have taken. Ultimately, Alex called an administrator to assist him, however the event is something that stayed with Alex as this had occurred several years ago.

Similarly, Steve shared an experience involving a student who reported she was sexually assaulted. Steve recalled having felt very “nervous that [he] messed up in [his] execution of that policy” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Additionally, Steve shared:

It turned out that I did exactly what I was supposed to do. But because I was new, it was my first two weeks of school, I was really nervous and had a lot of anxiety about it . . .

And so there's a need to know how to protect my . . . essentially how to protect my

license from things that can easily unfold in a classroom. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Maria also shared an incident that took place within her first week as a teacher. Maria had to call family services to report a suspected case of child abuse. Maria credited her ability to make that phone call to her colleagues as they had experience with such matters and were able to help her through the situation. She recalled, “I mean [it was] my first week of teaching. . . I called DCPD up, and I was like, I don't know what to do. . . it's my first week. And, you know, those experienced teachers that are 26 years [in], they have made those phone calls [before].”

As one can imagine, having had to deal with a situation where a student reports an incident such as sexual assault, physical abuse, or substance abuse to a new teacher is not something that is frequently discussed in pre-service programs and requires a local-knowledge base, context, and support to be dealt with properly (Leland & Harste, 2005). Such circumstances may be unique to schools or districts; therefore they may not have a current place in pre-service teacher curricula. However, as Leland and Harste (2005) stated in their study of preparing teachers for urban environments and the critical issues that exist in such environments:

Teachers of children from poverty need more than a good grasp of content knowledge about the different subject areas they will be teaching. Perhaps more important for them is the ability to see themselves as agents of change—people who can make a difference in the lives of children. They need to be able to rise above the temptation to give in to a feeling of fatalistic helplessness. (pp. 75-76)

Poor students are not the only ones who experience substance abuse, physical abuse, or sexual assault, but rather teacher preparation programs may lack one critical aspect to help in preparing pre-service teachers for teaching i.e., experience within local context. As further suggested by

Leland and Harste (2005), “If we want teachers who can think critically, then we need to immerse them in critical issues and give them opportunities to sort through their conflicting beliefs and observations” (p. 75).

Located within the scope of new teacher induction studies, the concept of new teacher feelings and their association to commitment or burnout can ultimately determine a new teacher’s longevity in the teaching profession. Such new teacher emotional responses to work environments were studied by Jones and Young (2012) where they found that, coupled with beliefs about one’s job, emotional experiences can ultimately influence overall judgments about job satisfaction. Similar to Plaskoff’s (2017) business study on new employee holistic perceptions, Jones and Young (2012) included new teacher emotions as a factor in determining whether or not new teachers will stay in teaching.

Emotions, as defined by Jones and Young (2012), are “affective responses to specific events” implying that emotions are “not static but are instead likely to change depending on a person’s interactions with their environment” (p. 3). As part of their study, they included how new teachers experience their environment during their transition into teaching. The experiences that new teachers shared, similar to the experiences shared in this study, were emotional experiences. However, emotions were not the only factor in how new teachers perceived an incident. Another factor that is considered alongside the emotional events that new teachers experience is the support they had within that experience from colleagues.

Essentially, Jones and Young (2012) found that emotions “provide a theoretical link between workplace conditions and work attitudes” therefore, “it is by influencing the kinds of events that individuals experience (and respond emotionally to) that work context potentially affects job satisfaction” (p. 20). This particular connection between emotions and job satisfaction



was relevant to this study because the participants in this study reported, in addition to the emotions they experienced, an overall satisfaction that kept them invested in APS. This investment appeared to have emerged from the support they experienced from the district and the colleagues with whom they worked.

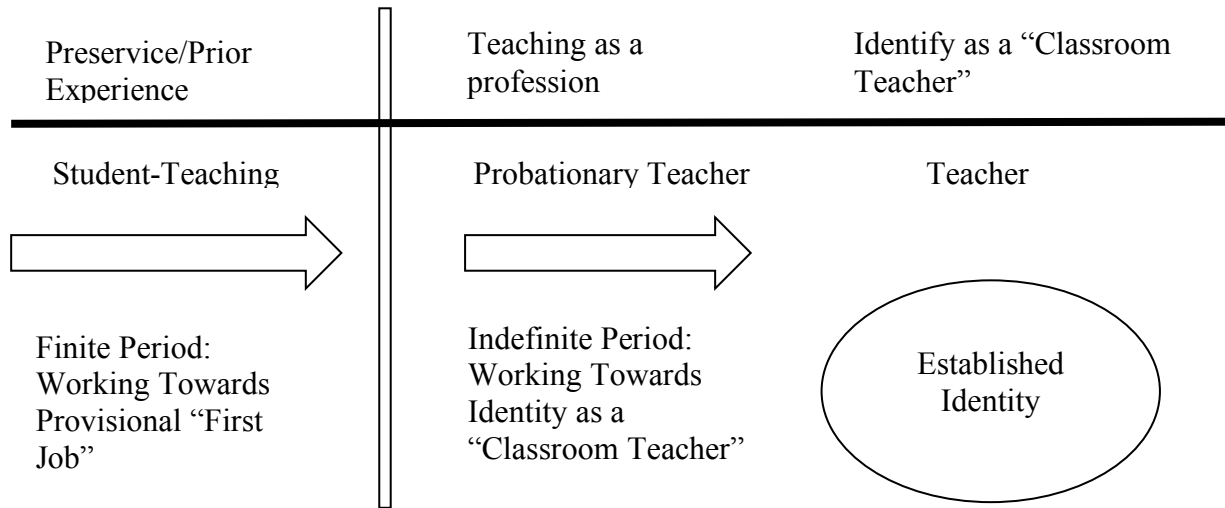
Unlike other professions that lend an extended period of time for new employees to work under more experienced practitioners, such as in law or medicine (Bell-Robertson, 2014), new teachers are typically placed in classrooms and are expected to perform similar to veteran teachers right away (Lortie, 1975 as cited in Bell-Robertson, 2014). As new teachers struggle to find not only the resources needed to fulfill their job requirements, but also discover their own professional identities within their organizations (Koehler & Kim, 2012), or as Rippon and Martin (2012) explained as new teachers are trying to identify themselves as “classroom teachers” (p. 320), there appears to be a stir of emotions that exists particularly around this liminal stage of a teacher’s career. During this transitional phase, new teachers search for acceptance from their peers or colleagues and climb a proverbial ladder of professional labels beginning with “student teacher” and ending with “classroom teacher,” thus extending new teacher perceptions of their professional self, beginning with the student teaching phase (Rippon & Martin, 2012). The phase in the middle of this professional teaching identity continuum (see Figure 3), identified as “probationary teacher,” is the transitional phase that is the focus of this study as the discussions during the interview process focus on the location of resources during the first four years of teaching in APS.

During this specific time period, and arising from the interactions with their new colleagues and peers, the participants in this study shared their emotional experiences as they encountered successes and failures in their new organizational environments. Having begun to

form their individual perceptions of teaching during the pre-service phase (Gavish & Friedman, 2010), such accounts from the participants in this study illuminated a traditionally under-reported aspect of induction i.e., how new teachers feel about their organizational environments during induction. Therefore, how the participants in this study felt during their introduction to APS and how they navigated through such feelings has a place in the conversation of new teacher induction. Some of the emotions were positive, while others were negative. Nonetheless, all of the new teacher participants shared some type of personal feelings during their transition into the district as they made the jump from pre-service to teaching in APS. Therefore, the personal feelings shared by participants in this study add another puzzle piece to the picture of this transitional period.

**Figure 3**

*Establishing an Identity as a “Classroom Teacher”*



**Retention**

Faced with alarming national attrition rates as high as 50% within the first three to five years of teaching (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Rinke, 2014), the new teacher participants in

this study appeared to have “beaten the odds” as by the time of publication of this study, all of the new teacher participants will have completed their sixth year of teaching in APS. What is even more interesting about the participants in this study is that the study was conducted in a district where all of the schools are categorized as Title I schools; schools which traditionally represent low-income students and students of color. Title I schools are known to have an even higher attrition rate for new teachers, as high as 70% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Yet, the new teachers that took part in this study not only expressed commitment to the district, but some of the participants were presented with opportunities to teach in other districts and chose to stay in APS. In relation to the location of resources to meet local demands, it is therefore important to understand why the teachers that participated in this study felt they wanted to stay at APS, as opposed to leave for other opportunities.

An example of leaving for another opportunity was shared by Alex during his First-Round interview. Alex was offered a position at his former high school, for a higher salary, and he turned it down. As Alex stated:

I made the decision [to stay] . . . you weigh the pros and cons and I'm happy and comfortable and confident of where I'm at now . . . I'm kind of bought in so I'm not looking to go anywhere . . . I mean I think those relationships we talked about, that's big with me. I enjoy going to work every day and I feel like I truly had people in both colleagues and administrators that I can trust and go to, and for me that goes a long way.

(First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Alex simply stated that he felt “happy and comfortable and confident” in his position. He also felt supported by colleagues and administrators. Ultimately, the environment of comfort and support outweighed the monetary advantages offered to Alex by the district he attended as a

student. Similarly, Maria, who was also offered a position in another district for a higher salary, turned the offer down to remain in APS. When asked why Maria had said “no way” to this job offer, Maria offered the following explanation:

I enjoy the people that I work with . . . I really am grateful for the people that I work with, and . . . I feel like everybody has contributed to me being able to do the best that I can. I have a relationship with the teacher coaches, with other coworkers, and even my principal. I enjoy where I am. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Like Alex, Maria referenced her supportive environment and the people she worked with as her reasons for staying in APS. Supportive environments and the colleagues that the new teachers work with at APS were standard responses in this study when the new teachers were asked if they ever considered leaving APS. Colleagues and administrators were also a reason Steve stayed in APS after receiving an offer for a position in another district. Steve, at first, shared that he is a very goal-oriented person, therefore he considered his time in APS as a work towards tenure, essentially a five-year goal. Steve stated:

I already worked so hard to try to get to that place of comfort where I was . . . the goal that I had set out was tenure. That's my short-term goal, to get tenure . . . I had many, many short-term goals, become a better educator, improve my tests, you know, different standard goals that you try to reach for. But the big one that I was looking for within that five-year period was to get tenure. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

However, once Steve began to talk more about his decision to stay in APS, he shared how he did not want to “renavigate” a new district (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20), reiterating a sense of comfort within APS that he mentioned in the previous statement. In addition to Steve’s comfort in the district, he also made mention of his colleagues and the positive and supportive work

environment that he felt he had. He stated, “I didn't want to risk going somewhere where that was not the case,” referring to the support he felt from his colleagues (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20).

As participants shared their reasons for staying in APS, even when offered a higher salary elsewhere, Paul was able to share a unique perspective of his transition into the district as he had previously served as a physical education teacher in two charter schools before coming to APS. Paul expressed during his interview that he has been “extremely happy” in APS, further sharing that he comes to work “with a smile every day” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). When asked why he felt this way about coming to work, Paul stated:

They [have] given me every opportunity I wanted. My dream [when] I was a kid was to be a phys. ed. teacher and coach. I wanted to coach soccer . . . my dream came true. I've finally reached it. And when I came into [the] district, everyone was so nice and so pleasant that I quickly started making friends . . . Any question I had was handled. Relationships with the kids are wonderful and the relationships [with] my staff are wonderful. My colleagues [are] wonderful . . . I wake up and want to go to work. You know, there's nothing [like] “Why do I have to be here?” No. I generally enjoy going to work and that's when I knew that okay, this is where I want to spend the next 35 years of my career. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

In Paul's case, he had experienced transition into other schools prior to coming to APS. Paul shared that he felt everyone was “nice” and “pleasant” during his transition into APS (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). According to Paul, the pleasant environment he experienced during his transitional period allowed him to make friends in his school. Although having colleagues as friends may not seem important in relation to new teacher induction study as it references a

social need, Paul mentioned friendships as part of his fulfillment of a dream coming true. In terms of retention, Paul considered the social aspect of his transition into APS as a part of his reason that he enjoys coming to work. However, these were not experiences Paul had during his previous transitions into charter schools.

Paul's first transitional experience as a new teacher was compared to having been "thrown to the wolves" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul attributed such feelings during his initial transition to the lack of support from both his administration and colleagues; further stating that he felt the environment was largely due to "the mentality of the Principal" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul also shared that he left that school to pursue more "opportunities" that a bigger school would offer, trying to "broaden his horizons" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). However, as Paul noted he was the only physical education teacher in his building and he was never provided any resources. According to Paul, being the only physical educator in the building limited the assistance that his colleagues could lend him, recalling that when it came to curriculum he had to "recreate [his] own lesson plans, [his] own packets, [his] own whatever . . . [his] own PowerPoints. Regarding my colleagues, there really wasn't anywhere for me to go because no one really understood the health aspect of the building" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Comparatively speaking, Paul shared a much different perspective when he transitioned into APS. Paul spoke positively of his transitional experience into APS:

Auriolus, there was more there for me. So, when I got there, like I said, I had my colleagues who gave me what they had . . . And we had textbooks. We had our own classroom. We had laptops, we had everything we possibly needed. Colleagues that were there to help you. Administration was more open. I can walk into an office and talk to somebody and it would only take me a second. I wrote an email, the meeting would [be]

set, you know, an hour later, just more of a homey type feel . . . like, really they want you to succeed. Again, I guess that comes with, I don't know if that's due to charter, public or what it was, but definitely more of an easier transition for me. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

In addition to Paul having received a warmer reception during his transition to APS, Paul also specifically mentioned the opportunities and resources that were available in APS that were apparently not available to Paul in his other districts or schools. Paul's comparison of transitional experiences offers additional insight into new teachers finding environments that meet teacher needs. In Paul's case, when his needs were not met, he sought opportunities elsewhere. However, when Paul was able to meet his needs, which he identified as opportunities, resources, support, and collegial relationships, Paul expressed interest in staying at APS for his entire career.

Kelchtermans (2017) described teacher attrition/retention as a "prime issue" in education; an issue that can only be addressed through a more comprehensive approach that must include topics such as "professional development, career development, job motivations, self-understanding or identity, working conditions, social status of teaching job" (p. 962). Such a prime educational issue also appears to be an issue that "everyone seems to know and recognize, but nobody is able to really identify and pin down" (Kelchtermans, 2017, p. 962). Therefore, I propose that such practical and theoretical themes in induction practices may be extended to include school environments as a factor of attrition/retention, rather than focus on the classroom itself. However, attrition and retention, although related, are not the same (Kelchtermans, 2017). Attrition, according to Kelchtermans (2017), referred to teachers permanently leaving the teaching profession, where retention referred to teachers staying in a particular school or district. Sharpening the definitions of attrition and retention Kelchtermans added the term "good" to the

conversation (p. 965), as not every teacher that leaves the profession constitutes a loss to the profession. Conversely, not every teacher that stays in the teaching profession positively contributes to education.

Where Kelchtermans (2017) took the position that there must be a better understanding of the reasons that teachers are *leaving* the profession, my study rather looked to highlight the reasons the effective or “good” teachers that participated in this study chose to *stay* in APS. Thus, what this section on retention hoped to accomplish in the context of this study was a better understanding of why the “good” teachers in this study decided to stay in APS (retention). Similar to the conclusion drawn by Kelchtermans (2017), the participants in this study shared that collegial relationships were a crucial factor in their decision to stay at APS. The relationship between new teachers and the colleagues within their schools or districts was described by Kelchtermans (2017) as an “existential importance” (p. 968), and like the stages of professionalism seen in Rippon and Martin (2012), were considered essential in the formation of a professional identity. Therefore, the collegial support which the participants in this study spoke so vehemently about was a contributing factor to their decisions to stay at APS as they began to form their professional identities based on the assistance and acceptance from their colleagues.

Finding value in their profession through such positive interactions superseded monetary concerns as the participants in this study turned down offers for higher salaries because they felt supported and acknowledged by their colleagues. As Kelchtermans (2017) pointed out in his description of the term existential importance: “Teachers need to experience that they are valued and trusted professionally. Actually, without that recognition they —worldly and metaphorically— don’t exist as teachers and as such this acknowledgment is —in every sense of the word— of existential importance” (p. 968). As factors that may mitigate the high attrition



rates and help retain new teachers as they search for their professional identities and seek out local resources, the collegial environment that greets them in a school or district appeared to have a significant impact on their decisions to stay in the profession. This was especially true for the participants of this study as they found resources to meet both their physical and emotional needs inside and outside of the schools.

If stakeholders are to better understand how to retain good teachers, they must be willing to consider how new teachers feel about their work environments. The participants in this study suggested that retention may have had more to do with the school environment than it did with monetary compensation. When asked why the new teacher participants in this study had chosen to stay at APS, even after they were offered teaching positions in other districts with a higher salary, the new teachers referenced feelings of comfort, support, opportunity, and resources. Once the new teachers in this study felt comfortable in their work environment, they were not willing to leave when opportunities to do so presented themselves. There may be a grave assumption that new teachers will automatically adapt to their new environment if they want to teach. However, the participants in this study shed light on such assumptions offering an alternative reason to stay in their schools; they were happy and felt supported by colleagues. As identified by participants in this study, resources were also a significant component of their feelings of comfort and played a significant role in their decisions to stay in APS. Therefore, the resources that new teacher participants were able to identify in this study have a foothold in new teacher induction program study as they represent a factor of consideration for retention.

### **Internal Resources**

Met with a litany of needs during the transitional phase of their careers, new teachers in this study shared not only what needs they had, but also where they located resources to address

such needs. As mentioned in the earlier sections of this chapter, new teachers in this study identified their needs within highly localized contexts. Therefore, the resources to meet such needs were also highly localized. To meet these needs, districts may have preexisting structures of support in place, including formal mentoring, formal new teacher induction programs, and internal reference materials e.g., evaluation handbook, faculty manual, new teacher resource guide. However, according to the participants in this study, the resources most important to them are their work colleagues. I organized this section into the following sub themes in order to discuss the emergent categories of internal resources identified by the participants in this study: *Mentors*, *New teacher induction program resources*, *Internal documentation as resources*, and *Colleagues as resources*.

### ***Mentors***

As an internal resource, new teachers in this study identified their assigned district mentors as sources of information to meet highly localized role demands. As suggested by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), the role of a mentor is to serve as a local guide to new teachers during their transition to teaching. The participants in this study shared interactions with their mentors that they found helpful. Their descriptions of such interactions suggested that the mentors served as both local guides through policies and procedures, and as guides through social interactions with colleagues. Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) also discussed the use of mentors as guides through social situations, dividing the functions of mentors into two categories: educative mentors and conventional mentors. The educational mentor focused on not only the immediate needs of the novice teacher, but also the enhancement of teaching practices that would move the novice teacher forward. The conventional mentors had more of a focus on new teacher emotional support, occupational socialization, and short-term assistance. In this

study, the participants shared that APS mentors served as both educational and conventional mentors.

In terms of positive responses to mentors, Alex, Maria, and Steve all shared that their mentors were either “good,” “awesome,” or “great.” Alex specifically shared that he and his mentor “got along” and that his mentor was able to help him through a lot of the “initial processes” within the district (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Alex also found it helpful that his mentor was in his department in the APS High School (AHS), which meant they both were in the same physical location and taught the same subjects. When Alex was asked why he considered his mentor to be “awesome,” Alex explained that he “got truth from [him] . . . he told me exactly how it was . . . you know, straightforward. [This] really helped me kind of focus on the things that matter and the things that you have to let go, it was very helpful” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). In this explanation, Alex associated his mentor being “awesome” with the mentor’s ability to offer advice and guidance that helped Alex prioritize his role responsibilities as a teacher. Alex also shared that his mentor warned him about some of his colleagues and their negativity towards their work environment. Alex’s mentor shared the advice to “be wary of some of the people and what they're going to say to you and how they're going to try to kind of paint the picture of this place” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20).

Alex’s mentor appeared to take on dual roles as both an educative and conventional mentor in Alex’s description of their relationship. As an educational mentor, Alex was offered advice on the initial processes associated with his transition into APS, such as how to submit lesson plans, how to take attendance, and how to locate physical resources. Additionally, Alex’s mentor offered the conventional advice of prioritizing what was professionally important and to be aware of negative colleagues and their negative perceptions of APS. This positive, dual-role

interaction was also expressed by Maria as she described her mentor as “great” and was able to share why she thought so.

For Maria, the circumstances were slightly different than Alex’s as Maria and her mentor were teachers in an elementary school, where Alex and his mentor were in a particular academic department in AHS. The immediate difference between the two situations was that Maria, although she identified her mentor as “great,” also made mention of the different grade levels that Maria and her mentor taught in. Maria stated that the reason that the different grade levels, in this situation, was not an issue to the mentor-mentee relationship was that her and her mentor were “on the same wavelength” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Regarding the mismatch in grade level, Maria explained how the mentor-mentee relationship was not impacted by teaching in different grades as:

We [were] both were departmentalized teachers, rather than her being in a full-day [class] like kindergarten, first or second [grade]. So I think that did help. The fact that she was the same subject as I was, that we both taught the same things, even though we weren't in the same grade level, it helps that we were in the same position. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

In this example, Maria found it helpful that she was matched with a mentor that was also departmentalized (i.e., taught specific subjects) versus primary grade assignments that taught all subjects. This allowed Maria and her mentor to share common teaching experiences even if they were in different grade levels. In this case, slightly deviating from the same school, the same subject scenario as seen in Alex did not have a profound effect on Maria regarding her perception of her mentor as she also shared additional qualities that made her mentor “awesome.”

Maria was able to expand on why she felt her mentor was “awesome” by identifying specific components of their mentor/mentee relationship. Maria recalled that her mentor frequently contacted her through the day and that her mentor had a sense of her own limitations. Regarding both mentor qualities, Maria stated:

She reached out 500 times in a day. She even said to me a few times . . . “I don't know how to help you, but I want to. Maybe you should go ask an administrator or the secretary that question” . . . so that kind of triggered the conversation of any dumb question I knew wasn't going to be a question [just for her], but was going to be a question for her and whoever [could] help . . . So I knew I had a comfortable relationship with her. And I have to say that really helps. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria understood that a question to her mentor also involved a greater network of resources as her mentor not only gave Maria advice on topics with which she was familiar, but also would suggest resources that could help Maria when her mentor was unable to answer the question herself. Maria identified her mentor's personal knowledge of her own limitations and her ability to direct Maria towards resources that would be helpful as positive mentor qualities. Maria also, like Alex, found herself asking her mentor questions about negative colleagues and specific situations.

Maria not only suggested that her mentor assisted her with procedures, but also with collegial interactions within her building. Maria shared a particularly negative experience with a colleague on her first day of receiving students at APS:

As a new teacher you are very excited . . . and I remember it was my first day I had my list of students. I was so excited I labeled everything in my classroom. I labeled all of the inside of the classroom [with] all the kids' names, and one teacher came in my room and

she was like “see this, take it all down . . . and where is your class list, just rip it up?”. . . And as she said “it will look different. You might as well tear it up and throw it all out in the garbage.” And I was like, “What do you mean?” and she was like “don't even go off of it because this one's gonna be in Peru, [this] one could be in South America, the other one's gonna [be] in China. . . then you're gonna get four new ones and you're getting a whole new list.” And I will never forget it because I was like, “What in the world is going on?” and I turned to my mentor and I was like, “[Suzy], are we going to get a whole new list?”. . . and I told her what happened and she just started laughing and she goes on [telling me] “part of it might be true, you might not see everyone on it, but that's not the way to do it. Don't rip it up. Hold on to it. If the kid doesn't show up, just cross the name out and tell the office if they don't [show up] probably three days in a row. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria considered this first-day interaction a “huge eye opener” as she had previously assumed that everyone was positive about their teaching positions (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20).

Instead, Maria learned that “not everybody has this positive [outlook] coming out of college,” thus Maria's encounter was not only with a colleague, but with a mindset that exists in a school or district.

To navigate through this negative interaction, Maria relied on her mentor to make sense of the situation and sought advice on how seriously to take the information that was presented to her by her colleague. Similar to Alex's mentor's advice regarding colleagues, Maria used her mentor's knowledge of colleagues and practice to navigate through a particular localized issue (i.e., negativity towards students moving and the process of changing class rosters). She considered her mentor a valuable resource to help navigate through collegial interactions as her

mentor shared her thoughts of which colleagues to “just say hi to” and the colleagues that Maria should “take guidance from” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Like Alex, Maria thought her mentor’s knowledge of colleagues was a valuable resource to help make sense of interactions. As mentors are mandatorily assigned to first year teachers (TEACHNJ, 2012) as part of the APS new teacher induction program, the participants in this study also shared their perceptions of their induction program.

### *New Teacher Induction Program Resources*

As an internal resource for new teachers, all first-year teachers at APS that are working towards their standard teaching certification must be assigned a mentor in their first year of teaching (TEACHNJ, 2012). As a matter of compliance, APS followed the mandated assignment of mentors to first year teachers as part of their new teacher induction program. At the time that the new teacher participants in this study were part of this one-year program in APS, the new teacher induction program consisted of two major components, the assignment of a mentor and a two-day orientation before the school year began. As such, the participants in this study were asked their opinion on the APS new teacher induction program as they recalled experiencing such within their first year.

Alex recalled that the two-day orientation offered a folder that contained all of the policies he needed to know in it. Maria also recalled the two-day orientation, adding that she did not feel the induction was done “incorrectly,” but rather that everything that was offered in that two-day period was “necessary” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria added that she recognized the compliance part of the orientation as “necessary” and further added that she did not expect the orientations to go into much detail as she believed that:

I don't think that first year teacher induction should be . . . “Oh, this is how PGP works this is how an SGO works”. . . I feel like that's more of something that needs to be sat with your mentor because there is so much more to discuss at the induction, that is more prevalent towards what is Auriolus' goal for you as a teacher, rather than this how you do an SGO. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Similarly, Steve recalled that he received all of the necessary policies at orientation, like Alex and Maria, but additionally shared that he felt there was no time to learn everything by the time he started in the classroom. Steve stated: “So as a first-year teacher, you're given everything, but there was no time to learn them” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20).

According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011), new teacher induction can be used to describe a variety of events or activities for new teachers which may include orientation sessions, collaborative time with other faculty, developmental workshops, reduced workload, and mentoring. At the time the new teacher participants were in their first year of teaching at APS, the district considered new teacher induction to be the assignment of a mentor and a two-day orientation. As expressed by the participants in this study, the mentors played much more of a role than the two-day orientation. According to the participant responses, there was no attempt by APS to institute a formal learning process that acknowledged new teachers as learners (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). Instead, it appeared that this role was left completely up to the mentors and the school as a community. Additionally, the induction program that was referenced by the participants was only a one-year induction program, not the multi-year program as suggested by Feiman-Nemser et al. (1999) and the one that currently exists at APS. However, the participants did not voice disappointment in the new teacher induction program. Instead, the new



teachers in this study identified the induction program that was offered to them as a matter of procedure; one that did not offer an extensive learning experience for new teachers.

The structure of the interview process, and the specific selection of the participants engaged in this study allowed for commentary from the new teacher participants as to what suggestions they could offer to improve the new teacher induction program at APS (*see* Appendix C). The topic of improving the new teacher induction program for future new teachers at APS also emerged during focus group discussions and the second round of interviews. The participants offered suggestions as how to improve new teacher induction at APS. One such suggestion from Henry was to possibly hear from past first-year teachers so that any current new teachers could learn from those that came before them. Henry suggested that new teacher induction programs run with “more teacher input, especially [from] the teachers that have been through it” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria shared a similar suggestion to Henry’s emphasizing the importance of hearing from newer teachers within their third or fourth years in the district. Maria went more into detail further suggesting that first year teachers “sit down with somebody just saying ‘hey I was new three years ago, four years ago. It’s hard. It’s rough but it’s fine’ and you have to keep the purpose of why you’re teaching in the back of your head” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20).

Maria further suggested that the new teacher induction programs include spaces that allow new teachers to ask about specific responsibilities that they may encounter. Maria suggested such spaces provide new teachers with people that may be able to provide new teachers with information that may be needed throughout their transition. Maria described such people as people that new teachers could “reach out to” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria

emphasized the importance of creating environments where new teachers could ask veterans for assistance and necessary resources. Maria shared an example of such an environment with:

‘Do you have this ready for the first day of school?’ . . . ‘[do] you have that ready for the first day of school’ and some of the teachers that have been there from one to four years, can say ‘oh yeah, I have that ready for you.’ (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria also proposed a resource for new teachers be created that assisted new teachers in identifying specific responsibilities during specific times. Maria believed that such a timeline resource would better allow new teachers to pace out their first year, in terms of needs and responsibilities.

Additionally, within the context of environments that promote collegial exchanges during new teacher induction, Steve suggested that new teacher orientation sessions could include “role-play” with experienced educators that allowed scenarios that are aligned with the district policies to be discussed (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve emphasized the importance of understanding policies as a means of “protecting yourself and protecting the kids” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). He included the role-play suggestion as part of a conversation during his interview that focused on new teachers not being able to identify what they needed, similar to the previously discussed section on misidentified needs. Steve stated:

I think it would be good for a new teacher to be able to articulate or outline things that they believe they may need. The truth of the matter is they don't know what they need because I didn't know what I needed. I think it's highly possible that a new teacher will underestimate their needs or overestimate their needs and in that way, miss out on what they actually need. But it's better to ask, because at least they're given an option . . . they're given the opportunity to put to bed some of their worries. And having an anxious

teacher [is] probably not a good idea. [It is] probably bad that the person who is in front of the class lecturing on . . . I don't know, a world war two is nervous about keeping their job. I think it's better to have them relaxed in delivering that content. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Like Maria, Steve thought an environment where colleagues were able to discuss new teacher responsibilities would be beneficial. Both Maria and Steve emphasized that new teachers may not know exactly what they need as new teachers since they lack experience in teaching. Veteran teachers could serve as a valuable resource to new teachers by sharing scenarios that capture policies in action, or even stories of their own struggles to help new teachers identify valuable resources. Such collegial environments that foster exchanges between veteran—even recently tenured teachers—could potentially help new teachers identify future role demands and potential resources to meet such. Creating such learning environments for new teachers would certainly be a step towards the acknowledgement that new teachers are learners, therefore they must be taught (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999). However, Paul offered a different take on the exchange process among new teachers during new teacher induction.

Paul, a new teacher participant that had experienced two other brief transitions before coming to APS, was hesitant to share in the open environment of new teacher orientation as Maria and Alex were. Paul had, instead, suggested that some of the topics that new teachers may want to ask about are best to be answered “behind closed doors” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul added that a new teacher “coming right out of college” may not feel comfortable asking such questions as they may be “scared to approach [people] and it may be difficult for them” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). The discomfort of new teachers asking questions or being scared to approach colleagues warrants further discussion. The hesitation to approach a

colleague with a question may reside in either the new teacher, as a person, or perhaps the environment that exists within the school. Such environmental questions are discussed in the third section of this chapter on micropolitical navigation, where the personal abilities to approach a colleague will be further discussed in the following section on new teacher biographies.

Nevertheless, Paul said that he would offer the following advice to a new teacher regarding the transitional process into APS:

Just relax, take it easy, relax, it's gonna be okay. Yeah, there's gonna be times when you're gonna be stressing out, freaking out. You just got to remember. . . You gotta relax. Take a deep breath and you got to just kind of [remember] you're the professional . . . and just know that there's people out there who want to help [you], you know, they can't be scared to approach somebody. There's 80 people in your boat. I mean, someone's gonna be there to help them. Someone's going to be there to let you know 'Okay, here's what you do.' Administration, they're not scary. You know, they have your back. You know, you got to work through your bosses, I understand they are people and you got to know that you can approach them and talk to them and just relax. It's gonna be okay. It's gonna be fine. You'll figure it out. You're gonna learn on the fly. It's gonna take some time.

Nothing ever happened overnight. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Although Paul initially stated that not all new teachers may feel comfortable approaching colleagues, he did make the point that he felt a majority of colleagues are willing to help new teachers. Paul's advice to new teachers that are starting out to "relax" and realize that there are people that do want to help you spoke to the overall environment in which he works, an environment that has a vast majority of colleagues that are willing to help because they are "in your boat" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). However, according to Paul, while most colleagues

are willing to support new teachers, there may be colleagues that are not as supportive. Paul's advice of having conversations "behind closed doors" implied that such support was not guaranteed from everyone. Therefore, if new teacher induction programs are going to try to create such environments for collegial exchanges, the selection of participants must be approached with caution as not everyone in a school may be approachable or want to help a new teacher. Continuing with the findings on new teacher induction programs as resources, the teacher coach participants in this study were able to provide input as to the evolution of the induction program at APS.

As a matter of participant perspective, it is important to note that the teacher coach positions have only existed in APS for four years at the time of this study. Having created the teacher coach positions within the district, my institutional memory of the process serves as a historical account of the merger between teacher coaches and the new teacher induction program at APS. The teacher coaches did not begin to focus their attention on new teachers until the 2018-2019 school year. Therefore, none of the new teacher participants involved in this study would have had the opportunity within their first or second years to have used the teacher coach services. Not having the participants with aligned timelines of services in this study offered different perspectives to the new teacher induction program that currently exist at APS. The new teachers shared what they wish they had at the time of their induction, where the teacher coaches offered ways to improve the current new induction program.

In general, the teacher coaches were positive about the way new teacher induction had been modified at APS. Ann, a newer member of the teacher coach team that was three months into her teacher coach position at the time of the interview, recalled her transition into APS and

the support she had received during this transition as compared to the support currently offered by APS:

Reflecting back on when I first came into the district, I really didn't have any kind of support like this. There weren't any teacher coaches, although the staff that I was with was more than generous and helpful. There wasn't a direct support system like we have right now with the teacher coaches and with the new induction program. We're offering professional learning to meet their needs, what they want. And when I was [new] they weren't even allowing us to go out for PDs out of the district unless we provided that for ourselves. So, coming from "if you wanted to grow as a professional, you kind of had to do it yourself and the district didn't support you" to now, where we're encouraging them constantly . . . you know, "if there's a professional development that you want to go out [to] and you want to learn this, and this is what's driving you," the district seems more than happy to help support that. Plus, we're personalizing what they want through those new teacher induction surveys, and we're delivering what they felt they were most [important] so I do feel like we have a lot of great support for teachers right now that we didn't necessarily have seven years ago. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

In Ann's comparison of her transitional experience into APS to the professional development and support now offered to new teachers, she addressed the support of professional growth and development from both the district and teacher coaches at APS. Ann's first experience with growth and development within APS appeared to rest on the individual teacher, rather than a support network of development. In the first part of her statement, she recalled that any professional development in which she wanted to take part had to be initiated and paid for by herself. This was a far different experience from that of the new teachers that now enter APS. As

Ann noted, APS has supported, offered, and encouraged professional development, especially within the last five-year period. Additionally, APS has utilized the teacher coaches to deliver responsive professional development based on survey responses; including responsive professional development specifically for new teachers. Similarly, Lisa, a 30-year veteran teacher with two years of teacher coach experience spoke of the positives of the current new teacher induction program.

Lisa shared her feelings about how the new multi-year teacher program helped not only the new first-year teachers, but also the new teachers in their second, third, and fourth years of teaching. Lisa stated that she felt APS's old system "dropped" the new teachers too soon, referring to the old induction program that only involved year-one teachers (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). Additionally, Lisa shared her positive perception of the needs collection of multi-year teachers through survey methods. Specifically, Lisa stated that "they thought of things that we didn't think to put on the agenda that they have these quick questions about" (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). Here, Lisa identified the survey method that Ann spoke of earlier to create agendas that addressed new teacher needs. The use of surveys to locate new teacher needs across a multi-year range allowed the teacher coaches to better understand the needs of new teachers within a certain year of teaching and create both agendas and professional development around such feedback. Additionally, Lisa shared that the challenge in assisting new teachers has always been that the assistance comes during or after the problem is encountered, almost never before a problem is encountered. When asked about her experience in helping new teachers in coaching cycles, Lisa shared:

I'm going to say it's [help] more after . . . I don't think that they have the foresight to see what might happen. Sometimes I, from my experience, will have that foresight that I can

say “well I know you're going to try this you know what might happen though. And if that happens what might you do?” . . . I've worked with teachers where during our cycle together they share, or sometimes after the cycle starts, after their issue and then it's like, “okay, I've had these issues” . . . So they tend to ask questions about what they're going through or what they're experiencing during or after. Not so much ahead of time. (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20)

New teachers and teacher coach participants identified the importance of using new teachers' experiences to help them create appropriate professional development. This proactive approach through understanding apparently allowed teacher coaches, such as Lisa, to identify possible outcomes of new teacher actions and walk-through such scenarios with the new teachers as they were working through such issues. This learning process not only helps the new teacher within the cycle, but allows for a better understanding of new teacher needs from the teacher coaches. Through his combined stakeholder involvement, areas of professional development may be identified through new teacher experience and implemented through new teacher induction programs to offer a proactive approach to address such issues.

Zugelder (2019) discussed the use of teacher coaches during new teacher induction programs where he proposed that “Instructional coaching should be the vessel through which a novice teacher builds competence and confidence in the trade” (p. 183). He additionally mentioned that new teachers and teacher coaches should be introduced as soon as possible as new teachers enter a district. He largely based his statements on work conducted through the New Teacher Center (2017) regarding the differentiation of professional development. Zugelder (2019) viewed the role of instructional coaches as educators that help teachers make “meaning through deep pedagogical interactions based on real-world application in their unique classroom



contexts” (p. 182). Ultimately, he arrived at the conclusion that “individualized, ongoing, intentional coaching yields the highest potential for impact on teacher effectiveness, resulting in greater self-efficacy, producing long-term benefits for teacher retention, and advancing student success” (p. 182).

Koehler and Kim (2012) also discussed support within a classroom when they identified the lack of in classroom support for new teachers as a problem with “common induction professional development activities” (p. 213). They emphasized the importance of a reduced workload for new teachers so they may work with “strong teachers” on classroom practices (p. 218). As a resource for new teachers, the current induction program at APS offers a mix of services to meet new teacher needs that include multi-year meetings (that are run under the direction of the teacher coaches) that allows time for new teachers to meet; mentors that are assigned to first year teachers; and teacher coaches that are available to all teachers, but have focused attention to teachers that are within their first four years of teaching at APS.

### ***Internal Documentation as a Resource***

Briefly mentioned in the previous subsection on new teacher induction programs as a resource, new teachers at APS were provided with documents during their induction program. As a matter of reference, all teachers are now provided with access to our policies and procedures (regulations) that are adopted by the APS Board of Education. The documents themselves are openly listed on the district website for all to review. In addition to the policies and regulations, all faculty and staff are provided with an evaluation handbook, a faculty manual, and new teachers are given a New Teacher Resource Guide. However, according to the participants of this study, although they may have received such document resources, they do not appear to use them when they have questions.

As referenced by Alex in the previous section, rather than referring to a manual or guide, Alex preferred to ask colleagues for quick answers to quick questions. He recalled “just pulling a colleague in the hall or, you know, [going] across the hall for a quick question” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Additionally, Steve recalled having received the same policies during new teacher induction that Alex had received, however Steve specifically stated that “there was no time to learn” the policies (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve referred to the lack of time during his first-round interview within the context of having received the policies but not having enough time to learn them before having to follow them.

In Steve’s specific example, he had to act on a policy regarding student substance abuse. Rather than looking up the policy, which he acknowledged that he had received during new teacher orientation, Steve sought out the guidance of an assistant principal and a counselor, stating “I spoke to Frank [the assistant principal] at that time and he was on it.” Furthermore, Steve shared that, in terms of learning more about his actions, that he also “spoke to the substance abuse counselor to seek clarification and what I should do if something like that were to happen again” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20).

During the focus group discussion about the topic of manuals as a reference for new teachers as they encountered issues, Steve stated that “if you were to tell me it’s in a manual, I would probably not read it. It’s just not gonna happen” (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). Steve further shared that, again, instead of referring to a manual, he would rather call on a colleague or an administrator, stating, “Anytime I need anything, I just, I call Tom. I call one of the administrators I call some of the people in my department, people outside of my department” (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). Kelly, a teacher coach, shared her perception of manual reference as she stated that:

Teachers may find that it's quicker to ask another colleague to get the answers that they need rather than thumbing through pages of manuals, where they might not find that information . . . You know, sometimes it's just quicker to ask a colleague for the information that you need. And that makes sense.” (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20).

However, the participants also made clear that the option to ask colleagues or administrators for assistance is also highly contextualized and is, therefore, the ability to ask colleagues for assistance is dependent on the school environment itself.

Lisa, a teacher coach, made the distinction between the environment that Steve mentioned and other environments that may exist in other buildings or departments by adding:

If they feel other people want to help, and it's a welcoming situation, then I think people are more apt to ask a question than they [are] to go to a manual to find a question . . . however, I would think if I felt as though no one really wants to help me, [then] I go to the manual. (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

Lisa’s comment referenced having both manuals and colleagues available to answer new teacher questions as the environment in a school or department may not lend itself to overt assistance.

Additionally, Maria mentioned during the focus group meeting that as much as the environment may play a part, so may the individual personalities of new teachers when seeking assistance.

Where Maria may be comfortable approaching a colleague with a question, other new teachers may not have the same personality as Maria, therefore they may not feel as comfortable approaching a colleague for assistance. Maria stated:

I think that depends on the person . . . I'm the first one to go up to somebody and say. . . “wow, you are amazing” or “Can you just show me what you do?” I mean, I've had those experiences with Kelly . . . she just, she's awesome in the classroom. I've taught with her

and I just want to turn to her and . . . “Okay, you just tell me how to do [this].” (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

Maria, along with Steve, also mentioned that new teachers should be receptive and “put themselves out there as not knowing everything” with their colleagues (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). They offered this advice as a means of admitting to colleagues that you are open to learning. Lisa, immediately questioned Steve’s ability to ask for help having asked, “Steve, what was the ability for you to do that? Was it your personality? Was it the, the culture you felt in the environment?” to which Steve referenced his personality and who he is as an individual (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20).

In terms of internal documentation as a resource for new teachers, the participants of this study suggested that, rather than refer to documents that were meant to describe how to do their job, they went to colleagues or administrators to tell them how to actually do their job. This finding is consistent with the work of Brown and Gray (1995) about the Xerox Corporation and the productivity of field service staff. Like the findings in Brown and Gray (1995), the participants in this study referenced their proclivities towards asking colleagues questions on how to execute job-related tasks, instead of referring to manuals that were produced for the same purpose. Additionally, the knowledge transfer (Brown & Gray, 1995) the participants described in this study took place in classrooms, hallways, and other spaces of congregation. They did not take place in formal, structured settings that were established by the district or administration.

Brown and Gray (1995) addressed three principles in their work that specifically lend themselves to the findings of this study. The principle that directly addresses the participant feedback in this section is the concept that the people do the work, not the processes (Brown & Gray, 1995). The participants in this study tended to acknowledge that they received the policies,

procedures and manuals, but did not use them. Instead, as seen with Alex, Steve, and Maria, the participants in this study went to colleagues for answers to their questions. Specifically, Steve and Maria acknowledged that colleagues knew how to do the job tasks better than they did, therefore they asked for assistance from their colleagues. As Brown and Gray (1995) mentioned, such informal, impromptu ways of solving problems captures how “real people solve real problems” (Three principles bring this perplexing environment into focus section, para. 1). Furthermore, Brown and Gray (1995) suggested that while formal processes should not be eliminated, they should be minimalized to make room for local interpretations and innovations. As was shared in this study, the participants called not on the policy manuals to perform the required tasks, but rather asked their colleagues. The downside to such practice is that the unofficial remains invisible and what is invisible is often what is most important (Brown & Gray, 1995, Three principles bring this perplexing environment into focus section, para. 4). Therefore, a new challenge emerged from the findings in this study as to how districts can capture the invisible advice passed from colleague to colleague in such intimate and useful conversations and maintain effective manuals to assist those that may not have access to such conversations. As I explored this dilemma, a subcategory emerged: colleagues as an internal resource.

### ***Colleagues as Resources***

As new teachers in this study sought out resources to meet their localized job demands, they shared that colleagues were the biggest resource available to them during their transition into APS. However, as resources to meet needs, the colleagues who were previously discussed by participants tended to be either mentors, administrators, or teacher coaches. However, this section broadens the term *colleague* to include the larger school community, including secretaries and custodians as well. Given that the new teacher participants in this study ranged

from elementary, middle, and high school environments, the context of the exchanges cover smaller elementary school settings (with staff of up to 30) to larger high school settings (with staff of up to 150). As illustrated in the previous sections, the on-the-job needs for new teachers ranged from immediate needs—such as finding the bathroom—to social and emotional needs where new teachers were trying to make sense of negative collegial interactions. This section highlights some of the collegial resources that the new teacher participants used during their transition into APS as they sought out solutions to their needs.

To meet basic procedural needs, the participants in this study shared that colleagues were a tremendous resource as they had working knowledge of the processes or procedures needed to fulfill job roles. One such example was that of curricular pacing or lesson resources. Alex shared that he had consulted with colleagues within his department to figure out the curricular pacing of his classes. Specifically, Alex was concerned about how fast, or slow, he was moving through the curriculum, sharing:

I would go to my colleagues and just kind of, you know, feel it out . . . “okay where, are you on right now?”, “what are you doing next?”, and just kind of looking to, you know compare their plans to mine saying “okay we line up here maybe I should speed this up slow this down.” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

The ability to ask colleagues, as opposed to an administrator or district pacing guide, allowed Alex to adjust his pacing to that of veteran teachers as they had prior experience teaching the course. As Alex had previously shared, he felt unprepared from his pre-service experience to fully understand the scope and sequence of his curriculum having never had the opportunity to see a full year’s worth of coursework during pre-service. To meet this need, Alex felt comfortable going to other colleagues who taught the same course. Henry, a middle school

science teacher who began his first year in March as opposed to September, also utilized his colleagues to figure out the processes and procedures curriculum, lesson plans, and pacing.

Henry explained that he sought out multiple colleagues to figure out what was expected of him as he began teaching later in the year, having missed new teacher orientation. Regarding who Henry went to for processes and procedures for curriculum, Henry stated:

First it was the long-term sub that was there. She was there for a few weeks. And then a colleague of mine in the department explained where they are in the curriculum, but again I didn't have any sort of guidance “where's the curriculum?”, “how do I access the curriculum?”, “And what's the pacing, how do I structure you know how am I structuring my plans based on the pacing guide?” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

As Henry shared, he did not have any guidance on how to locate the resources he needed to begin teaching. Therefore, Henry asked multiple colleagues where he could access them. Henry also explained that he went to other colleagues in his department to inquire about the text series he should have used and resources for student assessments. However, he emphasized that it was not until the September of his second academic year that he “started to ask more questions with colleagues in [his] department” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Henry’s start in APS was in March, as opposed to September, therefore Henry did not have an opportunity to attend the two-day new teacher orientation at the beginning of the year. Henry felt more comfortable approaching with his colleagues the second academic year explaining that he “started to ask more questions with colleagues in my department, you know, obviously as [they] got to know me more and more, we were working more together” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). As time went by, Henry felt more comfortable asking colleagues questions. However, another participant, Steve, spoke highly of the support from his colleagues from the very start of his teaching

experience. Additionally, Steve extended the term *colleague* to also include the custodial staff in the high school.

Steve captured his transitional experience, in relation with his colleagues, into APS with the following statement:

My entire department was helpful. Everybody from the administration down to the custodial staff was supportive in helping me transition into my position as a teacher in Auriolus High School. If I asked for something, or if I needed something, if a person couldn't help me get what I needed, they could tell me who to go to. And sometimes I had to wait. At times I had to be patient to get what I needed. And it varies from supplies to, to answers to questions about a policy that I might have, but I always got what I needed 100% of the time. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve had a unique perspective on his colleagues as he was a former student of AHS, therefore he had several preexisting relationships with colleagues before he began at AHS. Like Alex, Steve sought out resources from his departmental colleagues for curriculum and resources to support the teaching of such. However, Maria, an elementary teacher in a building with a smaller number of staff members, also shared this expanded view of colleagues as she specifically mentioned that she had a lot of resources, including “administrators, coworkers, the principal, and the secretary” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria’s mention of a secretary as a collegial resource, like Steve’s mention of the custodians, expands the network of colleagues that may be considered resources. Maria additionally shared that she felt her questions to procedures “never went unanswered” as she always felt comfortable turning to “administrators, coworkers, and [her] mentor” for answers (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). This was also the case with Paul, a middle school teacher.



Paul appreciated the various levels of experience within his department, having stated that his colleagues ranged from a colleague that was “fresh out of college” and two colleagues that had been at APS for 25-30 years. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Again, Paul offered a comparative perspective of colleagues as resources as he had previously worked in two different schools prior to coming to APS. He commented on how it was nice to work with other teachers that were physical education teachers. In Paul’s previous experiences he did not have the opportunity to feel like he was part of a team: “I was never able to meet other phys. ed. teachers until I actually got to Auriolus where I was there and, and working with a team. So basically, to say, to reach out, there was no one to go to” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul found that his departmental teams’ experience helped him within his subject area. Paul also shared an experience with a veteran colleague within his department where he learned about organization by use of a roll book to keep track of parent contacts and student incidents. According to Paul, the veteran teacher shared the practice of keeping the book with Paul so that he may refer to it when needed: “I use a Word document. But it’s the same idea. It’s just a different way of doing it. And that’s something that was actually beneficial to me as well. And I learned that from a veteran teacher” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul’s appreciation for collegial exchanges also extended beyond his departmental colleagues.

Paul also found that the overall collegial atmosphere of his school helped him develop as a teacher. This was especially true for Paul when he shared information about students with colleagues to better reach the students academically. Paul stated:

Now you have four or five, six teachers that see these kids every day. So now maybe they can give you some information on something that you may not know. Maybe they were able to reach an audience or maybe you have knowledge about, you know, his academics

and different classes, like in his ELA class. That transitions to health class. That was something that I really like, [that] was huge. That was one of the things that when that when that happened, I have that resource to go to was the best thing ever. So that was probably the biggest thing I've taken out of since I've started here.

Paul began to expand his network of colleagues beyond his immediate circle of departmental teachers. Through such expanded networks, Paul was able to better serve the students in his class by obtaining information about his students from other classroom teachers. Steve had a similar experience with veteran teachers within his own department.

Steve had previously praised the support of his school community as he transitioned into AHS. Additionally, Steve spoke highly of his departmental colleagues, especially the veterans. When asked why he went to his veteran colleagues for such assistance, Steve explained:

I went to the people that have been doing this longer than I have, because I knew that they would provide me guidance and the information I needed. So I could do this in a more successful way in the future. And also to put me at ease, you know, I knew that they would provide for me a, I guess, an outlet, but not just an outlet, but instructions on how to do something and perform to perform the job in a better capacity. I know they know.

So that's who I'm going to ask. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve identified his veteran colleagues as potential resources for not only the fulfillment of tangible needs (i.e., physical classroom supplies) and learning about processes or procedures within his building, but also as emotional outlets when he needed to better understand what he was feeling during certain situations.

Steve had previously shared an experience he had as a new teacher where a student had reported that she was sexually assaulted. Steve knew the policy he was supposed to follow, and

did such, however Steve recalled that the event brought him to his “knees” and that he was “absolutely devastated” by the experience (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). As Steve toiled with his feelings of devastation, he sought understanding of not only the situation but also what he was feeling. As a resource, Steve recalled that he went to “a couple of people in [his] department” to talk about the experience. Concerning the use of colleagues as an emotional resource, Steve shared:

So one of the things that I know is I definitely have a problem with, is as an individual, I hold a lot of stuff in and I try to cope with it and deal with it on my own. I couldn't with that. I had to, you know, my wife and I had to have a lot of conversations about it in order for me to, to start feeling normal about it. There was a significant period of time in which I was pretty sad about having to deal with this . . . I spoke to a couple of coworkers about it, and it was like they had dealt with it before. Like, “yeah, you'll get more of those” like this is intense. This is such an intense experience for me. And so I did not outwardly seek any more advice, probably because I felt like I would be met with that same type of thing again, like, “Well, you know, that happens.” And it was and it was universal [among colleagues], male and female. You know, I remember when I had this student tell me this, and they go into anecdotal stories about similar instances. And it's just like, I don't think I was able to articulate clearly how I was feeling. To them to get them to not necessarily be as anecdotal, but be more supportive. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

In this situation, Steve did not feel that he was adequately supported by colleagues as they provided the advice of “Well, you know, that happens” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20).

Steve felt like he needed more support beyond just a collegial sharing of experiences. However, Steve did approach his colleagues as a means of emotional support to deal with the impact this situation had on him.

As a new teacher, this event had a deeper impact on Steve than his colleagues were able to support. Additionally, Steve shared that if he had to deal with a situation like this again, he would have sought out advice from a school counselor instead of departmental colleagues. As Steve stated:

I am confident now that if I walked into a psychologist's office or one of the counselor's offices, and I had this conversation with them, they would be willing to sit down and talk to me about [it] . . . you know, I'm more aware of my resources now, because that was that was my first year [as] a teacher. I was so anxious about all of my other responsibilities that I was not prepared for that. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Therefore, Steve's contribution to the findings of this section expanded on the concept of resources being limited to tangible objects or mechanical processes and introduced emotions as a new teacher's need.

As discussed in the previous section, Brown and Gray (1995) studied the ways in which employees learned how to really do their jobs. The real-world view of colleagues as internal resources demonstrated how new teachers at APS used their colleagues' tacit knowledge (Brown & Gray, 1995) to better understand their profession and the work environment. Brown and Gray (1995) suggested that tapping into colleagues' tacit knowledge transformed the concept of learning from absorbing information to becoming part of a community, emphasizing that the latter is a "social process built around informed participation" (Across the Knowledge Divide section, para. 8). Furthermore, they suggested that the best way to access the knowledge of

colleagues is to interact with them. In all of the collegial exchanges shared by participants in this study, the new teachers did exactly that; they interacted with colleagues to access their knowledge to meet highly contextual needs as they arose. However, as Brown and Gray (1995) warned, only workers that make a voluntary commitment to help their colleagues can create a successful environment. Therefore, one must consider the detrimental effects of a poor collegial environment on new teachers where, unlike APS, new teachers cannot rely on their colleagues as resources.

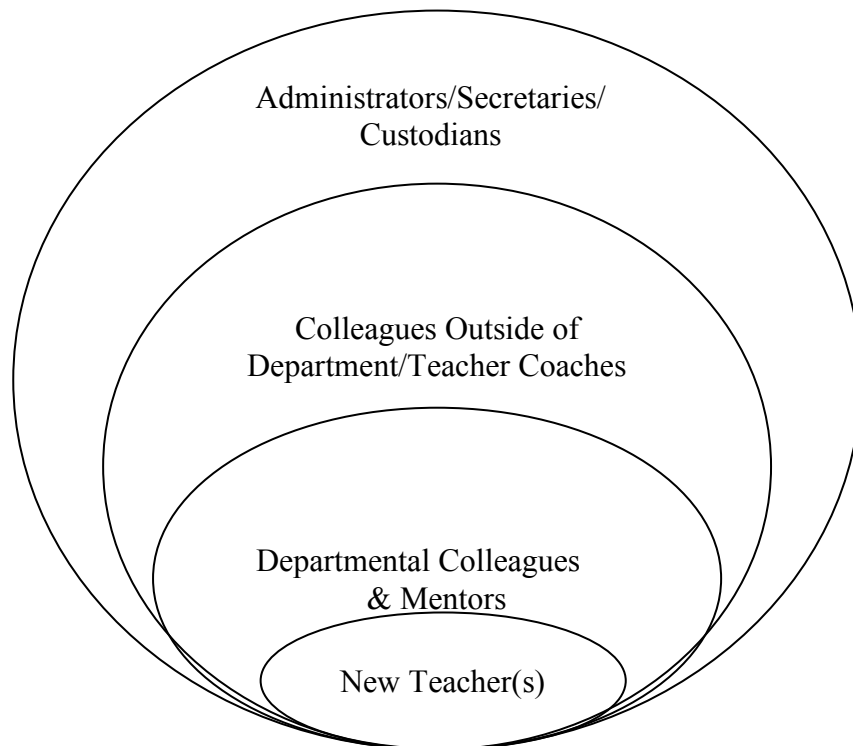
Within the scope of what Brown and Gray (1995) identified as Communities of Practice (CoPs) within the business world, the participants in this study appeared to be transitioning into such communities within their schools or departments. Based on the original work of Lave and Wenger (1991), Communities of Practice are defined by Brown and Gray (1995) as a small group of people that work together over a period of time on a specific goal. The CoP groups to which Brown and Gray (1995) refer were not purposely formed or officially sanctioned by management, or in this case, school administration. Rather, CoPs were organically grown through the individuals that share a common need or goal, driven by a need to know what each other knows. Additionally, Brown and Gray (1995) suggested that there are many CoPs within a single organization and that most people belong to more than one CoP.

The participants in this study shared several collegial circles as they expanded their network of resources. The network expansion was in line with the findings of Brown and Gray (1995) where the new teachers were engaged in several CoPs within their schools depending on the needs that presented themselves. As noted in the previous section on internal documents as resources, new teachers at APS were more likely to seek out a colleague's advice based on their past experiences. The preference towards personal interactions shared by the participants in this

study, rather than document reference, emphasized the importance of school environments. As demonstrated by all of the new teacher participants in this study, they sought out different colleagues to address different, localized needs. Therefore, the new teacher participants belonged to several different communities of practice to meet the diverse needs new teachers experienced. This ever-expanding circle, or layers, of communities of practice (see Figure 4) suggests that colleagues as resources are not static, but are rather in a constant state of change depending on the needs of new teachers. However, what if internal resources are not enough to meet new teacher needs during their transition into a district or school? As the last section in this discussion demonstrates, new teachers at APS did not only rely on internal resources to meet their localized needs, but also expanded their resource web to include external resources to mitigate transitional needs.

**Figure 4**

*APS Concentric Communities of Practice*



## **External Resources**

As new teachers are faced with highly-localized challenges during the liminal stage of their careers, they rely on sources of information to help mitigate their needs and work their way through such. Relying on internal resources, which new teacher participants in this study identified as mentors, new teacher induction program resources, internal documents, and colleagues, new teachers begin to identify and form networks of resources to address their various needs. However, what if internal resources are not able to provide new teachers with the much needed information they need to perform their job roles as teachers? According to the participants in this study, when faced with circumstances that need to be addressed, participants drew upon resources outside of APS to meet such needs. Therefore, to complete the findings section on the location of resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction, this final section focuses on resources outside of APS that participants identified during their participation in this study. The section is organized by the following subsections: *Prior experience*; *pre-service resources*; *Internet-based resources*; and *Biographical resources*.

### ***Prior Experience***

Within the context of external resources, the new teacher participants in this study indicated that they used prior knowledge or experience gained from job roles outside of education as resources during their transition to APS. While Maria shared her concerns regarding first-day needs for her students, she had initially identified health concerns as advice for new teachers on their first day. Specifically, Maria suggested that student health records be accessible to new teachers right away as Maria considered such her “go to for emergencies” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). However, Maria also shared that she was not as concerned about student medical needs, especially cardiac conditions, as she came from a background of coaching and

already possessed a training and a certificate in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Maria admitted that student medical concerns were “still a fear” of hers, but felt that such new teacher fears were lessened by her prior experience and the knowledge gained from such training prior to working in APS. Alex shared a similar circumstance of activating prior knowledge within a school environment to lessen his worries.

Alex’s experience in a customer service position, specifically as a manager of a health club, helped with parental communications as a teacher at APS. Alex shared:

That wasn't the biggest fear of mine dealing with, you know, people and parents. But it was something I just kind of feel like I remember saying to myself like, “oh boy forgot about this part” or “wasn't ready for this part.” . . . I managed health clubs before I got into teaching . . . I feel like the whole customer service aspect of it, it doesn't matter where you go, you can utilize that experience and so you compare dealing with an angry parent and dealing with an angry gym member. It was pretty good for you know. That experience helps for sure. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Here, Alex acknowledged that dealing with parents can be difficult. He also shared that he drew upon his experience in dealing with people from a field outside of education to navigate through conversations with parents. However, not all prior experience had to come from job-related experience. As shared by Steve, transferable skills from other outside experiences, such as martial arts, can also be applied to job roles.

Steve was a martial arts instructor. His experience of martial arts was an appreciation for those that were more advanced in martial arts training than he was. He found this experience to be transferable when it came to bettering his craft as a teacher. As mentioned earlier, Steve had no reservations about asking veteran teachers for advice. Steve shared:



I'm a martial arts instructor. And so one of the things that I learned in practicing martial arts is that asking the people that have been doing something longer than you is a smart idea. And so I went to the people that have been doing this longer than I have, because I knew that they would provide me guidance and the information I needed. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve was able to transfer his understanding of veteran knowledge within the world of martial arts to his teaching position to better his craft. To do this, Steve had practiced seeking out advice from experienced martial artists. When it came time for him to better his teaching craft, Steve activated his prior martial arts experience of asking the veteran teachers questions to learn more about teaching. Additionally, Ann shared her real-world experience with texting to help new teachers better understand alternative communication methods. Ann, a teacher coach participant, stated that she had offered the advice to new teachers, prior to becoming a teacher coach, to make phone calls to parents. Ann's advice was based on her "real-world experience" with texting or emailing as either may be "perceived the wrong way, negatively, when that is not what was meant" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20).

Framed within the concept of knowledge transfer (Triantafyllaki, 2016) the participants in this study shared the application of knowledge from job-related experiences, either inside or outside of education, to navigate through transitional needs at APS. According to Triantafyllaki (2016), new teachers undergo a transformational process during their transition into unfamiliar environments. This transformational process involves a "metacognitive awareness" of how their prior knowledge or experience may relate to their current situations (p. 402). During this process, new teachers activate such prior knowledge skills as they are related to the school or classroom environments. As Alex, Steve, and Maria shared, their prior experiences in fields other than

education allowed them to navigate through contextually similar situations that required such skills. In a larger conceptional field of teacher identity, such transferable skills are important in the overall formation of a new teacher's identity (Goodson & Cole, 1994).

As discussed earlier, new teachers strive to obtain a professional identity (Rippon & Martin, 2012) and in doing so we see that the events and experiences from both the past and the present are what shape teachers' lives and careers (Goodson & Cole, 1994). The experiences that Goodson and Cole (1994) spoke of take place in not only the work environment, but also at home and in the "broader social sphere" (p. 88). Goodson and Cole (1994) suggested in their study of participants transitioning from workforce trade jobs (e.g., chemical engineer, television producer, childhood educator, and industrial engineer) to that of educators at the community college level, that new teachers enter their new environments with well-established prior identities. According to Goodson and Cole (1994), such a transition initiated a "process of redefinition" for their participants where they had to make sense of their new personal/professional identities (p. 91). This process involved a gradual shift from their previous lives to "seeing oneself as a teacher" (p. 91). However, like the participants in this study shared, the participants in Goodson and Cole used their former identities and experiences to help form their new identities as teachers, rather than treating the two identities as separate lives. The formation of the teacher identity using various knowledge sources was also discussed in Beijaard et al. (2004) where they stated that "identity is not something one had, but something that develops during one's whole life" (p. 107). Therefore, the participants in my study used their prior experiences and knowledge to not only help navigate through situational needs as new teachers, but also as they formed their identities as *teachers*. An additional outside resource that

participants shared in this study that involved tapping into their previous identities or experiences was that of pre-service resources.

### ***Pre-service Resources***

In terms of locating resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction, the participants of this study drew upon various resources, including experiences during pre-service, that registered with situations they had dealt with during transition. During the first-round of interviews, the participants were asked if they had ever learned about the school environment, in general, and if they used what they learned during their transition into APS. Some of the participants drew upon advice lent to them during pre-service coursework, where others shared that they had actually reached out to previous pre-service instructors for assistance.

For instance, Alex, when faced with negativity in the teacher's break room, recalled one of his pre-service instructors advising him not go into the teachers' room/lounge. Additionally, Alex recalled that the same professor did not tell him why, but instead offered the words, "you'll learn why" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Steve, like Alex, was also warned of negative environments, such as the teachers' lounge during his pre-service graduate courses, having stated, "you're taught this in graduate school, don't go into the teacher's lounge. Because that's where all the drama is. Don't go into the teachers' lounge because that's where someone's airing out their frustrations about their relationships that are outside of the building" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). When asked why the pre-service instructors would have offered such advice, Steve recalled that the focus of the advice was the concentration of negativity associated with the teacher' lounge. Additionally, Maria also recalled the advice of staying out of the teacher' lounge having been offered to her by a pre-service instructor as well. Maria shared that the advice from her college professor also included the warning that the negativity she would experience was the

“worst aspect of teaching” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). However, Paul had experienced not only the advice about the teachers’ lounge, but had reached out to one of his professors for assistance during his transition at a former school.

Paul had also been told to stay away from the teachers’ lounge by his pre-service instructor adding the comment that the “walls have ears” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul interpreted this comment to mean as, “he was trying to get out as there's always someone who's trying to give you advice on what you should not be doing” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Additionally, Paul was able to share actual circumstances where this advice rang true to Paul. Paul stated:

I can't tell you how many times I would go into the cafeteria to get my lunch or whatever, and someone would stop me and start talking randomly about [someone] or bad about somebody. And I'm like, “Listen, I talked to that person before and I'm not getting that vibe at all, you know?” So it's one of those things where it's . . . don't put yourself in that situation, you're not going to get yourself involved with it. So that's basically . . . just don't get involved in you know, the drama of what goes on in the buildings. Because it turns out there's a lot of drama. You just can't get yourself involved. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

In addition to Paul having recalled advice from his pre-service instructor about the teachers’ lounge, Paul also recalled that he reached out to his kinesiology teacher, but felt as if once he graduated from the school that assistance was not available.

In reaching out to a former professor, Paul was often dismayed to find he was rebuffed. Regarding Paul’s experience of having reached out to former professors from his pre-service program for advice on curriculum and instruction, Paul shared he “reached out to the professors .

. . . They're like, 'Who are you?' You know, it's like 'Sorry, but I have a million other things I have to do'" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul also recalled that one of his professors told Paul that no one was there to help the professor when he taught and he, the professor, "did it on his own" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul took this to mean that the professor was unwilling to help, because Paul had to learn what to do on his own. As seen in the previous section on prior experiences, some of the participants shared a knowledge transfer of their former selves as new teachers and applied it to what they were experiencing during the formation of their teacher selves.

Within the concept of knowledge transfer, pre-service programs can be viewed as part of the pre-professional identity of new teachers. As new teachers transition into districts, they must undergo a process of redefinition, making sense of their new personal and professional identities (Goodson & Cole, 1994). Once again, as new teachers undergo experiences in their new professional lives, they bring with them certain old experiences that apply to new experiences. In the instances shared by the participants of this study, the application of what was learned in pre-service was that of advice. This advice may not have made sense to a pre-service teacher at the time it was offered, however the advice certainly stayed with the new teachers and resurfaced as they encountered negativity or attempted to avoid such. As an external resource, this advice from pre-service instructors made its way into the participants recollection of resources during transition. In addition to advice from their pre-service education, as seen with Alex, Maria, Steve, and Paul, Paul actually reached out to pre-service instructors for assistance during his transition into a school.

In Paul's sharing of having reached out to pre-service instructors, although it was unsuccessful, it appeared that Paul was trying to expand his community of practice beyond his

building. Paul shared that he was the only physical education teacher in his building during his first two teaching positions. He experienced a lack of resources in terms of curriculum as well as instructional supplies. Paul, frustrated with the lack of internal resources, attempted to expand his community of practice beyond his buildings, thus attempting to fulfil his needs through assistance from pre-service instructors. However unsuccessful Paul may have been at reaching out for assistance from his pre-service instructors, the concept of expanding communities of practice beyond a physical building or district is not unheard of.

The concept of expanding communities of practice (CoPs) to include resources outside of schools, such as the use of technology, has been on the rise (Al Hashlamoun & Daouk, 2020; Boling & Martin, 2005; McDonald & Klein, 2003). In Paul's attempt to form a CoP beyond his physical location (e.g., with his pre-service instructors), he experienced failure and a message that reflected what Paul shared in his recollection of his transition into a former district as having been "thrown to the wolves" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul's attempt to form a CoP beyond his physical environment may have failed, however the concept of new teachers using external, pre-service resources has a foothold within the larger context of locating resources to address localized needs. The conversation regarding external resources also extended beyond Paul's sharing and lent itself to a subsection discussion.

### ***Internet-Based Resources***

As an outside resource, participants in this study shared that they had used internet-based resources as they began their transition into teaching. Specifically, Paul recalled that he did not have access to curricular materials and resources during his transition into a charter school where he began his first teaching experience. In the absence of internal materials, but faced with

internal needs of having to deliver lessons with resources to support such lessons, he turned to the internet:

I borrowed a lot of information from the internet . . . I went on a lot of websites where they kind of gave me things to do and I created my own lesson plans, my own packets, my own whatever, my own PowerPoints . . . So in regards to the internet, I mean Google is a lifesaver. I mean, anything you put in Google, you know, thousands and thousands of options to help you. YouTube, I mean, video sites were definitely helpful. They basically break stuff down for you and teach you how to do things. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Earlier in this section, Paul shared his frustrations with the lack of resources available in the first two schools that he worked in before coming to APS. As Paul was unable to turn to internal resources to help design lessons and provide materials for lessons, he resorted to external resources to fulfil his need. Reference to internet-based resources was also made by Ann, a teacher coach participant.

Within the context of providing new teachers resources outside of APS, Ann shared that she had suggested online blogs research articles to new teachers to assist with localized needs. However, Ann suggested that the two internet-based resources have very different uses. According to Ann, she referred new teachers to blogs, and used blogs herself, to “find out what others are doing” in their classroom (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). She described the use of such as “personal” as she directed new teachers to blogs when they were trying to figure out a situation that they were experiencing. However, Ann differentiated the use of research articles as being used more for when she wanted more “evidence” of practice or effectiveness (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Ann would refer both internet-based resources to new teachers depending on

what the new teacher was seeking (i.e., blogs for a personal touch and research articles for evidenced-based approach). This finding is consistent with the research teachers using online resources to solve job-related problems.

Herrington et al. (2006) studied the implementation of an online community of practice designed specifically for new teachers in Australia. In their study, they strove to create online environments that perpetuated conversations around authentic context through a website titled *Beginning and Establishing Successful Teachers (BEST)*. The participants were able to engage in “real problems and issues of immediate concern to real teachers” (p. 125). In addition to providing a space for new teachers to discuss authentic issues, the BEST site also provided mentoring and coaching by experienced teachers, lesson plan resources, weblogs, and newsletters on relevant educational topics. Ultimately, Herrington et al. (2006) concluded that the use of online technologies may help new teachers feel less isolated, drive collaborative support, and provide professional development opportunities around new teacher topics. The use of the internet as a resource for new teachers, specifically online modules, was additionally explored in Parker-Katz et al.’s (2010) research on multimedia resources to assist new teachers.

According to Parker-Katz et al. (2010), the benefit of the internet as a resource for new teachers is that it is always available. Specifically, they stated, “The proliferation of online resources, often coupled with online networking, can provide opportunities to broaden the use of technology, incorporate development of teacher reasoning, and offer instructional support” (p. 15). Adding to the positives of the internet as a resource for new teachers, like Paul had stated earlier, the internet provides teachers with lessons and materials, however Parker-Katz did warn that, although the information may be available, the proper use of such may not be. Like Herrington et al. (2006), Parker-Katz et al. (2010) used online learning in conjunction with an



online community approach where new teachers could also hear from veteran teachers on topics that are relevant to their needs. Although participants in this study such as Paul and Ann, may have used online resources for materials or ideas, research suggested that there should also be a collaborative component either inside or outside of the school or district to really advance new teacher learning (Herrington et al., 2006; Parker-Katz et al., 2010). The concept of external resources available to new teachers in this study concludes with a discussion on biographical resources as they exist as part of a new teacher prior to entering a district or classroom.

### **Biographical Resources**

The term *Biography* was used by Schempp et al. (1993) to describe who teachers were based on their own particular experiences, as they began teaching. Specifically, Schempp et al. (1993) used the category of biography to describe a singular stream of consciousness that new teachers used as they constructed perspectives or performed teaching acts during their transition into teaching. They defined such past experiences as “similar or related pedagogical skill, university coursework, and experiences as a school pupil” (p. 454). However, where Schempp et al. (1993) used the term biography to include previous job-related experiences, pre-service coursework, and personal experiences as a pupil, this study adds to their definition of biography to include personal influences, such as family members or personalities, upon which new teachers draw to perform job functions. Therefore, where previous job-related experiences acted as a bridge from past experiences to present needs (Schempp et al., 1993), in this study the term *biographical resources* refers to the resources available to the new teacher that are very individualized and vary among new teachers, excluding work-related experiences. As the participants in this study shared, how they performed as teachers was influenced by biographical resources that were available to them, individually.

The participants in this study referenced biographical resources such as their family members, their attitudes/personalities, and even their work ethic as resources during their transition. For instance, Alex mentioned during his first interview that his father was also an educator. Alex recalled two very specific topics of advice that his father offered to him as he began teaching in APS. Alex's father warned Alex not to make any judgements about colleagues or the school based on what others said and advised Alex to be involved in school activities. This very personal advice from an experienced educator was available to Alex because of a family situation. Such advice and familial circumstances may not be a resource that other new teachers as they enter teaching. Alex took advantage of his father's words of wisdom and applied them to his interactions and job performance. Therefore, Alex's father was part of how Alex performed as a teacher, as a whole, as well as who Alex will eventually become within his school. Henry also shared that he drew upon his family as a resource when he was deciding to pursue a higher degree.

When asked about Henry's pursuit of a master's degree, he referenced his family as a factor in his decision to pursue such: "Well the need was, number one, that I had heard about the district encouraging their staff to pursue it. My parents also encouraged me. You know, fortunately I was the first one [in] all of my family to get a Master's" (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Henry felt that he had a need to pursue an advanced degree to represent the district as he considered achievement as such a "reflection on the district" (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). As Henry shared, he was not only encouraged to pursue an advanced degree from the district, but was also encouraged to do so by his parents. This was a particular biographical resource, that of encouragement and support, that was special to Henry's family situation. Like Alex, Henry had support from his family that influenced his professional career. The support and

advice from family members was also shared by Steve when he drew upon advice from his family to navigate through a social, job-related situation to obtain resources.

Steve, during his first-round of interviews, shared that he was “guided by his family” regarding accessing resources from custodians (3/19/20). Steve believed that access to resources, which went through the custodians in the building, was not equally accessible to all teachers. Steve believed that he had a better relationship with the custodians, therefore he was able to access needed resources much quicker than other staff members. Steve believed that his personality, as compared to others, was the key factor in his ability to access resources through custodians. When asked about his personality, as opposed to others, and how that related to access of supplies, the conversation was:

**Thomas D'Elia:** So you're basically saying that if that person or the person that you described, had a negative interaction with the custodian . . . if they went down and tried to get resources, supplies, they'd be met with a different response?

**Steve:** Oh absolutely.

**Thomas D'Elia:** like a kind of a default [response]. “Well, I can't give them to you. You have to fill out this form.”

**Steve:** Exactly. Yes, that's exactly right. Now, that may be because the teacher, for lack of a better word is a jerk. It also may be because the custodian is a jerk, and they're a jerk to this person because they don't like them. It can go both ways. It's not universal. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

When asked how Steve knew how to treat others to obtain the resources he needed, Steve referred to his family and how he was raised:

I was guided, but I was not guided by an educator. I was guided by my family in that regard. My father worked in the service industry his entire life . . . We learned, essentially, that if you need something from someone you're gonna get . . . what is that, uh, being sweet will get you further than being a jerk, you know what I mean? And so if I need something from the custodians, I will just go over there or not. I mean, I'll ask them how their day is, I'll be nice to them, you know, and ask them, may I please get a box of pencils? And, you know, I'm not going to sit there and just go in there, like, I need this now. But, well, I [know] that's no way to deal with people. And so I learned that from home, you know, like, just be nice. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve used what he had learned from his father (i.e., how to treat people) to obtain resources for his classroom without having to go through the default process that was in place. In this instance, Steve's biographical resource was a lesson he had learned through his family that helped him obtain a job-related need. Steve also referenced an interaction with the payroll department where he used his personality and understanding of the educational environment to fulfill a payroll need.

Steve shared that he needed to modify an employee record procedure, but had heard from his colleagues that "the person was a very angry, angry [person]. And if I needed help with anything, it was going to be very difficult to get any help" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve figured out that the best approach was to go to this person on a Friday because, as Steve stated, "Everybody seems to be pretty happy on Friday" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). When asked if he was told to do so by anyone, Steve replied:

I just came to the conclusion myself. Everybody's ridiculously relaxed on a Friday. And so [they are] gonna be off for the weekend, what could [they] be upset about? You know,

I mean, [they] could be upset about something outside of life, or the fact that Monday morning, she's gonna have all this work to do, but I knew just go on a Friday, [they'll] be more relaxed. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

In both instances, Steve drew upon his life experience with others and applied it to the school or district setting to obtain what he needed. Steve's biographical resource is very unique to Steve and, again, others may not have the same resource. In addition to family, Paul referenced his own personality as a resource, especially when it came to approaching others for assistance.

Paul felt comfortable reaching out to administrators, talking to his athletic director, and even calling his head coach to fulfill any needs. Additionally, Paul considered his ability to approach others to fulfill his needs as part of his "personality, the way I am" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Paul drew upon his own personality as a resource to fulfill needs as a new teacher. In Paul's case, his personality was a particular asset that allowed Paul to approach others to fulfill particular needs. Paul, Alex, and Steve all shared that they drew upon personal, biographical, resources to navigate transition. However, as stated earlier, such resources are particular to individuals and may not be readily available to all as they are influenced by life-experiences and people that influence such. Therefore, in terms of biographical resources, new teachers not only draw upon prior work experience (Schempp et al., 1993), but also draw upon personal resources such a family and personality to perform job functions.

The concept of personal new teacher attributes exists within a growing body of literature (Bishop et al., 2010; Haigh et al., 2013; Katz & Frish, 2016; Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2016). Bishop et al. (2010) specifically studied why some new special education teachers appeared to have more success than others in the classroom. They identified personal attributes to include "teacher beliefs and personal traits" (p. 76) as contributing factors to new special education

teachers' successes within a classroom. Additionally, Bishop et al. (2010) highlighted the ability of new teachers to engage in reflection as a personal attribute that positively contributed to their classroom successes. On a more personal, individualized level, they found that in addition to reflection, new teachers attributes such as being resourceful and relentless also emerged among attributes of successful new teachers. Their findings about new teacher resourcefulness also identified the less accomplished teachers as having been the teachers that were least likely to secure materials for their classrooms due to their inability to be resourceful. As seen in this study, Steve was able to navigate the social structures within his school to obtain resources. Therefore, Steve demonstrated his ability to be resourceful as a new teacher. In addition to classroom resources, Bishop et al. (2010) identified more accomplished new teachers with the drive to acquire more knowledge through coursework or professional development.

Henry shared earlier that his pursuit of an advanced degree was motivated by not only his district, but also by his parents. Bishop et al. (2010) also identified the pursuit of more knowledge as a positive personal attribute that new teachers possessed in their study. The personal attribute of resourcefulness was also accompanied by the trait of relentlessness (Bishop et al., 2010). In terms of relentlessness, Paul described a situation in his previous district where he was without curricular resources and felt compelled to do all that was necessary to obtain what was needed for the sake of the students. Paul explained:

[My previous district] was actually a charter school. The first year it opened . . . So it was brand new. So I was literally thrown to the wolves, I would say it was either sink or swim. That basically was [the] mentality of the principal. And it was tough. It was a tough area to teach in. And the resources [were] very limited because we didn't have a lot of funding. So it was basically be creative . . . So it was basically do what you can, and

good luck. So that was actually a great experience for me because I really got to kind of learn as I go . . . So [it] really kind of helped me create new things. Be creative. Be on my toes and learn teaching. Kind of like I was thrown in the deep end of the pool . . . and thanks to the kind of person I am. So I'm the type [of] person that adjusted from that, you know, some new teachers coming in may not . . . that may be tough for them. But for me that was actually beneficial. That was my first experience. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Henry was able to persevere through the lack of resources at his former district because of the type of person he was. Henry's relentlessness, as related to Bishop et al.'s (2010) use of the term, allowed Henry to apply a "no-excuses" mindset (p. 84) to his situation, which is a very personalized ability for Henry.

As identified in the previous discussion, participants in this study encountered local demands that were specific to APS. The new teachers were faced with the task of meeting such job demands by identifying resources within the local context (Demerouti et al., 2001). If such demands are not met, new teachers may experience burnout and eventually leave teaching entirely (Gavish & Friedman, 2010). However, the participants in this study all essentially beat the odds as by the time of publication, the new teacher participants will all have surpassed the five-year teaching mark. This is important to note because most new teachers within the first three to five years of teaching leave the profession, thus contributing to a national attrition rate of nearly 50% (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Rinke, 2014).

To better understand how the new teachers in APS met localized needs, which contributed to their overall retention, it is also important to understand what the new teachers in this study felt and experienced during their transitional period. To do this, the voices of the new

teachers were highlighted in this section as it is important that researchers do not silence teacher participants in their findings if they wish for the teachers to be the “central change in restructuring schooling” (Goodson & Cole, 1994). Such was the desired effect and personal belief of this study and the researcher, respectively. Therefore, what the new teachers in this study felt or experienced while they sought out resources was as important to share as were the resources themselves.

In terms of resources, as identified by the participants in this study, new teachers at APS appeared to undergo an identity shift that may have begun as early as their pre-service years, or during previous educational experiences (Koehler & Kim, 2012; Rippon & Martin, 2012). During this identity shift from pre-service to classroom teacher, the new teachers in this study not only relied heavily on resources that are internally located, but also in external resources. The location of such resources may ultimately have played an important role in both the new teachers in this study identifying as classroom teachers and staying at APS. However, what has not been closely examined in the previous discussions in the finding of this study were the impacts and awareness of micropolitics within new teacher induction and how new teachers navigate through them. Therefore, for the third and final section of this chapter, a micropolitical lens is used to examine the role such may play during new teacher induction.

### **Navigating the Micropolitical Environment During Induction**

During a new teacher’s transition into a school or district, not only are new teachers faced with immediate and long-term needs, but they are also faced with organizational power structures, or preconditions, that constitute *micropolitics*. I define micropolitics as “power, influence, conflict, and control inside new teachers’ organizational contexts” (Achinstein, 2006, p. 125) and thought about it within the larger context of new teacher socialization (Kelchtermans



& Ballet, 2002a). Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) identified new teacher socialization within a new organization as reliant upon two factors: prior experiences and beliefs, and the context of becoming a teacher. It is within the study of the latter, (i.e., the context of becoming a teacher) that micropolitics, and therefore their negotiation, has an influence on the socialization process of induction. Within the context of this study, the term *micropolitics* serves a dual purpose as it both identifies the power structures that exist within organizations, and also serves as a term to describe how teachers navigate through such power structures (Hoyle, 1986). Although it may not be possible to capture all of the complex interactions within an entire school or district (Hoyle, 1986), using a micropolitical framework to better understand social and environmental exchanges among colleagues may lend insight into such implicit practices.

New teachers at APS are faced with needs that they must fulfill as they become teachers. Those particular needs were captured in the previous sections of this chapter; what was not explicitly discussed was the existence of power structures within schools or districts. According to Hoyle (1986), such power structures, “pre-exist individuals,” and can define a new teacher’s role within an organization before the individual has arrived (p. 5). Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) further explained that organizations live by certain “traditions or habits, or more or less subtle power relations between (groups of) school members, with different interests” (p. 107). They noted that such power structures do not always refer to “tensions, conflict, struggle and rivalry” (p. 108), but also include collaboration and achievement of certain goals new teachers may have. What makes the concept of micropolitics even more complex, aside from how deeply such may be ingrained within the structure of an organization, is that micropolitics also tend to be implicit (e.g., power structures among colleagues), where formal hierarchies are explicit (e.g., power structures among teachers and administrators) (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011).

According to Schempp et al. (1993), colleagues, students, and administrators can all play a role in new teachers adjusting to their new school environments. These stakeholders exert enormous pressure and influence on new teachers and informally inform new teachers of the culture and standards that exist within the school environment (Armstrong et al., 2013; Brosky, 2011; Christensen, 2013; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a; Schempp et al., 1993). Therefore, the current systems that exist within an organization may not only stifle the growth of the new teachers that struggle for a foothold in the teaching profession, but also may impact the students through the perpetuation of inequities of practice, if such pre-exist a new teacher's arrival (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). To better understand how micropolitics influenced new teachers at APS, and perhaps more importantly, how new teachers navigated through such, I identified three subsections: *Recruitment*, *Micropolitical influencers*, and *Surviving micropolitics*.

### **Recruitment**

Although it may not be possible to capture all of the complex interactions within an entire school or district (Hoyle, 1986), using a micropolitical framework to better understand social and environmental exchanges among colleagues may lend insight into such implicit practices. The application of micropolitical awareness to new teacher induction programs may also allow for new teachers to better understand their environment and through such understanding, enact change within such organizations. Current systems that exist within an organization may not only stifle the growth of the new teachers that struggle for a foothold in the teaching profession, but also may impact the students through the perpetuation of inequities of practice, if such pre-exist a new teacher's arrival (Charner-Laird et al., 2016). However, to begin to change an environment, one must first understand the environment in which they are in. When new teachers experience micropolitical situations they may not necessarily agree or disagree with what they are

encountering or being told, but must understand that their professional survival may be contingent on their ability to understand and embrace the cultural norms of the school (Schempp et al., 1993). Within the scope of such conversations is the understanding that the people in a school *are* the environment as they are the ones that set and enforce the norms in a school (Hoyle, 1986). Therefore, it is important to understand the people in an environment to be able to begin to understand the micropolitics of the environment.

Hoyle (1986) recognized people's power within a micropolitical environment through three specific terms: Power, influence, and authority. Perhaps the most understood and explicit term is that of authority. Authority, as explained by Hoyle (1986), is the "static, structural aspect of power in organizations" (p. 74). Authority is formal, implies submission by subordinates, flows downward (unidirectional), and is clearly defined (Hoyle, 1986). Within a school or district, authority is obvious by title or job description (e.g., superintendent, principal, director, supervisor, etc.). New teachers tend to understand authority from either their own personal school experiences, or their pre-service teaching programs program (Christensen, 2013). However, influence is something different.

Micropolitical environments are undoubtedly impacted by overt, formal structures of a school or district, but they are also impacted by individuals, or groups of individuals, that yield power through covert influence. Influence, as opposed to authority, is dynamic, informal, unsanctioned, implies voluntary submission (not necessarily a superior-subordinate relationship), is multidirectional (can flow upwards, downwards, or horizontally), the source of influence can be personal characteristics, expertise or opportunity, access (to information) and resources (materials or symbolic), and lastly, influence is unsubscribed (origins are ambiguous)

(Christensen 2013; Hoyle, 1986). Given the overtness of explicit authority, the focus of this section will be influence, and how those with influence wield such within micropolitics.

The breakthrough in this study that initiated the recognition of influence among colleagues began with the simple acknowledgement of social cliques, and the recruitment of new teachers into such rivalries among staff (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a), that existed within buildings. Hoyle (1986) identified groups, or cliques, as interest groups within an organization and separates their functions into either pre-existing, or mobilizing for a specific issue. For instance, Alex, when asked about access to resources outside of the classroom, acknowledged that cliques existed within his school. When asked to discuss the existence and operations of the social structure of the cliques further, Alex stated:

Yeah, I mean absolutely, it's pretty much comparable to when you went to high school. I mean you know there were situations when I first started working almost like "alright well if I'm friends with this person I can't talk to that person" and, you know, "this person doesn't like that person." So there's certainly a lot of that going on and again it's, you know, part of the struggle is kind of sifting through, who's giving you legitimate information and who's just gossiping and making things worse. There's just a lot of it. I remember trying to figure out okay, the people that are sitting back and trying to say "oh This isn't fair that person's taken care of blah blah" and it's like okay well is that the case, or are you just doing nothing. And that person is working their tail off and you just want something to blame on. So I remember that being pretty specific, people coming up to me, pretending like they have my best interest. "Oh, you need to worry about that guy, and that guy," when in reality, I got to know those people and they ended up being very close to me. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Here, Alex described the social environment as like being in “high school,” explaining that he had to figure out who was trying to mislead him and pretending to have his best interest in mind. Additionally, he shared that he felt that he was being recruited into groups when he began teaching. In the example he gave, Alex felt he was being recruited into what he perceived to have been a negative group of colleagues, stating, “it was almost like they wanted me to be miserable with them” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Within this initial interaction with the group of colleagues is where micropolitics could be inserted as an explanation as to what Alex had experienced.

Alex shared that he thought the group that approached him tried to influence him into a group that Alex felt had a negative mindset about a particular event. Within Alex’s specific example, he felt as if staff were attempting to bring him into a particular mindset, one which involved the use of the term “fair” to describe someone receiving a position or access to something that the negative group did not like. This recruitment of sorts may have been a preexisting or emergent group's attempt to bring Alex into a mindset of people receiving something that they did not deserve. In terms of micropolitics, this could potentially be viewed as either Alex being recruited into a particular group that shared a common outlook on promotions or positions, or this could be a group of teachers trying to point out to Alex that some people within their organization are “taken care of” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Either way, the conversation is something that Alex felt was “part of the struggle” as he had to make social decisions about groups or individuals within his organization upon entering AHS (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Alex felt that being associated with one particular group that shared a common mindset could have an impact on future relationships within his building. Additionally, Alex was able to articulate his thought process working within the cliques and expressed that he

understood that association with one particular group or person potentially meant exclusion from other individuals or groups, realizing a micropolitical rivalry may exist among staff (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). Alex's recognition of the different group associations within his building demonstrate Alex's micropolitical awareness within his organization. Alex's awareness of the micropolitics among colleagues then allowed him to proceed with caution in his comments and actions as he understood they could have a future impact on his socialization and status within the school. The recognition of a social structure, and the recruitment into such, was also shared by Steve.

Steve, like Alex, taught at AHS. Like Alex, Steve recognized that AHS had a "social structure" that existed (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Regarding the social structure, Steve also shared that he associated such as either a negative or positive group within his school. Steve shared:

Some people are just unfriendly. Some people approach teaching with kind of a draconian bent. I don't necessarily agree with that. I think there's a place for behaving that way because you are trying to maintain the respect of students. But I think amongst colleagues, you can calm it down a little bit, you know, we are professionals and we have achieved the position we're going to achieve. Being friendly is a lot better than being a stick in the mud. There are definitely people within the building that I had to learn were either moody, just not friendly, or maintained different . . . almost ulterior motives because of their political belief in the structure of education. Some people in work [were] frustrated with the way things were going in the district and presented that frustration towards other people. I don't know of any way that you could socially that you could, tell someone in their first year "you see that group of people over there, don't associate with

them.” Because that's not effective. You can't do that . . . So there's a social structure to our school. There's a social structure to all institutions. And luckily, I fell in with a good group of people who socially, we all get along. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve, like Alex, felt he was fortunate to belong to the group of colleagues that he associated with. Steve understood that negativity existed within the workplace, however he also acknowledged that people may have “ulterior motives” because of their beliefs and that colleagues may attempt to bring him into such beliefs through associations or comments. However, there was also the possibility that the group with which Steve associated had ulterior motives themselves, therefore they attempted to influence Steve in terms of who he should associate with at work. Steve shared the following regarding advice offered by the group of colleagues he associated with and other people within the school:

They basically said “stay the fuck away from this group of [people]. Right here and this [person], stay the fuck away from that [person]. Stay away the fuck away from this [person]. He's looking to get you” or something like that. And you know sometimes, what I discovered was that that's not 100% true. Their personal experiences painted their opinions of people. Now, there were definitely truths in what they said . . . There's definitely truth in the fact that this group of people were extremely negative. And taking that I learned that they were correct, I stayed away from them . . . I talked to them but it's not like I am not going to engage in a full, long conversation with this person because they are so negative. All they're going to do within the next five minutes is try to inject some negative opinion and bring [me] down and there are people that seek me out sometimes to ask my opinion of something. And it's asking like a negative connotation, like “look at this shit bro.” And I just got to say, “I don't know, man. I see the other side

of it. I see the other side of it completely. It's great. I think it's a great opportunity for us.”

And I do that all the time with people. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Both Steve and Alex appeared to have been given advice about socializing with certain people within their organization, by certain people within their organization that they felt were looking out for them. According to Alex and Steve, they were both able to recognize the efforts of colleagues to lure them into conversations that they believed would brand them as associates with either individuals or groups within their school. Steve shared a particular incident where he was asked his opinion on a matter and was able to articulate his thought process through this micropolitical exchange:

Before you answer “Isn't this shitty?” You have to know that's injecting an opinion into the question that you're being asked? “Look, we have to do our lesson plans. Isn't that a mess? Like what jerk thought that would be right?” If you ask the question that way, you're injecting an opinion already. And a first-year teacher might say, “Yeah, you're right.” And start this, this frustration fest with you in which you start complaining all the time. You know, and that's what they're looking for. They're negative, they're looking for an ally. They're looking for an ally in negativity. They're not looking for an ally in positivity. They're not trying to bring you up. They want you to come down to their level so they have someone to talk to and vent to and commiserate with. That's what they're looking for . . . They're not saying “look, we have to redo our lesson plans. Isn't this great? My old lesson plans were a mess. It is a great opportunity for us to really evaluate how we use technology in the classroom.” It's not what they're doing. That's what they're doing. Or if you can't see the good or the bad in it, maybe we just leave it alone. And we



just redo our lesson plans, because that's what we're paid to do. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

As both Steve and Alex shared, they felt they were being recruited into certain cliques or groups that they identified as negative. Additionally, Alex and Steve felt that association with such groups could have had a negative impact on their identities with the school through association with such people or groups. They chose, instead, to think through the situations and sought advice from colleagues they felt would help make sense of the exchanges. However, what cannot be ignored is the coercive and strong influence the opposing side had on both Alex and Steve during their sorting out of advice. Where Alex was given advice to be careful from colleagues in previous discussions, Steve was explicitly told to “stay the fuck away” from certain identified groups or individuals. As both Steve and Alex noted they listened to the advice that was offered by colleagues, but made the ultimate decision to associate with people on their own. Conversely, what if this advice is not given to, or followed by, new teachers? As shared by Steve, he had personally seen the detrimental effects on a new teacher when they did succumb to unfavorable micropolitical exchanges and influence.

During Steve’s first-round interview, he shared an experience that he interpreted as a new teacher falling into the “wrong crowd” (3/19/20). When asked how important information on social interactions, or recruitment into groups, was for new teachers to know, he said:

I think it's incredibly important. I think it's incredibly important, because I watched a new teacher get in with what I would call the wrong crowd. And she began absorbing those behaviors of that crowd, and or presenting those behaviors. And she went from loving, being there every day, to hating it, hating education, not understanding why education is this way and not necessarily being an agent of change, but being just, for lack of a better

word, a complainer . . . My wife asks me all the time, “What's the hardest part of my job?” And I say, I love my kids. I have great students. I have great administrative help everybody, they're supportive. The one thing that is very difficult for me to deal with is the fact that there are so many people that complain about our position as teachers, they complain about our job. That's the number one thing I would say is a negative to being a teacher is that teachers want to play the martyr very often. And they take that on to the detriment of the atmosphere that we're trying to create in the building. They act as if we are completely unappreciated in society and they bring that into the building. And all of a sudden you get this young teacher who could have been anybody she could have been the Teacher of the Year for 10 straight years, we don't know because now she left because she was taught that the direction of education is terrible, what's going on in the building is horrible. You're not given any support, which is not true. She fell in with a group of people who are tenured teachers, who you cannot remove from their group who should leave on their own, because they hate it so much. They are toxic. And I think their presence and teaching a new teacher, maybe you should not be around these people is important, because that's one of the reasons I think that I believe wholeheartedly, this woman, this young woman, left because she was taught to hate teaching by a group of people that had been, that are, jaded . . . have been teaching for so long and hated teaching. (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Steve's interpretation of this event suggested that the new teacher fell in with a “toxic” crowd of teachers. Furthermore, he specifically associated the teacher's professional demise with her association with this negative, toxic crowd of colleagues. He appeared to have been moved so deeply by the events around this new teacher leaving the profession that he used this event to

illustrate the importance of social interactions or recruitments into groups. Steve, having been a new teacher himself at the time, recognized the attempts that various cliques or groups made at recruiting him. He felt he was able to avoid falling into what he recognized as the “negative” crowd within his school (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). However, his account of the events may have been skewed as they were his observations of the new teacher’s decisions, not the actual teacher’s expression of the events that led to her leaving. The event, nonetheless, had an impact on Steve regarding his understanding of different social groups within his organization.

This recognition of social groups, and the micropolitics associated with such, are what Hoyle (1986) referred to as the “organizational underworld” which is “rarely discussed in any formal contexts within organizations” (p. 125). He further described such groups as “organizational mafias” and spoke about the lack of presence of such discussions in the formal pre-service setting stating that such discussions rather “[take] place in the bar rather than submit them to analysis in the serious context of course discussion” (p. 125). Therefore, the telling of such tales by the participants in full length of their answers during their interviews seemed appropriate as to not enact any power or authority myself over the participant conversations (Goodson & Cole, 1994).

Continuing with the elusive aspects of micropolitics within a school or district, the feeling of being recruited into negativity were not only shared by Alex and Steve, who were located in the same school, but were also expressed by Maria, who was in an elementary school. Maria shared that preexisting collegial cliques did exist in her building and, like Alex and Steve, identified negativity as residing with people or individuals, more than with a group. Maria described her school environment as going “back to grade school . . . it's like, who do you not listen to?” Additionally, Maria explained that she expected negativity to exist:

I think [it] is like this anywhere. Really, teaching it just has a reputation, but I think anywhere that there's people, it's always going to happen . . . a lot of cliques, and people talk negatively about a profession, and it kind of sucks you in . . . and it sucks you in because there is a lot of negative people out there and there's a lot of negative conversations and . . . teaching is a very opinionated profession . . . If you start listening to so many people, it kind of drives you down. And another thing is you don't want to get involved in conversations because they can backfire. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria, identified that cliques existed in her school, however, unlike Alex and Steve, Maria did not necessarily identify the cliques as negative or positive. Rather, Maria acknowledged that negative individuals tried to “suck” other people into conversations that Maria felt could “backfire” on her (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria mentioned that listening to negative people may “drive a person down” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20), insinuating that listening to negativity may make one adopt a negative attitude themselves. However, Maria specifically mentioned the term *backfire* as a reason not to engage in negative conversations with individuals. Maria differentiated the consequences teachers may experience from negative conversations by speaking of how a teacher may begin to feel (i.e., drives one down), versus the professional consequences one may experience (i.e., conversations backfiring). Maria’s perception of the severity of consequences appeared to be quite different from the general complaints that teachers may have due to frustration or personal failure, as is expected in any school or organization. Instead, Maria specifically used the term *backfire* to describe what may happen if teachers engage in negative conversations. Maria’s perception of conversations of backfiring are further discussed in the following subsection on connected individuals. However, what can be applied to the recruitment efforts of individuals is that Maria associated such people with potential harm to

her either through the adoption of a negative attitude (personal), or the conversations backfiring and causing negative work consequences (professionally).

What Alex, Maria, and Steve had in common was that they had experienced, what Schempp et al. (1993) described as, “the makers of school culture” (p. 462). The makers of school culture, in the examples given, were colleagues. Schempp et al. (1993) identified colleagues as an influential group in their study of teachers during induction. Schempp et al. further explained that colleagues have a “vested interest in the induction of new teachers, for the newcomers may soon be one among them: friend or foe” (p. 464). Here, the clashing interests of groups (e.g., positive and negative) were trying to recruit the new teachers as friends and prevent them from becoming foes as each side was trying to preserve their own sets of interests (Schempp et al., 1993).

According to Schempp et al. (1993), what Alex and Steve experienced was an introduction to the “codes of school culture” that existed in their school (p. 463). They borrowed the concept of cultural codes from Foucault (1970) and applied it to the educational setting, especially for the informal passing of such from veterans to novices. As noted earlier, the teachers at APS displayed a great amount of trust and reverence for their veteran colleagues. Therefore, what the veteran colleagues at APS had to share, even and especially the cultural lessons, were taken to heart by the new teachers in this study. Additionally, the codes of school culture, like Alex and Steve, were not written down for new teachers, but were expressed orally in the form of stories (Schempp et al., 1993). Like Schempp et al. (1993), the behavioral and attitudinal norms were not formally expressed to the new teachers in this study, but were informally conveyed through expressions of negativity or objection. Like the new teachers in the Schempp et al. (1993) study, the teachers at APS went to their colleagues to learn how things

were really done in the school. As discussed in the previous section, this informal learning environment lends itself to micropolitical influence as the veterans are passing to the new teachers *how* to do something, they are essentially inserting how they *feel* things should be done. Ultimately, new teachers must accept, reject, modify, or accommodate the advice or procedures offered by the veterans, such as the participants in this study did. However, Schempp et al. (1993) warned that colleagues can either “ease, or prevent, a novice’s entry into the school culture” (p. 465). As much as the new teacher participants spoke of group influence, the participants also shared that there are certain individuals who may have influence in organizations. The next subsection discusses the individuals in a school that have no official power, but nonetheless, do have power in schools through their influence.

### **Micropolitical Influencers**

As mentioned in the previous section, power in a school is either enacted through authority or influence (Hoyle, 1986). For purposes of this study, I discuss power as how individuals carry their particular influence within their schools. Such individuals are not persons with actual titles of authority within the school. Rather, their power comes from their influence. However, as participants shared, there were also those individuals who had the power to influence those with authority. It was within this dynamic that the individuals with micropolitical influence were described as “connected” people within the organization. One such description of connected people was offered by Maria during her first-round interview where she mentioned that a person was very “connected in the union” (3/25/20). When asked to explain what she meant about people being connected and if such individuals had power or influence, Maria offered the following:

I think it's power. In my eyes . . . it's not it's just my eyes. It's what you have. You have to be careful what you say. It's just, if you're having a rough day you just have to be careful of who you say it to and not put into perspective that that's what teaching is. . . . As far as like, some teachers are more connected in the union? Some teachers that are maybe a little bit closer to the principal. Some teachers don't mind taking whatever you say and going and putting a turn on it, and portraying it as if it's something else. So I think that is something that I struggled with a little bit, not realizing, who would take what you would say and turn it into an issue when it really wasn't. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

Maria shared a story where she had made a comment in front of a colleague regarding a mess from the students' shoes on the floor of the classroom. Unbeknownst to Maria, the colleague took it upon themselves to go to the principal on behalf of the teachers' union and make a complaint. This situation caused Maria some worry as she believed the incident was blown out of proportion and did not feel it was necessary to go to the principal with the matter. In terms of perception, Maria seemed to associate unnecessarily complaining to the principal on small matters as creating an unfavorable reputation. Maria regretted saying anything as she did not want the principals to think negatively of her. She felt that the situation was taken out of context, and offered the following to explain why she was upset from the situation and better explain why new teachers should be careful with whom they speak to:

I think there was just more so . . . who you can have a conversation with knowing that people don't know who you are. You are a new teacher, they don't know your intentions, they don't know who you are, anything like this goes in any, any social setting. However, it's harder because being a new teacher, there are a lot of eyes on you . . . a lot of teachers are rough, they are very judgmental, what are you doing [in the] classroom what, how are

you reprimanding your class? How are you, structuring your class? How are you rewarding your class? So there are a lot of judgmental eyes on you and something as silly as making a conversation is something that you need to watch and be careful with because you don't want to say the wrong things and it's not so much getting a repercussion, it's just that . . . You don't want that reputation. You don't want that to go back to your administrators, saying, “oh, Maria is the new teacher and she's complaining about the [mess in the classroom] . . . And so it could snowball into something just from nothing. (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20)

In Maria's example, the person who she had made a comment in front of was a person with micropolitical influence as they did not hold an official position of authority (e.g., an administrator). In Maria's situation, this person enacted their influence within the teachers' union to bring an issue to the principal that Maria felt was unwarranted. Maria did not want the negative attention brought to the principal as she was afraid that the principal, who had official authority in this case, would associate her with complaining about small issues. This was something that Maria objected to, but her “connected” colleague felt necessary to bring to the principal's attention anyway (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Therefore, the person was initiating their influence in the school by trying to advocate on Maria's behalf to rectify the situation although this was not what Maria wanted. Maria worried that the connected person's complaint to the principal, allegedly on Maria's behalf, might reflect negatively on Maria as a professional. Maria may have feared that she would be perceived as someone who complains over small issues. Maria could have also thought that as a nontenured staff member, such a perception by the principal may carry negative consequences, such as dismissal or nonrenewal. Regardless of the consequence Maria feared, she clearly did not want this individual to say



anything to the principal as she did not feel it was something that needed the principal's attention and did not want the principal to associate her with such small issues. Unfortunately, Maria's colleague did report the incident and Maria was upset by this.

Hoyle (1986) spoke of such acts by people that possess influence as possessing *goods* that can serve as a barter system of exchanges that take place as power is negotiated. In Maria's case, the goods that may have been exchanged were the fixing of the problem in exchange for loyalty to the teachers' union or the individual as a building representative for the union. In this instance, Hoyle (1986) classified such a micropolitical act as "controlling information" (p. 142) as the person knew the process of getting a mess cleaned up and enacted their influence to make sure such was taken care of for Maria. The connected teacher apparently acted on behalf of Maria, however Maria was fully capable of solving the problem of the mess on her own (e.g., alerting a custodian). The result was, in this case, the micropolitical influencer having taken care of the situation instead of explaining to Maria how the situation could have been taken care of, process wise. Hoyle (1986) stated that "how information is acquired, distributed, presented, doctored or withheld is micropolitical" (p. 142). Therefore, the person may have withheld information of a process from Maria while taking such to the principal to be presented as a union issue. Regardless of the intentions, the act of taking the complaint to the principal was something with which Maria was not comfortable, therefore her understanding of this situation was to be careful of what you say and who you say it to. As other participants shared, and will be discussed shortly, the micropolitical influencers in buildings may not always be teacher colleagues. However, regardless of who the people may be in a building it appeared that the participants knew there were some people in the schools you just do not "piss off" as there may be negative consequences if you do agitate such individuals.

The participants in this study shared that there were individuals in schools, teacher colleagues, secretaries, and custodians, who you just do not want to “piss off” or make mad (First-Round Interviews, Arianna, 3/20/20; Lisa, 3/23/20). The teacher coaches, as veteran teachers, offered social situations in which new teachers, or teachers in general, did not want to cause conflict in a school. For instance, Arianna, a teacher coach, shared an experience where a new teacher she was helping brought up a social situation regarding the distribution of invitations to a school event in her school that the new teacher was leading:

So for that teacher, because she didn't want to, you know, make it a problem or a hassle for other teachers, this teacher definitely wanted to make sure that whichever way she was going to be passing out these invitations for [this event] that it was going to be in such a way that it was going to not disrupt, or barely disrupt procedures, in other teachers home rooms and she had even said to me, “I'm not tenured, I don't want to piss anyone off, you know.” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Although Arianna was not specific about who the new teacher in her situation was trying not to anger, Lisa explained that there are people that have “the ear of the principal” and that those are the people you do not want to upset (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). Lisa also shared the consequences of upsetting individuals that have influence with administration (i.e., have their ear) having explained that consequences can be harassment from the administrator or manipulation of classroom schedules. In Lisa's example, she defined harassment as an administrator “all of a sudden . . . [is] going to be walking past me, keeping an eye on me all the time” and the room assignment causing an inconvenience due to having to rotate among “five different rooms” instead of just being in one room all day (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20).

In both Arianna and Lisa's experience as veteran teachers and teacher coaches, they were able to further explain the concept of connected people. Lisa even identified consequences to upsetting people who have influence within the school or district. Both Lisa and Arianna spoke of colleagues that held some type of influence either with colleagues (Arianna's situation) or with the principal (Lisa's situation). Either way, it was clear that some individuals influenced the actions of teachers in general, and as one could imagine the consequences could be much worse for a new teacher. Schempp et al. (1993) found that their new teacher participants believed that their professional survival was "contingent on their ability to prove that they understood and embraced the cultural norms of the school" (p. 468). Additionally, Conway and Rawlings (2015) found in their study of new music teachers that micropolitics played a role in scheduling and resources. Conway and Rawlings (2015) explained that beginning music teachers in their study knew there was a hierarchy with scheduling and "insider knowledge" was necessary to secure favorable schedules and resources (p. 34).

The insider knowledge of which Conway et al. (2015) spoke led to the finding in their study that "the teachers who were more supported by the administration know how to secure the resources for their classroom" and schedules (p. 35). Like the findings in Conway and Rawlings (2015), the participants in this study related to the influence veteran teachers had with their administrators. Hoyle (1986) described such influence as part of the micropolitical exchanges that take place among administrators and teachers where loyalty from the teachers is exchanged for material resources for the staff. In both of the situations Lisa and Arianna shared, there appeared to be an understanding that there are some people that you do not want to upset because they will tell the principal. However, there was more than just being told on at stake. As Lisa pointed out, upsetting certain colleagues could lead to harassment from an administrator (e.g.,

constant watch) or the cutting off of a desirable resource (e.g., one classroom as opposed to moving around to multiple classrooms). Either way, one thing appeared to be true: there were just some people you do not want to upset. However, what if the people that you are not supposed to upset are not teacher colleagues? Is it possible for others to hold the power of influence in schools besides teachers? According to the participants in this study, it did appear that others in schools had yielded power through influence.

Michele, a teacher coach participant, expanded on the list of people that new teachers should not get on “the bad side” of, including the secretaries, custodians, and security personnel (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). Michele shared that such staff members can play a role in a new teacher having “a better experience” during their transition (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). When asked why it is important not to make such individuals upset, Michele explained that teachers need such individuals “to do something or to get supplies” emphasizing the importance of not upsetting the secretary (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20). When Michele was asked about the consequences of upsetting such staff members, Michele shared:

I think it'd be a life lesson. We have to get back on their good side . . . their good graces. . . It's a life lesson that they learn and then they have to realize that somehow they're gonna have to get back on their good graces, you know, be a little extra kind to them and apologize if you have to, you know? (First-Round Interview, 3/23/20)

Michele, like Steve in the earlier section on accessing classroom resources, shared that the micropolitical influence of a school may extend beyond previous studies on micropolitical school environments to include staff that are not teacher colleagues, but serve in other roles within a building. Hoyle (1986) emphasized the power of material resources as a micropolitical bargaining chip for administrators and teacher colleagues, but what if the ability to limit

resources, or even withhold information to accomplish a task, resides with not just with administrators and teacher colleagues, but also with staff such as custodians, secretaries, and security personnel?

During the focus group meeting, clarification about the importance of such non-teaching staff members' roles in schools was discussed. Specifically, secretaries and custodians were identified by the participants as having some influence on the access of needs or information and controlling such based on the interactions between the staff. When pointed out that the secretaries and custodians are not administrators, therefore should not have any particular power over situations, Amy stated, "it's the real world" (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). During this discussion, Lisa and Arianna explained that how you interact with such staff members will result in you either obtaining the information or resources you want, or not. They further explained, like Steve had, that access to such is not universal. During the focus group discussion, Lisa offered:

If you would ask a secretary or, or custodian, depending on who was, you know, in charge . . . if I was nice, and I said, "oh, wow, I ran out of paper," they'd go, "oh, I'll go get it right now." But if I wasn't on their good side, they'll be like "well put a requisition you can have it in a couple of [days]." (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20)

Following Lisa's statement, Steve, Kelly, Amy, and Maria all agreed with Lisa. Kelly, a teacher coach, shared that a veteran teacher once told her to make sure that she was always on the good side of the custodians "so that way you could get the supplies that you need" (Focus Group Meeting, 6/18/20). Maria, a new teacher participant, shared that a professor offered her the same advice regarding the custodians and being on their good side. Michele, a teacher coach participant, additionally noted that there used to be a copy room person who made copies for the

staff. Michele suggested that you had to wait for your copies unless you knew the person, then your copies would be made quicker than others. Steve, who had previously shared his experience with custodians in the section on accessing internal resources, suggested that he was able to “go into the supply closet tomorrow and get what I need” because he has a good relationship with the custodians. Steve had previously shared that if he did not have such a relationship with the custodians, he would have been asked by the custodians to fill out an official request form to secure supplies. As the participants suggested, the scope of micropolitical influence within a building did not appear to be only with teaching colleagues and administrators, but also resided with an extended definition of micropolitical influencers that includes custodial and secretarial staff. As offered by the participants in this study, it was important to be able to identify the micropolitics involved with the recruitment into ways of thinking, as well as it is to identify the connected people within an organization. What such skills essentially lead to are the new teachers being able to navigate through the micropolitical atmosphere to not only obtain necessary resources and meet needs, but to also better understand the micropolitical layout of their schools or districts. This final part is discussed in the subsection of surviving micropolitics.

### **Surviving Micropolitics**

By the time of publication of this dissertation, the new teacher participants of this study will have all surpassed the five-year teaching mark at APS, thus they will all have successfully transitioned from identities, or professional labels, as new teachers to veteran or mid-career teachers. However, what is quite clear from the micropolitical study is that micropolitics do not cease to exist for teachers as they exit their liminal career stage, instead they persist over time and are subject to change depending on both the consensus and dissent of school staff (Hoyle, 1986). As the new teacher participants in this study further identify themselves as classroom

teachers, the micropolitical landscape within their schools or district will shift, change, and evolve. The skills and tactics deployed to navigate through micropolitics are therefore ever-evolving and changing to adapt to the micropolitical landscape changes. As such, it is important to fully understand some of the micropolitical strategies used by new teachers to survive such environments and how participants in this study transition from micropolitical vulnerability to potential micropolitical influencers themselves, as “power can have continuity only as long as it is replicated in the next event, and the one after that, while it may quickly evaporate” (Kairienė, 2018, p. 136).

The first micropolitical strategy that was apparent in this study was that of awareness, or literacy. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) defined micropolitical literacy as “the capacity to understand, navigate, and influence the micropolitical realities of schools (p. 756). Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) emphasized that micropolitical awareness, or micropolitical literacy, should actually begin during teacher education. Therefore, from the earliest experiences that potential teachers begin to form opinions of teaching (e.g., coursework and student teaching) (Gavish & Friedman, 2010), it is important that new teachers are exposed to the concept of micropolitics to potentially become micro politically literate (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a). The participants in this study suggested that during their pre-service work, anecdotal pre-service advice regarding micropolitics was offered by pre-service professionals, but not identified as such. Specifically, Alex, Maria, and Steve had all received warnings of staying out of the teachers’ lounge during their pre-service experience. This may have been an introduction to micropolitical literacy offered by their pre-service instructors. Maria’s professor told her to “stay out of the teachers’ lounge, don’t even go there to make copies. Go someplace else” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Steve’s graduate professor also told Steve to stay out of the teachers’ lounge explaining

that “that’s where all of the drama is” (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Alex recalled being told to not go into the teachers’ room, but was never told why by a pre-service professor.

Additionally, Paul’s professor gave him the advice of “the walls have ears” suggesting that Paul be careful of what he says and who he says it to in general (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). This advice was offered by pre-service educators, but what was lacking was the formal structure of such within the pre-service programs.

Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) suggest that micropolitical literacy may lend itself to pre-service work through reflective practice assignments during the student teaching phase. Additionally, Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002a) offer the suggestion that “attention to the micropolitical aspects in the school reality should be brought up and focused on explicitly” through specific reflective assignments (p. 118). Such practices would be helpful in identifying the “different professional interests and analyzing their influence on the individual teacher's actions and thinking and on teacher collaboration within the school” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002a, p. 118). As no such reflective and explicit micropolitical assignments were discussed in pre-service programs, the teachers in this study had to figure out such micro political influences on their own as they transitioned into their new environments. The micropolitical strategies the new teachers used in this study to access resources are applicable to the discussion about micropolitical survival as they demonstrate micropolitical thinking and strategy that may be useful for future consideration in new teacher induction study. Further development of micropolitical awareness or literacy at the pre-service level, in addition to a better understanding of micropolitics in general during the induction phase, may help both future and new teachers understand their environments better. If future teachers understand what they may encounter, and



new teachers are able to understand what they are experiencing, perhaps they will stay in the teaching profession.

Some of the moments that were captured in this study that suggest micropolitical reflection while on-the-job transition occurred were either the awareness of micropolitical influence, or the application of micropolitical influence by new teachers. An example of micropolitical awareness was discussed earlier when Maria had experienced her situation with the union representative in her building having taken a small issue to the principal. Maria learned from this experience that she must watch what she says and who she says it to. However, Maria also shared that she has used some of the negative people in her building as resources when she had to vent some negativity of her own. Maria identified the teachers' lounge that she was warned to stay away from as her pre-service professor as a place to commiserate with colleagues when she needed to. However, Maria was not the only participant to discuss the teachers' room as a place of micropolitical action. Therefore, since multiple participants elected to mention the teacher's lounge as a specific contextualized example of a place where micropolitics were at play, it was important to study how the participants learned to play the micropolitical game within the context of the staff room.

### ***Micropolitics of the Staffroom***

The participants in this study spoke directly to the teachers' staffroom as a place where teachers commingled when they were not teaching. What is interesting about such spaces in a school building is that they are places where essential needs (e.g., eating, making copies, restroom visits) are often met, therefore they are nearly unavoidable in most situations as most schools lack space for new teachers to congregate and meet such personal needs. However, each staffroom may be unique as the people that occupy them, no two being the same. Therefore, the

interactions captured within such are also unique, but may lend insight into the micropolitical arena that exists within such spaces.

Christensen (2013) identified the teachers' room in her study as a "micropolitical reality" that all new teachers must face (p. 74). Christensen studied micropolitical learning (i.e., micropolitical literacy) within the context of the staffroom where both new and veteran teachers commingle as colleagues. As a specific contextualized environment, the staffroom plays an important role during a new teacher's transition into a school as it is a place where new teachers will spend most of their time, other than the classroom (Christensen, 2013). The participants in Christensen's study shared experiences from their departmentalized staffrooms. The participants in this study identified the staffroom as a place of negativity and had shared their anecdotal warnings from pre-service. However, what the participants also shared were tactics that they employed during their transition to navigate through the micropolitical staff room environment.

As mentioned earlier, Maria had learned from a negative micropolitical experience with a colleague to be careful of what she said and in front of whom. However, Maria also shared that she learned where to find negativity and how she used such places to vent out some of her frustrations that built up. Specifically, Maria acknowledged that sometimes she required a little "emotional support." In describing her emotional support network, Maria mentioned that she went to her mentor and even sought out the "negative" teachers (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Maria explained that venting to the negative teachers "somehow supports you" because "you know they'll listen to you" (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). Here, Maria used her negative colleagues as an outlet for her frustration because she understood that the negative teachers would not disagree with her in negativity. Maria, also understood that she could find the negative teachers in the teachers' lounge and knew she could vent to them about certain situations that

frustrated her and they would not talk about it with others. Maria further explained that she used this negative interaction to “get a good laugh” when “things [got] tense” (First-Round Interview, 3/25/20). In terms of micropolitical navigation, like one of the participants in Christensen’s (2013) study shared, Maria found herself aligning to a particular micropolitical position, for a specific purpose. In this case, Maria aligned with the negative teachers that complained about topics in the school so that she could vent her frustrations.

This micropolitical alignment was discussed in Christensen (2013) when one of the participants in her study, Millie, shared that she first “had developed ways to position herself and her practices, steering clear of living and telling stories that may have conflicted with the dominant micropolitical staffroom story” (p. 79). Such micropolitical awareness allowed Millie to employ passive strategies such as “holding her tongue” and “going with the flow” to show compliance (Christensen, 2013, p. 79). Over time, Millie became “more satisfied with her micropolitical literacy and her ability to understand and participate in the micropolitical context of the staffroom in such a way as to protect her desired working conditions” (p. 79). In Millie’s situation, she had used such strategies to gain information she wanted to protect her professional interests and “commitment to curriculum and assessment best practice” as she perceived she had no influence in changing the prevailing micropolitical context (Christensen, 2013, p. 79). Like Millie, Maria had adapted a go with the flow stance on negativity to achieve her own personal goal of venting on a particular topic. Maria understood she would not be able to change the prevailing micropolitical context within the teachers’ lounge, so she used the prevailing negativity to her advantage to meet a need (e.g., venting). Of specific importance to this study was the timing of Maria’s venture into micropolitical engagement as she did not use the negative context to her advantage right away as a new teacher. Instead, as Maria’s understanding of the

micropolitical layout of her school developed, she then felt comfortable navigating through such. Like Maria, other new teacher participants, Alex and Steve, understood the negative environment of the teachers' lounge, but dealt with it in different ways.

Alex, who was given the advice by his colleagues to stay away from the teachers' lounge, explained that he learned to avoid the teachers' lounge on his own because he felt that the teachers' lounge was "a place where some of the attitudes and personalities that [he] didn't want to be around gathered" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Alex identified the personalities he was trying to avoid as the negative people in his building. Alex further explained that the lounge was just a place and that it was the people within the lounge that made it negative. The people within the lounge could relocate to another room or part of the building and Alex would then stay away from the new areas occupied by the negative people. As an alternative to going into the teachers' lounge, Alex and his colleagues designated rooms around the building that were available during the day to meet in instead of the teachers' lounge. It was within such safe environments where Alex began his "micropolitical training" by trusted colleagues.

Alex shared a recount of an event where he was told by "someone he worked with" to "leave and go get a new job" (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). To figure out what this person could have meant by such a comment, Alex turned to a colleague. Alex shared:

I went to a colleague that I trusted, you know, feel comfortable with, and I just kind of said "listen what's . . . you know what's the deal with him and this place? Is it that bad? You know, are you kind of looking out for me here? Is [it] that bad of a place? Do I want to try to invest my time in looking for something else?" . . . and he pretty much said to me, "look at me. I've been here for this long. I've been in other districts, and I'm here because I want to be, not because I have to be. And, by all means you know every person

in this building has the same decision, including the person that says you know you need to get out of here.” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

What Alex encountered in this situation was what Hoyle (1986) referred to as interest groups. Again, the navigation of the micropolitical environment requires an ability to recognize the micropolitics and the micropolitical players. This included the identification of the interest groups within micropolitical organizations. It is then understood that such interest groups may occupy certain arenas within organizations. In Alex’s case, he knew enough about the teachers’ lounge to understand that the people that occupied the lounge belonged to an interest group that perpetuated negativity. As groups are comprised of individuals, Alex’s encounter with a negative member of the group put him in doubt of his decision to work at APS. Luckily, Alex had also identified with an interest group that he felt had his professional best interests in mind. As Alex was confronted with a negative message from a colleague, Alex had to decide which interest group to bring this information to. As it turned out, Alex chose to bring the information to a source that he felt “comfortable with” (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). However, Alex had options. Alex could have taken the statement to the teachers’ lounge where the negative interest group occupied. If Alex had sought clarification from the negative group, Alex may have received a different message and advice. Christensen (2013) found that one of his participants, Sally, positioned her alignment in her department “according to her interests, values and beliefs” and “shaped how Sally practiced her micropolitical knowledge in the staffroom, reflected whose opinions she valued, whose advice she sought and who she confided in” (p. 80). Therefore, like Sally, Alex made a micropolitical decision based on his particular values and beliefs as Alex recalled that he drew upon his father’s advice to always form his own opinions about people and his work. Alex shared:

My father is in education, too, so he kind of warned me about this as well . . . coming in, so I got lucky with that . . . just more so him saying “you need to make your own opinion on everything from the people to the kids to the profession, everything.” So I think that just kind of hearing it from multiple people just helps hammer that mindset in when I walked through the doors. So, . . . I'm not going to listen to anyone else when they tell me what the place is like, but it absolutely helped. . . . I felt like I had more trusting relationships, which made me enjoy work more which made me you know feel more confident coming in all those things. (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20)

Like Sally, Alex used his personal beliefs to navigate through a micropolitical situation. Christensen (2013) related Sally's alignment to a particular interest group (i.e., curriculum people) to serve as both a professional and personal interest. However, unlike Sally who used this information to navigate through her staffroom, Alex and his interest group formed their own staffroom that aligned to their particular interests and needs. Like Alex, Steve was also a teacher at AHS, however Steve discovered another micropolitical tactic to combat the realized negativity that existed within the teachers' lounge, that of engaging in micropolitics to change the environment.

Steve, a teacher in the same school as Alex at APS, chose a different approach to dealing with the micropolitics in the staffroom. Steve referred to the staffroom as a “double-edged sword” a “catch-22,” where having a place to air out frustrations is a positive so that teachers do not bring negativity into the classroom (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). However, Steve also understood that it was easy to “get dragged into” the negativity because of the people that congregated in the teachers' lounge (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Additionally, when Steve

was asked about his professor's advice to stay away from the teachers' lounge and what he thought the professor meant by the advice, Steve shared the following:

You have seen me in the teachers' lounge. I have been sitting there working with different individuals, talking about education or talking about life. It's a good place to relax. Sometimes I don't eat lunch in there. But the reason I don't eat lunch in there is because I want to stay away from the number of negative people that will enter there during the day. And so I think that the advice "stay away from the teachers' lounge" should have been expanded to "stay away from the negative, jaded, tenured teachers that exists within our profession." (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20)

Knowing the teachers' lounge could be "a congregation of negativity," Steve nonetheless continued to venture into the lounge (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). When asked why he continued to go into the lounge knowing that such a place was negative, Steve also noted that he has had good times in the teachers' lounge because he was in there "with teachers that are like-minded" and they "talked about school and our lives" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve appeared to have a strange pull into the teachers' lounge where he recognized the positives and negatives of sitting in there between classes. What he also noticed was how the room itself had an atmosphere that was influenced by individuals: "Occasionally, there are a couple other teachers that show up. There's one teacher that will eventually, when she shows up. . . the entire room shifts, it becomes a room of negativity" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). When faced with what Steve described as a "rain cloud coming in on a sunny day," Steve had decided to take on this shifting atmosphere by trying to "lighten the mood" and tried to "push that rain cloud out and talk about something fun or positive" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Steve also shared that his strategy "sometimes worked and sometimes it didn't" (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20).

Regardless of the success, Steve tried to engage in a type of micropolitical negotiation to try to control the room to restore the room to the conditions he felt were best (Christensen, 2013). Steve's micropolitical exchange in the teachers' lounge demonstrated competing interests among teachers. The interests in this particular situation appeared to be the atmosphere of the room itself. Instead of being passive and either not engaging in conversation or leaving, Steve chose to engage in micropolitical actions (i.e., try not to let the mood change in the lounge). Regardless of the positions that were being debated, both parties (Steve and the other teacher) appeared to be at odds with each other. Therefore, both decided to influence the atmosphere of the room. The actions were therefore for the purposes of restoring the room to the conditions each found favorable. However, it is important to mention that, like Maria, Steve shared that this engagement came over time. He did not engage in such micropolitical exchanges his first year of teaching.

### ***Micropolitical Literacy***

According to Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b), teachers “strive to establish the desired working conditions, to safeguard them when they are threatened or to restore them when they have been removed” through micropolitical actions (p. 756). Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) understood micropolitical actions to be the actions taken by teachers to “establish, safeguard, or restore desired working conditions” (p. 756). Therefore, the actions taken by teachers can be identified by new teachers as they learn to “read” the micropolitical reality and then can “write” themselves into it (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 756).

Such micropolitical awareness is described by Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) as the development of micropolitical literacy or “the competence to understand the issues of power and interests in schools” (p. 765). This has a place in new teacher professional development. They



identified three aspects of micropolitical literacy: “the knowledge aspect, the instrumental or operational aspect, and the experiential aspect” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 765). All three micropolitical aspects are intertwined and correlate to teachers’ professional learning. The content of the “formal characteristics” are also very sensitive to context and largely depend on “the interactions with the particular conditions” in which a teacher is working (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 765). As such, each of the examples given above lend themselves to contextualized interpretations of micropolitical literacy experiences.

The knowledge aspect refers to the “knowledge necessary to acknowledge (“see”), interpret and understand (“read”) the micropolitical character of a particular situation” (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 765). All three of the examples above spoke to an acknowledgement of not only negativity, which can be categorized as an interest for some teachers, but also the interpretation of the situation as negative. This allowed the participants to enact certain strategies based on the context of their individual experiences. Employment of such strategies are the second aspect, or the instrumental or operational aspect, of micropolitical literacy described by Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b). Finally, the participants were able to reflect on the final aspect of micropolitical literacy, that of the experiential aspect, or the degree of (dis)satisfaction the teacher feels about his/her micropolitical literacy (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b, p. 766).

In the staffroom examples above, each participant deployed different micropolitical strategies or tactics that they were able to describe during their interviews. The moments captured during the interviews describe what the new teacher participants *did* once they recognized the micropolitics. According to Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b), their actions were meant to “establish, safeguard, or restore desirable working conditions” (p. 765). Maria used her

micropolitical knowledge to deploy a strategy of negative agreeance to fulfil her own need to vent. Here, Maria was trying to restore a desirable working condition for herself (i.e., a return to happiness through a venting of negativity). Knowing that the negative people in her school building were going to engage in commiseration and not question her negativity, Maria used her colleagues to unload some of her frustrations in a space, and with people, where she knew negativity prevailed. Maria used her micropolitical awareness, and deployed a strategy based on such, to restore a desirable working condition. Such moments were also captured by Steve and Alex, although in different ways.

Alex was also able to recognize micropolitical situations (e.g., the negative comment by a colleague regarding Alex leaving the district and the negativity in the staffroom). Alex's tactics were to seek out colleagues that he felt he could trust and to avoid the staffroom as much as possible, respectively. He listened to another perspective from a "trusted colleague" to weigh in on the comment and recalled advice from his father regarding the forming of opinions of people and work environments (First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Additionally, Alex resorted to relocating his staff room to another room, or rooms, in the building to avoid the negativity of the staffroom. In both situations, he used strategies to either safeguard working conditions (e.g., the ability to congregate with like-minded colleagues by moving the staffroom) or restore working conditions (e.g., whether he should continue working in APS or look for a job elsewhere) depending upon the situation. Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b) also referred to the operational aspects of micropolitical literacy through the political efficacy of the teacher, or "the ability of the teacher to "effectively influence the situation, either proactively or reactively" (p. 766). Alex, instead of engaging the micropolitical situation head-on, decided to consult, then decided on the decision of staying in APS. This process could be viewed as a proactive approach, given that

Alex had already established a group, or individuals, that he trusted to weigh in on information as it was presented to Alex. However, Alex's decision to not engage, or attempt to influence the situation, could also be seen as reactive as he had to consult another staff member on a matter that he was not ready to make a decision on his own. Regardless of the proactive/reactive approach what Alex did do was recognize that micropolitical situation and employed strategies to address such. Steve also had to make such decisions regarding negativity. However, Steve chose a more direct approach.

Steve recognized the negativity that existed in the staffroom. Additionally, Steve recognized the shift in micropolitical atmosphere as individuals were introduced to the environment. Steve decided to try to change the atmosphere by attempting to "lighten the mood" in a reactive manner to the situation. Steve's attempt to restore desirable working conditions (i.e., a positive environment) captured a strategy used by Steve in a specific context within a particular situation. What the moment also captured was Steve's interpretation of his own ability to manipulate a micropolitical situation, or his experiential aspect of micropolitical literacy. Steve's sharing of the successes, or failures, of his micropolitical actions within the staffroom by saying "sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't" demonstrated Steve's ability to reflect on the effectiveness of his micropolitical literacy (First-Round Interview, 3/19/20). Although the experiential aspect of Maria and Alex's micropolitical literacy were not explicitly captured, they were certainly aware of their micropolitical environment and had deployed strategies to successfully exist in such. Therefore, their adaptability to the micropolitics of their respective environments, and the various strategies used, demonstrated the existence of micropolitical literacy and the (dis)satisfaction of such.

Regardless of the actions taken by the participants, the recognition of micropolitical situations in the workplace demonstrates the participants' abilities to first recognize such situations and then act accordingly (i.e., demonstration of micropolitical literacy). The actions taken by the participants were attempts to establish their personal perceptions of desirable working conditions Kelchtermans and Ballet (2002b). As demonstrated by the participants, each micropolitical situation was unique, as were the micropolitical actions taken by the participants. Therefore, micropolitical literacy, or micropolitical awareness, may be a skill as unique as the person involved in such situations as each person may have a different perception of desirable working conditions as well as unique strategies to navigate through such situations.

### **Summary of Findings**

The driving question of this study was: How can induction better include voices of the novice teachers it serves? Using dialectic conversations with the purpose of better understanding new teacher needs, resources, and the environments in which they must locate resources to meet such needs, the inclusion of new teacher voices in our induction program offers an opportunity to understand what new teachers are actually experiencing as they transition into APS. Within such conversations, our participants shared their experiences which formed the major themes of: 1. Meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures within district or school; 2. Locating resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction; and 3. Navigating the micropolitical environment during induction. Within the major themes discussed, subthemes emerged that offered further insight into new teacher induction and the importance of this very specific time period in a teacher's career. In the next chapter, I draw upon conclusions derived from such findings and discuss future implications for not only induction practices in school districts, but also pre-service program design for colleges and universities.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to understand how new teacher induction programs can better include the voices of the novice teachers they are intended to serve. In the previous chapter, I identified three overarching themes that emerged from the data collected through two rounds of interviews and a focus group discussion with participants. The three overarching themes were: *Meeting the role demands of highly localized processes and procedures within district or school*; *Locating resources to meet the local demands of teaching during induction*; and *Navigating micropolitics during induction*. In this chapter, I look across the emergent themes and make sense of what I have learned from the study utilizing both my research questions and my theoretical framework to drive such discussions and conclusions.

My original purpose in conducting this study was to include new teacher voices in the co-creation of induction programs that better addresses new teacher needs. During the literature review phase of this study, there appeared to be a gap in the research when it came to co-creating induction programs using new teacher voices. Instead, the new teacher voices that were reflected in the literature were perceptions of induction programs that offered what new teachers thought of their induction program; not what they would like the programs to have addressed or have looked like. Building off of the literature that included what new teachers had to say about new teacher induction practices (Anthony et al., 2011; Algozzine et al., 2017; Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2013; Ingersoll, 2001; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Petersen, 2017; Mitchell et al., 2017; Petersen, 2017; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Williams & Gillham, 2016), this work extends both practitioner and researcher knowledge of new teacher induction to include new teacher voices through third spaces created during the research process (i.e., dialectic conversations between teachers and an administrator). It is

through such third spaces created during the research process that, like Zeichner's (2010) use of third space to link practitioner knowledge and academic knowledge, and in turn the work of Klein et al. (2013) with the Newark Montclair Urban Teacher Residency (NMUTR) and pre-service teachers, school faculty, and university faculty, I sought to gain a better understanding of how new teachers in their fourth or fifth year of teaching made sense of their transition into APS. Through such understanding, the co-creation process for an induction program that includes new teacher voices may begin in my district to reshape induction practices for future new teachers. The voices of teacher coaches, who assisted new teachers during their transition into APS were also included during the research process to help make sense of novice teachers' needs from the perspective of experienced peers. Finally, the use of a micropolitical framework was applied to the data collected to help me, as an administrator, make sense of what new teachers were culturally experiencing during induction to ultimately draw the conclusions and implications that will follow in this chapter.

The findings of this study helped me, as an administrator, better understand not only new teacher needs as they exist in APS, but also how to use third spaces to allow for new teacher voices to be used in the co-creation of induction programs that help novice teachers address their needs. To draw conclusions and implications of the information contained within this chapter, I have structured this chapter to first discuss the conclusions of this work, then to discuss further implications for both practice and research on new teacher induction.

### **Conclusion**

When I began teaching, I recall my professional struggles as having existed both inside and outside of the classroom as I was not only new to the profession of teaching, but was also new to the school in which I was teaching in. Through this study I now understand that I

struggled with not only becoming a teacher in the classroom, but I also struggled to become a teacher among my new, veteran colleagues. I understand that transitioning into any new environment in any profession is bound to be difficult. However, formal new teacher induction programs that have been in existence for forty-years and are supposed to help new teachers during this transitional period. Despite such efforts, attrition rates among new teachers in the United States (teachers within their first three to five years) remain as high as 50% (Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017; Rinke, 2014). Furthermore, the highest turnover rates are found in Title I schools that traditionally serve low-income students; and 70% rates have been reported in schools serving the largest concentration of students of color (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). From an administrative standpoint, the costs associated with replacing teachers, in excess of \$20,000 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017), and perhaps the most compelling argument to address high attrition rates is that the most detrimental effect of high turnover rates in teaching are the effect on the children, especially in urban districts, where high attrition rates have been linked to lower achievement for students in classrooms that are directly affected by high teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Given such alarmingly high attrition rates that have a direct impact on student performance, the need to reexamine induction practices is essential as induction programs are not only meant to serve as a way to improve classroom performance and student achievement, but also play a vital role in determining a new teachers' commitment to teaching (Algozzine, et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Desimone & Phillips, 2013; Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Therefore, it is time that induction programs change their structure and format to include new teacher voices in the co-creation of induction programs to address not only classroom needs, but also school and district environments during induction.

The following discussions and conclusions are framed around my underlying research questions that drove this research: How do fourth/fifth-year teachers make sense of their first years of teaching?; How do teacher coaches make sense of the needs of the novice teachers they work with; How does this inform my work as an administrator?; and How can a micropolitical literacy framework help me make more sense of induction practices with coaches; new teachers; new teacher transition?

### **Making Sense of the First Years of Teaching**

This study focused on the transition of new teachers from novices to tenured teachers in a particular district and used new teacher voices to explain how new teachers made sense of this transitional period of their careers. Using the voices of new teachers and teacher coaches within a district, this study also demonstrated how new teachers not only toil with the learning one the job that takes place as they apply pre-service theory to practice, but also emphasized the importance of the school environments as teachers make sense of their transition. The understanding of this liminal stage in a teacher's career is essential for policymakers, pre-service educators, pre-service teachers, administrators, and perhaps most importantly, veteran teachers if we hope to curb high attrition rates and the effects that such high attrition rates have on our students and schools.

Through this study, I now understand that novice teachers are not blank slates; each bringing with them their prior personal and professional experiences in life and in education when they enter teaching. Furthermore, this study suggested that the individual starting points for new teachers are not just within a classroom, but also extend into novice teachers' abilities to fulfil personal and professional needs; navigate through micropolitical environments; and ultimately grow into their identified roles as teacher.



*New Teacher Voices*

New teachers, when asked, have a lot to say about their transition into a school or district. However, as new teachers struggle to find their “footing” among colleagues in their schools, new teachers may feel as if they are placed in low rank among colleagues, thus they are stripped of their voices in their school environments (Petersen, 2017, p. 2). Often, the ideals that new teachers bring with them can conflict with the realities they face as new teachers not only enter a new profession, but also a new environment (Cañón Rodríguez et al., 2017). This causes a silencing of new teacher voices in schools or districts. The silence must be disrupted. I believe that such disruptions include the very induction programs that are supposed to be designed to help new teachers transition into districts and reach their full potential as teachers. At the very essence of co-creation, if the induction programs do not include the voices of those that they are intended to serve, who are they actually serving? Perhaps this simple question is the basis of change that is needed in induction practices. The answer is simply that induction practices, when they do not include new teacher voices, are instead serving the districts, not the new teachers.

Participants in this study understood that their voices were necessary to help other new teachers transition into APS. This goes beyond just listening to what new teachers want or need. Instead, as a researcher I needed to understand what new teachers were actually experiencing during induction so that I could change induction practices for future new teachers at APS. I felt the only way to truly do this was to work within a third space during the research process to allow for the dismantling of institutional power structures, beginning with the inherent power imbalance between teachers and administrators. When you listen for the purpose of understanding, not necessarily agreement, the result is the creation of something new around a particular topic. In this case, the topic is new teacher induction.

### *New Teacher Needs*

The novice teachers in this study described their new needs as immediate/five-minute needs such as locating the restroom, or the copy room, and where to pick up the students in the morning (Arianna, First-Round Interview, 3/20/20). Such immediate needs may seem so simple to a veteran teacher, but are nonetheless unknown to a new teacher and are vital to performing their role demands properly. Perhaps it is the simplicity of such needs that makes them slip the minds of those that are supposed to be helping new teachers during their transitions. The immediate needs, as simple and easy they may seem to be, are nonetheless essential to a new teacher's survival as a professional. Therefore, they certainly need to be better understood by administrators and peers. This is also true for the long-term needs that present themselves once the quick needs are fulfilled.

As the novice teachers and teacher coaches expressed in this study, not all needs or role demands are immediate and take time to improve upon. Therefore, as immediate needs are completed, the needs may then shift to long-term needs that teachers can get better at through experience. The example of professional growth plans (PGPs) demonstrates such a need as new teachers at APS were required to complete a PGP within the first two months of a school year, but were then asked to complete a PGP annually. The need to *finish* the PGP was different from the deeper-dive into forming a good PGP. The difference between the two became the difference between an immediate need and a long-term need. Regardless of the particular need, what was explained by the participants in this study was that the answers to such needs were highly-localized (Clark, 2012) and could only be learned within localized contexts (i.e., within a workplace). However, what if that localized context knowledge is not easily and equitably accessible to all new teachers?

As the participants shared in this study, there is a lot more to fulfilling new teacher needs than just picking up a reference manual and looking them up. This leaves novice teachers in quite a predicament as they may not have access to answers that are localized needs during their pre-service, and may not have answers readily available to them during their transition into a district or school. It is within this liminal period that this study touches upon the potential differences between new teachers as not all new teachers arrive into teaching coming from the same place (i.e., pre-service programs and life experiences). What appears to be a very underdeveloped topic of discussion among educators is that not everyone has the same experiences in their pre-service programs as not all experiences that apply to teaching come from pre-service programs. Therefore, to expect that everyone will have the same questions or needs is the perfect way to ignore the individual differences that new teachers have. This was certainly the case when it came to the topic of biography in this study.

As new teachers transition into a school or district, who they are is just as important to understand as what they need. The two are intertwined and ultimately make up the transitional period into teaching. According to the participants in this study, new teachers faced phases of needs based on their individual biographies (Schempp et al., 1993). The biographies include experiences before new teachers begin teaching and are intimate and personal resources such as family support and work experience outside of education, as voiced by all of the new teacher participants in this study. Such personal biographies have an influence on the needs that new teachers may have as such personal experiences provide resources for new teacher needs. However, there also appear to be certain needs that are so highly localized that personal biographies cannot provide answers to them. For such highly localized needs, the new teachers in this study indicated that they turn to their colleagues for answers, not resource manuals or

policies. Using colleagues as resources for such vital needs creates inequities among induction experiences as controlling the information contained within a manual is easy, however understanding school environments may be difficult and confusing as no two school environments are bound to be the same.

### *New Teacher Resources*

As the new teacher participants in this study made sense of their first few years of transition, they shared that they have both immediate and long-term needs that required highly-localized information to be met. This highly-localized information was not only specific to a building or district, but was also controlled by certain individuals or groups within a school or district. It appeared that within such control of information, new teachers found themselves in search of resources to fulfil their needs. However, where the new teacher participants searched for the resources to fulfill their needs is the real impact of this study as according to the participants, regardless of the resources offered by the district, new teachers looked to their colleagues for answers to make sense of their experiences and questions.

New teachers want to interact with other new teachers and learn from their colleagues, not a book of policies and procedures. New teachers want to learn how to actually perform their role demands from those that have actually performed such. This appeared to be especially true when it came to situations that involved student safety. Novice teachers wanted to hear from veterans on how they were supposed to handle situations that involve students reporting incidents of sexual assault (Steve) or possible child abuse (Maria). New teachers want to talk about scenarios with colleagues where they can ask questions and learn the real way things are handled. New teachers want to know how to do their jobs without fear of getting reprimanded or fired (Steve). As an administrator, I certainly appreciate that new teachers want to learn about

such situations as student safety is an absolute necessity and a non-negotiable role demanded in teaching.

Where new teachers were finding their resources was an eye-opening experience for me as I had previously believed that new teachers took advantage of the many resources available through the district to locate information (i.e., new teacher resource packet, staff evaluation packet, email communications). What I learned from this experience, and again, it may not be something I necessarily agree with, is that new teachers look to their colleagues before they refer to internal resources for answers. A lot of time and resources went into the creation of such internal documents that were supposed to help new teachers. However, it appears that there was a significant oversight on behalf of the district and the administration. The oversight was where new teachers were actually going for answers to their questions. From what was shared in this study, colleagues were the major provider of information. Therefore, heavy consideration of school environments must be considered when discussing new teacher resources.

As illustrated in the findings section, the search for needed resources could cause a new teacher to be paralyzed at a particular need until that need is satisfied. Again, all new teachers come into teaching with different experiences and individual backgrounds, but similar to Maslow's (1947) hierarchy of needs, novice teachers' needs must be met in order for them to move on to the next level of needs to reach optimal performance. In this case, optimal performance refers to their focus on addressing the students' needs, not worrying about their own (First-round Interview, 3/25/20). It is within this new space of understanding that environmental factors play into new teacher learning as if an environment is not provided for new teachers to ask colleagues about processes or procedures, the new teachers may be paralyzed at a certain level of need. The responsibility then shifts from providing resource manuals to new teachers

during induction to providing an environment of resources that allows for questions to be asked, explored, and answered. That is not to say that manuals do not serve a purpose, but it is certainly to say that they cannot be the only source of information. As the literature review suggests, this may be a place for mentors and colleagues to fill in the blanks that new teachers may have (Anthony et al., 2011; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

### ***Mentors and Colleagues***

In the literature review, mentors were identified as local guides that helped new teachers fit into their environment to combat the feeling isolation (Anthony et al., 2011; Clark & Byrnes, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). The participants in this study spoke highly of their mentors and identified their mentors as internal resources for information. The importance of local context was discussed in the literature review section, and like the studies that spoke of the importance of local context during transition (Anthony et al., 2011; Algozzine et al., 2017; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2013; Petersen, 2017; Williams & Gillham, 2016) the participants in this study relied on not only their mentors to help navigate through local context, but also relied on their colleagues to avoid feelings of isolation and navigate through local contexts.

This study extends the transitional support of local guides beyond just mentors and includes the school community as resources for new teachers. The inclusion of the school community, discussed in the findings as APS's Concentric Communities of Practice, extends the responsibility of helping new teachers beyond just the individual role of the mentor during induction and calls on the colleagues of new teachers to assist during induction. This extended community of mentors and colleagues that new teachers go to while they make sense of their transition places a greater emphasis on the school environments and the pre-existing cultures that

exist within such, to better serve novice teacher development during transition. Although the teachers in this study found that mentors who were in their schools were essential as they were highly accessible (First-Round Interview, Maria, 3/20/20), the participants in this study also included colleagues as resources, which were also highly accessible due to their location. The participants in this study discussed how colleagues not only served as resources for processes and procedures, such as Alex asking colleagues into short, hallway conversations for answers, but also to make sense of the social environment that existed.

The new teachers in this study spoke highly of their mentors and colleagues. This personal connection with their colleagues and mentors played a significant role in their decisions to stay in APS as many of the new teachers had opportunities to leave for higher paying positions, but chose to stay in APS. I believe their decisions to stay were based on the personal connections they felt with individuals in their schools, including their mentors, as not all of the collegial interactions were positive.

As Maria shared during her interview, she encountered negativity from a colleague on the first day of school. The negative interaction involved Maria having set up her classroom to receive her students. This was something that Maria was proud of. When a colleague put a negative perception on the work that Maria had done to prepare for her students, Maria went to her mentor to make sense of the experience. Alex also indicated that he sought advice from colleagues within his department on collegial social interactions that he perceived as negative. Again, this extends the personal resources new teachers take advantage of while making sense of their transitions to colleagues, not just mentors. As much as mentors may play an important role during a new teacher's transition, this work extends the responsibility of helping new teachers make sense of their transition beyond just mentors and solicits the involvement of the school

community into this responsibility. This added responsibility may not be official, nor may it be wanted by the extended school community, but is it nonetheless part of the transitional experience.

### ***Identity as a Teacher***

As previously mentioned, transitioning into a school or district is not just a transition into a new profession, but also a transition into a new identity among colleagues (Koehler & Kim, 2012). The literature reviewed spoke of new teachers struggling to *fit in* among their colleagues (Anthony et al., 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Petersen, 2017; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004). It is within this context that the new teachers in this study described how they found colleagues that they trusted and counted on to help them with processes and procedures, but also to make sense of their environment. As described above with Maria, not all interactions among teachers are positive. Therefore, new teachers seek opportunities through colleagues to make sense of their negative experiences. However, if environments do not provide new teachers with such spaces for exploration, this could impact the commitments new teachers have to their profession or their school.

The new teachers in this study were at the end of their induction period and had committed to staying at APS, even if they were offered positions at other schools. According to the novice teachers, this commitment was largely due to how they felt about coming to work (Alex, Maria, and Steve). What was most surprising through the new teacher voices that were heard in this study were the simple terms of “happy” (First-Round Interview, Alex, 3/20/20); “enjoy” (First-Round Interview, Maria, 3/25/20); “comfort” (First-Round Interview, Steve, 3/19/20); and “pleasant” (First-Round Interview, Paul, 3/19/20) to describe their work environments and colleagues. Such simple, but powerful, terms shed light on the retention of



teachers as the teachers within this study demonstrated commitment to APS, an all Title I district. As the teachers in this study have committed to at least another immediate year in APS, they have essentially “beaten the odds” of Title I districts that traditionally have attrition rates as high as 70% (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Therefore, there is certainly something to be said for new teachers fitting in and seeing themselves as a part of a school or district as teachers within that school or district.

As new teachers and teacher coaches make sense of their transition, there is another party to this conversation that had to make sense of all of this. That party is me and the discussion and conclusion that follows is a testament as to how much this work changed me as an administrator and new teacher educator.

### **Shifting Identities Within a Third Space**

As an administrator in charge of induction practices, I knew very little about what new teachers needed during their transition into APS, but demanded a lot, as is often the relationship with hierarchical power structures. In order to create spaces for inquiry, the first thing that I had to do was relinquish my authority and allow for the participants to become active, equal participants in this research. From an administrative standpoint, this is a very uncomfortable space to work in as you have to prepare yourself to hear things that you may not agree with, but must push past agreement to reach understanding.

Essentially, what I believed new teachers were experiencing during their transition would be different from what they were actually experiencing. This situational understanding is something I am now proud of as if it were not for this invitation to become active participants, I would not understand the struggle new teachers experience as they enter APS to the extent I now do. However, my disorientation during this study does not compare to the struggles of new

teachers during their transition into APS. This new understanding was impactful and has changed how I perceive power structures in my profession.

The work contained within this dissertation was not easy, nor do I consider it complete. The real work lies ahead as co-creation of induction programs cannot be a situational understanding captured in a moment or experience, but must be ongoing and frequently renewed. As an administrator, I am not used to such deep, visceral discussions around a particular topic with teachers. The typical conversations tend to be quick and only touch the surface of an issue. The goal being to hear what the issue is, fix the issue, and move on to the next one. However, this work has changed me as I now have a better understanding of what new teachers in APS are going through as they transition into our district.

### **Micropolitics**

Prior research suggested that micropolitical literacy can not only help new teachers obtain much needed resources, but also involves collaboration and collegial relationships to achieve shared goals (Eilertsen, 2008; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002b). Adopting a micropolitical lens to the data collected in this study allowed me to better understand a new layer of complexity that exists with the discussion of new teacher induction. As the participants in this study indicated, there was a pre-existing social order that new teachers encountered in their schools that they had to make sense out of. Such “existing organizational norms” (Achinstein, 2006, p. 123) may not necessarily exist within the classroom, but I do believe that they have an impact on the classroom. Given the high attrition rates we are experiencing in the United States, the notion that something may exist beyond the traditional classroom needs must be entertained as the participants in this study voiced such.

As previously mentioned, new teachers bring with them their personal biographies, which include experiences and resources. However, new teachers in this study also provided insight into how new teachers obtain localized information, such as processes and procedures. The main resource for such localized information was their colleagues. Therefore, if a school environment has established organizational norms that allow and encourage new teachers to ask questions and obtain answers from colleagues, like the participants in this study suggested, then new teachers are able to transition from their various levels of needs and learn on the job. Conversely, if an environment does not allow for new teachers to grow through collegial inquiry and transition through their stages of needs, the novice teacher may be paralyzed in a particular stage of need. The difference appears to be the micropolitical environment that exists within each school. However, even within positive learning environments, what this study illustrates is that access to resources may not be equitable access for all. As individualized as new teachers are, it may be the individualized experiences and resources themselves that better prepare some new teachers for micropolitical navigation, better than others. There is no equal playing field when it comes to learning the game of micropolitics. Therefore, the better new teachers are at understanding micropolitics through personal experiences, and are given the opportunities to explore such through a supportive environment, the better new teachers are able to navigate through micropolitics.

### **Recommendations and Implications**

If schools or districts want to retain their new teachers, then they must consider new teachers' needs and their school environments when designing induction programs. New teacher induction programs need to be redesigned to realistically address new teacher needs along a learning continuum that includes immediate needs and long-term needs. To successfully do this,

districts must consider multi-year induction programs (Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999) that first listen to new teacher needs within a specific time period, and then co-create induction practices to meet such needs, allowing for spaces to discuss what new teachers were experiencing with colleagues. In order to understand new teacher needs, administrators also need to disrupt institutional authority structures and bring conversations with new teacher stakeholders to a more dialectic level where the goal is to understand, not agree. As administrators face new teacher attrition rates as high as 50%, as high as 70% in Title I schools, the call to act is best heard through new teacher voices. Administrators, like me, that are in charge of new teacher induction programs are failing to meet our new teachers' needs as we tell them what they need to know, rather than allowing them to tell us what they need to learn. This vicious cycle must stop if we have any hope of curbing attrition rates and keeping our valuable investments into our future in our schools.

New teachers are not blank slates, but they do have a lot to learn when they enter our schools. In addition to addressing the multi-year induction program, school district, administrators, and most importantly, veteran teachers, must have a better understanding of what the modern new teacher goes through during induction as perhaps time has made us forget our personal struggles and how difficult the transition into teaching was. Faced with a set of demands that are challenging for even the most veteran teachers, we must protect our most vulnerable colleagues and guide them through the many pitfalls modern education presents. To do this, new teacher induction must include all teachers and must address the environments that new teachers enter when they become teachers. The change begins with awareness. However, awareness of the environment new teachers are entering begins with pre-service programs.

Pre-service programs must discuss the realities of transition with future educators so that they understand that they may know the theories of teaching, but they have a lot to learn about the practice. Furthermore, pre-service teachers must be exposed to the realities of teaching role demands, both the immediate and long-term needs, and the micropolitical environment in which they will seek answers to such. As pre-service teachers are coming into their programs from different backgrounds and experiences, micropolitical awareness at the pre-service level needs to be addressed beyond the warnings of staying out of the teachers' lounge as sharing of such practical information may begin to level the playing field as future teachers encounter, and are able to identify, micropolitical situations.

Finally, the research implications of this work lend themselves to further research on new teacher needs and a deeper study into micropolitical environments during induction as this study was limited to a small population of new teachers within one district. Further research should be conducted on a larger scale to include how other new teachers make sense of their induction experiences and how they develop micropolitical literacy and action. Furthermore, future research is needed on new teacher induction programs that include new teachers in the co-creation of induction where new teachers are invited to participate, as equals, in their induction into a district.

In conclusion, this study was both very difficult and rewarding. The true heroes of this story are the new teachers and the teacher coaches as they were brave enough to use their voices to tell the true tale of new teacher induction. As much as this work has contributed to the topic of new teacher induction practices and the inclusion of school environments as a consideration in such, this work is not complete. Revitalization of new teacher induction practice will be an ongoing journey. However, the advice that I would lend to administrators, pre-service teachers,

teacher colleagues, and researchers is to not treat new teacher induction as employment, but similar to Plaskoff's (2017) work with holistic perceptions, treat induction and the teaching profession as a life journey, with the employee as the hero.

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## Appendix A

### 2018-2019 District Information Page



### Public School District

2018-2019

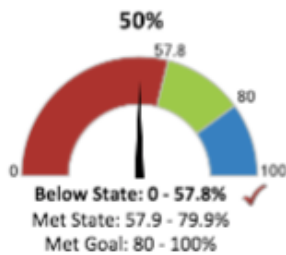
Total students: **4,495**

- Economically Disadvantaged: **52.6%**
- Students with Disabilities: **16.7%**
- English Learners: **6.1%**
- Grades offered: **PK-12**
- Student to Teacher Ratio: **13:1**
- Teacher Average Experience (years): **10.3**

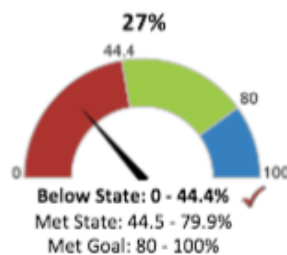
#### How did students perform on assessments?

Students that met or exceeded expectations on statewide assessments

##### English Language Arts



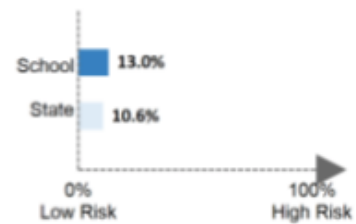
##### Math



#### Are students at risk?

Students that were absent for 10% or more of days enrolled

##### Chronic Absenteeism

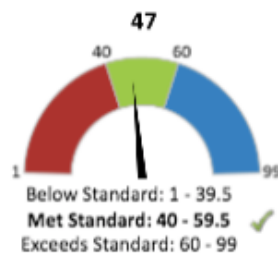


#### How does student growth compare to other students?

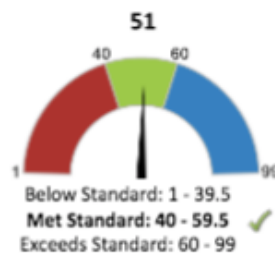
##### Median Student Growth Percentile

Each student gets a **student growth percentile** from 1 to 99 for English (4th to 8th grade) and Math (4th to 7th grade) that explains their progress compared to students who had similar test scores in the past. If the student growth percentiles for all students in the school are ordered from smallest to largest, the **median student growth percentile** is the percentile in the middle of that list.

##### English Language Arts



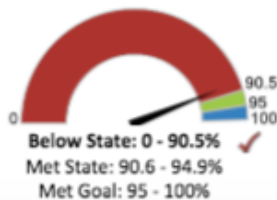
##### Math



#### Are students graduating?

4-year Graduation Rate

**88.1%**



#### Are students college and career ready?

##### AP/IB Courses:

**14.8%** of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled (State = 35.2%)

##### Dual Enrollment Courses:

**0.0%** of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled (State = 19.0%)

##### Industry-Valued Credentials:

**0.0%** of students earned (State = 0.9%)

##### College Enrollment:

**65.1%** of graduates enrolled (State = 77.8%)

## Appendix B

### Interview Protocol

#### Introduction-Script

Thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. The interview should take 60 to 90 minutes and will consist of approximately 10 questions regarding your needs as a new teacher to the district and how those needs were met. I would like your permission to electronically record this interview and to use the information you provide in my study. The intended purpose of my study is to better understand new teacher needs and to understand if and how the needs were met during your induction period into the district. Your responses are confidential and I will only use your answers to help me better understand new teacher needs and how to address such. However, it is important to mention that I am acting as both a researcher and an administrator during this interview. Therefore, if I hear anything during our interview that may warrant administrative action, I am obligated to inform you of such and may take such action. As a precautionary measure, if you do not feel comfortable discussing any such situations, please know that you do not have to. If you would rather discuss such using hypotheticals, you may do so. Having said that, please understand that your participation in this study is completely voluntary and if at any time you would like to stop or withdraw, please let me know.

At this time, I would like to ask you to read and sign the agreement. You will receive one copy and this signed agreement, and I will keep the other copy for my records.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do I have your permission to electronically record this interview?

Then, with your permission, let's begin.

## Appendix C

### Interview Questions-New Teachers

1. How many years have you been teaching in a full-time position?
2. Did you enter teaching through the traditional route of a college/university, or did you enter through an alternate route?
3. How are you finding/how did you find your transition to Auriolus?
4. Can you recall some of the needs you may have encountered as a new teacher? If helpful, you may break your needs into the years you had such needs to help you organize your thoughts. Please include any needs that may fall outside of the classroom.
5. Did you have an opportunity to address all of your needs as you experienced them?
  - a. If so, how did you address your needs? (who or what did you go to)
  - b. If not, can you now identify potential resources to meet such needs?
6. Can you give me examples of a topics that could have or should have been addressed during induction, but were not? This could include topics outside of the classroom.
7. Did you ever consider leaving Auriolus at any point during your induction period?
  - a. If so, can you explain why?
  - b. If not, can you explain why?
8. Suppose we changed our current new teacher induction program to allow for new teachers to offer input and state their needs in an effort to co-create their induction program. Do you think this is something that might be beneficial to a new teacher? Why or why not?
9. Are there any questions you can think of regarding new teacher needs that I did not ask you?



**Appendix D**

## Interview Questions-Teacher Coaches

1. How many years have you been a full-time teacher coach at Auriolus?
2. Before becoming a teacher coach, how many years were you a classroom teacher?
  - a. Were your years only at Auriolus, or have you taught in other districts?
3. Did you enter teaching through the traditional route of a college/university, or did you enter through an alternate route?
4. Part of your responsibilities as a teacher coach are to assist new teachers as they transition into Auriolus, is this correct? If so, can you recall some of the needs you may have assisted new teachers with?
5. Do any of the needs that new teachers have fall outside of classroom needs? If so, could you explain what kind of needs exist outside of the classroom for new teachers and how you assisted them with such needs?
6. Did a new teacher ever express their interest in leaving Auriolus to you? If so, what were the reasons stated for their wanting to leave?
7. Do you feel it is important to build trust with the teachers you work with during your coaching cycles?
  - a. If yes, how do you create such trusting relationships?
  - b. If no, please explain.
8. When engaged in coaching cycles, do new teachers ask you to explain what they are experiencing as they are experiencing it?
  - a. If yes, can you speak a little about this?
9. Do you feel that the induction program at Auriolus could be restructured to better address new teacher needs?
  - a. If so, how could we restructure the induction program to better meet such needs?
  - b. If not, can you explain why you feel the structure of our induction program meets such needs?
10. Are there any questions you can think of regarding new teacher needs that I did not ask you?

## Appendix E

### Focus Group Outline and Questions

**Opening comments:** I would like to welcome everyone to our focus group on new teacher needs. The purpose of this study is to locate new teacher needs during their early years of teaching so that districts may better address such needs during new teacher induction. You will be asked to reflect the information gathered during the first round of interviews and respond to such information regarding the accuracy and importance of such information. All answers will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used during transcriptions to ensure anonymity throughout future publication of this study.

**Focus Group Procedures:** As a matter of procedure, we will first ask that everyone kindly share their years of teaching as well as your current grade level or subject matter with the group. During our focus group discussions you will be asked to respond to the presented information based on your personal and professional experiences. There are no incorrect answers and your input is of great value to this study. As you respond to the presented material, please reflect on your own personal experiences as they relate to the topics. Additionally, if you feel anything should be added, has been left out, or should be left out, please bring this to the groups' attention.

**Focus Group Participants:** Allow time (five minutes) for participants to share their years of teaching and grade level or subject matter.

**Comparing Findings:** After each section of the presentation, the focus group participants will comment on the categories presented and will further discuss any needs that were omitted by the researcher, or should be omitted moving forward. Probing questions will be asked to the focus group regarding needs (i.e., is it relatable to your needs? Are you surprised to see this listed as a needs?). I will then ask the focus group about the needs that they have identified during their

reflection conversation and ask where the needs should appear, category wise, and why? This may lead to new categories or the identification of new needs.

## Appendix F

### Focus Group Slide-Summarized Categories of Discussion

## Recap on Categories and Suggestions from Group

3 Major Categories, and subcategories,  
from responses:

#### New Teacher Needs:

- Immediate/Five-Minute
- Long-Term
- Misidentified

#### New Teacher Resources:

- Mentors
- Resources-Outside of school/district
- Resources-Inside of school/district
- New Teacher Induction Program

#### Culture (environment):

- New Teacher Feelings
- The Teachers Lounge
- School Environment
- Praxis Shock
- Stay or go
- Trust