

COMMON PLANNING TIME: A TOOL FOR BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION

by

CATHERINE A. CARTER

(Under the Direction of P. Gayle Andrews)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. Study participants were teachers at Johnson City Middle School, a middle school in a small northeast Georgia town. The purpose of phase one, which was connected to the National Middle Grades Research Project on common planning time, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, was to see what interdisciplinary teams of teachers do during common planning time. Data consisted of an observation of one team meeting and an interview with the most senior member of an interdisciplinary team at each grade level (sixth, seventh, and eighth) that had one beginning teacher (in the first to third year of teaching) in the school. Phase two focused on the sixth grade team from phase one. Data consisted of observations of team and content meetings held during common planning time; and interviews with the beginning teacher, content mentor, team members, and an administrator. An inductive constant comparative method was used to analyze all data for common themes. Phase one results indicate that teachers use common planning to address student issues with interdisciplinary teams and address curriculum planning with content colleagues. Results from phase two of the study indicated that a wide variety of

teachers provided induction supports. Key induction supports included meetings with the content mentor, grade level content colleague, and interdisciplinary team; a curriculum notebook; and administrative support. Data analysis revealed that the induction supports provided had positive effects on the beginning teacher. Study participants generally believed that common planning time was a critical element in the provision of induction supports for the beginning teacher.

INDEX WORDS: Common planning time, Beginning teacher induction, Middle school, Collaborative planning, Professional development

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By

CATHERINE A. CARTER

B.S.H.E., The University of Georgia, 1985

M.S., The University of Georgia, 1986

Ed.S., Georgia Southern University, 2001

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CATHERINE A. CARTER

Major Professor: P. Gayle Andrews

Committee: K. Denise Glynn
Sally J. Zepeda

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2010

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This is the third journey I have made down the path of graduate school and research studies. I must admit, it has been, by far, the most difficult. However, nothing worth having comes without a struggle - this journey was bound to be the hardest since the prize at the end is the most desirable.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One concern of educators has always been for student achievement, whether that involves learning to read, performing complicated science experiments, or calculating mathematical problems. Since the late 1960s, national attention has focused on the gap in educational performance among groups of students. In particular, that attention has highlighted gaps between white and minority students and between middle- and upper-income students and low-income students (Viadero, 2000). More recently, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 refocused national attention on these achievement differences. Researchers who study these differences point to socioeconomic status (SES) and teacher quality as the predominant factors in student achievement (e.g., Schmoker, 2006; Singham, 2003; Williams, 2003).

It is difficult for schools to change the SES hand which they have been dealt. However, teacher quality is an area that schools can pinpoint for improvement in order to positively impact student achievement. Teacher quality takes on an added dimension of importance with projections that call for more than two million new teachers in the United States by 2010 (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Moir & Gless, 2001) due to a variety of factors, including enrollment growth, class-size reduction mandates, and retirement of a large cohort of veteran teachers. Replacing this large veteran cohort is not a simple matter of expanding teacher preparation programs, however. The problem lies in both attracting new people to the field and retaining them in the profession.

Research indicates that approximately 14% of new teachers leave teaching within the first year, while another 15% change schools (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Approximately 30% of beginning teachers leave the field within 3 years and up to 50% leave within 5 years (Ingersoll, 2002; Ingersoll & Smith; Johnson & Donaldson, 2004). Attrition of beginning teachers is especially pronounced in low-income urban and rural schools as well as in middle grades schools (Johnson & Donaldson; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll). For purposes of this review, middle grades schools are defined as those schools that primarily serve young adolescents (ages 10-15) and include grade configurations ranging from as low as grade 5 to as high as grade 9.

Studies of new teachers indicate that a supportive work environment is crucial for their retention (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Johnson, 2004; Wong, 2005). Increasingly, school systems are turning to induction programs to provide the support needed by new teachers to transition from preparation programs to effective practice. Although mentoring is often considered synonymous with induction, Wong and other researchers (Bartell, 2005; Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005; Olebe, 2005) assert that it is instead only one component of an induction program.

Effective induction programs go beyond providing emotional and procedural support to help new teachers survive. They instead offer sustained professional development in a collaborative environment that helps beginning teachers focus on content and pedagogy to support student learning (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006; Bartell, 2005; Johnson, 2004; Moir & Gless, 2001; Rutherford, 2005; Wong, 2005). Such programs provide beginning teachers with opportunities to observe successful experienced teachers, to receive constructive feedback after being observed in their own classrooms, and to problem solve around issues of student learning

in a collaborative environment (Achinstein & Athanases; Baron, 2006; Bower, 2005; Johnson; Rutherford; Wong). Effective induction programs improve job satisfaction, increase teacher retention, and raise student achievement, particularly for low-achieving students (Moir & Gless; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Villar & Strong, 2007; Wong). Perhaps more importantly, effective induction programs help beginning teachers transition more rapidly from preservice learners to experienced practitioners (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

Fitting induction activities into the school schedule is a problem that requires creativity on the part of school systems and schools. Systems such as California that focus on one-on-one mentoring for their induction activities often rely on the use of full-time release mentor teachers to do this work (Bartell, 2005; California Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) 2007; Moir & Gless, 2001). These mentors are released from their teaching duties in order to work with new teachers, providing both personal and professional support to help these new teachers better transition to the demands of teaching. Systems that cannot afford this level of investment, however, must find other ways of implementing induction activities. Some turn to university partnerships, use of administrators, the use of mentor teachers without release time, and the implementation of learning communities among many options (Baron, 2006; Serpell, 2000; Wong, 2005). A major problem in some of these other methods of implementation lies in providing time for the beginning teacher and the mentor to meet together during the school day. Many researchers recommend a common planning time for the beginning teacher and the mentor to facilitate this work (e.g., Hassell, 1999; Johnson, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In many schools, however, scheduling constraints preclude such an arrangement, limiting the work they do together to taking place before or after school.

One school structure, however, emphasizes the provision of common planning time for teachers to work together – the middle school (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development [CCAD], 1989; Erb & Doda, 1989; Jackson & Davis, 2000; Wraga, 1997). Research on the use of this feature in the provision of induction activities at the middle grades level, however, is relatively nonexistent. The purpose of this study is to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia uses the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. One primary research question guides this study, with several related sub-questions.

Research Question and Sub-Questions

What happens during common planning time in relation to the induction of beginning teachers?

- a. What happens during common planning time?
- b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purpose, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?
- c. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?
- d. What are the effects of the induction supports on beginning teachers?
- e. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?
- f. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

- g. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is found in its focus on the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support for middle grades teachers. This level has been identified by researchers as having the greatest rates of attrition among beginning teachers (Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Little research, however, has been done on induction for middle grades teachers, much less on how the structural features associated with middle grades schools can be utilized to provide support for induction.

Research has focused on teacher turnover as a contributing factor to the teacher shortage (e.g., Ingersoll, 2001; Provasnik & Dorfman, 2005). Current estimates of the average teacher turnover rate range from approximately 13% (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004) to 17% (Provasnik, & Dorfman, 2005). Closer examination of the data reveals, however, teacher turnover among teachers with less than 5 years experience is approximately 29%, more than double the average turnover rate (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

Murphy, DeArmand, and Guinn (2003) argue that the teacher shortage is a problem in terms of distribution rather than the actual numbers of teachers. Their analysis indicates that teachers are distributed unevenly across location, social class, and to some extent, subject matter. Ingersoll and Smith (2004) also found that school type is a factor in teacher attrition, with middle school teachers twice as likely to leave after the first year of teaching as new elementary teachers and 50% more likely to leave than new high school teachers.

Teacher turnover is costly for schools. Curran and Goldrick (2002) estimate the cost of replacing a teacher as approximately 25-35% of the teacher's annual salary plus benefits, a figure which doesn't account for the hidden costs of rehiring. Fulton, Yoon, and Lee (2005) indicate that the hidden costs (e.g., recruitment, personnel, lost productivity) drive the cost of replacing an employee up to 2.5 times the employee's annual salary. The Alliance for Excellent Education (2005) estimates a national cost of \$2.2 billion a year to replace teachers who leave the field, an estimate that rises to \$4.9 billion when teacher migration, or changing schools, is included. This cost does not reflect the organizational costs (Breux & Wong, 2003; Ingersoll, 2001) when administrators constantly have to focus on hiring new teachers, nor student costs when students face a succession of new teachers in light of evidence that links teacher experience to improved achievement (Breux & Wong; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004; Ross, Stringfield, Sanders, & Wright, 2003).

Teacher quality, a complex variable, is often considered the most important school-related factor influencing student academic achievement (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1997). Some easily measured indicators of teacher quality include years of experience, type of teaching preparation, amount of subject knowledge, and level of certification (Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Young, 2002; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002). However, according to Rivkin et al. (2005) and Wenglinsky (2002), teacher quality also includes application of teaching knowledge, dispositions, and strategies. An accurate, fine-grained measure of that application must go beyond the easily observable characteristics listed above. However, the effects of teachers' application - their praxis, defined as the intersection of theory and practice - are visible in student achievement scores, and the levels of their praxis can be developed with

support and professional development from the earliest days of teaching (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004; Thompson, Paek, Goe, & Ponte, 2005).

Researchers have found that years of experience are positively correlated with student achievement scores. Rockoff (2004) reported that teacher effects, defined as years of experience and teacher quality, were significant predictors of test scores in all achievement areas. Experience alone was a significant predictor for scores in reading for the first ten years of experience and in math computation for the first two years of experience before leveling off for both. Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin (2005) also found that certification, advanced degrees, and experience explained little of the achievement differences for students beyond the first three years of teaching experience.

Findings by Rivkin et al. (2005) found achievement differences related to large differences in teacher quality at the primary level. Differences in teacher quality led to slight differences in math achievement, though not in reading achievement, at the middle level (grades 6-7), although this finding may not truly demonstrate these differences due to sampling limitations. Quality differences between new and experienced teachers due to years of experience, however, explained 10% of the variance in students' math scores and 5-20% of the variance in reading scores. These differences virtually disappeared after three years of experience. Perhaps more importantly, a standard deviation increase in teacher quality produced more benefit than a class size reduction of 10 students, particularly through grade 6.

Teacher quality among middle grades teachers was highlighted in recent research by Neild, Balfanz, and Herzog (2007), which indicates that a large number of high school dropouts "send out distress signals in the middle grades, long before they actually drop out of school" (p. 29). Their research indicates predictive factors that 75% of high school drop-outs display as early

as sixth grade. It seems likely that if these middle grades students face a revolving door of beginning teachers who have not yet developed a repertoire of knowledge and strategies, the distress signals will not be received, and the needed interventions may not occur to prevent them from eventually dropping out of school. Thus, developing and retaining high quality middle grades teachers appears to be invaluable to the efforts to raise high school graduation rates, a factor hindered by the greater attrition of middle school teachers after the first year of teaching.

The significance of this study, then, is found in its focus on induction support at the middle school level. Beginning teacher attrition at this level is higher than that of elementary and high school teachers. Providing an array of effective induction supports eases the transition from preparation to practice by meeting both the personal and professional needs of beginning teachers. The result is not only improved retention rates of beginning teachers, but also improved teacher quality as beginning teachers collaborate with each other and more experienced colleagues on issues of content and pedagogy. Perhaps more importantly, the result could be an end to the revolving door of inexperienced teachers moving in and out of middle grades schools so that struggling students receive the help they need to improve their chances of eventually graduating from high school.

Theoretical Framework

Induction programs have been widely used across the United States for more than 30 years to socialize new teachers into the workplace as well as to improve teacher quality, teacher retention, and student learning (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Feiman, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). While there is an intuitive logic (Thompson et al., 2005) to this provision of support for new teachers, very few specific theories have been applied to the work.

In general, the epistemology of constructivism forms the theoretical foundation for induction programs. Constructivism asserts that individuals make meaning of the world around them by interacting with and interpreting the objects, experiences, and individuals around them rather than passively accepting the meanings defined by others (Patton, 2002). Truth, then, is a constructed meaning, rather than an objective reality; facts have meaning only within a value framework that can vary among individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Reflection on past experiences is a part of the meaning-making of new experiences. The reflective process allows one to reinterpret old experiences in light of new ones. Thus, meaning can change as new experiences occur or in light of new information, ideas, or contexts (Crotty, 1998; Mezirow, 1991).

Social constructivism emphasizes how meanings and understandings develop from social interactions with others. According to Jaramillo (1996), constructivists look at how students learn by “focusing on how each individual constructs knowledge in a social setting” (p. 136). In order to understand how an individual constructs meaning, one must also consider the “external social world” in which the individual operates, where “social” refers to the “rules and norms of society that teachers and more competent peers teach their younger initiates” (Jaramillo, p. 136).

Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains how learning is constructed from a social constructivist perspective. Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level and the potential level, as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Atherton (2005) points out that “proximal” simply means “next,” as in the next level of competency for a learner. The learner constructs knowledge through participating in experiential activities, guided by a teacher or more competent peer who is just above the learner’s current

level of competence. As a learner, with assistance, continues to develop new knowledge, he or she progresses from learning collaboratively to learning independently to teaching others (Jaramillo, 1996; Sanders & Welk, 2005).

Communication, then, is a key tool in the construction of knowledge. By engaging in dialogue with teachers and peers, learners develop new meanings of the world around them. This process of engagement with others leads learners to refine both their thinking about and their performance of the new concept at hand (Atherton, 2005). As they refine their understanding of the concept, they move to a new level, or zone, of competency where they are ready to once again begin the process of making new meaning and learning new skills. While this knowledge is constructed through social interactions with others, constructivism “suggests that each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). Thus, learners can also make contributions to the understandings held by the teacher and more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Constructivism and ZPD can be applied to the induction of new teachers. Each new teacher begins with a unique style of teaching that reflects his or her prior personal beliefs and experiences. As these beginning teachers experience the professional development, mentoring support, and collaboration opportunities provided in a comprehensive induction program, they develop new skills and confidence that empower them to make better decisions about teaching practices to improve student learning in their classrooms (Baron, 2006; Fletcher & Barrett, 2004). Guided learning experiences facilitated by an experienced mentor enable beginning teachers to develop a sense of mastery about their teaching as they develop new skill and knowledge levels. They also develop a sense of belonging in their school community as they are inculcated into the social values and beliefs of the school culture (Jaramillo, 1996). As they

continue to develop into professional educators with the support of more capable colleagues, they often develop classroom practices that are as effective as mid-career (3-12 years experience) teachers who received little or no induction support (Villar & Strong, 2007) or veterans of 10 or more years who had little or no induction support (Fletcher & Barrett, 2004).

Such a comprehensive induction process obviously requires an extended amount of time, typically two to three years (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a), to fully experience. Teachers who do not receive any induction support seem likely to remain in their existing competency levels as they are mostly isolated from colleagues who might assist them. Without this assistance, they tend to rely on the lessons learned about teaching during their “accidental observation” (Lortie, 1975) as students themselves. While they may develop skills through trial-and-error that help them survive in the classroom, they do not typically develop into expert teachers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). Teachers who receive one year or less of induction support may move from this beginning level of competency, developing some level of mastery, but they do not tend to reach their full potential as teachers (Breux & Wong, 2003).

Thus, the theoretical perspectives of social constructivism and Vygotsky’s ZPD theory shaped this study. I investigated the kinds of induction support provided to beginning teachers, and who provided those supports. I observed how the use of common planning time facilitated these social interactions so that beginning teachers interacted with a variety of more experienced peers. I also investigated the effects of these interactions with others on beginning teachers. Interviews and observations focused on both the new competencies developed as well as the processes by which they were developed.

Definition of Terms

The following are key terms used in this study. Since they may be defined in different ways in the literature, definitions for their use in this study are provided below.

- *Beginning teacher* is a term used for both preservice teachers and those employed for the first years (typically one to three) in the profession (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a). This study focuses strictly on teachers in the first few years of their professional experience.
- *Induction program* refers to an organized provision of support for beginning teachers. While these supports are typically offered for at least the first year of experience, many programs extend this support for up to the first three years of teaching experience (Moir, 2003; Wong, 2005). Many programs also offer support for experienced teachers who are new to a school. This study, however, focuses on induction support offered to beginning teachers only.
- *Middle-grades school*, or *middle school* as it is commonly called, refers to schools for older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents, those aged 10 to 15 (Alexander, 1984). Effective middle schools focus on providing a developmentally appropriate, academically excellent, and socially equitable education for this age group (National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, 1998). Common grade configurations for such schools include 6-8 and 5-8 (CCAD, 1989).
- *Common planning time* is defined in the Middle School Program Criteria by the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) as “planning for instruction, student needs, and modifications of student groupings or schedules during the students’ instructional day by academic [interdisciplinary] teams for a common group of students. Such

planning may include parent conferences and professional development” (Georgia Department of Education, 2004). This definition allows for meetings with interdisciplinary teams as well as professional development such as induction and content planning. The focus of this study is on the induction support delivered through common planning time.

- *Interdisciplinary team* refers to an organizational pattern where two or more teachers— representing different academic curriculum areas such as science, mathematics, language arts, and social studies—work together (Kellough & Kellough, 2008). Teachers from specialty areas like physical education, art, and special education may be included on these teams. “The team shares the same students, schedule, areas of the school, and the opportunity for teaching more than one subject” (Mertens, Roney, Anfara, & Caskey, 2007, p. 5). The teams in this study are interdisciplinary teams.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act* have caused schools to focus on teacher quality as a way to improve student achievement. Indeed, research on student achievement reveals that teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student academic achievement (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2000; Hanushek et al., 2005; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002; Rivkin et al., 2005; Wenglinsky, 2002). Professional development, mandated by all states as a requirement for certification or licensure renewal for teachers (Hill, 2007; Pritchard & Marshall, 2002) is an important component of improving teacher quality. Hassel (1999) defines professional development as the process of improving the knowledge and skills of teachers in order to improve student learning. Feiman-Nemser (2001a) proposes that improving teacher quality be seen as a process, or continuum, that encompasses a teacher's entire career. Induction is an important part of this continuum, serving as the bridge between preservice preparation and on-going professional development.

For students, the middle-level years of 10 to 15 are a critical period of transition. In fact, the CCAD (1989) asserts that these years are a time at which many young adolescents stand at the intersection of two roads: one leading to a bright, productive future while the other leads to declining academic achievement that could eventually result in dropping out of high school. Recent research by Neild, Balfanz, and Herzog (2007) echo the importance of the middle-level years for the academic achievement of young adolescents. Their study of high school drop-outs revealed that approximately 75% of them demonstrated signs of academic distress as early as

sixth grade through factors such as course failures, absentee rates, and discipline problems. High-quality teachers at the middle-level are critical if students are to improve their academic achievement to the fullest extent possible.

It is this concern for developing high-quality teachers at the middle-level that led to this study. The purpose of this study was to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. One primary research question guided this study: What happens during common planning time in relation to the induction of beginning teachers? Related subquestions included the following:

- a. What happens during common planning time?
- b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purpose, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?
- c. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?
- d. What are the effects of the induction supports on beginning teachers?
- e. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?
- f. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?
- g. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

The review of literature that follows focuses on areas related to the study. It begins by examining the characteristics and prevalence of effective professional development for teachers. Next, effective induction for beginning teachers is examined to see how this form of professional development contributes to both retaining beginning teachers and improving the quality of their teaching. The development of middle-level schools is then discussed, with a focus on how this structure meets the needs of teachers. Finally, the current requirements for middle-level schools in the state of Georgia are presented to set the context for this study. Gaps in the literature are identified in order to demonstrate how this study will contribute to the literature base in the related areas.

Professional Development

Pritchard and Marshall (2002) present two views of professional development for teachers. Their study of 18 school districts in 11 states links these views of professional development to the overall “health” of the district – the quality of the school and district climate for both teachers and students, the degree of commitment from faculty and staff to growth and change, as well as how well the district manages its operations. One view features a collection of activities in response to either surveys of teacher need or the demands of outside forces such as school improvement initiatives or accreditation requirements. According to this perspective, professional development is seen “as a way to improve operations, to broadly introduce new directives, or to remediate teachers or ‘fix’ isolated problems” (p. 115). This perspective was found in districts that rated “unhealthy” on an organizational health scale. Professional development in such districts relied on “one-shot” approaches to popular topics, was driven by state mandates rather than district vision, and relied on voluntary participation.

Pritchard and Marshall's (2002) second view of professional development sees it as "a process of continuous improvement for everyone in the district" (p. 115), much as other researchers have advocated a career-long continuum of teacher development (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; McRobbie, 2000; Moreno, 2007). This view reiterates Senge's (1994) assertion that organizations must learn how to learn and encourage new ways of thinking in order to expand their capacity to reach desired goals. Districts that ranked as "healthy" in organizational health approached professional development from this perspective. Professional development in such districts focused on a district-wide shared vision for student learning and addressed curriculum and instructional in an integrated manner to achieve continuous improvement of teaching. These activities were primarily carried out during working hours so that all teachers could participate. Implementation was flexible in order to meet the needs of the individual schools, which served to ensure that the improvement efforts were actually carried out in teachers' classrooms.

Grodsky and Gamoran (2003) examined the role of professional development participation in the development of a sense of professional community within a school. They suggest that such activities develop not only the human capital of the participating teachers, but also the social capital of the entire school organization. Thus, teachers benefit from not only their own participation in professional development activities, but they also benefit from the participation of their colleagues. These results only come about when the professional development activities are reflective, requiring teachers to communicate openly with each other about instructional issues. The authors examined data from approximately 50,000 teachers in the 1993-1994 SASS. Results indicated that professional development opportunities sponsored by the school make a modest, but positive contribution to a teacher's sense of professional community.

Lauer (2001) studied the professional development experiences of K-5 teachers from 10 schools in a Midwestern district with large numbers of impoverished students to determine differences between the experiences of high-performing, high-needs schools (HPHN) and those of lower-achieving schools. The HPHN teachers were more likely to have professional development experiences that addressed content standards, deepened the teachers' content knowledge, addressed diverse learners, featured classroom application, and modeled teaching strategies than were teachers in the moderate- or low-achieving schools. Although teachers in the low-achieving schools reported a higher frequency of collaboration than the moderate- and high-achieving teachers, the high-achieving teachers reported higher perceived improvement in their teaching due to collaboration than did the other groups. Thus, to improve achievement for high-needs students, their teachers need professional development that focuses on deepening both content and pedagogical knowledge.

Elfers, Boatright, and Knapp (2004) surveyed teachers in Washington during the 2003-2004 school year to examine both the types of professional development received over the previous 18 months and teachers' perceptions of the value of this learning. The majority of teachers had participated in three or more different types of professional learning during this time period. Professional development activities were usually tied to district or state reform efforts. Teachers consistently reported workshops and conferences as the least useful learning opportunities, while regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers was reported as the most useful. Although a majority (80%) of all teachers reported experiencing these regular opportunities for collaboration, elementary and middle school teachers were more likely to participate in collaborative activities than high school teachers. Teachers with less than five years experience were more likely to report finding their professional development experiences useful

than were their more experienced colleagues. Inexperienced teachers (less than 5 years experience) also had greater access to mentors than did more experienced teachers. Two-thirds of teachers with four or fewer years reported working with a mentor during the first two years of their career compared to 20% of teachers with more than 15 years experience. However, one-third of novice teachers reported no mentor support during the first two years of teaching. Of those who did work with a mentor, 42% reported that the experience was helpful. Finally, 70% of all teachers reported that professional development experiences were not built into the weekly school schedule, although 40% reported having at least one hour a week of common planning time on a regular basis.

The view of professional development as a process of continuous improvement for all teachers fits both the needs of the current standards-based reform movement as well as the best practices recommended by researchers. Standards-based reform represents the most recent wave of educational reform in the United States. This reform effort, which features high standards for student learning, curriculum frameworks to guide instruction, and new assessments aligned to the standards, depends on both the content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers to help students meet these challenging standards (Darling-Hammond, 1999; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF], 1996).

Teaching for standards requires that teachers have both a deep understanding of their content area as well as an understanding of how diverse students will best learn that content (Darling-Hammond, 1999; McRobbie, 2000). This deep understanding of both content and pedagogy will only come about when professional development activities focus on curriculum issues over an extended period of time. Cohen and Hill (2000) examined the influences of assessment, curriculum, and professional development on teacher practice and student

achievement in California when new math standards were implemented in the mid-1990s. They found that both the content of the professional development activity and the duration of the activity made a difference in teacher practice. When the activity focused on both content and pedagogical aspects of the new student curriculum, teacher practice changed to include more reform-oriented practices (i.e., standards-based practices such as group problem-solving, exploring different ways to understand a concept, etc.). When the activity was not tied to the curriculum, no change in teacher practice was found. Duration of the professional development activity was also important. Most teachers spent minimal time – 8 hours or less – in professional development activities over the preceding 12 months. Only 5% of the teachers surveyed spent more than one week in professional development activities. The greater amount of time spent in the curriculum-focused activities, however, the more change teachers reported in their teaching practices. Perhaps most importantly, schools where more teachers reported more reform-oriented practices produced higher average student scores on the state assessment.

Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001) examined the relationship between features of professional development, as identified in the literature, and self-reported changes in teachers' knowledge and skills and classroom teaching practices. They used data collected from a national evaluation of the Eisenhower Professional Development Program, a federal program that provides professional development for teachers, mainly in math and science. Their findings confirmed the best practice assumptions in the literature. Time is an important factor, with sustained and intensive professional development having a greater impact on practice than shorter-term activities. Also, professional development that focuses on academic subject matter provides opportunities for active learning, and takes place during working hours is more likely to be perceived as enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers. Teachers who perceived that

their knowledge and skills had been enhanced by a professional development activity were more likely to report a change in their teaching practices. According to these findings, the type of activity (i.e., reform or traditional) had the same effects when they were of the same length, indicating that the duration of the professional learning activity is more important than its format.

Unfortunately, many teachers do not have the content and pedagogical knowledge required to teach a standards-based curriculum. This lack of preparedness to teach to high standards is particularly evident at the middle-level grades. Many teachers at this level have either elementary or secondary certification, lacking the specialized preparation necessary to meet the developmental needs of young adolescents (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Killion, 1999). Teaching out of field is also a common occurrence among middle-level teachers, particularly in the areas of math, science, and social studies (Jackson & Davis). Lewis et al. (1999) examined the results of the 1998 Fast Response Survey System to develop a profile of teacher quality of the nation's teachers. While 93% of all public school teachers were fully certified for the area in which they taught, only 64% of new teachers (3 years or less of experience) held full certification.

For those who do have in-field certification, their content preparation may not be adequate for the deep levels of understanding required to teach to high standards (Killion, 1999). Lewis et al. (1999) found that only 66% of middle school teachers had either an academic major or minor in either an academic field or subject area education. Approximately 28% had a general education major. Furthermore, some states such as Georgia, add certification in a field based on passing a standardized content-area assessment (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2008); such a route does not provide either the content or pedagogical knowledge needed to effectively teach these subjects.

Effective professional development is essential for providing teachers with training beyond their initial preparation in both content and pedagogical knowledge (Jackson & Davis, 2000; Kent, 2004; Moreno, 2007; Zepeda, 2008). The reality, however, is that most teachers do not participate in sustained professional development activities with a content focus; this is especially true for those who need the most help, namely those with weak content knowledge and new teachers. Desimone, Smith, and Ueno (2006) examined surveys of eighth grade math teachers from the 2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) to determine if professional development in math was serving teachers with weak content knowledge or those who already had strong content knowledge. They found that teachers with strong content knowledge (as determined by type of degree and self-reports of knowledge and preparedness to teach specific topics) were more likely to participate in sustained, content-focused professional development than were teachers with weak content knowledge. More than half of the teachers surveyed participated in sustained (16 plus hours) content-focused professional development activities. Having academic credentials in mathematics and feeling prepared to teach specific math subjects both increased the probability that a teacher would participate in such activities. The professional development activities measured in the survey were the most common forms of professional development (i.e., workshops, seminars, college courses) rather than job-embedded activities. The researchers speculated that teachers with weak content knowledge may have found the strong content focus intimidating and thus avoided such activities. They suggested scaffolding content-focused professional development activities to target varying levels of content knowledge. They further suggested that administrators take a more active role in determining the professional needs of their staff rather than allowing teachers to self-select activities of interest.

Scotchmer, McGrath, and Coder (2005) examined data from the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) to determine the prevalent characteristics of professional development activities. Overall, approximately 73% of all teachers had participated in activities that focused on methods while 59% participated in activities that focused on content. Elementary teachers were more likely to participate in content-focused activities (69%) than were teachers whose main assignment was in an academic content area. Teachers with three or fewer years of experience were the least likely to participate in content-focused activities. The majority of all teachers had participated in 8 hours or less of professional development during the previous 12 months, regardless of the focus of the activity. Only 18% of teachers participated at the most sustained levels (at least 33 hours) of content-focused activities while only 10% participated in methods-focused activities at the most sustained levels. Teachers with 4 to 19 years of experience were more likely to participate in these more sustained activities than were teachers with fewer than 3 years of experience. Finally, 74% of all teachers participated in regularly scheduled collaboration with other teachers on issues of instruction. However, new teachers (fewer than 3 years of experience) were less likely to report participating in such collaborative activities than their more experienced colleagues while elementary teachers were more likely to participate in this type of collaboration than were secondary teachers.

Parsad, Lewis, and Farris (2001) examined data from the 2000 Fast Response Survey System to determine the focus and duration of professional development activities in which public school teachers of all levels were most likely to participate. Teachers were most likely to participate in activities focused on curriculum and performance standards (80%), integration of educational technology (74%), in-depth content study (72%), implementing new teaching methods (72%), and student performance assessments (62%). Experienced teachers were less

likely than new teachers (3 or fewer years of experience) to participate in staff development on classroom management, new methods of teaching, and content study. This is the opposite of the findings of Scotchmer, McGrath, and Coder (2005).

Collaborative activities that involve joint work with other teachers have also been identified as an important part of professional development activities. Parsard, Lewis, and Farris (2001) found that frequency with which teachers participated in collaborative activities was related to the extent to which they felt their participation improved their classroom teaching. The collaborative activities in which teachers in this study were most frequently involved included collaboration with other teachers (69%), networking with teachers outside of the school (62%), and common planning time for team teachers (53%).

The number of hours spent in these professional development activities was related to the extent that teachers believed participation would improve their teaching (Parsad, Lewis, & Farris, 2001). The majority of these activities consisted of the equivalent of one day or less of training; only activities that featured in-depth study in a content area were likely to report more than 8 hours of training. Teachers who participated in more than 8 hours of training (33%) were more likely to report improved teaching practices than those who had less than 8 hours of training (11%). These low percentages may indicate that many teachers do not think their typical professional development offerings will improve their teaching.

Although a majority of teachers participate in some form of professional development that focuses on enhancing content and pedagogical knowledge, the accountability demands of high-stakes testing are an influence on how that new knowledge transfers into the classroom. Boardman and Woodruff (2004) interviewed 20 elementary teachers from a large urban district in Texas that placed great emphasis on statewide assessments. These teachers participated in

professional development to learn a new reading strategy to improve reading comprehension. They found that the teachers were more likely to use the research-based strategy, both during the study period and afterwards, if they thought it helped prepare their students for the state's standardized test. Thus, high-stakes assessments influence the transfer of professional development into the classroom and affect the extent to which even high-quality professional development activities result in changed teaching practices.

In 1999, the National Staff Development Council released a report authored by Dennis Sparks and Stephanie Hirsh titled *A National Plan for Improving Professional Development* (Sparks & Hirsh, 1999). This report called for an organized national plan for staff development that would provide teachers with both the knowledge and pedagogy to teach all students to high standards. One of their primary suggestions was that schools increase the amount of time teachers have to collaborate on issues of student learning to 25% of their work day. Suggestions for providing this time include utilizing block scheduling, reducing the non-instructional duties of teachers, providing release time for mentoring new and less successful teachers, and providing common planning time for departmental and interdisciplinary teams. They summarized the characteristics of effective professional development as

- Results-driven and job-embedded,
- Focused on helping teachers become deeply immersed in subject matter and teaching methods,
- Curriculum-centered and standards-based,
- Sustained, rigorous, and cumulative, and
- Directly linked to what teachers do in their classrooms (p. 5).

The usual professional development offerings of one-day workshops or conference attendance in which most teachers participate will not provide the needed support. To effect change in a teacher's practice, professional development must be job-embedded and sustained over time so that teachers have an opportunity to implement a new strategy, discuss the results with colleagues, modify the results and try again (Zepeda, 2008). Time to engage in professional learning activities and pressure from high-stakes testing are key barriers to implementing effective professional development.

Hassell (1999) authored a guide to help schools and districts "implement strong, sustainable professional development" that would meet student learning goals. The guide is based on a review of schools winning recognition in the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. Criteria for selection in this program was based on the content of the professional development, the process used to create and implement it, and staff and student learning results that were achieved as a result of the professional development activities. Suggestions are offered for ways that time for professional development can be provided, including adding time to the teacher workday, lengthening the school day in order to "bank" time for early-release days, and making teacher planning a learning activity so that common planning time with small groups can be utilized. These suggestions concur with those offered by Rice (2000), who authored a report by the Finance Project that presents a cost framework for financing professional development for teachers. Since asking teachers to voluntarily sacrifice their off-duty hours for professional development activities will not work for an extended period of time, utilizing common planning time with various small groups (i.e., team, grade-level, content area) may be the most feasible option for many schools.

In summary, all teachers need continual exposure to structured opportunities that help them learn about teaching in order to continually improve their practice. To make a difference in classroom teaching practices, these opportunities should give teachers the opportunity to collaborate with each other on both content and pedagogical issues over an extended period of time. New teachers (3 or fewer years of experience) seem to be the least likely to participate in professional development activities that focus on content and pedagogical issues; they are, however, those most in need of the help. In order to provide these professional development opportunities, schools must be creative in carving out the time for such collaboration.

Induction

While these kinds of content-specific professional development are recommended for all teachers, most districts in the United States also offer beginning teachers a specialized form of professional development known as induction (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). No consistent definition of induction appears in the literature. In fact, Serpell (2000) concludes that any definition given is rooted in the program components and is therefore, merely descriptive as opposed to defining. Researchers tend to agree, however, that successful induction programs provide organized support and professional development, specifically tailored to the needs of beginning teachers, to ease their transition from teacher preparation to full-time practice (Breux & Wong, 2003; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Olebe, 2005; Wong, 2005).

Historical Overview

Views on induction in the United States have changed over the years. Serpell (2000) provides a historical overview of induction, beginning with its first mention in the education literature in the 1960s. Historically, induction was seen as support for beginning teachers needed to compensate for the inadequacies of teacher preparation programs. These supports were viewed

as providing a linear socialization process to help new teachers adapt to the “real” job of teaching. During the 1970s and particularly in the 1980s, school reform efforts brought induction into focus as a way to develop effective teaching. Budget woes during the 1990s reduced the focus on these programs until the move to standards-based reform and accountability, sparked by NCLB in 2001, revived interest in induction as a way to improve teacher quality.

Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, and Yusko (1999) reviewed the history of induction in the United States, looking at how induction has been understood. They found three basic ways induction has been framed: 1) a phase/stage in teacher development, 2) a time of transition, and 3) a program for beginning teachers. Each of these frames has implications for the structure of induction programs. The phase or stage frame focuses on the first year of teaching as a time of intense learning and anxiety; the emphasis of induction programs is on the concerns and self-defined problems of teachers that promote learning to teach well. A recent alternative to this frame is the view of induction as a place on the continuum of teacher learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2001a), but the focus is still on understanding the needs of this phase, or place, in order to learn to teach. The transition frame focuses on the socialization of new teachers into the occupational setting or professional community. Finally, the frame of induction as a program suggests a formal and deliberate approach to teacher learning. Induction programs in the United States vary widely, not only among states, but also both among and within districts, a fact that makes defining induction rather difficult, but it does allow each program to be tailored to the unique needs not only of each school, but also of each group of new teachers.

A third extensive review of literature is provided by Wang and Odell (2002), who examined the implications of recent standards-based reforms on induction practices, particularly mentoring. Many states have begun to link induction to teaching standards, either adopting or

adapting national models of what teachers should do to improve student learning. As a part of these standards-based reforms, many states are linking teacher certification to the completion of induction programs that focus on these teaching standards.

Finally, Woods and Stanulis (2009) review the literature on quality induction programs from 1997 through 2006. They identify these programs as “a comprehensive, organized, system of integrated novice teacher assistance and assessment using multiple strategies...wide array of educative mentoring, professional development, and formative assessment activities” (p. 2). They cite three frameworks that influence the design of induction programs: a transitional phase in teacher development, a socialization process, and a comprehensive multi-year system of intensive support. In their view, all three are needed to provide quality induction support to beginning teachers. Such induction programs go beyond an emphasis on teacher well-being and retention to emphasize teacher quality, development of teacher practices for diverse learners, and improved student achievement through improved teacher performance. The most common components of these quality induction programs include the following:

- Educative mentors’ preparation and mentoring of beginning teachers
- Reflective inquiry of teaching practices
- Systematic and structured observations of beginning teachers
- Developmentally appropriate professional development
- Formative teacher assessment
- Administrative involvement in induction

Common program models include full-release, partial-release, and no-release of mentor teachers, although the assertion is made that in quality induction programs, mentor meetings are not in addition to full-time teaching responsibilities for the support provider. The need for

schools to choose the model that best suits both their needs and available resources is stressed. Further, the induction supports provided to beginning teachers should focus on issues of student learning and be job-embedded in ways that encourage beginning teachers to collaborate with other beginning teachers as well as more experienced peers.

Need for Induction

Veenman's (1984) classic review of literature on the perceived problems of beginning teachers shows reveals why beginning teachers need the support provided through an induction program. He defined the "reality shock" that beginning teachers (in the first 3 years of teaching) experience as the loss of their ideals about teaching that disappear when confronted with the realities of accepting the responsibilities of "real" teaching; this loss of ideals is often fairly traumatic, no matter how well-prepared the new teacher is. He summarized the perceived problems that new teachers experience as classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing student work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient or inadequate teaching materials and supplies, and dealing with the problems of individual students. He reported that principal's perceptions of the problems experienced by beginning teachers closely mirrored the teachers' perceptions.

Johnson (2004) and Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, and Peske (2002) report similar problems experienced by a group of 50 beginning teachers in Massachusetts over a three-year period. The vast majority of these teachers reported some level of problems with classroom management, inadequate materials and supplies, lack of guidance with curriculum and assessment, and difficult or nonexistent interactions with colleagues and administrators.

Eberhard, Reinhardt-Mondragon, and Stottlemeyer (2000) found that beginning teachers (3 years or less of experience) in 25 south Texas school districts also had problems similar to

those found by Veenman. These new teachers reported problems with student behavior, administrative recognition and support, non-instructional duties, salary, teaching assignment, and class size. Opportunities to observe model teachers and working with effective mentors were induction supports deemed most helpful by these new teachers, particularly when the support extended into the second and third year of teaching.

Participation

Smith and Ingersoll (2004) report that induction participation by teachers in public schools has become widespread across the United States, rising from 40% in 1990 to 80% in 2000. Their findings from studies of several years of School and Staffing Surveys indicate that beginning teachers tend to receive a variety of induction experiences rather than just one. Serpell's review (2000) indicates that induction programs have generally been provided only to fully certified teachers; including the nationally renowned California program (Bartell, 2005). The result is that those teachers most in need of assistance – alternatively certified and under-certified – have not been given induction support (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Bartell; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002). As worries about a teacher shortage have opened new pathways to teacher preparation and accountability measures have been put in place to ensure that qualified teachers are in classrooms, many states have mandated that induction programs include all new teachers (American Federation of Teachers; Bartell), although Curran and Goldrick (2002) point out that implementation of these mandates is left up to the districts, reflecting the lack of funding provided for these programs.

Mentoring

The work of induction has engendered a separate discourse on mentoring because of the different ways mentoring is implemented. The mentoring relationship was portrayed as a

“buddy” relationship in the early implementation of induction, with the experienced teacher viewed as providing emotional and procedural support for the novice (Serpell, 2000) Reform efforts during and after the 1980s resulted in a shift to a pedagogical focus for mentoring (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Serpell & Bozeman, 1999). Moir (2003) emphasized the use of full-time release mentors to fulfill this coaching function, although Bartell (2005) noted that release time for mentors can vary from full, to partial, to none. More recently, Mullen (2005) has expanded the discourse on mentoring by emphasizing alternative methods of mentoring that move away from the traditional one-on-one relationship. She suggests that if mentoring is viewed as a process rather than a person, several people can simultaneously fulfill the traditional role of a mentor, developing a whole-school culture of taking responsibility for the needs of novices. Thus, alternative mentoring practices such as collaborative or co-mentoring, mentoring mosaics (formal or informal network of multiple mentors), and telementoring (on-line communication with a mentor providing academic or professional guidance; also known as e-mentoring) can provide cost-effective options that provide the support and guidance needed by beginning teachers.

Alternatives to the traditional one-on-one mentoring pattern are needed considering the cost of induction programs that rely on intensive mentoring. The cost of California’s Best Support and Teaching Assessment model (BSTA), for example, runs as much as \$5,500 per new teacher per year (Breaux & Wong, 2003; Moir, 2003), with the state providing approximately \$3,000 per new teacher each year. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2001), 33 states had developed induction policies by 2001, although only 16 mandated and funded them (Feiman-Nemser et al, 1999).

A final aspect of mentoring that is discussed is the need to train mentors. Breaux and Wong (2003) and Wong (2005) assert that mentoring alone focuses the new teacher merely on survival rather than on student learning, although that focus on student learning is crucial to developing effective teaching skills. Without training in appropriate teaching and curriculum standards, as well as coaching methods and conferencing skills, a mentor is little more than a buddy to a new teacher (Arends & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Breaux & Wong, 2003; Moir, 2003; Serpell & Bozeman, 1999). As such, the new teacher typically receives help as the veteran's schedule and interest allow (Dyal & Sewall, 2002; Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999; Jofus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002), but does not receive the support that will help him or her develop into an accomplished teacher more rapidly.

Benefits

Breaux and Wong (2003) summarized the benefits of a structured induction program that have been cited in the literature: "reduced anxiety for first-year teachers; a higher-quality teaching force; a reduced attrition rate for new teachers; increased student achievement; a common culture throughout the district; a common mission and set of goals; a common professional dialogue among teachers, support staff, and the community; and a willingness to participate in career-long staff development" (p. 88). Other benefits include reduced costs and administrative attention on hiring (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Fulton et al., 2005; Marshak & Klotz, 2002), increased sense of professionalism (American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Feiman-Nemser, 2001a; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; Moir & Gless, 2001); increased teacher efficacy (American Federation of Teachers, 2001), rejuvenation of experienced teachers (Moir, 2003; Moir & Gless, 2001); and the building of a culture of collegiality and collaboration throughout a school (Fulton et al., 2005; Moir).

The literature on the benefits of induction relies heavily on anecdotal evidence and expert voices; it also represents the bulk of the literature on induction. Now in its third decade of implementation, one would expect a rather in-depth body of empirical findings that provide support for this discourse. Only when the induction literature is grounded in empirical research can leaders justify the time and expense devoted to induction. Empirical evidence is slowly appearing. While quality empirical studies have been more common since 2000, much of what passes for empirical data still consists of program evaluations, pre and posttest studies, and small qualitative studies (Thompson et al., 2005). These findings are discussed the following section in terms of the intensity (number of supports) of the induction experience, specific components of induction, as well as the effects of induction.

Induction Findings

Induction Intensity

This represents the largest category of findings. These studies typically involve either a national or state-wide focus on induction programs. The findings from national data sets are presented first, followed by state-wide studies.

Richard Ingersoll and Thomas Smith, working both individually and jointly, have become leaders in quantitatively examining the impact of induction programs on teacher retention. Their work uses the various cycles of SASS and TFS studies conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics. They report that induction participation by teachers in public schools has become widespread across the United States, rising from 40% in 1990 to 80% in 2000 (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Smith and Ingersoll (2004) indicate that 80% of beginning teachers had regular, supportive communication with administrators; 69% worked with a mentor; 68% experienced collaboration opportunities such as regular planning

time, regularly scheduled instructional collaboration, or beginning teacher seminars; very few, however, participated in external networks of teachers or had adjusted work conditions.

They frame induction participation into four levels based on the prevalence of participation in the various induction components. Thus, the most widely experienced components are in the Basic package, while all of the components are combined in the most comprehensive programs. Their four levels of induction participation are (1) no participation in induction; (2) Basic, which includes a mentor from any field and regular, supportive communication with administrators; (3) Basic +, which includes a mentor in the same subject field, regular and supportive communication with administrators, collaboration with other teachers in the form of common planning time or regularly scheduled collaboration on instructional matters, and beginning teacher seminars; and (4) Basic ++, the most comprehensive package of induction which adds participation in an external network of teachers and adjusted working conditions, such as a reduced number of preparations or a teacher's aide, to the other components (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Their findings indicate that the likelihood of teacher turnover, which is the additive function of either leaving the field or moving to another school at the end of the first year of teaching, is related to both the number and types of support received (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Mentoring alone did not have an impact on beginning teacher turnover. In fact, turnover for those who participated in the most basic levels of induction is projected as 39%, which is not much different than the 40% turnover rate for those who did not participate in any induction. Very few participate in the most comprehensive induction packages, but they are the least likely (18%) to experience turnover at the end of the first year of teaching.

Ingersoll and Smith (2004) report that beginning teachers tend to receive a variety of induction experiences rather than just one. The induction components most strongly related to reduced turnover include having a mentor in the same subject and collaborative activities such as common planning time or regularly scheduled collaboration on instruction. Activities with the least impact on turnover include a reduced teaching schedule, reduced number of preparations, or extra classroom assistance, which is not surprising since these were also the least experienced components.

While these findings give a snapshot of the components of induction programs presently being implemented, they do not provide any indication of the quantity or quality of these experiences. Mentor support, for example, varies widely in terms of the quality of the support and the frequency with which it occurs.

Smith (2007) expands this research to include the effect of state-level policies mandating induction on both the experience of induction and turnover rates. He finds that the beginning teachers who most need induction – those with alternative certifications – are the least likely to receive it when induction is mandated. These teachers are also more likely to leave the field than those who are fully certified, a finding supported by other researchers (e.g., Eberhard et al., 2000). When states fund these induction mandates, the access gap only widens, possibly reflecting the fact that the states who can afford induction programs also tend to select more qualified candidates. Strong administrative support, along with the strength of state standards for assessment and accountability, has the strongest influence on reducing teacher turnover. This seems to indicate that teachers appreciate clearly defined high expectations for teaching and learning.

Youngs (2007) examined the effect of district-level policy on the induction experiences received by first- and second-year teachers in two urban, high-poverty districts in Connecticut. District policies related to mentor selection, mentor assignment, and professional development led to differences in both the number and quality of induction supports provided to the beginning teachers in the two districts. In particular, these policy differences affected access to mentors or other colleagues in the same content and/or grade level taught by the beginning teachers. One district mandated both a full-time release mentor and a building-level colleague as support providers for all teachers in the first year and provided optional access to support during the second year of teaching. The second district, however, mandated only a mentor, who may or may not have been in the same building, to provide support for beginning teachers. These findings point to the need to provide multiple sources of support for new teachers to better meet their needs.

Johnson, Kardos, Kauffman, Liu, and Donaldson (2004) used data from two surveys to examine the use of hiring practices, relationships with colleagues, and curriculum as sources of support for new teachers. One survey focused on hiring practices and first- and second-year teachers' relationships with colleagues in Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan; the second survey focused on the curriculum experiences of second-year teachers in Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington. They found evidence of a support gap between beginning teachers in low- and high-income schools, indicating that beginning teachers working in schools serving large populations of low-income students may not receive the help they need to do their jobs well. Beginning teachers in low-income schools were less likely to experience a supportive hiring process, to have frequent and substantive interactions with a mentor with whom they are well matched, and to receive guidance concerning the curriculum they teach than beginning

teachers in high-income schools. One exception was found in curriculum experiences: beginning language arts teachers in low-income schools received more curriculum support than their high-income counterparts. The study authors noted that differences in curriculum may explain this discrepancy, since teachers in low-income schools are more likely to use a directive reading curriculum which provides specific lesson plans while teachers in high-income schools are more likely to use a reading curriculum which does not provide such lesson plans. Also, more teachers in low-income schools (20%) reported having less curricular freedom than did teachers in high-income schools (7%). These findings support the work of other researchers indicating that teachers in low-income schools tend to have less supportive work environments than teachers in wealthier schools (e.g., Johnson, 2004; Schmoker, 2006; Wong, 2005).

State induction guidelines in Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin were compared by Bartlett, Johnson, Lopez, Sugarman, and Wilson (2005). Findings indicated that all three states linked induction to tiered state licensure, with induction participation required in Ohio and Wisconsin for advanced credentials, but only offered as one of many options in Illinois. All three states had common goals for their induction programs: improving teacher retention within the first five years of employment, improving student achievement, and increasing levels of teaching quality.

They framed the induction supports mandated by each state according to Smith and Ingersoll's (2004) frames of basic (in-field mentor and communication with administrator), basic + (basic plus common planning time and new teacher seminars), or basic ++ (basic + with support network, reduced number of preparations, and a teacher's aide). Illinois neither mandated induction participation nor provided funding for such activities. As a result, induction supports offered in the state ranged from no supports to the most comprehensive levels of support, depending on district-level mandates and funding. Ohio mandated a mentor for only one

year, which is less than Smith and Ingersoll's basic package of support; the state, however, provided funding and clear guidelines for the mandated support. Many districts also elected to offer additional support, up to the most comprehensive levels. Wisconsin mandated a basic package of support for beginning teachers, including mentor support for teachers with less than five years of experience, although no funding was provided to pay for these supports. Many districts offered additional supports, including common planning time and new teacher seminars.

In North Carolina, Algozzine, Gretes, Queen, and Cowan-Hathcock (2007) examined beginning teachers' perceptions of the induction support they received during their first two years of employment. The majority (69%) indicated that individualized activities or those focused on specific aspects of teaching were more useful than global activities such as district-wide orientations and workshops. The aspects of mentoring found most helpful included locating instructional materials, managing instructional time, planning and organizing instruction, and using varied teaching methods. The most effective means of providing these supports came from individuals from similar fields of study, providing common planning time, and creating networks where new and experienced teachers could meet to discuss issues of teaching and learning.

Differences in induction programs in the state of Arizona were presented by Horn, Sterling, and Subhan (2002). They use Stansbury and Zimmerman's (2000) classifications of low- and high-intensity programs to organize their study. Schools featuring two of the five components they inquire about (orientation, mentoring, professional development, follow-up of inductees, and program evaluation) are deemed to have a low-intensity program; schools that feature four of the five components have a high-intensity program. Their findings indicate that almost all of the public schools in the state offer orientation sessions for new teachers at the beginning of the school year. For a significant number of schools (30%), however, that is the

only type of support offered to beginning teachers. Low intensity programs are found in 54% of the schools, most of which tend to be smaller schools. Only 16% of the schools in the state offer high-intensity induction programs; these tend to be found in large systems. They indicate that funding is linked to the provision of induction, with many schools simply not able to afford such services. Many of the smaller schools also indicate that their small number of new hires each year makes an induction program irrelevant.

Andrews, Gilbert, and Martin (2006) investigated the induction and mentoring practices of partner school districts of two universities in Georgia. New teachers were surveyed to determine which support strategies they valued and which they received; building principals were surveyed concerning the support strategies provided to their new teachers. Results from the groups were compared to determine if their perceptions were consistent. In general, teachers reported that they valued opportunities to collaborate with and learn from other teachers; these were the support strategies they received the least, however. Rather large differences were found between the support strategies that principals said were offered and the ones teachers said they received. For instance, approximately 85% of principals reported that opportunities to observe other teachers were provided, but only 42% of teachers said they had this opportunity. Also, 85% of principals said they provided new teachers with co-planning time with other teachers, while only 45% of the new teachers said they had such an opportunity. One area in which both groups did have a high level of agreement, however, was in the provision of a mentor teacher, with 90% of administrators claiming to provide such support and 87% of teachers claiming to receive such support. These findings may indicate that administrators may need to specify the types of induction support that will be provided to new teachers as well as provide follow-up to make sure the activities do occur.

Finally, Nagy and Wang (2007) identified issues related to beginning high school teachers in New Jersey who had taken alternate routes to teacher certification. They examined the transition process for these teachers in three phases: preparation before entering the classroom, school or district support once they entered the classroom, and retention in the teaching profession. Survey data from high school principals and alternate route teachers were used. Training received prior to entering the classroom included classroom management and instructional strategies (69%), instruction for special education inclusion programs (42%), and content methods or other forms of school-specific staff development (36%). Induction supports after entering the classroom were varied. The majority (more than 80%) indicated they received supports such as student handbooks, staff handbooks, and copies of emergency lesson plans. More than half received information on the mentoring and observation processes, as well as instruction in classroom management; just over half also reported receiving a mentor visit during the first week of school. Just over half of the teachers (51%) indicated they were not formally assigned a mentor; this contrasted sharply with the finding that 88% of principals indicated that mentors were formally assigned.

Most of the beginning teachers indicated that both their mentors and their principals were at least somewhat helpful during the first year of teaching, although mentor support received higher marks. Approximately 90% of the teachers indicated they had opportunities to meet with other teachers in their departments, while 81% reported opportunities to meet with other new teachers within their buildings during the first year of teaching. Teachers reporting the highest desire to remain in the teaching profession were either in their first two years of experience or had more than six years of experience. These findings indicated that the most common induction support offered to these alternately certified teachers within their first year of teaching included

some form of collaboration with other teachers, although there was some discrepancy between teachers' and principals' reports of mentors being formally assigned.

While these studies examine the provision of multiple induction strategies, most (with the exception of the Ingersoll and Smith studies) do not track teacher retention data to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. The only evaluation of the effectiveness of the supports provided tended to be surveys of teachers' perceptions of the helpfulness of the supports. Some of the findings also indicated differences in the perceptions of principals and beginning teachers of the supports provided, with principals generally perceiving higher levels of support than did teachers. Differences in induction participation related to funding issues were also found, which raise concerns for issues of fair access to quality education for all students.

Components

Individualized teacher support. The next largest category of research studies center on issues of individualized teacher support. This support includes induction components such as mentoring, opportunities to observe and be observed, provision of feedback from observations, and opportunities for reflection, among others. For the most part, these components are found in high-intensity induction programs since they involve a willingness on the part of administrators to provide release time for beginning teachers and mentors to work together.

First, Storm and Lee (2001) examine variations in the program design and implementation of six BTSA sites in California to determine if such variations are linked to differences in teacher professional growth, particularly reflective practice. Their findings indicate that the quality of the relationship between the mentor and the beginning teacher is the key component in the development of reflective practice in beginning teachers. In particular, the way the mentor values reflective practice personally, as well as understands and implements the

mentoring role directly impacts the way the beginning teacher will view reflective practice. Their findings point to the importance of careful mentor selection as well as extensive mentor training. Mentors who want to participate as a support provider and who understand the importance of reflective practice are better able to lead beginning teachers to value the practice. On the other hand, mentors who are chosen simply because no one else will do the job and who do not personally value reflective practice tend to simply pass the work off as more paperwork to be completed. Beginning teachers with whom they work will thus miss opportunities to develop the capacity to improve their practice.

Fletcher and Barrett (2004) use on-line surveys from 70 participants in one California BTSA program to determine if these new teachers had become more effective in both their classrooms and their schools as a result of their participation in the program. Their comparison of achievement gains between the students of new teachers (1-2 years experience) and those of experienced (10-plus years of experience) teachers indicates the students of new teachers show slightly lower achievement gains. The new teachers, however, tended to have more Latino students and students classified as English Language Learners than did the experienced teachers. To control for these student demographic differences, comparisons of class gains were also reported. In these comparisons, comparable growth gains were made by the students of all teachers. These findings indicate that beginning teachers who experience the support provided through a comprehensive induction program became as effective in the classroom as more experienced teachers who had received little to no induction experience. This is an interesting finding that needs further exploration since it provides direct evidence that induction programs can lead to improved student achievement. These new teachers also demonstrate improved

effectiveness in their schools as shown through high levels of interaction with administrators and colleagues that they attribute to the guidance of their mentors.

Milanowski (2005) investigates the controversial issue of assigning both formative and summative evaluation responsibilities to mentors in one Midwestern school district. Two groups, one in which the evaluation responsibilities are split, and one in which the evaluation responsibilities are combined, are compared to determine if such a split is helpful. Survey results of beginning teachers indicate no significant differences between the two groups in their perceived comfort for discussing problems with the mentor. The combined group showed a slightly lower, though not significant, difference in the levels of support received, indicating that the time needed to perform both roles may somewhat hinder mentors from working with beginning teachers. Slight evidence is presented indicating that beginning teachers have a slightly more negative reaction to mentors who combine the two roles, possibly reflecting a lack of time for interaction with the mentor. Overall, though, the findings do not present compelling evidence to keep the two assessment roles separate.

A mentor teacher's perspective on supporting new teachers was examined by Feiman-Nemser (2001b). Findings highlight the use of "educative mentoring," which attends to both the immediate concerns and long-term development needs of beginning teachers. Educative mentors focus on helping the beginning teacher develop the knowledge and skills to reflect on both their own practice and student learning. Both the mentor's personal experiences and the mentor training and support he received helped him develop the skills necessary to implement educative mentoring with the teachers he supported over a two-year period. Mentor supports included a weeklong orientation and weekly seminars that provided opportunities for both conversations about their practice and discussions of articles on teaching and learning.

Athanases and Achinstein (2003) used surveys of experienced induction mentors and case studies of two mentor/new teacher pairs to show how mentors can lead new teachers to focus on individual student learning. Data indicated that mentors draw on a wide range of knowledge, including knowledge of students and teacher as learners, pedagogy for classrooms and adult learners, content knowledge in multiple subjects, and knowledge and skills in the assessments of students, aligning curriculum with standards, and formative assessment of teachers. They used this knowledge to help new teachers focus on issues related to individual student learning and generate methods to design instruction to meet the varied needs of students. Formative assessment skills were particularly important for observing the practice of beginning teachers and guiding the teachers to focus on evidence of student learning. Findings indicated that beginning teachers can move beyond a focus on surviving the first year to focusing on student learning with appropriate mentor support.

Evertson and Smithey (2000) present the only experimental study found that relates to induction. They compared classroom practices of protégés whose mentors received training with those whose mentors did not receive training. Although assignment to the treatment and comparison groups was based on scheduling reasons, no differences in mentors' backgrounds or experiences were found. Forty-six mentor-protégé pairs from two large school consortia in a Midwestern state participated in the study. Findings reveal that protégés in the treatment group are more effective at organizing and managing instruction at the beginning of the school year; their students are also more engaged and better behaved than those whose mentors did not receive training. More research of this type involving more teachers in other parts of the country is needed to convince districts to provide appropriate mentor training.

Content-Specific Induction

Few studies examine content-specific induction programs over the past decade. Of the four studies I found, three focused on science-specific induction programs, all of which were conducted by the same group of researchers. The fourth focused on the working conditions and induction supports experienced by beginning special education teachers.

Luft, Roehrig, and Patterson (2003) report on a study that compared teaching beliefs, practices, and experiences for secondary science teachers who participated in one of three types of induction programs: a science-specific program sponsored by a university, a general induction program sponsored by the school district, or no induction support. A total of 18 teachers participated in the study, with 6 teachers assigned to each type of support. Teachers in their first to third year of experience in the sixth through twelfth grades participated in the study. Each group included first-, second-, and third-year teachers at both the middle and high school levels.

The science-specific program – Alternative Support for Induction Science Teachers (ASIST) – consisted of monthly workshops focused on science instruction, including classroom management, curriculum planning, instructional strategies and assessment. Participants also attended a regional science conference. These participants had access to mentors who were experienced science teachers as well as the university faculty members who presented the workshops.

The teachers in the general induction programs typically experienced a workshop before the beginning of school and follow-up workshops held during the school year. They had access to mentor teachers, either formally or informally, who helped with planning and observed the beginning teachers. Teachers in the no induction support group received only informal support from a variety of colleagues in their schools.

Teachers in the science-specific induction group used laboratories and student work groups more frequently than did teachers in the general induction and no induction groups. On the other hand, teachers in the general induction and no induction groups tended to use individual seatwork more frequently than did their peers in the science-specific program. Materials used by the beginning teachers varied by group as well. Teachers in the science-specific induction program tended to use more laboratory equipment and technology-based materials such as graphing calculators and the Internet in their lessons than did teachers in the other two groups. Each group used a variety of assessments, although teachers in the general- and no-induction groups tended to use more multiple choice tests while their science-specific peers tended to use frequent, short quizzes with short answer and open-ended response questions.

Most of the participants experienced a shift in their teaching beliefs from the pre- to post-study interviews. Teachers in the science-specific induction program ended the study with more student-centered beliefs, while their peers in the general- and no-induction groups held more teacher-centered beliefs.

Six beginning biology teachers who participated in the ASIST induction program (discussed above) were the focus of the study done by Luft, Lee, Fletcher, and Roehrig (2007). Three of the participants experienced the program for one year, while three experienced it for two years. Cross-case analyses of the individual participant cases revealed some common themes. First, teachers who held student-centered beliefs were more likely to create an inquiry-oriented environment in their classrooms. Teachers who improved their inquiry practice were also more likely to build their conceptual knowledge of their science field. The science-specific induction program supported the emerging inquiry practices of the beginning teachers by providing inquiry experiences through the program. Finally, teachers who both lacked a science

major and experienced school constraints in terms of administrative support for and student acceptance of inquiry-centered practices were unable to create productive inquiry-oriented classroom environments, even with help from the induction program.

Lee, Brown, Luft, and Roehrig (2007) explored how 24 beginning secondary science teachers developed pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) during their first year of teaching. The teachers participated in one of four induction programs: e-mentoring, general induction, internship, and science-specific. Beginning teachers in the e-mentoring program communicated with each other and experienced teachers through an Internet-based listserv group. The general induction program consisted of a traditional mentoring program, with each new teacher working with an assigned mentor. The intern group consisted of teachers who were supervised by university mentors as part of an alternative certification program. Finally, the science-specific program focused on content-specific professional development, including the assignment of an in-field mentor.

Researchers focused on the development of just two categories of PCK: Knowledge of Student Learning and Knowledge of Instructional Strategies. Data collected included both interviews and classroom observations. At the beginning of the study, all of the teachers held either limited or basic levels of PCK in the two categories, with the majority (76%) at the limited level. By the end of the study, some improvement was shown, with 65% at limited levels, 34% at basic levels, and 1% at proficient levels. However, no statistical differences were found among the four types of induction. When all of the data were pooled, with no regard for induction program, the category of Knowledge of Student Learning showed the most significant change over the course of the year.

Finally, Billingsley and Klein (2004) profiled the working conditions, induction supports, and career plans of a national sample of more than 1,000 special education teachers with five or fewer years of experience. More than 90% of the participants reported receiving informal support from other colleagues, with 89% indicating this was the most helpful form of support they received. When questioned about individuals who provided help, 77% indicated that other special educators were the most helpful. Almost 60% of participants had a formal mentoring experience, although a third indicated they did not find the experience helpful. Receiving induction support during the early years of experience was not significantly related to these teachers' overall perceptions of their effectiveness as teachers. However, those who reported higher levels of induction support reported that their jobs were more manageable and success in reaching difficult students.

Professional development. Four studies investigated the use of inquiry groups as an induction support for beginning teachers. Two additional studies examined university-sponsored induction programs that led to a graduate degree for participants. Curry, Jaxon, Russell, Callahan, and Bicaïs (2008) investigated how beginning teachers from five schools, participating in site-based inquiry groups facilitated by university professors, collaboratively made sense of the micropolitical environments of their schools as they engaged in inquiry activities. Findings indicated that participation in the inquiry groups resulted in increased career commitment and leadership contributions for participants. Meyer (2002) reports that participants involved in an off-site professional learning community for three years found the experience helpful for developing reflective practice. Participants indicated that the off-site location helped them feel safe when discussing the dilemmas they faced.

The strengths and weaknesses of extending a model for university involvement in preservice teacher preparation to support for new teachers were examined by Hines, Murphy, Singer, and Stack (2000). A network approach brought together beginning teachers in ethnic minority secondary schools with university professors; connections were maintained through peer mentoring opportunities, regular support meetings, email contact, and conferences. New teachers who participated in the network assisted the university professors by visiting teacher education classes and mentoring student teachers. University faculty who participated found topics for their research through their work in the classrooms of the beginning teachers. Beginning teachers reported that their participation in network activities provided collaborative interactions that helped them overcome the problems associated with their own inexperience and isolation in urban and minority schools to make a difference in the learning of their students. Researchers suggest that such a network can become a support the university offers for alumni.

Rogers and Babinski (2002) also examined the use of a network of beginning teachers (one to three years experience) to help teachers deal with problems they faced in their work. The bi-monthly discussions focused on problems and concerns posed by group members. The range of experience and competencies among the members provided multiple perspectives on the issues discussed. The collaborative dialogue fostered reflection in participants so that they felt better prepared to handle similar situations in the future. Key factors in the success of the network were found to be the regularly scheduled meetings and the facilitation provided by university faculty sponsors. Participating in the group problem solving discussions allowed members to socially construct meaning that they could apply in their own settings. Findings indicated that the opportunity to share their knowledge positively impacted their sense of professionalism and competency. These results support Vygotsky's assertion that working with

more experienced peers help a learner reach new levels of competency more quickly than working alone.

Gilles, Crammer, and Hwang (2001) report findings from a longitudinal study of the concerns of new teachers who participated in the Teaching Fellows Program, a high-intensity university-supported program in Missouri. Participants do not receive a full salary during their first year of teaching, but they do receive a free master's degree. Surveys during November of the first year of teaching over five years of the program indicate that these new teachers show concern across all phases of developmental concerns. Like other recent research on teacher concerns (e.g., Watzke, 2007), these new teachers experience these concerns concurrently rather than in a linear progression. Although concerns for survival are understandably greater during the first semester of teaching, more than a quarter of the participants indicate an awareness of student needs as a dominant concern. The Fellows program is highly selective, with a rigorous application and interview process. Researchers speculate that the program attracts mature applicants who seem to value the experience, which may explain why they move so quickly beyond a concern with survival to a concern about addressing student needs.

The Partners in Education program, like the Teaching Fellows program, is a high-intensity induction program featuring a university partnership with local school districts. Kelley (2004) examines survey and retention data for 10 cohorts of this program to determine its effects on teacher retention and satisfaction. Findings indicate high levels of satisfaction among principals and beginning teachers, who reported the benefits of the mentoring provided by the program and the high levels of teacher growth that result. This teacher satisfaction seems to translate into high levels of teacher retention. Ninety-four percent of the participants were still teaching four years later, with most still in their original schools. Kelley does note, however, that

program participants have the opportunity to receive a master's degree and resulting higher salary earlier than most teachers, a factor that may also contribute to high levels of retention.

Overall, these findings indicate that university-sponsored inquiry groups and learning communities and induction programs leading to graduate degrees may offer an alternative to mentor-driven induction programs. Beginning teachers, because they share so many common experiences, can develop a curriculum for study together as they share their experiences of practice. Participation in collaborative dialogue about issues of teaching and learning with other beginning teachers may allow these teachers to socially construct meaning that allows them reach levels of competency they may not have reached – at least as quickly – on their own.

Other supports. Five studies focus on administrative support for beginning teachers. Baron (2006), investigating ways to improve the working conditions of beginning teachers, suggests establishing grade level learning communities as a way to integrate them in the school culture. This suggestion offers administrators an alternative to reduced teaching assignments when considering how to adjust working conditions for new teachers. Baron suggests such learning communities are a “way to promote the benefits of mentoring as funding shrinks” (p. 133).

Brock and Grady (1998), Angello (2002, 2006), and Wood (2005) all examined the role of principals in providing support for induction. Their findings underline the importance of administrative support for both new teachers and induction programs. New teachers look for principals to clearly communicate the expected standards of good teaching and offer performance feedback before evaluations are done (Brock & Grady). Angello (2002) indicated that effective middle school principals make frequent visits to classrooms, both formally and informally. They offer teachers immediate feedback that focuses on student engagement and

learning based on these observations. Angello (2006) found that informal monitoring and support provided by the principal for beginning teachers increased both their socialization into the school organization and their intent to remain at the school after the first year of teaching. Wood indicated that principals are responsible for building a school culture that supports standards-based teaching and learning through recruitment practices and the creation of structures that support mentoring programs.

These findings highlight the role of administrators, particularly principals, in creating a school environment that encourages improved teaching and learning. Although Ingersoll and Smith (2004) indicate that 80% of first year teachers report receiving regular, supportive communication from administrators, research findings that indicate a paucity of high-intensity induction programs suggests that these communications may provide emotional support rather than the instructional leadership needed to bring about dramatic changes in teaching practices.

Interdisciplinary teaming as an induction support for new middle school teachers is the focus of a study by Bickmore, Bickmore, and Hart (2005). Their findings indicate that the people involved in the provision of induction support – interdisciplinary teams and mentors – were more helpful to the new teachers than the activities in which they participated. The interdisciplinary teams contributed positively to meeting the new teachers' personal needs, particularly in terms of providing them with emotional support and a sense of competence. The new teachers indicated that having a regularly scheduled common planning time with team members provided the opportunity to develop collegiality and camaraderie with their more experienced peers. The common planning time also allowed both the new and experienced teachers to share pedagogical strategies, providing a forum for improved professional practices for all.

Effects

Kapadia, Coca, and Easton (2007) examined the effects of induction supports provided to first- and second-year teachers in the Chicago Public School system on their perceptions of the quality of their first year of experience and their intentions to remain in the profession.

Participation in the GOLDEN Teachers Program was mandated for all first and second year teachers in the system. Other programs were also available through alternative teaching certification programs or specific schools. Approximately 80% of all participants participated in an induction program, with most citing the required GOLDEN program. A small percentage of teachers – 7% of elementary and 4% of high school – indicated that they participated in more than one program. Levels of participation were high among both first and second year teachers. Those who participated in a traditional preparation program were slightly less likely to participate in an induction program than were those who took an alternate certification route. Participants indicated that the most helpful induction supports included mentoring support, collaboration with peers, and supportive interactions with principals. Collaboration with peers included opportunities to work with teachers in the same field, release time to observe in other classrooms, and participation in external networks of beginning and experienced teachers. The effects of the induction program and other supports had a greater impact on novices' reports of teaching experience and future teaching plans than participation in the induction program alone. These findings indicate that both district and school-based supports play an important role in teacher retention.

Studies by Fletcher, Strong, and Villar (2008) and Villar and Strong (2007) focused on the effects of mentor-based induction programs on reading achievement for elementary students in California. Fletcher, Strong, and Villar examined the effect of differences in the intensity of

the induction programs in three California districts on student achievement. They measured the intensity of the induction program in terms of whether a site-based or full-time release mentor was used, the support provided to mentors, and the frequency with which the mentor had contact with a beginning teacher. They also compared the influence of induction participation and classroom poverty level on student achievement. Their findings indicated that high intensity mentor programs (full-time release mentors, support for mentors, weekly contact with mentor) had a positive effect on student achievement while moderate intensity programs (site-based mentors, no training, less than weekly contact with mentor) had a negative effect on student achievement. Overall, the direct influence of induction on student achievement was greater than the direct influence of class poverty. The authors suggest that high intensity mentor-based induction support is particularly important for schools with high levels of disadvantaged students. Their models indicated that if induction support didn't meet a minimal level, then the influence of class poverty canceled the influence of induction participation on the student achievement of new teachers.

Villar and Strong (2007) performed a benefit-cost analysis on the comprehensive mentoring program of a medium-sized California school district. Such an analysis entails estimating the financial benefits of a decision against the actual costs of the decision in order to give decision makers an estimate of the potential returns or losses of the decision. They compared the student achievement gains of new teachers (1-2 years experience) with comprehensive induction participation to the student achievement gains of mid-career teachers (3-12 years experience) with similar induction experiences and without induction experience. Findings indicated that there was virtually no difference in the student achievement gains of new teachers and those experienced teachers who had not participated in induction activities. In terms

of the benefit-cost analysis, increases in teacher effectiveness due to the induction program produced greater savings for the school district than the reduction in costs due to improved teacher retention rates. After five years, the investment of one dollar produced a positive benefit to society, the school district, teachers, and students, while the state almost broke even on its investment in the induction program.

Thompson, Paek, Goe, and Ponte (2005) used a quasi-experimental design to assess the impact of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment induction program on teacher practices and student achievement. Key components of the induction program include support from a trained mentor, participation in activities designed to help the beginning teacher analyze and reflect on practice, and formative assessment. Since BTSA is a statewide program required for all new teachers who hold preliminary certification, no natural control group existed to compare with the treatment of the induction program. However, program level differences at both the school and district levels meant that the induction program was implemented at varying levels, due to factors such as ease and frequency of access to mentors and training and monitoring of mentors; these differences in implementation were used to assign control and treatment groups. Researchers compared teaching practices of third-year teachers who had high levels of engagement in the program (treatment group) during their first two years of experience to third-year teachers who had little to no engagement to the program (control group) during their first two years. Results indicated that teachers with a high level of engagement in the induction program were better at instructional planning at a statistically significant level; they were also better at providing substantive feedback to students and reflecting on their own practice, although not at statistically significant levels. Similar results for student achievement were also found. Students of the more highly engaged teachers outscored the students of low-

engagement teachers on state standardized tests by an average of 0.25 standard deviations, even when school-to-school differences were controlled for. Although these differences were not statistically significant, they were consistently positive.

Glazerman et al. (2008) conducted the first large-scale experimental study of the effects of structured comprehensive induction programs for the U. S. Department of Education. They defined the components of comprehensive induction as the following:

- Carefully selected and trained full-time mentor
- Curriculum of intensive and structured support that included orientation, professional development opportunities, and weekly meetings with mentors
- Opportunities to observe experienced teachers to facilitate a focus on instruction
- Use of formative assessment tools to provide on-going constructive feedback to beginning teachers

Seventeen school districts in 13 states were chosen to participate in the study. Researchers used random assignment to create a treatment group of schools exposed to comprehensive teacher induction, and a control group of schools exposed to the usual set of induction services provided by their districts. Two nationally recognized providers of comprehensive induction programs – Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, NJ and New Teacher Center (NTC) of the University of California at Santa Cruz – were contracted with to deliver induction services for the study.

Findings after one year of the program were released. Positive impacts included statistically significant differences in the amount, types, and content of induction supports existed between the treatment and control groups. Beginning teachers in the treatment group received more mentoring support than the control group – they were more likely to be assigned a

full-time release mentor and spend more time working with that mentor as well as additional mentors at the building level.

Teachers in the treatment group were significantly more likely to have participated in the following specific induction activities in the previous week: being observed by a mentor, observing mentors modeling lessons, and one-on-one meetings with mentors. They received significantly more assistance from mentors in the previous week in setting instructional goal, improving their practice, and designing assessments. Finally, during the previous three months, they had significantly worked more with their mentors to reflect on their classroom and instructional practices, review student data, and assessment results.

A final difference was in the professional development opportunities made available to the two groups during the previous three months. The treatment group teachers were significantly more likely to participate in study groups of new teachers or a combination of new and experienced teachers; they were also more likely to observe experienced teachers in their classrooms and in the teacher's classrooms and to receive feedback about their teaching. They also were more likely to experience professional development in the areas of lesson planning, analyzing student work and assessments, and differentiated instruction. However, there were no differences between the treatment and control groups in keeping portfolios, analyzing student work or in meeting with principals, instructional coaches, or resource specialists. Teachers in the treatment group were, however, more likely to spend less time preparing students for standardized testing than teachers in the control group.

Although there were differences in the induction supports received by the two groups, there were no significant differences in the teaching practices of the two groups in the domains of lesson implementation, lesson content, and classroom culture. Differences in student

achievement scores on standardized tests in math and reading for the two groups were not significantly different from zero. Finally, the induction interventions seemed to have no impacts on teacher retention after the first year, with no significant differences in teacher mobility between the two groups. Their findings do not support those of other researchers of the positive effects of induction supports on teacher retention and student achievement (e.g., Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Fletcher et al., 2008). One possible reason is that teachers in the control group did receive some induction support, including mentor support, albeit not at the same levels as teachers in the control group did. Also, these findings represent only the first year of result; the full impact of the supports may not become visible until later. Future plans include extending the comprehensive induction support for some of the sites to a second year as well as collecting additional achievement and mobility data.

It seems that the investment in an effective induction program reaps many benefits not only for beginning teachers, but also for experienced teachers, administrators, and students. The number and quality of induction supports offered to beginning teachers differs by program design. Initial results from the first experimental study of the impacts of comprehensive induction programs, however, indicate that the intensive supports provided in such programs may not make a significant difference in teacher practices, student achievement, or teacher retention. Effective induction supports seem to be the provision of mentors in the same grade and content areas, opportunities for new teachers to reflect on their own practice with other colleagues, and strong administrative support. Barriers to effective induction supports include both time and funding for the activities.

Middle Schools

By the 1950s, the junior high model was the education model most widely used for young adolescents, typically in grade configurations of 7-8 or 7-9 (Lounsbury, 1974). This model had its beginnings in educators' concerns for the developmental needs of young adolescents, including the need for adult guidance and learning experiences that integrate both across subject areas and with student interests (Gruhn & Douglass, 1947; Horn, 1989; Howard & Stoumbis, 1970). Many educators, concerned that the junior version of the departmentalized high school was not meeting the needs of early adolescents, called for a reform of the junior high. That call, however, was transformed in the 1960s into a call for a different type of middle-level school, or middle school, as it began to be called. William Alexander, widely considered the father of the middle school, began to make a case for a change in both the structure and organization of middle-level schools (Alexander, 1984). He argued that ninth graders did not fit this pattern of middle-level education since the majority of them had already gone through puberty, and they were engaged in earning credits for high school graduation. He asserted that middle schools needed to focus on the needs of older children, preadolescents, and early adolescents, who need "freedom of movement, opportunities for initiative, a voice in the running of their own affairs, the intellectual stimulation of working with different groups and different teaching specialists" (Alexander, 1998, p. 21).

Alexander et al. (1969) and Beane and Brodhagen (2001) also identified the problem of racial segregation as a reason for moving from the junior high model to the middle school model. The emphasis on including students in the sixth or even fifth grade would help alleviate the segregation problems often brought about by attempts to maintain neighborhood schools for elementary-aged children. Overcrowding had once again become an issue as the baby boom

generation began having their own children, and the government began to fund the kindergarten level, both of which caused the populations of elementary schools to swell.

Alexander (1998) called for a three-part approach to the education of middle-level learners. One emphasis would be on basic skills and instruction in the learning process so that students would become interested in and capable of learning on their own. A second emphasis would be on the basic academic subjects, with the sequence tied to the elementary model at the lower end and the high school model at the upper end, with students allowed to move back and forth as needed. A final emphasis was on personal development, with remediation, independent study, and exploratory experiences provided as needed to develop the interests and abilities of the individual student. Students would participate in all three types of learning experiences during the school year and would be allowed to progress at their own rate, thus truly individualizing instruction for each student.

Ironically, the reasoning for a new middle school model echoed the reasons given for the junior high school some fifty years previously. The first middle schools were established in the early 1960s; the model grew rapidly, with approximately 500 middle schools in place for the 1965-66 school year and more than 1,000 in place by the 1967-68 school year (Vars, 1998). By 2004, there were 14,548 middle schools and only 554 junior high schools of grades 7-9 in the United States (Lounsbury & Vars, 2005).

In 1989, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development published *Turning Points*, which contained recommendations for middle-level reform. They suggest as an overarching goal that middle-level schools should be ensuring success for all and developed a platform for a developmentally appropriate education for young adolescents (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Louis (2000) summarizes the main points of these recommendations:

- Creating trusting, caring schools through smaller learning environments, teacher and student teaming, and personal adult advisement;
- Encouraging critical thinking, healthy lifestyles, and active preparation for citizenship; and
- Providing opportunities for all students to succeed by limiting rigid tracking, using cooperative, mixed ability instructional strategies, flexible scheduling, and the use of out-of-school time to reinforce learning (p. 85).

This reform platform was revisited by *Turning Points 2000* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) to reaffirm the purposes for middle-level education after a decade of programs and grants sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation to implement the middle school concept. One change of this version was to reword the overarching goal so that success was ensured for *every* student since, as the authors pointed out, success for all was often thought to mean just “most” students. They countered the criticisms that middle-level reforms were not working by pointing out that although necessary structural changes, such as teaming, had been implemented in most middle schools, important changes in teaching and learning had not been implemented. They suggest that this lack of complete implementation of middle-level reforms is the reason that every student does not experience success in this setting.

Lounsbury and Vars (2005) point out that recent economic struggles resulted in budget cuts for education that have either reduced or eliminated many desirable middle level practices, such as common planning time for teams. The accountability pressures of NCLB have affected the implementation of student-centered learning practices such as integrated curriculum, heterogeneous grouping, and service learning.

Common Planning Time and Teams

The use of interdisciplinary teams in middle schools is one of the most widely implemented structures of the model (Jackson & Davis, 2000). In fact, Wraga (1997), in a comprehensive historical review of the literature on middle schools, concluded that teaming is the one structure most often associated with middle level education. Although this structure is beneficial for students, it has also proven to be of great benefit to teachers. Warren and Payne (1997) examined middle grades' organizational patterns and their impacts on teacher efficacy and teachers' perceptions of their working environments in North Carolina and Georgia. Findings indicated that teachers on interdisciplinary teams with common planning time had significantly higher perceptions of personal teacher efficacy and more positive perceptions of their working environments, as compared to interdisciplinary teams without common planning time or teachers organized by departments. The authors asserted that the provision of common planning time was a critical component to the success of interdisciplinary teams because it provides opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively.

Flowers, Mertens, and Mulhall (1999) studied 155 middle schools in Michigan as part of the Middle Schools Initiative funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. They used data collected from the 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 School Improvement Self-Study surveys of the staff, students, and administrators in these schools. Their findings indicated that common planning time was necessary for interdisciplinary teams to be effective. Schools that experienced teaming with high (minimum of 4 meetings a week for at least 30 minutes per meeting) levels of common planning time showed the largest gains in student achievement. Schools that implemented teaming reported improved work climates due to the strategy as well as higher levels of parent contact.

Erb (1987, 1995), a long-time researcher in the field of middle schools, asserts four features are necessary to the success of effective team organization at the middle level – common planning time, shared student, a common block-time teaching schedule, and close spatial proximity of team members' classrooms. His research revealed that one of the most important benefits of interdisciplinary teams for schools is the positive changes in communication patterns that occur. Teachers communicate more frequently and in greater depth about student issues, curriculum and instructional matters, and other professional concerns. He claims that the power of teaming grows out of regularly scheduled meetings to collaborate on student and instructional issues. Erb and Doda (1989) interviewed teachers on teams in six states. They reported that teaming results in increased teacher satisfaction as the traditional practice of teachers working in isolation is broken down. They also found that changing both members and time to work together are barriers to successful teaming. They added that intact teams need at least three years of working together to become a fully functioning team.

The research makes it clear that the provision of common planning time for teachers on interdisciplinary teams is critical to the success of interdisciplinary teams. When teams of teachers have regular opportunities to collaborate with each other on both student and instructional issues, both teachers and students benefit. Teachers feel more positive and more powerful in their working environment. Students experience higher levels of achievement, as measured by standardized test results, when their teachers have opportunities for this type of collaboration.

Development of Middle Schools in Georgia

As it has been with educational advances in general, Georgia was behind the rest of the nation in adopting first the junior high, then the middle school concepts. At the beginning of the

twentieth century, when the rest of the nation was considering how to begin secondary studies at an earlier age, Georgia still didn't have a publicly supported high school. A system of public education that provided the common school through the seventh grade was not established until 1870 (Joiner, 1979). By the beginning of the twentieth century, public schooling in Georgia, such as it was, stopped at grade seven. Secondary schools that existed tended to be privately funded and were mostly found in urban areas. Some larger cities adopted a tax to pay for a local high school; these schools and those found in the rural areas tended to be of poor quality compared to the privately funded schools found in the urban areas of the state.

The focus of the legislative agenda for education in Georgia for the first half of the twentieth century included establishing a publicly supported high school, establishing a system of licensure for teachers, equalizing funding for rural and urban areas of the state, changing the Constitution to allow for state support as well as local taxation to support education, and implementing vocational education with the passage of the federal Smith-Hughes Act (Joiner, 1979). The 7-4 system of public school continued until 1947 when state law was amended to include a twelfth grade. At that time, school systems were encouraged to adopt "an organizational plan best suited to their needs, including the 6-3-3, 6-6, 7-5, or 8-4 plans" (Joiner, p. 362), with most systems using the eighth grade year as the transition year. This was the first mention of any form of middle-level education in the state of Georgia. Joiner (1979) points out that the state board of education minutes of 1957 cite "workshops approved for teachers in the middle grades, emphasizing work on materials covered in all subjects and special learning techniques for students in grades seven, eighth, and nine" (p. 433), indicating that the junior high concept was the predominant form of middle level education in the state at the time.

The junior high school again received special attention when the Georgia Educational Improvement Council issued a 1964 recommendation for providing special attention to the problems in grades 7-9 and separate junior high schools in large districts (Joiner, 1979). During the years 1965 through 1972, industrial arts grew rapidly in the junior high and middle schools, the first mention of middle schools in state records (Joiner). Middle schools were mentioned again when the Adequate Program for Education in Georgia recommended improvements in Georgia education in 1973 (Joiner). The committee recommended incentive allotments to local systems initiating “comprehensive program improvements at the 6-8 and the 9-12 grade levels [to be used for] initial and continuing costs for 6-8 grade level programs which emphasize career exploration” (Joiner, p. 478) by providing additional teachers to implement such programs. Local systems were allowed to supplement this funding in order to provide training for these teachers.

In 1998, the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) released an evaluation of the middle school programs in the state (Georgia DOE, 1998). Findings indicated that more than 85% of the systems in the state had implemented the middle school concept to some extent. Implementation had been spurred by the additional funding provided by the Middle School Incentive Grant (MSIG), adopted in 1988. This grant provided funding at 113% of the school’s Full-Time Equivalency count (FTE) as long as certain criteria were met (Georgia DOE, 1998). Findings revealed that academic achievement increased as implementation of the middle school concept increased, although these differences disappeared when socioeconomic status, as measured by participation rates in the free- and reduced-lunch program, were controlled. Approximately one-fourth of the systems receiving the MSIG implemented the middle school concept at substantial levels, while another quarter implemented the concept with an above-average effort. Approximately 38% only partially implemented the concept; these schools

showed the lowest gains in achievement. Finally, 16% of the systems implemented the concept in name only. Evaluators concluded that achievement problems were associated with implementation of the middle school concept rather than the concept itself, echoing the responses of middle level advocates nationwide to criticism of the program.

Georgia has amended the MSIG requirements. In 1988 when the funding was first appropriated, academic teams were required to have a minimum of 85 minutes of common plan time each week, four and one-half hours of daily academic instruction were required, and students were required to take two exploratory classes each grading period (Georgia DOE, 1998). In 2000 the legislature increased the requirement for academic instructional time to five hours, reflecting the belief that middle schools needed to include more academic rigor in their programs (Harrington-Lueker, 2000). In 2004 the law was amended to require only 55 minutes of common planning time for the required academic teams, and students were required to take only one exploratory, or connection class (Georgia DOE, 2004), reflecting budgetary cuts to the program. Middle schools were defined as schools or portions of a school containing either the 6-8 or 7-8 grade configurations with a full-time principal.

In conclusion, the process of reforming education to better meet the needs of early adolescents began at the beginning of the twentieth century and continues today. Changing winds in the political arena often translate into changes in the world of education, with not all of these changes mixing comfortably with what educators deem developmentally appropriate techniques. The problem seems not to be with the concepts of middle-level education itself but in the degree to which those concepts are implemented by a school system. The challenge for middle-level educators in the future seems to lie in meeting the demands for increased academic rigor while also meeting the developmental needs of young adolescents.

In the past, Georgia schools, along with most of the South, have lagged behind the rest of the nation in implementing education reforms. Implementation of the middle school concept was no different. Recent revisions of the state's curriculum objectives have included changes that mirror standards in other high-achieving states and nations (Georgia DOE, 2004), causing State Superintendent Kathy Cox to proclaim on the home page of the Department of Education's web site "We will lead the nation in improving student achievement" (Georgia DOE, 2004). Organizational structures like interdisciplinary teams and common planning time are critical to these efforts to improve student achievement at the middle grades level.

Implications and Gaps

In light of the research indicating both high levels of turnover among beginning teachers at the middle school level and a lack of preparation to teach both the student and the content at this level, is obvious that beginning teachers in middle schools are in particular need of induction support to improve both their retention rates and the quality of their teaching. The middle school concept calls for the provision of common planning time for teacher teams – a key ingredient for successful induction programs. It would seem that implementation of this middle school concept would naturally lend itself to the provision of induction support. This connection has not been extensively explored in the research literature to date, however. In fact, while these teachers are included in large national studies such as those done by Thomas Smith and Richard Ingersoll (i.e., Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), my extensive review of literature found only three studies that focused exclusively on induction at the middle school level. Angello (2002, 2006) examined the role of middle school principals in the new teacher induction programs while Bickmore, Bickmore, and Hart (2005) examined the use of interdisciplinary

teams as a support strategy for the induction of beginning middle school teachers. This study will address this gap in the literature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Question and Sub-Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. One primary research question guided this study: What happens during common planning time in relation to the induction of beginning teachers? Related subquestions included the following:

- a. What happens during common planning time?
- b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purpose, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?
- c. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?
- d. What are the effects of the induction supports on beginning teachers?
- e. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?
- f. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

- g. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

Theoretical Framework

In general, the epistemology of constructivism forms the theoretical foundation for induction programs. According to constructivism theory, individuals make meaning of the world around them by interacting with and interpreting the objects, experiences, and individuals around them rather than passively accepting the meanings defined by others (Patton, 2002). Reflection on past experiences is a part of the meaning-making of new experiences. The reflective process allows the individual to reinterpret old experiences in light of new ones. Through this process, meaning can change as new experiences occur or in light of new experiences, ideas, or contexts (Crotty, 1998; Mezirow, 1991).

Social constructivism emphasizes how meanings and understandings develop from social interactions with others. According to Jaramillo (1996), a focus on how individuals construct meaning in a social setting is key to understanding how they learn. In order to understand this meaning-making process, the social world in which the individual operates must be considered. According to Jaramillo, “social” in this case refers to the “rules and norms of society that teachers and more competent peers teach their younger initiates” (Jaramillo, p. 136).

Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains how learning is constructed from a social constructivism perspective. Vygotsky (1978) defined ZPD as the distance between an individual’s actual and potential developmental levels when receiving guidance from a teacher or collaboration with more competent peers. According to Atherton (2005), “proximal” simply means “next,” as in the learner’s next level of competency. Thus, the

learner constructs knowledge by participating in experiential activities, guided by a teacher or more competent peer who is just above the learner's current level of competence. Engaging in dialogue with others is an important factor in the learner's construction of knowledge. This process of engaging with others leads learners to refine both their thinking about and their performance of the new concept at hand (Atherton, 2005). Since Crotty (1998) suggests that each person's way of making sense of the world is as valid as another's, learners can also contribute to the understandings held by the teacher and more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978).

Constructivism and ZPD can be applied to the induction of new teachers. New teachers begin with unique styles of teaching that reflect each one's prior personal beliefs and experiences. Guided learning experiences facilitated by an experienced mentor, along with professional development and collaboration with more experienced peers (including administrators), enable beginning teachers to develop new skill and knowledge levels. They also develop a sense of belonging in their school communities as they are inculcated into the social values and beliefs of the school culture (Jaramillo, 1996). Thus, the participation of beginning teachers in induction activities provides the social interaction with mentor and more experienced peers needed to assist them in progressing to new levels of competency.

Methodology and Design

This qualitative study was grounded in a case study approach (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). According to Yin, a case study examines a phenomenon in its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence to provide an in-depth portrait of the unit of analysis. Thus, a case study is an appropriate method to examine the interactions a beginning teacher has with other individuals through participation in a school's induction program. Case studies can be distinguished by the size of the unit of study as well as the intent of the analysis (Creswell). A

case may be a single example or multiple examples of the issue being studied. It may also be a case that represents “an unusual or unique situation” (Creswell, p. 74). This study examined the use of common planning time as a tool to support beginning teachers in the induction program of one middle school. Common planning time became the avenue by which these induction activities with others could take place. As such, it is an example of an embedded case study, where the analysis of a single program is based on the outcomes of individual parts (Yin).

This study is connected to the National Middle Grades Research Project on common planning time, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. The purpose of the national project is to investigate “what teachers do when they meet for common planning time” (Mertens, et al., 2007, p. 3). Using research (interview and observation) protocols developed by the national project leaders, participant researchers will combine their data in a national database that can be used for large-scale studies of the use of common planning time. This study went beyond the purpose of the national project, however, to focus on the supports offered to one beginning teacher during common planning time and how the structure of common planning time can be used to better support the effective induction of beginning teachers.

Site Selection and Participants

Many public school systems in north Georgia offer induction programs to support their beginning teachers. Within one of these school systems, I hoped to identify a middle school that had a beginning teacher at each grade level, for a total of three teams. My preference was to find teams that had only one beginning teacher (identified as being in the first to third year of experience) so that possible mentoring effects from more experienced peers were apparent. Just two weeks before school started, I identified the middle school where I work, Johnson City

Middle School, as such a site when a first year teacher was hired for a sixth grade team. One seventh grade team had a second year teacher in her second year at the school, and both eighth grade teams had a second year teacher, both of whom were in their first year at the school. A check of other systems to which I might gain access to do the study revealed no schools that met my criteria of a beginning teacher at each grade level. After consultation with school administrators and my committee, I decided to conduct the study at Johnson City Middle School (JCMS).

Data Source and Collection

The study was done in two phases. The first phase consisted of observations and interviews with a team at each grade level. Identification of the teams was fairly easy since the sixth and seventh grades each had only one team with a beginning teacher. Since I teach eighth grade, I decided to observe the team I was not on in order to keep my observations as objective as possible. This phase of data collection focused on what occurred during the common planning time of interdisciplinary teams and the purposes, benefits, and barriers to the use of common planning time, as perceived by an experienced teacher on each team.

I identified the sixth grade team for more focused study during the second phase of the research. A main factor in selecting this team was the fact that the beginning teacher on this team was in her very first year of teaching. Although studying the eighth grade team would have been more convenient since I shared common planning time with them, their beginning teacher was a second-year teacher whose first year experience was at a high school in another system. I knew that my results in such a situation would reflect not only the results of the induction experiences offered by JCMS, but they would also reflect the results of induction opportunities the beginning teacher had experienced in another system. Also, I knew that separating my roles of researcher

and colleague would be difficult when working with other teachers who were also teaching eighth grade. Despite the greater difficulty involved with observing a team with whom I did not share common planning time, I knew that studying the sixth grade team would give me results that represented more fully the induction supports offered by JCMS.

Data collection during this second phase focused on observations of meetings in which the beginning teacher participated, including meetings with the interdisciplinary team, content team, and any professional development offered through the school and system's induction programs. Interviews were done with the beginning teacher and the experienced colleagues she identified as her primary mentors. This phase of data collection focused on identifying the types of induction support the beginning teacher received during common planning time and the benefits of these supports, as perceived by the beginning teacher, mentors, and school administrators.

The use of social constructivism and Vygotsky's ZPD in my theoretical framework directly influenced the design of the second phase of my study. The emphasis of social constructivism on social interactions with others in making meaning of information and experiences led me to explore who provided induction supports and the kinds of supports that were provided for the beginning teacher in my study. As a result, I expanded the second phase of my study to include content meetings in which the beginning teacher participated. Also, Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD theory led me to examine the effects of induction supports on the beginning teacher as perceived by the beginning teacher, mentors and more experienced peers, and administrators. In this theory, Vygotsky asserts that a learner can reach higher levels of development with the assistance of teachers or more competent peers than he or she could

without such help. I wanted to see if the participants felt that the beginning teacher had reached a higher level of development with the supports than she could have done otherwise.

Phase One

Research protocols for the national project called for an observation of each team during a common planning time meeting and an interview with a team member regarding the experience within common planning time. I interviewed the most experienced teacher from each of the three teams to gain insight into what happens during common planning time, particularly when a new teacher is part of the team. I conducted these observations and interviews during the first and second weeks of January, which was the beginning of the second semester. Several data sources were used to triangulate the data, including field notes from the observations and informal conversations with study participants, interview transcripts of the recordings of the interviews, and my researcher journal notes that recorded my impressions and questions.

For the first phase of data collection, I used both observation and interview protocols developed by the national project leaders. The interview protocol is a scripted interview protocol, designed to increase the reliability of data collection by participant researchers. This protocol was used “as is” (see Appendix A for the interview protocol and Appendix B for the observation protocol.) I audiotaped each of the interviews so that I could not only work more reliably with the data, but I could also refer back to the tapes if I needed to check for clarity or accuracy (Seidman, 2006). The interviews were professionally transcribed. I had the entire interviews transcribed instead of selecting portions so that I could avoid making what Seidman calls “premature judgments about what is important and what is not” (p. 115). I asked the transcriptionist to be verbatim in the work, including as many nonverbal signals as could be heard on the tapes.

I used the informed consent forms, developed by the national project leaders, for the first phase. These forms provided participants with information concerning the storage of data in a national database (see Appendix C for Informed Consent Forms.) Participants were assured of confidentiality in that neither their names nor the name of their school would ever be used in any written report that used the data. Anonymity cannot be promised, however, because the need to link the data from the observations to that from the interviews requires that names be listed to establish a coding system. Pseudonyms for the names of participants, even for the initial coding list, were used. The school's actual name was used in the data transferred to the national database so that other researchers accessing the national database can make comparisons between schools. New pseudonyms will be used for both names and schools in any publications or presentations of findings, including this dissertation. Data transferred to the national database will be maintained on a secure (password-protected) server at Portland State University. Only researchers who have participated in a training session for the national project and agreed to abide by the guidelines will be given access to the national database. Researchers who took part in a training session are allowed to use the data that they individually collect for the national project for their own research and related publications. Since I participated in a training session for the national project in November 2007, I can use all the data collected in phase one for my dissertation study.

Phase Two

Data collection during phase two of the study focused on the sixth grade team that participated in phase one, for reasons already discussed. Although I had hoped to do a combination of personal and videotaped observations, these were difficult to arrange due to interruptions to scheduled meetings and the spontaneous nature of other meetings during the team's common planning time and the resulting difficulty of arranging coverage for my own

classes in order to conduct observations. In order to gather usable data, I asked the beginning teacher to audiotape the team and content meetings in which she participated. I used transcripts of these audiotapes to identify the kinds of support offered to the beginning teacher. Because I had to rely on the team participants to remember to audiotape meetings, I did not obtain as much data as I would have liked. I did get information from both the content and team meetings held during the months of February, March, and May. I interviewed the beginning teacher and the identified mentors three times – in February, March, and May. These recorded interviews took place at the school, after the school day was over. Each interview lasted approximately 35 to 45 minutes. Both the observations and the interviews were professionally transcribed. I asked the transcriptionist to do the work verbatim, including as many nonverbal signals as could be heard on the tapes.

During the second phase, I also interviewed Ms. Carlson (a pseudonym), the school's assistant principal who was the administrator in charge of the school's induction program. I interviewed her in both February and May. The first interview focused on obtaining background information for the JCMS induction program as well as her perceptions of the value of common planning time as an induction support for beginning teachers. The second interview sought her insight on the use of common planning time to support this particular beginning teacher over the course of the 2008-2009 year (see Appendix D for Administrator Interview Protocol.) Although I asked to examine documents related to the school's induction program, there were none to examine for the current induction model. Background information about the school's induction program is shared later in this chapter.

As in phase one, I used data from many sources to triangulate any findings from the research. Those sources included field notes from observations, field notes from any informal

conversations with study participants and from formal interviews, transcripts of the audio recordings of the interviews, documents related to induction and common planning time, and my researcher journal notes. Table 1 depicts the data collection methods I used in this study alongside the research sub-questions. Each of the methods was intended to assist my exploration of all of the research questions.

The transcriptions of the audiotaped observations of team and content meetings held during common planning time were analyzed according to Bartell's (2005) categories of support needed by beginning teachers to determine the types of support (e.g., procedural, content, pedagogical, classroom management, etc.) offered to the beginning teacher during these meetings. See Table 2 in Chapter 3 for these categories and examples of the needs in each category. These observations informed the focus of the semi-structured interviews with the beginning teacher and the mentor teachers. These interviews focused on exploring both the types of supports provided to the beginning teacher during common planning time meetings and the effectiveness of these supports in helping the new teacher develop new teaching competencies. To provide a starting point for the interviews, I asked both the beginning teacher and the mentors to assess the new teacher's progress in professional skills using a form based on Feiman-Nemser's (2001a) framework describing the central tasks of learning to teach (see Table 3).

Feiman-Nemser (2001a) developed this framework to illustrate the professional learning continuum that should connect preservice teacher preparation, induction, and professional development over the course of a teacher's career. This study focused on the induction phase within the framework. I made connections between the types of support provided during the common planning time meetings to the kinds of learning the beginning teacher was developing, as noted according to frameworks developed by Bartell (2005) and Feiman-Nemser (2001a). Use

Table 1

Research Questions and Data Collection Methods

Research Question	Data Collection Method(s)
1. What happens during common planning time in relation to the induction of beginning teachers?	
a. What happens during common planning time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from observations - Transcripts from audio recordings of observations - Researcher journal notes
b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purposes, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from interviews - Transcripts of audio recordings of interviews - Field notes from informal conversations
c. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from interviews - Field notes from informal conversations - Transcripts from audio recordings of Interviews - Transcripts from audio recordings of common planning time team and content meetings
d. What are the effects on beginning teachers of the induction supports provided to them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from interviews and informal conversations - Transcripts from audio recordings of interviews and team and content meetings - Researcher journal notes
e. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from observations - Transcripts from audio recordings of observations and interviews - Field notes from informal conversations
f. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from interviews - Transcripts from audio recordings of interviews - Field notes from informal conversations
g. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Field notes from interviews - Transcripts from audio recordings of interviews - Field notes from informal conversations

Table 2

New Teachers' Needs Addressed in Induction Programs

Category	Examples
Procedural	Familiarity with school and district policies and expectations for personnel
Managerial	Classroom management strategies; time management; setting up the classroom; getting materials and supplies; scheduling; taking attendance; grading practices; keeping records
Psychological	Managing stress; gaining self-confidence; handling challenges and disappointments; transitioning from student to teacher role; attending to physical and emotional well-being
Instructional	Grade-level curriculum standards and expectations; lesson planning; instructional resources; assessing student progress and using results to shape instruction; using a variety of instructional practices; adapting instruction to meet individual student needs
Professional	Teaching norms and practices; appropriate boundaries and relationships between faculty and students; legal issues; the role of professional organizations; professional development opportunities
Cultural	Developing rapport with students and parents; understanding and appreciating environment; using community resources; valuing diversity; developing cultural proficiency
Political	Getting to know colleagues; contributing to extracurricular program; building relationships with colleagues, staff, and administrators; understanding the broader context of teaching and reform efforts

Note. From *Cultivating High-Quality Teaching Through Induction and Mentoring* (p. 17), by C. A. Bartell, 2005, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. © 2005 by Corwin Press. Reprinted with permission.

Table 3

Central Tasks of Learning to Teach

Preservice	Induction	Continuing Professional Development
1. Examine beliefs critically in relation to vision of good teaching	1. Learn the context students, curriculum, school community	1. Extend and deepen subject matter knowledge for teaching
2. Develop subject matter knowledge for teaching	2. Design responsive instructional programs	2. Extend and refine repertoire in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
3. Develop an understanding of learners, learning, and issues of diversity	3. Create a classroom learning community	3. Strengthen skills and dispositions to study and improve teaching
4. Develop a beginning repertoire	4. Enact a beginning repertoire	4. Expand responsibilities and develop leadership skills
5. Develop the tools and dispositions to study teaching	5. Develop a professional identity	

Note. From “From Preparation to Practice: Designing a Continuum to Strengthen and Sustain Teaching,” by S. Feiman-Nemser, 2001a, *Teachers College Record*, 103(6), p.1050. ©2001 by Teachers College. Reprinted with permission.

of Bartell's framework provided me with categories, based on the literature of induction and teacher quality, for the supports offered to or sought by the beginning teacher. The use of Feiman-Nemser's (2001a) framework provided a starting point for participants to assess the beginning teacher's progress in the development of her professional skills. The use of these frameworks provided a strong research base for my study.

I used a separate informed consent form for participants in the second phase of data collection. This form presented both videotaping and audiotaping techniques as possible data-gathering strategies. Pseudonyms were used for all participants as well as the school, although a master list was maintained to help me keep the relationships clear during data analysis. This master list was held separately from the other data in a locked cabinet. Audio tapes were stored in a locked file cabinet. Audio data will be deleted within six months of publishing the dissertation. Transcripts of the interviews and observations, field notes, and the researcher journal will be maintained for up to two years in case they are needed to publish or present the data.

Context of the Study

Guba and Lincoln (1989) identify transferability as the qualitative equivalent to external validity, or generalizability. According to Mertens (2005), in order to transfer the findings of a study, a reader must determine the amount of similarity between the study site and his or her own situation. In order for readers to make such a determination, the researcher must provide enough descriptive data about the study in order for the reader to determine context similarity (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 2007).

Context of the School

Johnson City Middle School (JCMS) is the only middle school in the Johnson City System. This system is a small, rural system in north Georgia with a long history of academic excellence (Carlson, 2007). Among its most recent noteworthy accomplishments include its designation as a 2008 Distinguished Title I school, its designation as a 2005 Platinum School, exceeding the requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for eight consecutive years under the provisions of the *2001 No Child Left Behind Act*, and scoring as one of the top five systems on several sections of the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency tests (personal conversation with JCMS principal, January 20, 2009). Beginning in the late 1990s, the system began to experience significant growth as the metropolitan Atlanta area expanded. As a result, the system's student population grew more than 70% from 2000 through 2007 (Hopkins, 2006). Since then, system growth has slowed, although the trend is still upward (personal conversation with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent, August 19, 2008).

With the growth in population also came changes in demographics. The school's poverty level (as measured by the number of students qualifying for the federal free or reduced price lunch program) increased from 26% in 2003 to 34% in 2008, resulting in the school being designated a Title 1 School at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year (conversation with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent, July 9, 2008). The Title 1 designation meant that the school received additional federal funds to assist students who struggle academically (conversation with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent, July 9, 2008). One of the ways JCMS used these funds was to fund the position of an Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) for language arts (conversation with JCMS principal, July 9, 2008). The ILT position was created to increase the rigor of language arts instruction in the school by teaching a pull-out class of high

achieving students at each grade level as well as working with all language arts teachers in the school on lesson planning and curriculum development. Scheduling difficulties the first year resulted in the ILT teaching the pull-out classes only in the sixth and seventh grades, leaving her with an additional planning period. Administrators arranged her schedule so that she had common planning time with both the sixth and seventh grades, allowing her to work with the beginning teacher in the sixth grade and the second-year seventh grade teacher.

The middle school, housing the sixth through eighth grades, opened in 2002. Prior to that time, students in the seventh and eighth grades were housed in a wing of the high school while sixth grade students were housed in the elementary school (personal communication with JCMS principal, July 11, 2007). The middle school opened with a population of 325 students. In the fall of 2006, 21 new classrooms were added to accommodate student growth. The 2008-2009 school year began with a student population of 615 (personal conversation with JCMS registrar, August 19, 2008).

The JCMS building is organized in a radial pattern from a central office and commons area, with connections classrooms on both outside wings and the sixth, seventh and eighth grade academic classrooms each on separate halls in between. There are two teams on each grade level. The classrooms of team members are all located within close proximity to each other, with student bathrooms, various storage closets and a book room serving to divide the two teams somewhat.

Context of Induction Program

For most of its short history, JCMS relied on a mentoring program staffed by teachers holding the Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) endorsement. The purpose of the endorsement is to train experienced teachers to provide support and guidance to student and beginning teachers and

promote the professional growth of experienced colleagues. To receive this endorsement, certified educators in Georgia must participate in an approved program, consisting of both a class and an internship, offered by a state college or university or one of the states Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA's). Educators seeking the TSS endorsement receive 50 hours of instruction in effective teaching practices, adult learning theory, and observation and conferencing skills. The program emphasizes peer coaching and collaborative structures that offer support to beginning or struggling teachers (Northeast Georgia RESA, n.d.)

State support for this program ended just as growth at JMS burgeoned (personal conversation with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent, July 8, 2006). The system funded the program locally, with mentors receiving a supplement in return for providing documentation of 45 hours of work with the new teacher (communication with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent, July 8, 2006).

By the 2006-2007 school year, only three mentor teachers were available to meet the needs of ten new teachers at JCMS (personal communication with Johnson City Schools associate superintendent). Knowing that teacher growth had not ended, Barbara Carlson (pseudonym), JCMS assistant principal and the administrator in charge of the school's induction program, worked with system administrators to plan a comprehensive induction program that began in the 2006-2007 school year. I was asked to both help plan and facilitate the monthly after-school meetings of this induction program. Called the New Teacher Network (NTN), the program included a building-level orientation day prior to the district-wide orientation for new teachers before the beginning of school year, release time for new teachers to observe in the classrooms of veteran teachers, and monthly after-school meetings for all teachers new to the school.

The format of the monthly meetings included ongoing support and networking opportunities that allowed the new teachers to address common dilemmas and administrative tasks faced by new teachers. The NTN program continued in the 2007-2008 school year and included all first- and second-year teachers. The format during the second year called for the monthly meetings to be held during the teachers' planning periods since the participating teachers were on either the seventh grade team or the connections team.

By the 2008-2009 school year, the teacher population at JCMS had stabilized, and only three new teachers were hired. Assistant Principal Carlson felt that a return to the TSS-endorsed mentor model was a more appropriate induction model for the three teachers new to JCMS that year. Two of the new teachers were second- year teachers, both of whom worked in eighth grade mathematics. The third new teacher was a first-year teacher in the sixth grade. A teacher with the TSS endorsement was available in both grade levels to work with these new teachers during common planning periods. Although the sixth grade assigned mentor teacher (who had the TSS endorsement) did not work in the same content area as the new teacher, the school's new Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) for language arts was given a shared planning period with the new sixth grade teacher to assist her with content planning. The ILT was also given a shared planning period with the seventh grade language arts teachers, one of whom was the second year teacher included in phase one of the study. Carlson reported that since no TSS-endorsed teacher was available in the seventh grade to work with the second year teacher, content support from the ILT during common planning time would most appropriately meet her needs. Although the ILT did not have the TSS endorsement, Carlson indicated that, as language arts department head, she had worked extensively with the language arts curriculum standards, attending several workshops on how to incorporate the standards into lesson planning and development.

Administrators felt that these experiences had adequately prepared her to provide the needed content support for these beginning teachers.

Context of the Study Team

The sixth grade team chosen for the focus of study during phase two of this study consisted of the beginning teacher Jackie Sanders (language arts teacher), Shelly Banks (social studies teacher), Will Marks (special education inclusion teacher for math and language arts), Carly Simonton (science teacher), and Ella Walker (math teacher). (Pseudonyms were used for all teachers' names.) This team was a new team after administrators made extensive changes at the end of the 2007-2008 school year and over the ensuing summer. JCMS administrators made the decision to switch the science and social studies teachers on each of the school's academic teams so that all teams in the school were actually "new" teams during the 2008-2009 year. Walker was asked to move from a special education inclusion position to teach the general education math classes. Marks, formerly a special education inclusion teacher in the eighth grade, was asked to move to the same position in the sixth grade. (The special education inclusion teacher co-teaches with the general education teacher in content classes.) Finally, Jessica Becker, the team's language arts teacher, became the ILT for language arts, as discussed earlier.

Even though the study team was in its first year of working together, most of the teachers were familiar with each other and the school. Simonton had been at JCMS for seven years; she also served as the science department head for the school. Banks had taught language arts and social studies at JCMS for eight years; she had also been Sanders's mentor teacher during her student teaching experience the previous year. Walker had been a special education inclusion teacher in the sixth grade for ten years, co-teaching in all four content classrooms during those

years. Becker, the newly appointed ILT in language arts, taught sixth grade language arts for ten years prior to her appointment; she also served as department head for language arts at the school. Even Sanders, the beginning teacher was fairly well known to the other teachers on her team after both her student teaching experience in the sixth grade the previous year and several years of working as a substitute teacher for the school system. Marks had possibly the least history with the team since his previous year in the eighth grade had been his first year at JCMS.

Context of the New Teacher

Jackie Sanders, the first-year teacher who was the focus of this study, had completed all of the requirements for certification except student teaching some twenty years earlier. She did not do the student teaching experience because she did not want to leave her position as an administrative assistant for Georgia's Secretary of State, which included scheduling appointments and handling constituent issues. After receiving a bachelor's degree, she continued working in this position for more 12 years. After having children, she stayed home for 13 years, starting an out-of-state, on-line program to complete her teaching credentials in middle grades social studies so that she could start teaching when her youngest child started school. During this time, she also worked as a substitute teacher in the Johnson City School System.

Sanders did her student teaching in sixth grade social studies at JCMS during the first semester of the 2007-2008 school year, with Banks serving as her supervising mentor teacher. During the second semester of that school year, she worked as a long-term substitute in science on the other sixth grade team. Sanders was hired just two weeks before the start of the 2008-2009 school year to teach language arts – not her initial area of certification. She passed a state certification test in middle grades language arts as a requirement of taking the position.

Context of the Researcher

According to Anderson et al. (2007), researchers who study their own schools bring their past experiences and conclusions they have drawn about their schools to their research; this knowledge is an important source of data that must be examined critically. They further assert that “Carefully thinking through one’s positionality within an organization is important in understanding how it may impact the trustworthiness of the findings and the ethics of the research process” (p. 9). To that end, I explore my own position at JCMS, particularly within the context of the induction program.

The 2008-2009 school year, when this study was conducted, represented my sixth year at JCMS and my twentieth year of teaching overall. Although I taught math my first year at JCMS, the rest of my teaching career has been in language arts. Given the number of new teachers at the school over the past few years, I am a veteran teacher in the language arts department. Finally, I started my doctoral program when I moved to JCMS, and many of the colleagues there have experienced this journey with me. However, these factors—the extent of my teaching experience and my doctoral work--can make other teachers feel nervous about being observed, particularly since many of the observations were in language arts, my field of expertise. On the other hand, I think the fact that I have never taught sixth grade lessened any anxiety felt by the focus team since I would not be considered “an expert” on the needs and expectations at that grade level, even in the area of language arts.

As mentioned earlier, I was involved in planning and implementing the induction program used at JCMS during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years. My main responsibility was facilitating the monthly meetings during which we discussed common dilemmas and administrative tasks that the new teachers typically faced. I also frequently

touched base with the new teachers before or after school to see how they were doing. Thus, I also had a reputation in the school for being concerned about the needs of new teachers.

Before the study started in the second semester of the 2008-2009 school year, I felt I already had a good working relationship with all the study participants, including the seventh and eighth grade teams in phase one. All expressed pleasure at being able to help me complete the requirements for my doctoral program. I did face an interesting dilemma in the summer before school started after talking to the assistant principal about the change in the induction program and realizing I might be able to conduct my study at the school. During the course of our conversation, the assistant principal shared that she was trying to find some supplies for the new teacher. I knew that I had extra supplies in my room as well as some extra language arts bulletin board materials that I could share. I had to ask myself if I was willing to share these materials to possibly smooth the way to secure the new teacher's willingness to participate in the study. However, I have always shared materials with new teachers as needed. Also, I knew that I had not even presented the idea to my committee, so I could very well end up not doing the study at the school. In the end, I shared the materials with a clear conscience because I would have done so even if the study had not been a factor.

Data Analysis

In the first phase of data collection, I used an inductive constant comparative method to analyze both the observations and interview transcriptions. An inductive analysis begins with specific observations and moves toward general patterns or themes that develop across the data (Patton, 2002). These patterns were used to develop categories for coding the data for analysis. Using an inductive method meant that I had to "come to the transcripts with an open attitude, seeking what emerges as important and of interest from the text" (p. 117) rather than trying to

match the data to preconceived ideas. Use of a constant-comparative method indicates that data from each of the interviews were compared for common patterns that develop (Silverman, 2006). The constant comparative method allowed me to examine evidence from the multiple sources of support offered to the beginning teacher. The inductive analysis revealed general themes that indicated the new knowledge and skills the beginning teacher developed through these interactions with others. Member checking was done by offering interview participants the opportunity to review transcriptions for clarity of meaning.

During the first phase, I analyzed the observations for common themes that indicated what these teachers did during common planning time. In analyzing the interviews, I looked for themes related to the experienced teachers' perceptions of the purposes and benefits of common planning time as well as barriers to its effective use. In the second phase of data collection, the audio-recorded observations were initially coded inductively to determine the kinds of activities that occurred in the meetings. I asked questions such as "What is this an example of?" or "What is going on?" as ways to make sense of the initial data. I looked at the data a second time using a focused coding method based on Bartell's (2005) categories of support needed by beginning teachers: procedural, managerial, psychological, instructional, professional, cultural, and political. See Table 2 for examples of the needs in each category. Focused coding, according to Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland (2006) is a more selective and conceptual coding that knits together larger chunks of data to answer more selective questions. These larger chunks of data are classified in categories of meaning that have been preestablished in terms of theory or prior research, in this case, Bartell's framework. Using this framework helped me connect my findings to prior research on the types of support offered to or sought by the beginning teacher.

Researcher's Assumptions and Biases

I entered this study as a white female who had 20 years experience teaching at the middle grades level. Although extensive in the number of years, my teaching experience has occurred in only two schools, both of which have been in rural areas with student populations of less than 800 students. To date, I have earned three college degrees, and I conducted this study to complete the requirements for a doctorate in middle grades education. My age, experience, and education may be intimidating, particularly for beginning teachers. However, I also have a passion for supporting and encouraging beginning teachers due to my own experiences as both a beginning teacher and a mentor. This personal empathy allowed me to build a rapport with the participants that conveys “that I respect the people being interviewed, so what they say is important because of who is saying it. . . their knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and feelings are important. . . I will not judge them for the content of what they say to me” (Patton, 2002, pp. 365-366).

Since I conducted the study in my own school, my work became an example of “insider” research, a term used by Anderson, Herr, and Nihlen (2007) to describe research done by practitioners using their own site as the focus of the study. The study is not the traditional action research where I implemented a series of interventions in my own classroom and observed the effects in an attempt to improve my own practice (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Noffke, 1997). However, I did have insider, or local, knowledge about the setting that gave me advantages and access an outsider would not have. This insider knowledge did, at times, cause some awkward moments during observations of meetings as the teachers being observed felt like they needed to include me in the conversations, and I, at times, had to bite my tongue to keep from inserting comments or observations. These experiences showed me the wisdom of Anderson et al.’s

(2007) caution that “carefully thinking through one’s positionality within an organization is important in understanding how it may impact the trustworthiness of the findings and the ethics of the research process” (p. 9).

I did bring to the study, however, knowledge of the individuals involved and the procedures I needed to follow to obtain access to conduct the study. I also had working relationships with the individuals involved in the study, including the first-year teacher, who had worked as a substitute teacher in our school prior to completing the requirements for certification. All of the individuals involved have followed my doctoral studies over the course of my years at the school, and they were all eager to help me complete the requirements in any way they could. They also knew that my interest in teacher induction was genuine since I had helped lead the school’s new teacher induction program for the two years prior to my study. A reduction in the number of new teachers at the school had led to a change in induction models, meaning that I was no longer actively involved in the induction efforts. These factors increased my trustworthiness in the eyes of the participants.

I brought to this study a firm belief in the need for comprehensive induction support for beginning teachers. Even though I planned to inductively analyze the data, allowing the data to reveal patterns, my own beliefs necessarily influenced the patterns that I recognized. I have also read extensively in the literature on induction; I tried to set that knowledge aside when analyzing the data, although I took it up again during the interpretation process.

CHAPTER 4

PHASE ONE RESULTS

This study was connected to the National Middle Grades Research Project on common planning time, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. The purpose of the national project was to find out what interdisciplinary teacher teams do when they meet during common planning time. I was able to meld this focus with my interest in supporting new teachers when designing my study. The focus of my study was on interdisciplinary teams that included a beginning teacher (one to two years of experience) to see if common planning time was used to provide induction supports to the beginning teachers. Before looking specifically at induction supports provided through common planning time, I needed to see what happened during team meetings held during common planning time. To that end, the first phase of the study looked at an interdisciplinary team at each grade level (sixth, seventh, and eighth) in the school. Interview and observation protocols developed by the national project leaders were used to gather data. The research subquestions which guided the first phase of the study include the following:

- a. What happens during common planning time?
- b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purpose, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?

I observed all three teams during the first two weeks of January 2009, which was the beginning of the second semester. All three meetings focused on student-related issues. After completing the observations, I interviewed the most senior member of each team for a more

complete understanding of what teams do during common planning time. I will describe the observation and interview for each grade level before summarizing the commonalities among them.

Sixth Grade

Observation

The sixth grade meeting focused on students at-risk of retention after the first semester. Participants included Sophie Banks (social studies teacher), Jill Sanders (first year language arts teacher), Carly Simonton (science teacher), and Evie Walker (math teacher). About half-way through the meeting, Will Marks (special education inclusion teacher) joined the team after concluding another meeting. The meeting was held in Walker's room. Banks, Sanders, and Simonton sat in student desks pulled together in the middle of the room while Walker sat at the computer behind her desk in order to both take notes from the meeting and to reference notes saved from an earlier meeting. The meeting lasted 45 minutes.

The teachers began by reviewing decisions made during parent conferences held at the end of the first semester. Walker led this discussion by reading from a saved document on the computer. Simonton and Banks referred to their copies of this document, a chart that detailed interventions for each student and the teacher who was responsible for each intervention. Sanders jotted notes on a pad of paper, having forgotten to bring her copy of the chart to the meeting. During these conferences, teachers and parents had agreed on interventions to help students who were at-risk of failing due to poor grades. Some of the interventions they had agreed upon involved having teachers check on struggling students at different times of the day. Sanders was to talk to identified students in the morning to make sure they had completed homework assignments; Simonton would work with students to organize their notebooks and lockers; and

Walker and Marks (who was not present at the time of this discussion) would make sure the identified students had the necessary homework materials at the end of the day. As these interventions were read out, teachers jotted down notes to themselves and orally confirmed they would follow through.

While reviewing the interventions and teachers responsible for each one, the teachers carried on a discussion of the differences in student behavior in different periods. Sanders, the beginning teacher, seemed to spark the discussion with the following exchange:

Sanders: *Why is it that some of these students do fine in my class but not in others or the other way around?*

Walker: *Well, if you look at it, some of them don't do as well in classes just after lunch – maybe they need to move around some or they get sleepy. Some of them don't do well in the morning – maybe their meds haven't take effect yet. It really all depends on the time of the day and what subject hits then.*

Simonton and Banks joined the discussion with examples of specific students, with Sanders and Walker also sharing examples of relevant student behaviors in their classes.

After they finished discussing the students on their list from the winter conferences, Sanders asked the group in general, “*How do you decide on interventions for different students?*” After Walker told everyone that she would send everyone an updated copy of the intervention chart, she and Banks offered some general suggestions for interventions before Simonton offered a more specific suggestion:

Simonton: *You know, I've found it helpful to keep a copy of this chart in my plan book (holds up chart from her plan book) so I always have it in front of me. Also, as I look at all the modifications, that gives me other ideas to try with other students as well.*

Sanders: *Yeah, that would help. I would also have it with me when I come to these meetings instead of forgetting it.* (laughter from all)

From the review of the recent parent conferences, the team moved on to a discussion of students they now thought they needed to schedule for parent conferences including some gifted students whose grades were okay but whom the teachers seemed to collectively feel were not working up to their potential. They also identified additional students who were at-risk for failing for the year based on first semester averages, which were posted after the Christmas break. During this discussion, Sanders did not make any comments other than to agree with the other teachers, but she made notes of the discussion on her pad of paper. Marks came into the meeting about this time, offering the explanation that he had been waiting on a parent to hold an IEP (individualized educational plan) meeting. Upon hearing this, Walker lamented, *“It’s so difficult to get parents to respond for any of these meetings.”* Simonton reminded them, *“Administrators recommended that we hold these meetings even if parents do not attend. Of course, if a parent asks us to reschedule, we’ll do that – anything to help them join us.”* This comment seemed to calm the slight tension that everyone felt about the lack of parent response, and they settled down to continue their discussion. As they continued to discuss different students, Banks and Simonton each agreed to talk to the counselors about working with some students who were having issues such as organization and test anxiety. Finally, they agreed upon the days they wanted to set aside for parent meetings. Banks summarized their plan:

Banks: *Okay, we’ll set up the meetings for Tuesdays and Thursdays with four meetings each day. Maybe we can get some of these gifted students working like they should be if we can get their parents in. Good, that will still give us time to get things done.*

As they were winding up the meeting, Walker asked Simonton about something she had said to some students in one class. Simonton related the anecdote to laughter from everyone, and Walker related an amusing incident from her own class. That led to Simonton sharing a success story of a student who had met goals the teachers had previously set, and Banks, Sanders, and Walker chimed in with other good reports as well that had resulted from a parent starting a student on medication. Everyone left the meeting on a positive note, with smiles on their faces and laughter in their voices.

It was interesting to note that Marks did not participate much in the discussion after coming into the meeting late. He smiled pleasantly and nodded or murmured in general agreement to whatever was decided, but he did not make any specific contributions.

Interview

Following the team observation, I interviewed Banks because she was the senior member on the team. Although both Banks and Walker had been at the school the same length of time, Banks had slightly more experience overall. Also, Banks had started her own doctoral program when I was about halfway through mine. We had frequently discussed the difficulties involved in this shared journey, and she always offered to help me with my study in any way she could. Therefore, I knew she would be willing to take the time required for the interview, not only to help me, but also to gain her own insight into the process.

She confirmed what I had observed in the team meeting – interdisciplinary team meetings during common planning time focus mainly on student issues. Activities that she indicated typically occur during their team meetings include the following:

- *staying in touch with each other,*
- *addressing our students' needs,*

- *support each other's [academic] objectives*
- *addressing at-risk students and behavior issues*
- *brainstorm strategies to help our students*
- *plan parent communication*
- *meet with parents*
- *tweak the schedule*
- *worked on interdisciplinary units together*
- *vent*
- *support each other.*

She felt that having the time [during their common planning time] and opportunity to carry out these activities had resulted in positive benefits for everyone on the team. Specifically, she indicated, *"Our team has done a really good job of communicating to our parents."* The result of that was, *"We have been able to correct minor behavior issues that could turn into lasting habits that could be a problem in seventh and eighth grade."* She also felt the team had communicated to the students that they cared about them: *"We help them come up with action plans to solve whatever the problem is, whether it is behavior, organization, or academic"* as well as *"We help the students realize that everything ties together rather than just having random lessons."* Finally, benefits for teachers included *"the encouragement to get through a bad day as well as ideas to improve both behavior management and lesson planning."*

When asked about administrative requirements for their common planning, Banks said there were very few: *"Each team is supposed to document at least 100 minutes a week of a combination of team or content planning,"* but she said, *"We don't feel like they police us. We are not mandated to meet on certain days, but we have the freedom to have impromptu meetings*

as needed.” Administrators “meet with the entire grade level once a month to check in, but they are also available if we need them to sit in on other meetings.” She opined “That (monthly meetings) works out well for the administrators as well because they have got us all together at one time. . . work out whatever it is together. . . that saves them a bunch of time instead of eight or ten individual conferences.” While administrators do schedule required trainings, such as one for an upcoming standardized writing assessment, Banks felt, “They (administrators) are judicious in scheduling such meetings and do not try to plan every meeting for us.”

When asked how she had been prepared to use common planning time effectively, Banks could not pinpoint anything specific. Since her undergraduate and master’s degrees were outside of the field of education, she definitely did not hear about common planning time in those programs, nor did she hear about use of common planning time in her certification program in secondary education. She did remember, *“I heard it [common planning time] mentioned in various trainings I participated in at the middle school, such as Learning Focused Schools and the classes I took for the Teacher Support Specialist endorsement.”* Otherwise, *“The only instruction I received was in casual conversations during a faculty or department meeting when an administrator mentioned meeting during common planning time.”*

When asked what she considered the ideal use of common planning time, Banks indicated, *“It’s when you can meet with other people in your content area. . . and plan content.”* While she thinks this would be “awesome,” she also admitted, *“I have not been able to take advantage of such time because my counterpart on the other team is hard to pin down due to his year-round coaching responsibilities.”* However, she added, *“I have observed other teachers using the time like this, and I think it makes teaching much easier.”* She thought, *“Meeting with a content colleague [same content teacher on the other grade-level team] during common*

planning time would do for my curriculum planning what meeting with my interdisciplinary team did for managing student issues. . . provide me with new ideas and strategies to try. . . improve my ideas, . . . and make me feel less isolated in my work.”

Finally, Banks thought barriers to the effective use of common planning time included “lack[ing] the discipline to show up” due to things like “*getting caught up in coaching responsibilities,*” “*work[ing] on their class they are taking,*” or “*just socializing.*” She also indicated “*The timing of planning has a lot to do with its effective use; for example, my team has planning at the end of the day, and I think that sometimes people are just tired and need some down time.*”

Perhaps the most interesting comment Banks made about utilizing common planning time was when she equated it to being a good teacher. According to her, “*Being a good teacher is having a good rapport with your colleagues and having that face-to-face time and solidifying the relationship.*” She said, “*The trust and good relationship I have built with my team means that sometimes I agree to do an activity they want to do that I did not really want to do – and hey, they are right.*” To her, that is a welcome position from being at the other end – without common planning time with anyone when “*I felt kind of abandoned. . . and didn’t feel a particular attachment to doing things when they asked me to.*”

Seventh Grade

Observation

Teachers present for the meeting included Sandy Michaels (special education inclusion teacher), Jane Murphy (science teacher), Tom Nations (social studies teacher), Reba Overs (math teacher), and Rachel Standage (second year language arts). Teachers entered and seated themselves on opposite sides of the room. Overs, in whose room they were meeting, sat behind

her desk and put away various papers on her desk as the meeting started. Michaels, who came in last, sat in a student desk by Overs. Nations, the team leader, pulled out a student desk to sit by the door to the hallway. Murphy sat in a desk him while Standage sat on a stool at the front of the room, close to the group by the door. The meeting lasted a total of 30 minutes.

Nations started the meeting, *“We need to discuss some rules we might want to review with the students, including morning procedures and dress code.”* Other teachers responded with illustrations of why these rules needed to be reviewed such as *“I’m seeing holes in jeans,” “No one is bringing a book to read to homeroom,” “They [students] are hanging out in the bathrooms in the mornings,”* and *“They want to just sit and talk during homeroom.”*

As the discussion moved to how to conduct the review, Standage suggested, *“We could develop a power point to use in homeroom to review these rules.”* Michaels agreed with that idea and suggested, *“We could have students highlight the rules in their agendas as we review them.”* Murphy suggested, *“We could share the power point with the other team so they could also use it.”* While Overs, Murphy, and Standage discussed how would work on the proposed power point presentation, Michaels asked Nations, *“Are we back to homeroom to pass out report cards or do it during last period?”* He answered very quickly, *“We’ll stay in last period”* before he turned his attention back to the discussion on the power point, jotting notes on his notepad.

A couple of interruptions occurred in the middle of this discussion. Nations yelled out the door as a student passed by, *“Where are you going?”* to which the student responded that he was going to another teacher’s room. A few minutes later, a scuffle could be heard in the hall; when Nations returned from investigating, he reported, *“Four students were in the restroom just goofing around.”* After he made this report, Michaels, Standage, and Overs made similar comments, including, *“This is why we need to review these rules!”* and *“This just proves our*

point!” Michaels suggested, *“We need to add expectations for behavior in the halls and restrooms to the list of rules and procedures to review with the students”* while Murphy, Overs, and Standage added their verbal agreement. Nations clarified from his notes, *“We want the students to read or do homework during homeroom time instead of the talking they are currently doing.”* The other teachers chimed in with general agreement.

While Nations worked on his notes of what to mention to the other team, Michaels mentioned, *“I’m having problems with the students in Nations’ homeroom when I cover on the days he has learning lab duty.”* She went on to add, *“I think since I’m inclusion teacher and don’t teach any of them, they think they don’t have to listen to me.”* Overs offered, *“I’ll go into his homeroom and you can stay in mine since you’re in here first period anyway.”* Nations also offered, *“I’ll definitely talk to them to remind them how they are supposed to act for you.”* No final decision was made on whether Michaels would continue to cover for Nations or whether Overs would go into his room instead.

The discussion returned to the review of rules and procedures when Standage asked Nations, *“Can you send an email to the entire grade level about reminding students of these rules and procedures?”* During the entire time, teachers were talking over each other as they shared examples of ways students were not meeting their expectations.

Overs brought up another subject: *“Don’t forget that we’re starting to do office referrals with some of our students for on-going discipline problems.”* As this discussion started, Nations broke in to confirm items the team wanted to revisit with students. He added, *“Some students are also late going to silent lunch,”* all of the others chimed in with names of specific students they had seen coming in late and how late they were arriving. When Nations asked, *“Do we want to*

add this item to the list to discuss with students?” everyone agreed with comments such as “Yes,” “Certainly,” and “You bet.”

After writing this on his list, Nations commented, “*Some are intentionally doing wrong while others just seem oblivious.*” The others chimed in with agreement and started offering up names as examples of each case. Nations returned to Overs’s earlier comment with the reminder, “*I’ve told administrators that we’re going to just start writing office referrals for some of these students.*” After the teachers agreed on which students would start receiving office referrals for repeated discipline violations, Michaels informed everyone, “*Just to let you know, Student X is having medical issues and should be allowed to go to the restroom whenever she asks without a pass.*” No one commented on this item, but Overs, Murphy, and Nations nodded their heads.

The next item brought up for discussion was break. Murphy commented, “*Since the weather has been cold and muddy outside, the students should be kept indoors to make things easier on the custodians.*” A general discussion ensued on this comment about where teachers needed to stand to better monitor students if they were kept on the hall. With everyone talking at once, it was impossible to keep up with who said what. Finally, Overs suggested, “*We need to discuss this with the other team as well,*” but no one mentioned who would do so or when this would happen.

In the middle of this discussion about break, Standage walked over to Michaels, and they had a quiet side discussion about their practice of selling snacks during break. Standage asked, “*Are we going to continue selling snacks?*” When Michaels declared, “*It’s really not worth the time to sell the stuff.*” Standage nodded her head in agreement before walking back to her seat on the stool. Their discussion was too brief and too quiet to be noticed by the other teachers, and neither brought it up to the rest of the group or took the lead to pursue the matter.

Nations returned the discussion to homeroom issues by stating, *“Student Y consistently comes to homeroom with no materials and then he’s not prepared to read or do homework.”*

Overs, Standage, and Michaels chimed in with anecdotes of similar student excuses such as losing notebooks, couldn’t textbooks, and needing to go to the media center. Again, the teachers were all talking over each other to share their examples. Finally, Murphy offered, *“Well student B – remember we changed her schedule – has been doing a really good job in my class since we changed her schedule.”* Overs, Nations, and Standage agreed, and Overs added, *“I feel sort of sorry for her, though because she’s been separated from all of her friends now.”* Michaels and Murphy nodded sympathetically after this comment.

Standage brought up another student’s name and commented, *“I’m not sure if she understands what I expected of him or if he is just being oblivious.”* She then immediately asked, *“What about Student C who was involved in an altercation in the hall this morning before school?”* Nations informed the rest, *“I took him to the office during second period for being disruptive.”* Overs commented, *“Surely he’ll be in line for ISS (in-school suspension) at this point.”* Michaels then mentioned, *“Did you hear Student D mooing as he was coming down the hall this morning?”* to which the others laughed and nodded their heads

The group continued this discussion of students with whom they were frustrated. Nations commented, *“They don’t seem to connect their classroom behaviors and work habits with the grades they receive!”* Again, teachers were talking over each other so that it was hard to distinguish any real comments. When Nations prompted, *“Remember we told administrators we were going to start writing them up and sending them to the office”* the others agreed by making comments like, *“Yes,” “Okay,”* and *“Right.”*

When Overs brought up one student's name, Standage and Nations immediately identified him as a student not prepared for their classes. Overs, however, shared, "*He has started improving in her class since I moved him to the back of the room.*" She added, "*He often works ahead of the class, but at least he is working.*" Nations then reported, "*The principal told a student he would go to ISS if he had not completed his work.*" It was not clear which student he was discussing at this point, and the other teachers made no comment.

At this point, Overs started writing on the board in preparation for her afternoon classes. The others started getting up to leave. Some general conversation lingered, but the meeting was obviously over.

Interview

I interviewed Overs because she was the most senior member of the 7-Red team. She and one other teacher had three years experience at JCMS, but she had been teaching longer overall. She asked that we meet in my room so that she would not be interrupted by questions from cheerleaders. (She is the varsity cheerleading sponsor and thus also has overall responsibility for the middle school program as well.) Her answers were somewhat brief, and she did not respond to prompts to elaborate, possibly because she was watching the time in order to relieve the other sponsor who was watching her squad.

When asked about team meetings, Overs reported, "*We typically meet once a week for 20 to 30 minutes.*" During these meetings, "*We tend to discuss team and student issues so we can get ideas from each other and share what works and what doesn't work for different students.*" She indicated, "*When a student behaved better in one class than in the others, we might discuss things like what does that teacher do differently, where does the student sit, who does the student sit by in an attempt to help the student become successful in all classes.*"

Another thing teachers discussed during their team meetings was ways their content areas were interrelated. She indicated, *“I like to be aware of what the other classes are doing so I can talk about it with the students and point out how the concepts are the same.”* Examples she cited that had occurred recently included *“doing map coordinates in social studies and grids in math, as well as doing pie graphs in math when science was doing measurements and percents.”* She felt, *“Helping the students see such connections helps them better understand the material.”*

She also indicated, *“We discuss logistical issues, such as the grade-level field trip we are currently planning.”* Issues they discussed about the field trip included *“Where do we want to go, what content do we want to focus on.”* She did indicate, *“We do not typically coordinate tests and assignments unless it’s quarter exams. Sometimes teachers will refer to the weekly email sent to parents to see when other teachers have tests or projects due.”* According to her, *“The main activities that occur during team meetings are discussions of student issues and meetings with parents, which we do lots of times during planning.”* She also mentioned, *“Our goal for the year is to improve our unit plan – an interdisciplinary unit we had developed the previous year,”* although she did not indicate what the topic of the unit plan was.

When asked about meeting with the other team, she replied, *“We meet once a week, to discuss general student body issues or concerns,”* as well as logistical things like *“break and who is standing where, and the lunchroom and whose table is where, who gets restroom breaks at this time,”* etc. She indicated that these meetings usually focused on *“problems”* that arose, although she offered only the vague answer of *“not long”* for the length of time they usually met.

The main purpose Overs saw for common planning was *“to meet with my content colleague to discuss lesson planning and to make sure we are kind of doing the same things.”* In her opinion, *“this type of meeting has most changed my teaching”* because *“it allows me to share*

ideas with my counterpart.” She added that she felt “fortunate to work very closely with him.”

The result was that *“we both know exactly what goes on in each other’s classes since we have so much time to meet.”* She said, *“I think about it more before I teach because we do have time to go over things.”* The benefits of this time, according to Overs, included the time to *“bounce ideas off each other. . . I did this; it worked, or this didn’t work.”* She said, *“We discuss everything we do, down to the warm-ups we put on the board. . . we put a lot of thought into it all.”* While they met at least weekly, she said it was not uncommon to meet daily because *“a lot of times we do impromptu, hey, this has come up, can we discuss this kind of meetings.”*

Beyond the improvement to her content area, Overs felt that she had benefited from *“improved classroom management as a result of being able to discuss ideas with my team during common planning time.”* She felt, *“This helped students most by giving them structure, something I think is very important for middle school students.”* According to her, *“They really want it [structure] even though they don’t believe they do. . . . The same consequences follow you from room to room, and you don’t have to act this way and follow these rules in this room and those in that room.”* Overs felt that her view of the purpose of common planning time and the purpose expressed by school administrators was similar – *“to meet with content colleagues for lesson planning and to meet with your team to discuss team and student issues.”* She added, *“Administration does not put many requirements on our common planning time beyond requiring weekly minutes documenting the meetings. . . . We don’t get like an outline of what to do. . . it’s pretty open as to what we discuss, how long we meet.”* She indicated, *“Administrators do lead a grade-level meeting during our planning time once a month,”* but she did not otherwise expand on this meeting or other administrative involvement.

While Overs did not have any training related to the use of common planning time in her teacher preparation program, she did feel that *“professional development required by the school administration did help me better use this time.”* She offered as an example *“some inclusion trainings that were required,”* as well as *“department meetings that encouraged planning with your content colleague on the hall.”* She felt that *“these meetings were not really focused on helping teachers use common planning time more effectively, but it was nice.”*

She identified some things that administrators could do that would improve her use of common planning time. One thing she wanted to see was *“an outline of things to do or talk about.”* She also felt that sitting in on a meeting with *“a team that does a good job of using common planning time”* would be useful. She identified the one group in particular that her team sees as successful: *“We kind of always look at the sixth grade as being very good at planning stuff together, as a whole team they make it seem like it is easy.”* In her words, *“We never make it flow like they can.”*

Overs felt that common planning time benefited everyone involved. Individual teachers benefited from having a chance during the day to discuss common issues and concerns *“because it’s hard getting together before and after school”* while teams of teachers benefited from communication with each other and *“know[ing] what was going on.”* Students benefited from knowing that *“their teachers were all working together”* so that a *“team concept”* is developed. The school as a whole benefited in terms of better communication *“on teams, grades [levels], content areas, and administration.”*

The main barrier she saw to the effective use of common planning time is time. Even though administration provides the time for their planning, *“sometimes things come up.”* For her current team, she said that *“coaching responsibilities pull us in different directions sometimes,*

even during the middle of the school day.” Another barrier, in her opinion, would be “personalities.” She expanded, “It is very distracting for some team members to be off focus because I am very selfish with my time. . . and very focus-driven.” She particularly dislikes it when “you just kind of roll things around and no decisions are ever made when there are definite issues to be decided.” Another factor that she linked to personalities was “experience,” in terms of “what you know and what you can suggest that develops as a result of your years of experience. She also indicated that she has “the most number of years of experience on my team” and had worked “at the most schools” compared with the others on her team, so she felt that she “came with different ideas from different places.”

While Overs did think the ideal use of common planning time would be focused on *“discussing lessons more than student behavior, and how we can work together to reinforce what other teachers are doing in their classrooms,”* she also felt that *“creating a team atmosphere is also an important use of our time.”* She added that ideally, teachers would use the time *“just making sure that you are doing things consistently, so it doesn’t seem like four separate classrooms, but pretty much the same.”*

Overall, Overs could see no negatives that would result from the use of common planning time. She said, *“I would be disappointed if we were to lose the time because of my previous experience as a half-day teacher who did not have any planning time with the members of my team.”* [She worked mornings, and the team’s planning time was at the end of the day.] She reported that her previous experience was *“very difficult because I always felt out of the loop. . . I wasn’t in on any conversations on any of the kids or anything that would go on.”* She reiterated that she was glad to have a different experience now.

Eighth Grade

Observation

This is the only team meeting I observed where non-team members were present. The graduation coach (Bandy), school counselor (Brady), and assistant principal (Carlson) participated in the meeting, along with Bradford (science teacher), Manders (social studies teacher), Perkins (language arts teacher), Roberson (second year math teacher), and Winters (special education inclusion teacher). Although Carlson announced at the beginning that they (non-team members) hoped to finish up quickly and leave, all three stayed through the entire meeting. The seating arrangement appeared slightly adversarial at first, with the three non-team members sitting together on one side of the room by the door to the hallway, and the team members sitting in a loose group in student desks across the room. The attitude of the teachers seemed fairly relaxed, with one teacher sitting on a student desk and a couple of others lounging back in chairs with their feet propped up on desks. The meeting lasted a total of 55 minutes.

The assistant principal opened the meeting by referring everyone to a list of “*target students – students who were at-risk of retention after the first semester*” – she passed around. As she went over the list, she noted, “*I know that several of these students have been retained in previous years at the middle school. . . they are very unmotivated students who I know frequently bring nothing to class.*” Three teachers nodded their heads in agreement while two said, “*Yes.*” Carlson emphasized, “*None of us are here asking teachers to change grades, but we want to see what we can do to plan proactively for next semester.*”

Perkins commented, “*These students are biding time because they know they will be passed regardless.*” Bradford, Manders, Roberson, and Winters nodded their heads in agreement. Manders quickly suggested, “*At some point, we need to make a point and fail these students.*”

Bradford agreed and suggested, *“It would not take more than a year for the rest of the students to get the message.”* Carlson reminded them, *“Several of these students were retained last year – they did no better during the retention year, and they are following the same pattern this year.”*

At this point, Bradford asked, *“Can we narrow the list down to those definitely failing (two or more classes) for the year?”* As everyone looked over the list, Brady commented, *“A handful of these students already have no mathematical chance of passing some classes for the year.”*

Bandy shared that she had worked with several of the students on the list the previous year and pointed out, *“Many had made great improvement behaviorally from the last year although they are still struggling academically.”*

At this point, Manders asked, *“Can we make a contract with some of these hard-core students that would base promotion more on second semester efforts?”* Carlson replied, *“Let me remind everyone that contracts and alternative school had already been tried with many of these students, and they have not accepted the help.”* Brady proposed, *“Bandy and I could monitor some of the students weekly – meet with them, check on their work, pull the students to work individually with them.”* Perkins commented, *“These students are pulling down the other students in their classes,”* to which the other teachers nodded in agreement. She then reminded the other teachers that they *“had the carrot of the Six Flags trip”* that they had just announced to the students. Manders commented, *“Maybe this trip will entice some of the students to work harder or behave better,”* to which Perkins, Roberson, and Winters nodded in agreement. Bradford, however, countered, *“Some won’t care, no matter what.”*

Carlson, responding to a comment from Bradford about the possibility of putting some students in alternative school, reminded the teachers, *“A paper trail of write-ups is necessary before a student can be put in alternative school – and choosing not to do work is not a reason*

for alternative school placement.” At this comment, Bradford admitted, “I have not been writing students up because I wanted to avoid the perception in the office that I could not control my classes.” The other teachers nodded their heads in agreement to this statement. Carlson quickly reassured them, “Everyone in administration is familiar with these students after two or three years with them – your write-ups would not be perceived as the teacher being out of control.” At this, Bradford stated, “I think that administration needs to be more up front with teachers in terms of warning about these types of behaviors so we would better know how to deal with the students from the beginning of the year.”

Brady spoke up then to tell everyone, *“We [counselors and administration] are working to firm up POI [Pyramid of Intervention¹] processes to help with this very problem.”* She reassured everyone, *“Once POI is in place, teachers will have a record of what has been done previously with these at-risk students and will know what has and has not worked in previous years.”* Carlson also spoke up with the reminder that the system’s new data management program, Infinite Campus (IC), would hopefully be on-line by the end of the year. She expressed the hope that *“IC will help with some of these issues so that parents can check progress on a regular basis.”*

At this point, the conversation took a different turn when Perkins commented, *“There’s such different classroom structures and expectations among the elementary, middle school, and high schools. . . and parents react differently – for instance, by the time students get to middle school, the parents are tired of being so involved, and the kids definitely don’t want them here. By high school, they [parents] just turn them loose and don’t really jump on the school*

¹The Pyramid of Intervention, developed by the Georgia Department of Education provides a framework to support struggling students with pre-established interventions. Progress monitoring data is used to identify students who need more intensive interventions in order to be successful and make progress in their learning (Creel, Krisel, O’Connor, & Williams, 2006).

anymore.” Carlson agreed, “There are fewer student supports and issues such as puberty that students at the middle school had to contend with the result that many students who were successful in elementary school often were not at the middle school.” She further acknowledged that parents were “hit with a lot of changes in terms of both their students and the school – and they often lash out at the school as a result.” Manders then shared the “gist of a conversation” she had just a few days earlier with the parent of an elementary student. “The parent had admitted to me that she was petrified of middle school because of the work load, safety, etc.” The assistant principal, counselor, and graduation coach, along with Perkins nodded their heads to indicate they had experienced similar conversations. [During this conversation, an all-call announcement came over the intercom for the counselor to contact the office; she buzzed the office and told them she was in a meeting and could not leave.] Perkins then asked with a hint of frustration in her voice: “What are we supposed to do about Student X [on the target list of students passed out by the assistant principal at the beginning of the meeting] who needs medication but his family can’t afford it? What are we supposed to do in such a situation?” Manders, Brady, and Bandy all huddled with her to briefly discuss the situation, with Brady promising, “I will see what we can do” as they broke up.

Carlson spoke next, *“To wrap up the meeting we [including counselor and graduation coach] can have conversations with those in danger of failing.”* At this point, Roberson spoke up for the first time, *“Student Y turned in homework for the first time yesterday.”* At this, the others responded with smiles and while Bradford, Manders, and Perkins responded with comments of *“Good!”* To pick up where Carlson left off, Bandy offered, *“I can work with some of the students on a contract of what they have to do to pass and set goals with them. Brady and I will check in with them on a weekly basis to make sure they stay on track. We can pull them from connections*

classes to make sure they get the work done. . .” At this point, Brady emphasized, *“We want you [teachers] to know that you have gone above and beyond in your efforts to help these students so far – please know that we know what you have done.”* Carlson added an emphatic *“Yes, yes!”* to this statement, shaking her head in agreement. Bradford responded, *“I think there’s been great value in having conversations like this – I just wish we had been warned about the disruptive behaviors, etc. earlier.”*

At this point, instead of the meeting ending, frustration came out again. Manders stated, *“Many of these students ask me for extra credit, but I’m only going to offer that to students who have turned in all their work and paid attention in class.”* Perkins said, *“Well, I’m frustrated with things like a student sleeping in class, then bouncing off the walls at break – and then taking a picture with her phone right in front of me!”* Bradford shared, *“I’ve held individual conferences with students who were failing – told them what they had to do in order to pass and gave them opportunities to pass, but so many of them just walk away and never attempt anything.”*

At this point, Bandy shared some insights about the home environments for some of the students who were on the list. As she spoke, Bradford and Roberson engaged in a quiet, side conversation that lasted a couple of minutes. Bradford rejoined the conversation to share about one particular student *“who checked out almost daily from my last period class because the mom was going to school herself and had to get to class.”* Carlson assured him, *“We as administrators would not expect a student to be passing in such a situation. I know that the principal and visiting teacher are both aware of the situation, but I will make a note to myself to double check on that situation when I get back to the office.”*

During this conversation, Brady and Bandy were quietly discussing the success of one student (not sure whom) among themselves, sharing smiles, *“Yeah!”* and soft clapping. As they

shared this story with the rest, Manders turned to me and commented “*They can’t beat us – we cured one kid of autism one year!*” general laughter broke out at this comment.

Bradford, in what seemed to be an attempt to end the meeting, stated, “*We’ll put Students A, B, and C on a short leash and all teachers will be more active in writing them up for disruptive behavior in class.*” The other teachers signified agreement by either nodding their heads or saying “*Okay.*” Carlson added, “*The counselors and I will talk to those students.*” Becker recommended, “*We [counselors] will talk to the parents as well.*” Manders asked, “*Can we get a list of students with grades of 75 and below at the end of first semester so we can keep an eye on those in danger?*” Becker agreed to get such a list to the teachers, and the meeting began to break up.

During this time, I noted that Winters made no comments during the entire meeting, and Roberson made only a couple. They were among the first to leave the meeting when it ended, in contrast to the others, who still stood around chatting.

Interview

I interviewed Manders a couple of days after the observation. I interviewed her because she had worked at JCMS longer than other members of the team. When I offered to come to her room for the interview, she said she would just come to my room. Although she did not offer a reason, I suspect that she, like Overs earlier, thought her cheerleaders might interrupt us if we met in her room. The interview lasted 40 minutes.

Like the sixth and seventh grade teachers I had already interviewed, she confirmed that the majority of their team meetings focused on student issues. When I asked her about the presence of the administrators and counselors, she replied, “*We don’t usually have non-team members present at our meetings, but it’s not at all unusual to talk informally to either the*

administrators or the counselors about student issues.” She added, *“In fact, we tend to meet informally as a team rather than in scheduled meetings.”* When I asked her why they did not set aside at least one day for a scheduled meeting as the other grade levels did, she responded, *“We talk daily about various student issues, but the only scheduled meetings we tend to have are parent meetings that we try to keep to certain days a week. We just don’t feel the need to have a certain day for these meetings.”* She said these informal meetings typically begin *“when one of us wanders into someone else’s room and starts chatting. Someone mentions a student who is struggling or a conflict that’s been observed. As the discussion continues, we’ll yell for another team member to join us to see if the problem is a recurring pattern or an isolated incident.”* My own experiences on the eighth grade hall verify the veracity of her comments. With the classrooms of all team members located in close proximity to each other, team members do tend to wander into each other’s rooms for casual conversations that often turn into informal team members. During my year as a team leader, I often included these unscheduled conversations when documenting our required 100 minutes of common planning.

According to Manders, decisions they reached during these informal conversations might include the following:

- *having one teacher talk to the student(s)*
- *sending an email to parent,*
- *all the teachers meet informally with the student(s) between classes*
- *have one teacher take the concern to administrators or counselors for follow-up*

She indicated, *“Scheduled meetings are typically reserved for the monthly grade-level meetings with administrators or for parent conferences. While we can’t control how long the grade-level meetings last, we try to limit parent meetings to no more than about 15 minutes each so that we*

take up only about 30 or 40 minutes of our planning time with meetings.” Again, her comments echo my own experiences as an eighth grade teacher at JCMS.

In terms of the focus of their meetings, Manders indicated, *“Behavior problems are typically discussed during our informal discussions while the scheduled meetings with parents tend to focus on students who are struggling with grades.”* The team did *“some academic sort of planning together”* when they worked on the interdisciplinary units administrators required each team to do every semester, but *“our work on these units is more informational – letting each other know what they were doing and when – because the units are usually planned as a grade-level...the entire grade-level decides on a topic, and content colleagues plan what they will do related to this topic.”* She said they would also work together *“on things such as calendar-type stuff like tests, projects - that type of thing so that we don’t overload a student at any given time.”* Overall, she felt that student issues or behavior problems took up the majority of their team meetings because *“it’s the one thing that we all share. . . and can improve by working together.”*

Other activities that teachers engaged in during common planning time included meetings with administrators and the other eighth grade team. She felt these took place during their planning time because *“it’s a convenient way for administrators to pass along information.”* The two teams also met *“informally to discuss common issues break and reward activities... and sometimes just to socialize.”* Content teachers also met together during planning periods to *“plan their curriculum across teams.”* When asked what activities she felt should be included in an ideal situation, she responded, *“I think all of these should be although I do think that more time should be focused on interdisciplinary lessons and cross-curricular activities.”*

She felt that the kinds of activities her team engaged in during common planning time matched the purpose administrators had expressed: *“to discuss student issues that develop and*

come up with both academic and behavioral strategies to meet the needs of a particular student or a particular group of students.” She felt this also described the reason for having a team of teachers share the same group of students since developing these strategies was easier when working with a group because you could see if problems were “*happening across the board or during a certain time of day or in amongst other students.*”

When asked if she had received any preparation for effectively using common planning time, Manders replied, “*I have only some vague recollections of professional development meetings planned by administrators years ago. . . when middle schools first started to go to that.*” She felt that additional training on developing teamwork skills would be helpful. Currently, administrators influenced the use of planning time by requiring a weekly log. She said “*Teams are required to log the minutes that we meet and the things that we deal with and talk about. . . they are making sure that we are using the time appropriately and not wasting it.*” She felt “*this requirement definitely makes me more aware of using planning time more effectively.*”

Manders thought that the most important benefit of common planning time was “*the support from other teachers.*” As she explained it, “*Sometimes when you are in a room all day by yourself, you can feel like you are all alone and it’s nice to have other teachers back you up and sympathize and support you.*” Teachers also benefited from being able to “*brainstorm together – be creative in solutions to different issues. . . we each share what worked and did not work...and we come up with new ideas to try. . . whether we’re discussing behavioral issues or content plans.*”

She admitted, “*I think students get a better environment because the common planning time creates a little bit more of a family environment because you have got a group of teachers that have time to look at the students’ needs and figure out solutions to their problems.*” In the

end, she also felt that *“teachers are better prepared, which enables students to be more successful.”* For the school as a whole, she felt that common planning time was *“good for morale. . . people feel valued when they are part of a team, and they feel like their input matters, and that their ideas are heard, even if it’s just within a small group.”* This led to the team as a whole having *“a bigger voice when we go into parent meetings, particularly the tough ones.”* She added, *“Teachers are able to go in there [to parent meetings] together, knowing the recommendations that you are going to make and the approach you are going to take...which helps to control that situation better.”* The only negative issue she felt arose because of common planning was *“possibly some scheduling issues for the school as a whole.”* She saw this in terms of *“the whole school schedule – who goes to lunch, when they go to lunch because administrators have to account for larger groups at a time.”*

Manders felt that having common planning time *“has helped me become a more effective teacher because I’ve received ideas for not only academic activities, but also behavioral approaches from hearing what other teachers do.”* Discussing and evaluating these ideas with others who taught the same students *“have made me more confident in making modifications and adjustments. . . I am not stepping out on a ladder trying to do something all by myself.”* She went so far as to say that *“most of the things that I use in my room today are ideas I have gotten from other teachers.”* These ideas, in turn, had positive benefits on student learning and achievement because *“the more ideas I have to draw from, the more effective I can become through all different kinds of support, then the more I am going to be able to meet my students where they are.”*

She had experienced difficulties with common planning time *“where teachers did not want to participate. . . makes it difficult when you know your administration is expecting you to*

do that.” [She was quick to point out that this occurred at a previous school.] She also felt it was hard when “*common planning gets taken up with larger school business, making it hard for teams to find time to work on the issues we need to focus on.*” When asked to identify examples of these issues, she pointed to “*assemblies, testing, and even picture days as well as coaching responsibilities.*” A final difficulty she expressed was when “*teachers think that common planning time is a gripe session and not a problem-solving session.*” However, she thought that the administrators’ requirement of the weekly log solved many of these problems since teachers were held accountable.

Analysis of Results

Data collected in phase one was used to address the following research subquestions:

- a. What happens during common planning time?
- b. What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purpose, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?

In analyzing the data gathered from the observations and interviews from phase one; I used an inductive constant comparative method to look for common themes that indicated what these teams of teachers did during their common planning time. I also looked for themes related to the experienced teachers’ perceptions of the purposes and benefits of common planning time as well as barriers to its effective use. I discuss the findings from the observations, which indicate the activities teams engage in during their planning time, followed by the results from the interviews, which indicate the teachers’ perceptions about common planning time. Finally, I examine results of the observations against those of the interviews to look for common themes that either support the data or show a disconnect between the two. This analysis will also allow me to determine

how teachers' perceptions aligned with the reality of what occurred during common planning time.

Observations

Per the observation protocol developed by the national project leaders, I observed only one team meeting held during common planning time. The timing of the observations – at the beginning of the second semester – most likely affected the content of the meetings. With the school year halfway completed and the return from a long break, teachers naturally check on the status of struggling students and look for ways to get students back into the normal school routines. All three teams engaged in similar activities during the meetings I observed.

Academic Issues

The expressed purpose for both the sixth and eighth grade meetings was to consider a target list of students at-risk of retention after the first semester. The sixth grade reviewed notes from conferences held at the end of the first semester and determined other students who needed parent conferences after final grades were released. Counselors and the assistant principal shared with the eighth grade a list generated by the counselors based on report card averages. Both groups sought to determine ways to help these students become successful, although some eighth graders apparently were already mathematically unable to pass by this point in time.

The sixth grade teachers divided up responsibilities for students so that two teachers would make sure certain students had homework materials before leaving at the end of the day, another teacher would check with students before school started to make sure they had homework completed, while another would make sure their lockers were organized. Two teachers volunteered to talk to the counselor about students with issues such as organization and test anxiety so that help from outside the team could be utilized. The beginning teacher was also

offered some strategies on making modifications for students as well as insights on why students might perform inconsistently during the day.

It was obvious that some of the eighth grade students did not experience the success the sixth grade teacher (during the interview) indicated they had with some of the sixth graders when they were able to *“correct some minor bad habits before those habits became problems later in seventh and eighth grades.”* From the comments of the assistant principal and counselors who had worked with these students previously, some of the students on the target list had not experienced success at any time in middle school. Even when teachers suggested the possibility of contracts, alternative school, or even retention, the assistant principal reminded them that those strategies had already been tried with no success. The only solution generated for a few of the so-called *“hard core”* students seemed to consist of actively referring the students to the office for their disruptive behavior. I know from my own understanding of the school that generating this *“paper trail,”* as the assistant principal called it, eventually opens the door to a tribunal meeting, an official disciplinary hearing before a group of system-wide administrators. This group convenes when student behaviors have either accumulated or escalated to the point that the building-level administrator recommends a punishment such as placement in alternative school or student expulsion for the overall safety of the school environment. This seems to meet with the teachers’ assessment that *“a few students are pulling the rest of the class down.”*

The group was able to generate general solutions for other students. One teacher reminded the rest of the *“carrot,”* as she called it, of the just-announced trip to Six Flags. According to another teacher, *“Maybe this trip will entice some of the students to work harder or behave better.”* The two counselors agreed to *“work with other students on a weekly basis”* to remind the students of what they had to do to pass and *“to pull them from connections classes to*

make sure they had completed the necessary work.” No indication was given during the meeting of how many students the counselors would target, however. Finally, the team requested a new list that identified students with semester averages of 75 or above so they could “*keep an eye on them*” as a whole.

The seventh grade team did not really address academic issues in their meeting beyond a few comments such as “*They don’t seem to connect their classroom behaviors and work habits with the grades they receive!*” One teacher did mention a student whose grades started improving after she moved him to a different seat in the room. They also discussed the fact that students were not reading or doing homework during homeroom time, obviously a strategy they had implemented to give students time to complete homework. However, the only strategy generated was to have a discussion with the students in homeroom to remind them of these procedures and expectations.

Behavior Issues

The main focus of the seventh grade meeting was behavior issues. They were meeting to determine how to remind students of grade-level policies, procedures, and expectations. Some of the issues they addressed included morning procedures, dress code, silent lunch, and class preparation. They also discussed issues related to misbehavior of both individual students and groups of students. One issue – a student with a medical condition that necessitated frequent trips to the bathroom – was presented to let teachers know they would need to bend their usual requirement of giving students a pass to go to the restroom. From my conversations with eighth grade students as well as seventh grade teachers, I know that their usual practice is to allow students a certain number of passes to the restroom during the school day. Overall, teachers were talking over each other to share examples of students’ misbehaviors.

Behavior issues also came up in the eighth grade meeting, particularly in regards to those students who no longer had any hope of being promoted on their own. Teachers voiced frustration with some of those behaviors, such as “. . . *sleeping through my class, then bouncing off the walls during break, and taking a picture with their phone right in front of me!*” Although disruptive behaviors were not defined, teachers did agree to start an aggressive campaign of office referrals for a handful of students who, in the teachers’ collective opinion, were “*bringing down the others in the classes.*” The counselors and assistant principal in attendance at the meeting seemed to be well aware of these students from previous years in terms of such behaviors; in fact, the assistant principal indirectly encouraged such a campaign by reminding the teachers of the need for a “*paper trail.*”

Behavior issues were not really addressed during the sixth grade meeting. The beginning teacher did open a brief discussion about behavior when she asked why some students behaved one way in her class and another in someone else’s class. One of the other teachers related these differences to the time of day students had a class, with the explanation that maybe their medication had not taken effect or maybe they were sleepy after lunch. Even this discussion, however, seemed related more to academic behaviors, such as completing work and staying on task, rather than misbehaviors.

Background Information

Neither the sixth nor the seventh grade teams shared much in the way of background information on students during the meetings I observed. The only background information shared during the sixth grade meeting seemed to come from parent conferences held at the end of the first semester, just before the Christmas holidays. Teachers referred to a couple of students who had “*test anxiety*” and “*organization*” problems. Otherwise, they seemed focused on

behaviors and problems they had observed at school. During the seventh grade meeting, the inclusion teacher shared information about a student's medical condition that would necessitate frequent trips to the bathroom. She did not specify whether her knowledge of the problem came from a discussion with the student or with the student's parent.

A great deal of background information was shared during the eighth grade meeting, primarily by the counselors and assistant principal who participated in the meeting. Because these individuals had interacted with the students throughout their time at JCMS, they were able to offer insights to the eighth grade teachers. They also offered the teachers updates on school-level programs – Pyramids of Intervention processes and a new data management system – which they hoped would help both teachers and parents in the future. They directly shared information on topics such as students' home environments, improvement in behavior from previous years, and strategies already attempted with students. The assistant principal shared background information indirectly when she reassured teachers that administrators were familiar with these students after working with them for two to three years when she encouraged teachers to make office referrals for disruptive students. She also let teachers know about administrative progress concerning an attendance issue that had been mentioned.

Some teachers also shared general background information, based on conversations with parents, about how parents viewed the middle-school years. One teacher made reference to a student with a medical condition whose family could not afford medication, although she did not indicate how she knew about this condition.

Venting

Teachers in all three meetings took the opportunity to vent their frustrations. In the sixth grade meeting, this venting was fairly limited. One teacher lamented how hard it was to get

parents to come in for meetings while the beginning teacher asked why students behaved differently in different classrooms. Venting was more extensive in both the seventh and eighth grade meetings.

The seventh grade meeting seemed to feature the most venting. The main purpose of the meeting was to determine how to address rules they needed to review with students. Teachers offered many examples of how students were not meeting their expectations, often talking over each other as they shared. Their frustrations seemed to center mainly on procedures students were not following: morning procedures, dress code, silent lunch, and coming to class prepared. Their frustration had obviously led them to determine how they needed to respond as a group to get students back on track.

Eighth grade teachers vented about both student behaviors and administrative behaviors. Their frustration with students centered on an overall lack of academic motivation among a group of at-risk students as well as frustration with the disruptive behaviors of a smaller subset of this group. They were also frustrated that administrators had not previously informed them of how much these students had struggled in previous years and the strategies that had already been tried without success. The implication seemed to be that if administrators had forewarned them of these issues, they could have approached matters differently and lessened the impact of the disruptive behaviors of a few on the majority of the students.

Support

Teachers at all three grade levels offered each other support. In the sixth grade, the beginning teacher was the focus of her colleagues' support. Their support centered on dealing with struggling students. They offered strategies for making modifications for struggling students as well as offering insight into why students struggle in different classes. In the seventh grade

meeting, teachers offered support to the inclusion teacher who was covering another teacher's class during homeroom time. One teacher offered to switch class coverage with her, while the teacher whose class was causing the problem offered to talk to the students. In the eighth grade meeting, non-team members – counselors and assistant principal – offered reassurances to the teachers that they understood both the problems being experienced by the teachers and the extent to which the teachers had “*gone beyond the call of duty*” in trying to help these students. They went to great lengths to assure the teachers that their efforts with these students were appreciated.

Successes

Student successes were shared in all three meetings. While the success may have occurred only in one classroom, as was the case in the seventh grade meeting, all teachers celebrated. In the sixth grade meeting, when one teacher shared a success, others were able to chime in with success the student had experienced in their classes as well. In the eighth grade meeting, news of successes came mainly from the counselors, who shared how some of the students had improved behaviorally from previous years. One teacher did share the news that one of the students on the target list had turned in homework for the first time all year the day before the meeting. Teachers celebrated this news although they were been largely noncommittal toward the success stories shared by the counselors.

Interviews

I used the interview protocol developed by the national project leaders. The scripted protocol was designed to increase the reliability of data collected by multiple researchers (Mertens et al., 2007, p. 10). I chose to interview the most senior member of each team (in terms of experience at PCMS), hoping to get more insight into how common planning time is used by interdisciplinary teams at JCMS. Both the sixth and eighth grade teachers had at least a decade of

experience at JCMS; the seventh grade teacher had been at the school for only three years, despite having more than ten years experience teaching overall. No one else in the seventh grade had been at JCMS longer than she.

I summarized the findings of the interviews in terms of the main categories used for the interview protocol: understandings of common planning time, teacher use, administrative role, preparation, benefits, and barriers. I discuss insights into other uses of common planning time offered by participants.

Purpose of Common Planning Time

All three teachers indicated the belief that common planning time was to deal with both content and team issues. They saw content colleagues dealing with content issues while interdisciplinary teams dealt with student issues. They felt that their understandings matched with what administrators had communicated to the faculty as the purpose of common planning time.

All three felt that common planning time had made them better teachers in terms of their confidence in classroom management because they could draw on the ideas of the other teachers on their teams. The seventh and eighth grade teachers felt that their curriculum content was stronger because they were able to plan with their content colleagues during planning time. The sixth grade teacher indicated that, for various reasons, she and her content colleague met together only “*very sporadically*” during their planning time. She did think that her curriculum would be stronger if they met on a regular basis. Finally, although all three teachers felt they would continue to teach if they lost common planning time with their interdisciplinary and grade-level teams, they admitted they would miss the experience.

Teacher Use of Common Planning Time

Addressing student issues was the main activity for interdisciplinary teams during common planning time. The sixth and seventh grade teachers indicated their teams had a regularly scheduled meeting once a week, but they also met informally throughout the week. The eighth grade teacher, on the other hand, indicated that her team rarely scheduled team meetings, relying instead on daily informal conversations with each other to address student issues. All three teachers indicated that their teams scheduled meetings with parents during planning time to address student issues.

All three teachers also mentioned using their common planning time to plan the interdisciplinary units required by administrators. The seventh grade teacher identified strengthening their interdisciplinary unit as a goal for her team. The eighth grade team's work on the interdisciplinary unit tended to be more informational in nature since most of the planning was done with content colleagues rather than team members. The sixth grade teacher did not address how her team worked on such units beyond "*occasionally*" working on them together. All three did indicate that common planning time was used as a time to keep each other informed about current units so they could support each other's objectives as much as possible.

Although the focus of the interview was on the interdisciplinary team's use of common planning time, both the seventh and eighth grade teachers indicated that content colleagues met during common planning time to work on curriculum. The seventh grade teacher, in particular, saw meeting with her content colleague as the main purpose for common planning time. She felt this type of planning had most changed her teaching by allowing her to share ideas, plan lessons, and coordinate her curriculum with her grade-level counterpart. Although she met at least weekly with her counterpart, she indicated that it was common to meet daily "*on an impromptu basis*" as

they discussed class. As a result, she reported that she put more thought into what she teaches “*because we do have time to go over things.*” The sixth grade teacher indicated that circumstances prevented her from meeting with her content colleague in this way although she believed this would happen in an “*ideal*” setting.

A final use of common planning time for all three teachers was to meet with administrators to address grade-level issues. All three teachers indicated that they met with the other team on their grade level at least once a week to discuss common concerns; meetings with administrators were held monthly as a way to address school-level concerns. The sixth grade teacher indicated that administrators tried to schedule required trainings, such as those required for standardized testing, for their common planning time as well. She indicated that administrators were very judicious in scheduling such meetings in order to preserve as much time as possible for teachers to plan their curriculum and address student issues.

Administrative Role

All three teachers referred to an administrative requirement for each team to document a minimum of 100 minutes each week in either team or content planning. All indicated that this requirement, rather than being onerous, was actually helpful because it made them more aware of meeting with their colleagues. They felt that administrators tried to give them as much freedom as possible to use their common planning time in a way that best suited their needs rather than following a mandated plan. The sixth and eighth grade teachers also indicated that their teams felt a freedom to include administrators in their meetings as needed. The tone expressed by all three teachers as they discussed the role of administrators in the common planning time was very positive, indicating that they perceived their administrators as supportive rather than critical.

Preparation

None of the teachers had any preparation for using common planning time during their teacher preparation time. All mentioned various professional development trainings organized by school or district administrators as sources of information. They also mentioned comments made by administrators during faculty and department meetings as well as the administrative requirement to document their meetings as ways they had learned how to use common planning time. Both the seventh and eighth grade teachers mentioned a desire for some training in how to better use their common planning time. Some of their suggestions included training in teamwork skills, a list of suggested topics to be addressed, and the opportunity to observe effective team meetings.

Benefits

All three teachers felt that everyone – teachers, students, and the school as a whole – benefited from providing teachers with common planning time. Benefits for teachers included receiving support from other teachers and the opportunity to share ideas with each other. The eighth grade teacher specifically mentioned that having “*other teachers back you up and sympathize and support you*” helped her keep from feeling so isolated in her classroom. The sixth grade teacher also mentioned the importance of receiving encouragement from other teachers to “*get through a bad day*” as an important benefit. Another teacher benefit was having “*a bigger voice*” during parent meetings. Having the time to discuss student issues as well as the recommendations and approach they wanted to take helped teachers better control potentially difficult situations. Finally, having common planning time to address these student and academic concerns kept work from intruding into personal time, as it would if teachers had to meet after school. All three indicated that they felt they were better teachers as a result of having common

planning time with their colleagues. The eighth grade teacher perhaps expressed it best when she said that common planning time made her “*more confident in making modifications and adjustments*” because she felt that she was “*not stepping out on a ladder trying to do something all by myself.*”

A benefit to students was the “*team,*” or “*family*” environment that resulted when teachers who shared a common group of students were able to meet together. They felt that students could tell their teachers cared about them when the teachers were all working together. The ability to involve parents when solving problems was also beneficial to students, according to the sixth grade teacher, because minor problems could be corrected before they became lasting habits. The eighth grade teacher indicated that teachers with common planning time were “*better prepared, which enabled students to be more successful.*” She went on to add that “*the more ideas I have to draw from, the more effective I can become through all different kinds of support, then the more I am going to be able to meet my students where they are.*” Thus, students benefit both academically and socially when their teachers share a common planning time.

Benefits for the school were also mentioned by the seventh and eighth grade teachers. One benefit mentioned was the better communication “*on teams, grades [levels], content areas, and administration.*” According to the eighth grade teacher, the school also benefited from higher teacher morale because “*people feel valued when they are part of a team. . . their input matters... and their voices are heard.*” One teacher did mention scheduling issues as a possible negative outcome for the school as a result of giving teams of teachers common planning time. When asked to elaborate, she explained that the master schedule could be more difficult to plan because of “*having to account for larger groups at a time*” when deciding matters like who went

to lunch when. She felt, however, that the positive benefits of common planning time far outweighed the potential negative ones.

Barriers

All three teachers discussed two main barriers to the effective use of common planning time. One barrier was the tendency for other things to intrude on teachers' planning time, whether that was coaching responsibilities or "*larger school business*." Even the timing of planning could prevent it from being used effectively, such as when teachers were exhausted at the end of the day and "*need[ed] some down time*." The other barrier was "*personalities*" on the team. All teachers mentioned problems they had experienced when trying to plan with other colleagues. These problems ranged from having discussions but reaching no decisions to having gripe sessions or socializing rather than attempting to solve problems to lacking the discipline to show up. Other problems they mentioned included teachers using common planning time to address coaching responsibilities or outside school work rather than working with colleagues to address student and curriculum issues.

Analysis of Cross-Data Sources

Two research subquestions guided the work in phase one of the study. To determine how the data answer these questions, I first summarize the data by source and grade level; sixth grade data is presented in Table 4, seventh grade data is in Table 5, and eighth grade data is presented in Table 6. I then analyze the data across sources to determine common themes in answer to my questions.

Question A: What happens during common planning time?

Although I observed only one meeting at each grade level, interviews with the experienced teachers provided a wider view of what happens during common planning time at

Table 4

Sixth Grade Cross Data-Source Comparison

Question Domains	Observation	Interview
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss student interventions • Confirm teacher responsibilities • Discuss student behavior • Plan parent conferences • Share student successes and anecdotes • Venting frustration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in touch with other teachers • Address student needs-academic and behavior • Support academic objectives of other teachers • Brainstorm strategies • Plan parent communication • Meet with parents • Adjust schedule • Work on interdisciplinary units • Provide support and encouragement • Professional development trainings • Take some down time
Purposes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address student issues • Share information from administration • Content planning • Build rapport with colleagues
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share ideas • Advice for new teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better parent communication • Correct behavior issues • Communicate caring to students • Help students take responsibility • Make connections to other contents • Share ideas • Lessens teacher isolation • Improve curriculum
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict with other meetings • Lack of parent involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of preparation • Not showing up • Coaching/other responsibilities • Work on personal classes • Socializing • Timing of planning

Table 5

Seventh Grade Cross Data-Source Comparison

Question Domains	Observation	Interview
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review rules, procedures, expectations • Assign teacher responsibilities • Clarify procedures • Address student issues • Brainstorm strategies/solutions • Plan grade-level communication • Share information from administration • Share background information on students • Venting frustration • Share student successes and anecdotes • Share successful strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss team and student issues • Share ideas • Share strategies that worked/didn't work • Discuss connections among content areas • Discuss logistical issues • Plan field trips • Meet with parents • Work on interdisciplinary units • Hold grade-level meetings • Plan content curriculum • Develop consistent procedures and expectations for team
Purpose		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with other team • Content planning • Address team and student issues • Create team atmosphere
Benefit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share ideas • Better curriculum • Improved classroom management • Provide structure for students • Better communication with teachers, grade, administration, parents • Time to discuss issues • Develop team concept • Coordinate assignments
Barriers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of preparation for organizing meeting • Time getting used by other things • Coaching responsibilities • Personalities • Teaching experience

Table 6

Eighth Grade Cross Data-Source Comparison

Question Domains	Observation	Interview
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm strategies to meet student needs • Meet with administrators • Share background information on students • Clarify procedures • Encourage teachers • Voice frustrations • Update on school-wide programs • Understand parent expectations • Share student successes • Share ideas that did/did not work • Socializing • Plan parent communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss student issues • Develop strategies to meet student needs • Parent meetings • Coordinate assignments • Meet with administrators • Meet with grade-level • Socialize • Address grade-level concerns • Plan grade-level activities • Provide support for teachers • Plan interdisciplinary units
Purpose		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address student issues – behavior and academic • Plan interdisciplinary units • Content planning • Coordinate with grade-level and school • Provide support for teachers
Benefits		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase teacher confidence • Gives teachers a stronger voice • Improve teacher morale • Supported by other teachers • Brainstorm ideas with others • Creates family environment for students • Creative approach to problems • Improve teacher skills
Barriers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training • Difficulties with school-wide scheduling • Lack of interest in participation • Interference from larger school issues • Gripe session rather than problem-solving

JCMS. Four categories of activities emerged from the interview and student data: student, curriculum, teacher, and administrative issues.

Student issues. A majority of the activities I observed during observations of the three interdisciplinary teams centered on student issues. All three teacher interviews confirmed that student issues were the usual focus of team meetings. During the meetings, teachers identified student needs before brainstorming strategies to address those needs, including involving school counselors to work with some of the students. Although most of the student needs addressed during the meetings I observed were either academic or behavioral in nature, both the seventh and eighth grade teams also discussed medical issues faced by a student. As part of the brainstorming session, teachers discussed student behaviors that illustrated the problem, along with strategies each had already used. When one teacher shared a successful strategy, the other teachers sought to determine how to implement a similar strategy with the student. Teachers also planned for parent communications as a strategy for addressing student needs. Finally, both the seventh and eighth grade teacher interviews referred to working together on coordinating assignments so that they did not “*overload a student at any given time,*” as the eighth grade teacher expressed it. The eighth grade teacher indicated that her team discussed “*things such as calendar-type stuff like tests, projects – that type of thing.*” In contrast, the seventh grade teacher reported, “*We do not typically coordinate tests and assignments unless it’s quarter exams.*”

Sometimes teachers will refer to the weekly email sent to parents to see when other teachers have tests or projects due.” Neither the sixth grade observation nor the interview revealed any such coordination; however, I know from informal conversations with sixth grade teachers that they, too, work together to coordinate the timing of assignments and projects to make sure they do not put undue pressure on their students.

Curriculum issues. Although no curriculum issues were discussed during the team meetings I observed, all three teachers indicated that curriculum planning was a major activity during common planning times. Not all content colleagues, however, collaborated to the same extent, according to these teachers. The seventh grade teacher saw content planning as *“the main purpose for common planning time.”* She and her content counterpart on the other team collaborated extensively, meeting together almost daily and discussing all aspects of the curriculum. The sixth grade teacher thought that the ideal use of common planning time would be to *“meet with other people in your content area. . . and plan content,”* although she indicated that she was not able to collaborate with her grade-level counterpart because he was *“hard to pin down due to year-round coaching responsibilities.”* The eighth grade teacher did not directly address her own experiences with content collaboration, but she indicated that it was a common experience for the grade level. I know from my own experience and conversations with other teachers at the school that a wide range exists in the levels of collaboration, from doing everything to nothing together and everything in between.

While most of the curriculum planning was done between content colleagues, interdisciplinary teams also addressed curriculum at times. Both the sixth and seventh grade teachers I interviewed said that their team members tried to actively support each other’s content objectives by making connections to each other’s classes. The seventh grade teacher cited examples that included *“doing map coordinates in social studies and grids in math, as well as doing pie graphs in math when science was doing measurements and percents”* as ways that she could *“talk about it [different contents] with the students and point out how the concepts are the same.”* The sixth grade indicated that her team emphasized making connections among the academic subjects as a way to *“help the students realize that everything ties together rather than*

just having random lessons.” All three teachers also referred to working together as teams to plan at least one interdisciplinary unit. There were differences, however, in how each grade level approached these units. The sixth and seventh grade teachers indicated that their team members did much of the planning together. In the eighth grade, however, the work of the team “*on these units is more informational – letting each other know what they were doing and when*” with all teachers involved in determining a topic for the unit while “*content colleagues plan what they will do related to this topic.*”

Teacher issues. Although teachers at JCMS spent most of their common planning time focusing on student and curriculum issues, they also spent time helping each other, as confirmed in both the interviews and observations. During observations of all three meetings, teachers clarified responsibilities and procedures as they reached decisions. In the sixth grade meeting, they reviewed which teacher was responsible for carrying out various student interventions, such as checking for completed homework before school started, helping organize notebooks and lockers, and making sure homework materials went home at the end of the day. They also agreed upon procedures for holding parent conferences, specifying the days of the week to have the conferences and the number of conferences they wanted to schedule for each day. These activities confirmed the Banks’ comments during the interview that teachers brainstormed strategies to address student needs.

After seventh grade teachers agreed on rules, procedures, and expectations they wanted to review with students, they designated the team leader as the person who would discuss this plan with the other seventh grade team. As they discussed holding the student break time on the hall, they identified locations where teacher were needed to better monitor students. One teacher sought clarification of the procedure for passing out report cards during a side conversation with

the team leader. When Michaels brought up a problem she was having while covering Nations' homeroom, both Overs and Nations identified steps they could take to alleviate the problem. Finally, teachers clarified specific students who would begin receiving office referrals for behavior issues. These activities confirmed the assertions Overs made during our interview that teachers shared strategies and discussed logistical issues during planning.

In the eighth grade meeting, teachers worked with the counselor, graduation coach, and an administrator to clarify procedures and responsibilities for working with struggling students. The three non-team members agreed to talk to all of the struggling students and their parents to identify what students had to do in order to pass for the year. The counselor and graduation coach also agreed to work with *“some of the students on a contract of what they have to do to pass and set goals with them.”* Further, they would *“pull [these students] from connections classes to make sure they get the work done.”* The counselor also agreed to see what she could do to help a student's family obtain necessary medication. Finally, the counselor agreed to generate *“a list of students with grades of 75 and below at the end of the first semester”* for teachers so they could better identify students who might need further intervention during the second semester. Finally, one teacher identified three students whom the team would put *“on a short leash and... be more active in writing them up for disruptive behavior in class.”* These discussions confirmed Menderes's assertion that teachers addressed student issues during common planning time.

Teachers also used common planning time to vent their frustrations and encourage each other. In all three meetings, teachers expressed frustration over various student behaviors, although it was more prevalent in the seventh and eighth grade meetings. In the sixth grade meeting, the beginning teacher expressed the most frustration as she asked why students behaved

differently in various classes. She also asked the others how they decided to intervene to help struggling students. The other team members offered explanations to help her with both questions, which seemed to lessen her frustration. Walker expressed frustration over parents who did not come to scheduled conferences, which Simonton alleviated by reminding everyone that *“Administrators recommended that we hold these meetings even if parents do not attend.”* During our interview, Banks also alluded to teachers *“working on their classes they are taking”* as well as *“socializing”* and being *“just tired and need[ing] some down time”* as ways teachers needs are met during common planning time.

Both seventh and eighth grade teachers vented their frustrations with students’ behaviors. The seventh grade teachers focused primarily on behaviors that did not follow established rules and procedures while the eighth grade teachers focused on behaviors that interfered with student learning. No one offered any real encouragement to teachers during the seventh grade meeting; the non-team members (assistant principal, counselor, and graduation coach), however, encouraged the eighth grade teachers in various ways. The assistant principal assured the teachers that administrators were *“familiar with these students after two or three years with them – your write-ups would not be perceived as the teacher being out of control.”* The counselor also assured teachers that *“we know that you have gone above and beyond in your efforts to help these students so far – please know that we know what you have done.”* These encouragements confirmed the claim Manders made during our interview that teachers provided support to each other during common planning time.

Administrative issues. All three teachers indicated in our interviews that some of the activities they engaged in during common planning time were in response to administrative requirements or needs. One specific requirement mentioned by all three teachers was the need to

document at least 100 minutes of collaborative planning each week. Thus, the team meetings that I observed may have been held, at least in part, to meet that time requirement. All three teachers also stressed that, beyond the time requirement, administrators did not “*police us. . . . We are not mandated to meet on certain days, but we have the freedom to have impromptu meetings as needed,*” as Banks expressed it.

Both Banks and Manders indicated that administrators were always willing to sit in on team meetings when needed, something that occurred in the eighth grade meeting. During this meeting, assistant principal Carlson alluded to the desire of administrators to help both students and teachers experience success when she explained to teachers why she and the other non-team members were present at the meeting: “*None of us are here asking teachers to change grades, but we want to see what we can do to plan proactively for next semester.*” Although neither administrators nor the counselor or graduation coach were present at the other team meetings, some reference was made in each meeting to conversations with these individuals. In the sixth grade meeting, Simonton referred to recommendations by administrators to “*hold these meetings [parent conferences] even if parents do not attend.*” Banks and Simonton both agreed to ask counselors to talk to students about various issues. In the seventh grade meeting, Nations made reference to a conversation with administrators about writing up certain students who were being especially disruptive.

Finally, all three teachers alluded to a monthly grade-level meeting led by administrators that was held during their common planning time. Both Banks and Manders indicated that these meetings were intended to “*pass along information,*” or “*to check in*” with teachers. I did see evidence of an administrator “*pass along information*” during the eighth grade meeting when Assistant Principal Carlson discussed the system’s new data management program, Infinite

Campus (IC), as a potential strategy for the future: “*IC will help with some of these issues so that parents can check progress on a regular basis.*” According to Banks, professional development, such as the training for a standardized writing assessment, was also held during these monthly meetings, although this did not occur during any of the meetings I observed.

Question B: What are the perceptions of experienced teachers of the purposes, benefits, and barriers of common planning time?

Purposes of common planning time. Data from the interviews with experienced teachers about the purposes of common planning time revealed three categories – student, team, and content purposes. All three were confirmed by the activities that teachers said occurred during planning time while only one – content – was not confirmed during observations of team meetings.

Teachers identified addressing student issues as one purpose for their common planning time. Specific activities identified by the sixth grade teacher that fulfilled this purpose included brainstorming strategies to address those needs, planning parent communication, and meeting with parents. During my observation of the sixth grade team meeting, teachers did discuss student issues, both academic and behavioral, and interventions to address those needs. They also identified students for whom they needed to schedule parent conferences. Finally, teachers shared stories of students’ successes and anecdotes that illustrated the problems under discussion.

Overs, the seventh grade teacher identified discussing student issues, sharing ideas and strategies that did or did not work with students, and meeting with parents as activities that addressed student issues. She also indicated that “*developing a team atmosphere*” was a related purpose of their common planning time. I observed teachers discussing various student issues –

both academic and behavioral in one of their team meetings. One teacher also shared a strategy she had successfully tried with a student. Other strategies teachers developed during the team meeting included developing a power point presentation to share with students to address some of their concerns as well as referring students to administrators for continued discipline issues. The power point presentation addressed rules, procedures, and expectations teachers held in common for their students. Having common expectations were crucial, in Overs's opinion to providing "*structure*" so that "*the same consequences follow you from room to room, and you don't have to act this way and follow these rules in this room and those in that room.*" Teachers did not conduct any parent conferences during the meeting I observed.

Discussing both student issues and strategies to address those issues were activities identified by the eighth grade teacher that I also observed in the team meeting. Issues discussed during the meeting included students who were at-risk of failing for the year, students who had no mathematical chance of passing for the year, disruptive behaviors in which these students engaged, and strategies that had been attempted with these students in earlier grades. The school's assistant principal, counselor, and graduation coach suggested interventions they were willing to implement with these students as an effort to help the team. Other activities Manders mentioned that addressed student issues but that I did not directly observe included meeting with parents and coordinating student assignments.

Team-centered purposes for common planning time mentioned by the teachers I interviewed included sharing information from administrators, building rapport with colleagues, and supporting colleagues. All three teams shared information from administrators during their team meetings; an administrator did so directly during the eighth grade meeting. This information from administrators ranged from expectations concerning parent meetings to

effective ways to address discipline issues. During the eighth grade meeting, the assistant principal and counselor both updated teachers on programs the school hoped to implement in the future.

For Manders, the eighth grade teacher, the most important benefit of common planning time was *“the support from other teachers.”* She added, *“... you can feel like you are all alone, and it’s nice to have other teachers back you up and sympathize and support you.”* Banks also felt that having common planning time with her team *“make me feel less isolated in my work.”* Although I did not observe teachers providing such support during the eighth grade meeting, the assistant principal and school counselor did so. I did observe instances of teachers offering support to their colleagues in both the sixth and seventh grade meetings. During the sixth grade meeting, team members offered their first-year colleague suggestions and explanations in answer to her questions about student issues. In the seventh grade meeting, both Overs and Nations offered ways they could help Michaels when she shared problems she was having when supervising Nations’ homeroom on the days he had learning lab duty.

According to Banks, the sixth grade teacher, *“Being a good teacher is having a good rapport with your colleagues and having that face-to-face time and solidifying the relationship.”* Teachers in the meetings I observed all seemed to enjoy a good rapport during their meetings. They were in agreement with each other concerning the problems they faced, and they enjoyed moments of laughter as they shared classroom anecdotes, such as when the sixth grade teachers laughed over a conversation Simonton had with her students and the seventh grade teachers laughed as Michaels asked, *“Did you hear Student D mooing as he was coming down the hall this morning?”* Teachers developed this rapport in other ways as well. Banks indicated that *“sometimes people are just tired and need some down time.”* Manders, the eighth grade teacher,

also cited “*socializing*” as an activity teachers engaged in during their planning time. I know, too, from my personal experiences and conversations at JCMS that teachers often socialize together to celebrate special events like birthdays, weddings, and the birth of children or just to relax.

Content planning is the final purpose of common planning time cited by the three teachers I interviewed. In fact, Overs, the seventh grade teacher, saw content planning as the main purpose of the time. Although I did not observe any instances of content planning during the team meetings, all three teachers shared that such planning was done. Both Banks and Manders indicated that they had observed teachers on their grade-levels engaging in such planning; although Banks indicated that she herself had not done so.

All three also pointed out that the interdisciplinary unit required by administrators was planned during their common planning time. The sixth and seventh grade teachers indicated that this work was primarily done together by the teachers on each team. The eighth grade teacher, however, indicated that while all grade-level teachers were involved in determining the topic for the unit, content colleagues worked together to develop lessons and activities related to this topic. The only work done by the eighth grade teams on these interdisciplinary units was informational in nature as teachers shared their plans with each other. Finally, both the sixth and seventh grade teachers indicated that an important activity for the teachers on their teams was to identify ways their contents were interrelated so that they could comment on those connections during their classes. The seventh grade teacher also indicated that teachers worked on logistical issues for field trips, including “*Where do we want to go, what content do we want to focus on*” during their team meetings.

Benefits of common planning time. All three teachers I interviewed felt that both students and teachers received important benefits as a result of teachers having common planning time.

Both the sixth and seventh grade teachers cited improved parent communication as one benefit that helped both students and teachers. Students benefited from *“a really good job of communicating to our parents”* when *“we were able to correct minor behavior issues that could turn into lasting habits that could be a problem in seventh and eighth grade,”* according to Banks.

All three teachers indicated that they and their colleagues benefited from having the time to share ideas with each other. Their classroom management skills as well as their content curriculum had improved from sharing ideas with colleagues. As Banks expressed it, teachers received *“the encouragement to get through a bad day as well as ideas to improve both behavior management and lesson planning.”* Having common planning time for such discussions was critical, according to Overs because *“it’s hard getting together before and after school.”* She also felt that students benefited from knowing that *“their teachers were all working together”* so that a *“team concept”* is developed. Manders pointed out that *“students get a better environment because the common planning time creates a little bit more of a family environment because you have got a group of teachers that have time to look at the students’ needs and figure out solutions to their problems.”* She also pointed to the school-wide value of common planning time as *“good for morale. . . people feel valued when they are part of a team, and they feel like their input matters, and that their ideas are heard, even if it’s just within a small group.”*

Both Banks and Overs contrasted the benefits of having common planning time with their experiences without it. According to Banks, *“I felt kind of abandoned. . . and didn’t feel a particular attachment to doing things when they asked me to.”* Overs indicated that her experience without common planning time at another school was *“very difficult because I always*

felt out of the loop. . . I wasn't in on any conversations on any of the kids or anything that would go on."

Barriers of common planning time. All three teachers cited a lack of preparation or training during their teacher preparation programs for using common planning time as a barrier to its use. They all cited comments from administrators and professional development opportunities not focused on common planning as offering guidance into ways to utilize this time. Other barriers, however, were not so easily addressed.

All three teachers pointed to "*time*" as a barrier to the use of common planning. For Banks, this meant "*the timing of planning has a lot to do with its effective use.*" She pointed to her team's experience that year with common planning time at the end of the day: "*I think that sometimes people are just tired and need some down time.*" For Overs and Manders, the problem with time occurred when other issues interfered to keep teams or content colleagues from working together. Overs indicated that "*coaching responsibilities pull us in different directions sometimes, even during the middle of the school day.*" According to Manders, at a previous school, sometimes "*teachers did not want to participate*"; even at JCMS, sometimes "*common planning gets taken up with larger school business*" such as "*assemblies, testing, and even picture days as well as coaching responsibilities.*" Banks agreed that coaching responsibilities could be a problem; she also pointed to teachers "*working on their class they are taking*" as a reasons teachers would not participate.

Finally, Overs and Manders pointed to teacher behaviors during common planning time as barriers to its effective use. Overs saw these as "*personality*" issues such as when "*you just kind of roll things around and no decision is ever made,*" which she found very "*distracting.*" Another issue she linked to the personality issue was "*experience*" in terms of "*what you know*

and what you can suggest that develops as a result of your years of experience.” She pointed to her own experience as an example since she has *“the most number of years of experience on my team”* and had worked at *“the most schools”* compared to the others on her team. She felt that she came to team meetings with *“different ideas from different places”* compared to other team members. I know from my involvement in the New Teacher Network planning in previous years that the lack of experienced teachers on the seventh grade hall was a concern for administrators as well. For Manders, the personality issue came into play when *“teachers think that common planning time is a gripe session and not a problem-solving session.”* However, she felt these problems had been at least partly alleviated by the administrators’ requirement of a weekly log that documented the issues teachers discussed during a minimum of 100 minutes of their common planning time.

Summary

The purpose of the first phase of my study was to understand how interdisciplinary teams of teachers at Johnson City Middle School use their common planning time. Although one observation provides only a snapshot of what occurs, the interviews provided a wider overview through teachers’ perceptions of the purposes, benefits, and barriers to what happens during planning at the school. Since each grade level at the school has only two teams, the teachers I interviewed were able to comment, in general, about what goes on during common planning time.

Based on these results, teachers at JCMS appear to use common planning to address student issues with interdisciplinary teams and address curriculum planning with content colleagues. Teachers address both behavior and academic issues experienced by their students by sharing ideas with each other, involving parents in developing solutions, and including non-team

personnel such as school administrators and counselors as needed. These teachers seek to present a united front not only with their own students, but they also seek to work with the other team on their grade levels so that both teams express common expectations for all students. Curriculum planning with content colleagues does not seem to be as universal as does the work with interdisciplinary teams.

For the most part, teachers and administrators at JCMS share the same vision for the purpose of common planning time, seeing it as a time to discuss student, team, and content issues in collaboration with team and grade-level colleagues. My own experiences as a teacher at the school confirm this, although I must acknowledge that it is also a relatively new development. When I began teaching at JCMS in 2003, teachers and students were organized in teams, but it was in name only. Teachers seldom worked together, even to address student issues, unless required to do so. Perhaps the most important fact in changing this environment occurred at the beginning of the 2005 school year (personal communication with JCMS principal, Sept. 16, 2008) when school administrators required each team to turn in weekly documentation of what teachers did for a minimum of 100 minutes of common planning time. All three teachers alluded to this requirement during the interviews, remarking that it made them more aware of working together. They also noted, however, that although they were required to meet a minimum of 100 minutes, administrators placed no other mandates, allowing teachers to meet when they needed to do so and to choose their topics of discussion. The collaborative environment that resulted as a result of this change is perhaps responsible, at least in part, for the school's continued success as measured by student achievement on state-required standardized tests even as the school's population grew and its demographics changed. Although JCMS has always made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), according to the mandates of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*,

results since the spring of 2006 have consistently placed JCMS among the top ten systems in the state of Georgia. This success seems to confirm the teachers' perceptions that common planning time benefited students and teachers, as well as the school as a whole.

Implications

Going into the study, I theorized that the team with the first-year teacher would have more supportive interactions than the teams with the second-year teachers; my observations of the differences among the interactions of the beginning (one to three years experience) teachers in each team meeting during the first phase confirmed that fact. In the sixth grade meeting, the beginning teacher, who was in her first year of teaching, asked specific questions of her colleagues and received suggestions to help her better understand her students and how to help them. She did not, however, contribute her own suggestions and examples very often, but she instead just agreed with what the other teachers had to say. The seventh grade teacher, who was in her second year of teaching at the school, actively participated in discussions during the team meetings, offering her own examples, insights, and suggestions. Finally, the eighth grade teacher, who was in his second year of teaching overall but only his first at the school, did not offer many comments during the meeting other than to agree with the others, typically by shaking his head in agreement. He did share one student success with the other teachers; he also entered a side conversation with the other male teacher on the team. These observations suggested that the team with the first year teacher had more supportive interactions with their beginning teacher, confirming my decision to select the sixth grade team for the focus of the second phase of the study.

Interview results from the first phase indicated that teachers participated in both content and team meetings during their common planning time. This result led me to expand my

observations in phase two to include content meetings as well as team meetings. Thus, the results of both the observations and the interviews from the first phase of the study informed what I did during phase two. These results will be discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

PHASE TWO RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time (CPT) to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. One primary research question guided this study: What happens during common planning time in relation to the induction of beginning teachers? The second phase of the study focused on one team for further observations and interviews to determine how the structure of common planning time was used to provide induction support to a beginning teacher. Research subquestions that guided this phase of the study are listed below:

- a. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?
- b. What are the effects of the induction supports on beginning teachers?
- c. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?
- d. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?
- e. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

As discussed in Chapter 3, I selected the sixth grade team for study during the second phase because that team showed more supportive interactions with the beginning teacher than did the other teams during phase one. I observed both interdisciplinary team and content meetings and interviewed the new teacher as well as her mentors on both the interdisciplinary and content teams. I included content meetings after all three teachers I interviewed in phase indicated that both content and team meetings were important activities that teachers at Johnson City Middle School (JCMS) participated in during common planning time. I also interviewed the other members of the interdisciplinary team as well as the assistant principal, who is in charge of the school's induction program.

My original plan was to observe the meetings either directly or via videotape. However, this proved impossible to do. Scheduled meetings were frequently canceled, with make-up meetings either held spontaneously or conducted via email. I was able to observe one content and one team meeting during February, but I asked the beginning teacher to audiotape other meetings in order to obtain data. Although the audiotaped data was certainly not as complete as either direct or videotaped observations would have been, it did provide the gist of what occurred during the meetings. In addition to the February meetings I observed directly during phase one of the study, I also had audiotaped data from content meetings in March and May as well as team meetings in March and April. I interviewed the beginning teacher and the two mentors in February, March, and May. Finally, I interviewed the school's assistant principal, who was in charge of the induction program, in both February and March.

In discussing the results of phase two, I start with the interviews with other team members to provide background information. I then present the results from the content and team observations, followed by the results from interviews with the beginning and mentor teachers.

Finally, I present the two interviews with the assistant principal for an administrator's view of the induction supports provided to this beginning teacher.

After initial inductive coding of the induction supports offered or sought during the observations of team and content meetings in phase two, I did a focused coding of these supports, using the framework of Bartell's (2005) list of new teacher needs addressed in induction programs (see Table 2) to categorize them. The inductive method allowed me to examine the data with no preconceived ideas of what I would find. Focused coding is a more selective coding that knits larger chunks of data together. These larger chunks of data are then classified in categories that have been preestablished in terms of theory or prior research (Lofland et al., 2006); Bartell's framework is an example of categories preestablished in prior research. Using such a framework made it easier for me to connect my findings to the existing research on induction supports.

I used the information about the induction supports offered to or sought by the beginning teacher to form interview questions for the beginning and mentor teachers. I also asked each teacher to review the induction portion of Feiman-Nemser's (2001a) Continuum of Central Tasks of Learning to Teach (see Table 3) prior to each interview. Specifically, I asked them to think about progress the beginning teacher had made on each of the tasks and what supports had helped her make that progress since our last interview. Doing so allowed each of the teachers to focus on progress the beginning teacher was making. In analyzing the interview results from the beginning teacher and her mentor teachers, I looked for how the beginning teacher had progressed on Feiman-Nemser's tasks for the induction phase and the supports that had helped her make this progress (e.g., reflected on instructional strategies with her mentor to design an responsive instructional program).

Interviews with Team Members

I interviewed the three members of the sixth grade team-- Ella Walker, the math teacher, Carly Simonton, the science teacher, and Will Marks, the special education inclusion teacher-- who were not involved in the mentor teacher interview I conducted during phase one with sixth grade the social studies teacher, Banks. I conducted these interviews during the last week of February and the first week of March. By this time, they had worked with the first-year language arts teacher, Sanders, for more than a semester and had a sense of how her year was going. I asked them about the experience of working with Sanders as a new teacher. I analyzed their responses for the types of support each had offered to Sanders as well as other factors they felt had influenced her first year of teaching.

Walker

My interview with Walker, the math teacher, took place in my room because she felt she would be better able to focus if she were not in her room, surrounded by work that awaited her. Our interview lasted 30 minutes. She felt that the year had so far been generally positive for Sanders. She attributed the successful start to two main factors: Sanders's life experiences as well as her previous work at the school. According to her, Sanders did not seem to have any problems with classroom management, something she attributed to having "*children of her own because she kind of knows developmentally where a sixth grader is because she had a sixth grader last year.*" In addition, she felt that the fact that Sanders was "*older and carries herself with a lot of confidence and poise*" helped her classroom management skills. She pointed to Sanders's experiences as a student teacher in the sixth grade at JCMS the previous year as well as her many years of substitute teaching in the school system and at JCMS in particular as other factors that had helped her "*fit in.*" Walker felt that those experiences allowed Sanders to feel

comfortable with “*what the expectations were in general for sixth graders and. . . how [the teachers] run their classrooms;*” she also “*knew how the office worked, she knew the people.*” Walker believed that these experiences helped Sanders “*transition because it didn’t feel like she was a true first-year teacher.*”

Although Walker felt like she “*couldn’t offer [her] as much support as I would have liked to*” at the beginning of the year due to her own transition to a new position (changed from being the special education inclusion teacher to the math teacher on the team), she did share ways she had been able to support Sanders. Although she was now teaching math, Walker was able to offer significant instructional support due to her previous experiences as an inclusion teacher who co-taught in all four subject areas. She speculated, “*I think I was really non-threatening to her since I no longer taught language arts – it was like it was safe to ask me questions.*” In addition, Walker suggested, “*Since I was an inclusion teacher so long, I’m really familiar with behavior and academic strategies that I could share when she struggled with her lower level students.*” Walker felt she was also able to offer psychological support by being “*a listening ear, a venting place...[not] always offer[ing] advice, just listening*” whenever Sanders was frustrated or overwhelmed. Her physical proximity in the classroom next door to Sanders’s room was something she saw as helpful: “*Since I was right next door, I think she found it easy to just pop in the room. . . to ask a question or to just vent.*”

Procedural support was something Sanders needed at the beginning of the year, according to Walker: “*Well, especially in grade-level meetings, we [other teachers] would start talking about things, forgetting that everyone of us had been a sixth-grade teacher the year before except for her.*” Walker indicated, “*Whenever I saw confusion on her face in a meeting, I would either clarify the discussion then or make a mental note to explain it to her in private later.*”

Finally, Walker was a source of managerial support: *“I’m sort of the techy-person [technology] on our team, so I helped her with things like setting up her grade book, entering grades, and printing progress reports.”*

Overall, Walker felt that she and the other teachers on the team were *“available for her”* and *“were keeping an eye on her, especially at the beginning because she was very nervous about the content area.”* By this point in the year [a month into the second semester], her opinion of Sanders’s progress was *“I think she’s very comfortable with the language arts content now, and she doesn’t worry about asking for help when she doesn’t understand something.”* When I asked what she felt had helped Sanders the most in feeling more comfortable with the language arts curriculum, she indicated, *“Of course, the help from Becker [language arts ILT] was great. Plus, Banks taught language arts for years, and I had worked with language arts when I did inclusion, so we were all able to help her. I could give her help with the special education and struggling students – those were the ones she really struggled with.”*

Walker felt that she herself had benefited from working with Sanders. First, she indicated that *“the positives of working with a first-year teacher are that you really think about things that you do.”* She found herself analyzing her own practice to pinpoint things that helped her become a successful teacher. In her words, *“That really helped me realize – hey you have more experience in the classroom than your remember.”* Walker had also benefited from watching Sanders plan with the team’s co-teacher and *“now I’m trying to do more of that with the math teacher on the other team now.”*

Simonton

I interviewed Simonton in her room. She had been working with some students after school and wanted to be available if they had any questions. Our interview lasted 27 minutes.

Simonton felt that Sanders was “*a very strong first-year teacher.*” She attributed that success to that fact both to her previous experiences in the school as well as her life experiences. She saw Sanders’s student teaching experience in sixth grade the previous year as “*a definite help. . . she already knew the climate of the school. . . the mode of operation of the school. . . understood our rules and our consequences. . . [and she was] able to both learn our personalities and see how we handle the kids.*” She attributed these experiences with helping Sanders develop and follow through with a “*concrete plan*” for discipline to the point that “*we never really had to help her with discipline.*” Sanders’s life experiences that Simonton saw as being especially helpful included “*she has age on her; she’s wiser. . . not fresh out of college; she’s more worldly. . . has two children of her own. . .*” She also pointed to Sanders’s experiences with her own seventh grade child: “*she knows what it’s like to have a middle school child, and she knows how they are.*” This experience not only benefited Sanders, but it also benefited the rest of the team because “*she has that ability to sort of help spot their [students’] strengths and weaknesses and give them [students] a little more backbone when they’re feeling weak in one area versus another.*”

Simonton offered psychological support in various ways. She pointed to their weekly team meetings as a time to “*touch base for the week. . . and address any individual needs that she [Sanders] may have.*” She tried to offer support during these team meetings as well as trying to “*stick my head in the door*” and check on her periodically. At the beginning of the year, this support included “*advice on dealing with a difficult student*” or “*offering her a break.*” Now that Sanders was “*confident in what she’s doing,*” the psychological support consisted of “*get[ting] her through this last semester*” with reminders such as ‘*you’re going to make it,*’ and ‘*you’ve got*

x-number of days.” Managerial support was another area Simonton addressed at the beginning of the year by helping her with supplies and modeling organizational strategies for her room.

Finally, she offered instructional support in various ways. One form of instructional support was to help Sanders “*increase the content, make the content a little more differentiated or a little more challenging for her gifted classes.*” Simonton offered additional instructional support by reinforcing language arts concepts such as vocabulary instruction and writing skills in her science classroom: “*I try to look at her words that she’s working with and see if they transfer over to my [science] words. . . [telling the students] you’ve used this word in vocabulary in a different context, now I want you to transfer that word to science and use it as a synonym in science.*” She also emphasized “*writing across the curriculum, reading across the curriculum*” as a “*major philosophy I live by,*” which led her to incorporate both in science. She believed that making her science class connect to the language arts classroom was “*good for them [students] communicating. . . [to] know what’s going on in each other’s classrooms.*” This, in turn, “*strengthens how the students see her [Sanders].*” She felt that the instructional support from the team as well as the ILT had been an important factor in giving Sanders confidence so that by the second half of the year, she was “*still planning with the other teacher...[but] seeing her doing it more independently and getting her own ideas together.*”

Simonton felt she had benefited from offering support to Sanders because “*it helps me stay more organized. . . so that I can be a support system to her. . . [as well as] modeling it for [her].*” She said the experience of working with a first-year teacher so far that year had been “*a reminder of how overwhelming it is to be a first-year teacher*” as well as a reminder to be “*a support system*” in any way that she could. She said that at times, “*sometimes I feel like she may feel that she is burdening us, when that’s not at all right.*” Simonton was adamant that she felt

the responsibility, as a veteran teacher, to let Sanders know that “[you’re] *not a burden, we’ve been there, we’ve walked your path before; we are here to help you.*”

Marks

I interviewed Marks in my room by his choice, although he did not offer a reason. Our interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. Marks, as the team’s inclusion teacher, was the only person on the team to work directly in the classroom with Sanders. He was not able “*to offer her much advice about the language arts, however, as my previous teaching experience had always been in eighth grade science.*” He reported, “*I enjoy working with her. . . learning a lot in language arts. . . both of us working together, looking at the lessons, and working with other language arts teachers. . . so we’re all working together.*” This shared learning offered some psychological support since, “*we’re all learning. . . it’s a good experience for all of us.*”

Because of his experience as an inclusion teacher, however, he was able to offer instructional support by “*assist[ing] in working with the special needs students and the struggling students in modifying the tests or quizzes or maybe the homework assignments.*” Other ways he would help included “*pull kids. . . to go to my room and work on something that they’re struggling with.*” He also helped with classroom management by “*walking around the room to monitor behavior. . . offer suggestions on what to do with some of the students or maybe come up with a behavior contract or work on that [behavior] with some students who need it,. . . [and] discuss options we have with these certain students [special education].*” He seemed to feel that his managerial support was offered more as an equal colleague than as an experienced colleague because, in his words, “*She’s got classroom management under control. . . . The kids do respect her, and they listen to her. . . she’s good.*”

Marks attributed Sanders's success to both having her own children and doing her student teaching at the school. Having a child in middle school made her *"familiar with the kids and what to expect at this age"* compared to *"someone who just came out of college with no kid experiences [who] then could struggle."* Doing her student teaching at the school allowed her to get to *"know people and how we work, how [Johnson City] works,"* with the result that *"though she's a new teacher, she just fits in like she's been teaching here with us a couple of years."*

Summary

All three teachers agreed that Sanders was a strong first-year teacher. They all attributed her success to her prior life experiences as well as her previous work experience at the school as both a student teacher and a substitute teacher. Each offered some combination of instructional, managerial, and psychological support. Although not mentioned directly, they were, for the most part, able to offer these supports during their common planning time. They indicated that they *checked in with her during the team meetings or popped in her room to check on her* after students had left for connections. As a result of these supports, they saw her grow in confidence to the point that one teacher saw her functioning as though *"she's been teaching here a couple of years."*

Content Meetings

Data collection for the content meetings was an interesting process. Although the beginning teacher and her content mentor met daily for the first nine weeks of school, those meetings had tapered off to the point that they were meeting weekly by the end of the first semester. By February, although they talked with each other frequently, they met on a scheduled basis approximately once a month. I directly observed the first meeting in February. The teachers audiotaped their meeting in March. Between family and personal illness experienced by Becker

as well as her increased ILT responsibilities at the end of the year, Sanders and Becker did not meet after the beginning of April except to touch base with each other. However, Sanders did work with her team mentor, Shelly Banks, to put together a cross-curricular unit they implemented the last month of school. I interviewed them in May about their planning efforts since they did not remember to tape any of their planning meetings, and they did not think I would be able to follow what they did from the emails they had.

February Meeting

Sanders and Becker, the language arts ILT, met in Becker's room during their common planning time to discuss a writing activity they had used and to look at content descriptors for grammar to determine concepts and skills they still needed to cover or review before the end of the year. Both teachers brought materials from the writing activity, including copies of student work. They also brought copies of the content descriptors for the Georgia Performance Standards for language arts, which lists the objectives students are supposed to learn at each grade level. They both brought various content resources, including their grammar textbook and workbooks. Their meeting lasted approximately 45 minutes.

While they were getting their materials organized, Sanders shared her beginning work on the team's interdisciplinary unit on *The Cay*, a novel being read in social studies classes. She had used a writing prompt to introduce the concept of "prejudice," a theme in the novel. She shared with excitement how they responded to the journal prompt she had used. "*They all wrote, and they wrote without looking up!*" she proudly exclaimed. Becker offered psychological support by commenting, "*Yeah! That's definitely an improvement over your earlier attempts to get them to write about what they were reading.*"

Their first activity was to discuss the results of a writing activity both had used the previous week. The “Story Glove” graphic organizer was one Becker had previously shared with Sanders; students used the organizer to record what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of their papers before examining the results with a partner to see where more details might need to be added. Sanders shared, *“The activity was great, but it was really overwhelming for my struggling students because they just were really unsure where to add details in the revision process.”* Becker offered instructional support by suggesting several strategies (e.g., *Pinpoint one event and ask the “what” or “why” questions as ways to give revision feedback.*) Sanders might use to help students identify where they could help each other. She also reminded Sanders, *“Don’t worry about all the areas of deficiencies that your struggling students have, but focus more on their successes on parts of the graphic organizer.”* She went on to offer psychological support by reminding Sanders, *“Remember that improvement in one area is a very important step for students who struggle with writing an entire paper.”*

After spending approximately 10 minutes discussing the writing activity, they moved to their main activity of the meeting – examining the content descriptors to gauge how far they had progressed in covering their standards so far this year. As they discussed each content descriptor, they determined if it had been adequately covered, needed review, or had not been covered. During this discussion, Becker primarily offered instructional support as she led the discussion. She often stopped to interpret the language of the descriptors for Sanders, such as the time when she explained, *“When the descriptor says ‘pronouns,’ it actually means ‘types of pronouns,’*” something Sanders admitted, *“I wouldn’t have realized on my own.”* Becker also continually suggested strategies for Sanders to use that would allow her to reinforce each skill in multiple ways, focusing on how to reinforce grammar skills in writing and reading activities. One

suggestion she made involved the work each did with *Daily Grammar Practice* (DGP), a grammar program adopted by the school: “*When I talk about sentence types with them on Wednesdays, I constantly ask them questions to get at how they know the sentence is a certain type, or how they would change it to a different type of sentence. That really helps them improve their writing as well.*” She also pointed out areas where Sanders would need to supplement their existing materials to adequately cover the required standards, such as: “*You know, DGP doesn’t really do much with pronouns and antecedents, so we have to pull things from the grammar book.*” As they identified descriptors they needed to plan for, she led Sanders in reviewing their resources to identify specific pages they could use to supplement their teaching for the rest of the year.

Although Becker led the discussion, they both intended to carry out the plans they were making. Sanders said very little during this discussion beyond an “*Um hum,*” or “*Yeah, they knew that one pretty well,*” or “*Okay,*” or “*What was that page again?*” As Becker talked, Sanders worked busily to keep up with her, starring items in the list of content descriptors, writing page numbers beside those items, and marking pages in the various resources. She also used a note pad to jot notes to herself.

At one point during this meeting, Sanders shared, “*I get so frustrated grading their writing – it’s like they don’t remember anything we’ve talked about – especially my lower students!*” Becker reminded her, “*Try to focus on finding some success in their papers rather than on everything that was done incorrectly.*” She also reminded Sanders, “*You don’t have to mark everything that was incorrect in the paper – you could focus on corrections in say, one paragraph, as well as find at least one thing the student’s done successfully.*” Finally, she pointed out, “*Remember, not all of these skills need to be covered extensively – for some, you*

need to say it only once without going into a full lesson on it. For instance, they've done the parts of speech for several years now, so they just need a reminder on things like nouns and verbs." Becker offered managerial support as she shared advice on grading practices that were both effective for Sanders and constructive for students.

Becker constantly found ways to offer psychological support by praising Sanders's efforts to *"hold students accountable in a way that doesn't crush them."* She reminded Sanders, *"I know that having all of your struggling students in one class can be overwhelming for anyone. Just remember that a focus on the students' successes and improvements will make all of you feel better about your work together."* When Sanders expressed her frustration: *"I just don't know how to help some of these students who basically can't read,"* Becker empathized: *"I know I don't have those groups of students this year, but I've taught them in previous years. It is hard and frustrating."* Becker reminded her, *"You'll always have students who struggle, but over time, you'll develop strategies to help them. That just takes time."*

March Meeting

The teachers audio taped this meeting, held in Becker's room. The meeting lasted approximately 35 minutes. Sanders and Becker discussed a review activity they had used in their classes. They had developed the activity after identifying areas of the sixth grade language arts standards they needed to review. This activity required students to revise sentence order in one paragraph as well as identify sentences that did not support the main idea of another paragraph. They cut each paragraph into individual sentences for the students to physically manipulate; they organized the paragraph sets using Ziploc bags and a different colored paper for each center. Becker prepared two different paragraph activities for each of the five centers in her room while

Becker prepared sets of the same paragraphs to use with her students. The plan was for students to rotate to various centers to complete the activities with partners.

Becker offered managerial support as they discussed how the activity had been implemented. According to Sanders, *“The students didn’t pay attention as they put the sentences up. The sentences got mixed up and put in the wrong bags. Then, the directions didn’t match the sentence when they handed it off to the next group to use it.”* Becker suggested, *“It might have worked better to let the students change stations rather than switch off the bags of sentences.”* She also offered suggestions for reducing confusion and wasted time when having students move to different places in the classroom: *“Make sure you give them a bit of warning so they can start to clean up. Make the rotation order something simple so that they aren’t walking over each other. Also, tell them how much time they have to move – and don’t make it very long!”*

Becker combined instructional and managerial support as they discussed the benefits of the activity. *“You know, this was a good activity. The kids enjoyed it, and I think it will help them retain the skill. However, it took us a long time to get it ready.”* Sanders agreed, *“Yes, I spent hours cutting apart those sentences! I should have used a larger font for the paragraphs, too.”* Becker pointed out another benefit of the activity: *“Sixth graders really need some hands-on learning, which this activity provided. Also, having them change stations gave them a chance to stretch and refocus.”* Sanders reflected on her students’ response to the activity: *“My lower students especially enjoyed this activity. They really got into it.”* They agreed that, while the students enjoyed the activity, the time required to prepare it may not have been worth the effort. Sanders said, *“I might use these same sets again next year, but I’m not sure I would make another set!”*

May Meeting

This content meeting reflected work over a two-week period at the beginning of May that Sanders did with Banks, the social studies teacher on her team as well as her team mentor. As mentioned earlier, I interviewed them about the planning process since they had not thought to tape any of the five meetings they held during their planning time, and they felt I would not really understand the process by just reading their email communication throughout the process. Once they implemented the two-week unit, they also checked with each other daily to work out snags.

For a class project in her master's program, Sanders had to develop a WebQuest². As she said, *"If I had to do this, I may as well do something that could be co-curricular, that maybe Banks and I could work on together."* She decided to tie the WebQuest to a grade-level social studies activity that focused on Australia: *"I knew we had the airport project coming up. I thought we could use the web quest to support their learning about Australia."* Banks added, *"She wanted to do something that incorporated persuasive writing and persuasive speaking. . . the writing skills. . . evidence to back up your claims. . . since the kids were flying to Australia from the airport, that was just a logical choice."* [The airport project is an annual activity organized by the sixth grade social studies teachers for their students. Students mimic the process of traveling to a country they have studied during the year: they are issued passports and airline tickets, with students receiving first class tickets for various rewards. They move to different

²A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity for students where some or all of the information students will use come from Internet resources. The teacher provides students with a real-world project and a list of preselected web sites to use. Completing the project requires students (often working in groups) to use higher-order thinking skills to integrate, analyze, and synthesize new knowledge gained from the provided resources.

rooms on the sixth grade hall as they go through customs, security, check-in, the flight, and baggage claims as well as take “tours” of well-known locations. During the “flight,” they are provided with snacks and watch a movie about the country they are “visiting.” Teachers obtain or create posters related to the country and play music that reflects the country’s culture to create realistic settings for “tours” of well-known locations in the country. The entire activity lasts approximately two hours.]

Sanders described the development process for the project: *“I reviewed both the social studies and language arts standards for ones that would apply to this project. I talked to Banks to make sure I was on target with those. My professor had given us a template to use for the web quest, but Banks and I decided we wanted to tweak it to make it fit our needs.”* When I asked her to clarify how they changed the template, she explained, *“We wanted the students to work in cooperative groups, with each student responsible for a certain type of information. The template seemed to be set up for students to complete a task individually.”* Students worked in groups, with each having a job such as historian, economist, and cultural specialist, as they put together their presentation. These jobs represented various aspects of social studies the students had studies throughout the year; they had also used these roles in previous projects, so they were already familiar with these requirements.

Banks added that the final product required students to *“complete the WebQuest to get the necessary information to produce a presentation to the Johnson City School Board, asking them to replace the system’s current Scotland Exchange Program [a Johnson City High School student exchange program to Scotland] with an exchange program to Australia.”* Banks said,

The inspiration to focus on the exchange program came when some high school students came around selling onions for their trip next year. We knew the students remembered seeing the Scottish students visit our school back in the fall, so we thought that would give our students a realistic context for the project.”

Sanders explained the work that took up the bulk of their planning time:

I had to make sure I provided clear guidelines for the students to follow. I had to explain what the Scotland Exchange program entailed so they would understand the information they needed to include in their presentations. I also had to come up with clear tasks for each of the student jobs. Although students were familiar with these roles. . . had to make [the roles] fit this project. I asked Banks to read what I wrote to make sure that the students would understand it. I also wanted to make sure it was clear to Banks since she was using it in her room! Finally, Banks and I had to develop rubrics for the presentation as well as the work each student produced to fulfill the roles. Although all that took a long time, I think what took even long was getting it into a format that my professor liked!

As they talked about the process of planning this project, Banks seemed to do most of the talking since Sanders seemed a little bashful about sharing her work. The attitude Banks conveyed was one of pride in what Sanders had accomplished as she flashed frequent smiles at Sanders both as Sanders talked and as Banks herself talked. When they finished their explanation, I expressed my own admiration for the project and told Sanders I might want to use some parts of it in the future. She seemed to relax and smile at that point. It appears that both Banks and I provided psychological support by affirming the work Sanders had done creating this unit.

Banks provided instructional support during the process. According to Sanders, Banks offered instructional support such as, *“She suggested good web sites to use as well as giving me input on the historical aspects of the assignment. Since she’s traveled so much herself, she also had a lot to add to that part of the assignment – [she] helped me make it more realistic.”*

However, Banks countered with some affirming psychological support: *“Sanders really did it all. I helped with the historical parts and then the travel part because of all of my experience in that area.”*

Banks also provided psychological support with comments such as *“I kept telling her how impressed I was with her computer skills to put all of that together!”* She also commented, *“She [Sanders] could have just cranked out a really easy little web quest and been done, but she wanted – and I applaud her – she wanted to come up with something that would really be worthwhile.”* Perhaps the most important form of psychological support Banks offered, however, was her willingness to implement a major portion of the unit in her own classes: *“Oh, I’d use anything Sanders created in my classes – she does such a good job! I had her last year for her student teaching experience, and I knew she’d do well”* – high praise indeed from a veteran teacher to a brand-new teacher.

Overall, however, the two felt they worked together as colleagues on the project. Sanders reflected, *“I think because it was pretty new to both of us, it kind of leveled the playing field a little bit. It wasn’t like a project I had done or a project she had done.”* Banks added, *“I haven’t felt like, you know, a mentor. I have been very hands off, other than you know – I am here...do you need this...as far as this project, I felt like I was working with, you know, a colleague.”*

They both agreed they had learned quite a bit from creating and implementing the project. They liked how *“it really fulfilled several standards from both our content areas,”*

according to Sanders. She continued, “*I also felt it tied in well with an existing project our grade level does – really added some important critical thinking skills to the overall project that we wanted our students to do.*” Both agreed they would implement it again, although they would change it somewhat, based on this experience.

Summary

As one would expect, the majority of the support provided by the mentor teachers in these content meetings was instructional in nature. Becker, in particular, pointed out teaching strategies and explained how to interpret standards. The mentor teachers also helped Sanders find instructional resources to supplement lesson plans. However, the level of such support declined as the year progressed, and Sanders became more confident in her knowledge of the language arts curriculum. I found it significant that she felt confident enough by the end of the year to plan her web quest unit on her own, consulting Banks only for confirmation that she had included all the necessary standards and accepting suggestions for web sites to include.

Managerial support was also offered as the mentor teachers pointed out ways to manage assessing student work and implementing student-centered learning activities. The assessment piece is particularly crucial for language arts teachers who have to grade subjective work like writing assignments, as I know from my own experience. I think it was significant that Sanders received positive support for implementing student-centered activities, something that may make her more likely to engage in such activities in the future.

Finally, Sanders also received psychological support from her mentor teachers. They reaffirmed her efforts and approaches to her students. They also empathized with her frustrations when all of her students were not able to do what she asked them to do. By sharing their own

experiences, they reassured her that she was not failing and reminded her that she, too, would develop the knowledge and skills to deal with such situations in a more instinctive manner.

Team Meetings

I collected data from a direct observation of a team meeting in February as well as audiotaped observations of meetings in March and April. These data were analyzed for evidence of induction supports offered to Sanders during the meetings. I also reanalyzed the data from my first observation of the sixth grade team meeting, used in phase one, for categories of induction support offered to the beginning teacher. I present the reanalysis of the January meeting first in order to provide a chronological record of Sanders's growth.

January Meeting

This team meeting, which lasted 45 minutes, focused on a review of students who were at risk of failing for the year after the first semester. The meeting was held in Walker's room. To guide their discussion, teachers used a chart detailing the interventions they had agreed upon during parent conferences at the end of the first semester. Walker had apparently originally prepared the chart since she read it from a document saved on her computer; she also made changes to the chart based on their discussions in this meeting. They also generated a list of other students they needed to discuss since final grades had been posted for the semester. Sanders took notes during this discussion as she had apparently forgotten to bring her copy of the chart to the meeting. As they discussed these interventions, Sanders, with a hint of frustration in her voice, asked, *"Why is it that some of these students do fine in my class but not in others or the other way around?"* Walker offered cultural support when she explained, *"Some of them don't do as well in classes just after lunch – maybe they need to move around some or they get sleepy. Some of them don't do well in the morning – maybe their meds haven't take effect yet. It really all*

depends on the time of the day and what subject hits then.” The other teachers agreed, and Sanders seemed satisfied with the explanation.

As the discussion of the modifications continued, Sanders asked the group in general, *“How do you decide on interventions for different students?”* Walker and Simonton offered instructional support by sharing a couple of strategies to use in different situations. Simonton offered also offered managerial support by sharing, *“You know, I’ve found it helpful to keep a copy of this chart in my plan book (holds up chart from her plan book) so I always have it in front of me. Also, as I look at all the modifications, that gives me other ideas to try with other students as well.”* With a laugh, Sanders agreed, *“Yeah, that would help. I would also have it with me when I come to these meetings instead of forgetting it.”* The other teachers seemed to offer psychological support as they laughed with her.

From the review of the interventions agreed upon during the recent parent conferences for students who were struggling academically, the team moved on to discuss students they now thought they needed to schedule for parent conferences, including some gifted students whose grades were okay but whom the teachers seemed to collectively feel were not working up to their potential. They also identified additional students who were at-risk for failing for the year based on first-semester averages, which were posted after the Christmas break. Through this discussion, the teachers provided instructional support as they identified students who were not meeting appropriate grade-level standards and expectations.

During this discussion, Sanders did not make any comments other than to agree with the other teachers, but she made notes of the discussion on her pad of paper. Marks came into the meeting about this time, offering the explanation that he had been waiting on a parent to hold an IEP (individualized educational plan) meeting. Upon hearing this, Walker lamented, *“It’s so*

difficult to get parents to respond for any of these meetings.” Simonton reminded them, *“Administrators recommended that we hold these meetings even if parents do not attend. Of course, if a parent asks us to reschedule, we’ll do that – anything to help them join us.”* This comment seemed to calm the slight tension that everyone felt about the lack of parental response, and they settled down to continue their discussion. Her response provided procedural support for Sanders as she provided insight into how administrators wanted teachers to handle the situation of parents not showing up for scheduled conferences.

As they continued to discuss different students, Banks and Simonton each agreed to talk to the counselors about working with some students who were having issues such as organization and test anxiety, providing more procedural support by identifying school resources outside the team who could help meet student needs. Finally, the teachers agreed upon the days they wanted to set aside for parent meetings. As Banks summarized their plan, she provided managerial support for Sanders by modeling how to arrange conferences with parents while still protecting planning time for other teacher work:

Banks: *Okay, we’ll set up the meetings for Tuesdays and Thursdays with four meetings each day. Maybe we can get some of these gifted students working like they should be if we can get their parents in. Good, that will still give us time to get things done.*

As they were winding up the meeting, Walker asked Simonton about something she had said to some students in one class. Simonton related the anecdote to laughter from everyone, and Walker related an amusing incident from her own class. That led to Simonton sharing a success story of a student who had met goals the teachers had previously set, and Banks, Sanders, and Walker chimed in with other good reports as well that had resulted from a parent starting a student on medication. Everyone left the meeting on a positive note, with smiles on their faces

and laughter in their voices. Sharing both the amusing and successful stories provided psychological support for Sanders by attending to emotional well-being after spending so much time focused on students who were not experiencing success.

February Meeting

The February meeting focused on planning an interdisciplinary unit on *The Cay* that the team was about to teach. They met in Banks' room for approximately 35 minutes. Only Sanders, Banks, and Simonton were present; Banks explained, "*Walker isn't here because math classes don't do much with this unit. Marks had another meeting, but he'll just help us in each class.*" The three teachers sat in student desks pulled together in a circle. Both Banks and Simonton had taught this particular unit several times, although Simonton admitted, "*I've tweaked it somewhat for this year.*" Sanders, with a puzzled expression, asked Banks, "*Why don't I remember this unit better from student teaching last year?*" Banks reminded her, "*We did this during second semester, so you probably saw only some of it when you did that long-term sub assignment on the other team.*"

Both Simonton and Banks provided managerial support as they explained the unit to Sanders. Simonton explained, "*After our [professional development] meeting the other day, I made us one of those Lotus organizers for the students to use as they take notes in science and social studies on the topics related to the novel.*" (The Lotus graphic organizer was a strategy introduced to teachers at the school during a professional development session toward the end of the first semester, so this was the first time the teachers had put it into use.) After Simonton gave the teachers a copy of the graphic organizer, she indicated which topics applied to science and social studies. Banks added, "*I'll introduce the unit in social studies with a slide show that Walker made of my pictures from that Caribbean vacation along with some big band and island*

music she found.” She continued to explain, “We’ll read the novel in social studies – it should take us about seven days to finish the reading. I’ll let you know each day how far we’ve gotten with the reading so you will know where we are.” Finally, Simonton indicated, “We won’t grade the actual graphic organizer the students complete. We’ll let them use it on some of the assignments and grade those.” During these explanations, Sanders listened and took notes as she looked over the graphic organizer.

Simonton and Banks offered instructional support to Sanders on ways to incorporate the novel into her class after she admitted, *“We’re in the middle of our writing unit right now, and I’m not sure what I can do beyond using the information from the graphic organizer for a writing piece, and I hate to make them do yet another essay.”* Banks suggested, *“You can have the students complete a flip book with summaries of what they read each day. That will help them remember the main ideas of what they read.”* Simonton suggested, *“Why don’t you review the story elements by having them make a plot diagram after they finish reading the novel?”* They also offered suggestions on how she could structure a writing piece as Banks suggested, *“Why don’t you have the students create diary entries by the main character? That would let them use the story details for informational writing.”* Simonton followed up on that suggestion with a way she could differentiate it for her gifted student: *“Oh yes, that’s good. And for the gifted, you could have them do the journal from the mother’s point of view so they could think of what someone else’s experience would be like as they read about the main character.”* Sanders accepted both suggestions with a smile and a look of relief: *“I like those. That will be different from the other things we are writing – and it lets them combine their knowledge of the literature with the writing.”*

Banks offered psychological support when she shared, *“You’ll be glad to know how well the students did on a writing assignment the other day. I had them write an acrostic poem using the word Caribbean. I warned them in advance they would be graded on capitalization and punctuation. They did great!”* She further offered, *“Don’t worry about it [the unit]. I’ll be glad to help you whenever you need anything.”* Sanders admitted, *“I feel more confident now about incorporating the novel into our current writing unit. Thanks for these suggestions.”* Finally, both Simonton and Banks reassured her, *“Don’t worry – the students have always enjoyed this unit in past years.”*

March Meeting

The teachers audiotaped the March meeting. Participating in the meeting were Banks, Sanders, Simonton, and Walker. Marks joined them after the meeting started. They met in Banks’ room; the meeting, which lasted about 30 minutes, focused on students who were at-risk of possible retention. The meeting started out with a review of students for whom parent meetings were scheduled in the near future. As Walker shared which parents had confirmed attendance, they discussed individual students and their progress. A student discipline issue was discussed as well as another student’s medical issues.

Through the first part of this discussion, Sanders listened, without offering much comment as the others did most of the talking. She began to actively participate during the discussion about one student whom Walker identified as *“language arts is where we are really struggling.”* Sanders shared, *“He’s tried. I bargained with him that I would buy him a candy bar if he would make 100 and I would have even taken an A on his vocabulary, but he got a 79... it was almost a B.”* When Walker and Banks offered psychological support by encouraging her with *“at least that’s passing,”* she agreed and continued, *“Well, my deal is going to be next week,*

if you will do your homework and pass your test, here is your [candy] bar.” She explained that she had arrived at that plan after “I asked the kids [in homeroom] who had their homework. No – I said well, go to break and get it done, and then you will at least get credit for your homework fourth period.”

The other teachers liked her idea of checking on students’ homework before they came to class. Banks said,

So maybe that is a strategy for all these kids, that we divide them up amongst us and check with each of these children in homeroom, and see, I want to physically see the homework. . . don’t have it, they go straight to break.

Simonton added, *“If they don’t have the homework for first and second period [before break], they could do it in homeroom.”* Adopting her strategy for use by the rest of the team provided psychological support by helping her gain self-confidence.

The teachers immediately devised a plan to require students to check in with a teacher during the mornings. When Banks offered, *“None of these [students] are in my homeroom, but I can commit to being here at 7:00, and they can report to me,”* Sanders joined in the chorus of protests against this idea: *“I don’t want that to fall on you every morning.”* Simonton suggested, *“Why don’t we each just take a morning?”* As the others agreed, Sanders suggested, *“Whoever is on the board?”* [referring to the poster in the hall where they listed the teacher responsible for silent lunch and break detention each day]. When Simonton mentioned that she could not come in early on the day she was scheduled, Sanders volunteered, *“Well, I don’t care, I mean I will do it any day, so do you just want to trade with me?”* When they finally reached a consensus, Sanders volunteered, *“I will just email this to Carlson [assistant principal], just to update her.”*

The conversation turned to Banks' mention of a conversation with the school counselor about the seventh grade teachers' use of lunch time as an additional work period. As most of the teachers demurred, Sanders suggested the possibility of using such a time for students who had not turned in work and were in both coaching classes (academic remediation) during connections since these students could not be kept from their coaching classes to work on missing work. Others agreed that could be a possibility, but the conversation moved on without reaching a decision.

As teachers continued to discuss their list of students, Sanders joined in with suggestions for each student, sharing both successes and frustrations she had experienced with each. For one student, she shared,

Something that has been working for him. . . I gave him a five minute break to the media center if he turned in his test and completed the DGP [grammar work], before we transition to the next assignment, I let him. . . go to the media center, check out a book, and he came back in, sat down, and got right to work.

The other teachers agreed they could use the same strategy to encourage him to turn in work of acceptable quality, again providing psychological support as they increased her confidence in her performance.

When they discussed a student who required services as an English Language Learner (ELL), Sanders shared information about a possible family or neighbor relationship with another Hispanic student, whom she suggested might be a source of support for him: *"I feel like she helps out a lot at home, because I think they are neighbors or something like that; she is constantly there. I hear her reminding him to do things."* As the discussion continued, she shared, *"He has a great work ethic, his issue is comprehension. . . . I think he is a sharp little boy; it's just that*

language barrier.” During a discussion of another student, she shared, “*I gave him a positive referral. . . because he does such a good job in language arts.*” [A positive referral to the assistant principal is given for a job well done. The assistant principal rewards students with a soft drink and calls home to brag on the student.]

The final student discussed by the team was a student who had done exceptionally well tying knots during an activity for the interdisciplinary unit, leading someone to jokingly suggest that he might do well in the navy. Sanders suggested, “*Can we like set up an appointment for him to go over there* [Junior ROTC program at Johnson City High School]?” The other teachers responded to that suggestion, and eventually Banks agreed to email the person in charge of the program to make the arrangements.

During this meeting, Sanders received psychological support from the rest of the team when they liked strategies she shared and decided to adopt them for team-wide use. Although she did not actively participate during the first part of the meeting, she seemed emboldened when the other teachers liked the first strategy she mentioned. When the teachers liked but did not agree to her suggestion to use their lunch period to work with some students, she did not seem deterred from contributing other ideas and suggestions.

April Meeting

A few weeks after the March meeting, the team met with a representative from the other sixth grade team to explain their morning sessions [decided in the January team meeting] designed to help students at-risk of not passing. The other sixth grade team wanted to use this strategy with their own struggling students. Banks, Marks, Sanders, Simonton, and Walker, participated in the meeting, held in Walker’s room. The meeting lasted approximately 20 minutes, and the team audiotaped the meeting.

Walker and Banks did most of the talking during the meeting as they explained the team's procedures for morning sessions. The other teachers on the team, including Sanders, did little talking other than to offer an occasional "Yes," or *"That's right."* Toward the end of the meeting, Simonton and Sanders explained some of the work that students did for them during these sessions. Sanders pointed out, *"One thing I always check on is their vocabulary since most of them never have their homework - never."*

Sanders and Walker then entered a side discussion, which could be heard on the recording, about whether one student would be present for the morning sessions. According to Walker, *"He says he can't get to school early because his mother is out of town on business."* Sanders replied, *"I've seen his mother at Store X [a local grocery store], so I doubt she had to go out of town for business."* Banks joined the conversation to confirm Sanders's comment, amid background noise that indicated the meeting had ended. Sanders and Walker agreed when Banks suggested, *"I'll try to stop by the store this week to see if mom is there, and I'll try to talk to her - see if she can come in for a meeting."* Sanders suggested, *"Yeah, she may not have even seen the letter requesting a meeting, so it would be good to confirm with her directly."* At that point, the tape ended.

Once again, Sanders did not seek any support from her colleagues during their meeting. In fact, she offered support to others by sharing strategies she used during the morning sessions as well as sharing her own cultural knowledge of her students during a discussion of one of her students. Her actions seem to demonstrate increased confidence in herself as a teacher.

Summary

Sanders's participation in the March meeting was markedly different from her participation in the January and February meetings. She did not request any support during the

March meeting, nor did any of the other teachers offer any type of support to her. Instead, she shared information on the students being discussed, ranging from insight into academic performance, remediation strategies for at-risk students, motivational techniques for struggling students, and community information and resources that could provide assistance for students. She also actively participated in finding workable solutions for team efforts so that the work was not only fairly shared by everyone, but so that it also did not inconvenience anyone, even offering to rearrange her own schedule to make it easier for others.

Although Sanders did not actively participate in explaining the team's morning study sessions to the other team during the April meeting, she did speak up to share the types of language arts homework she had students focus on. She also shared information with Walker and Banks during a side conversation about the home situation of one of their students.

It appears that Sanders's confidence during team meetings developed over the course of the semester. Her participation moved from seeking support and listening to the discussion to actively participating by sharing information and insights.

Interviews

I interviewed Sanders and her primary mentors, Banks and Becker, to determine how each saw Sanders progressing on Feiman-Nemser's (2001a) induction phase of the Central Tasks of Learning to Teach. I also asked them to share the induction supports they saw as instrumental in her progress. I interviewed all three teachers in February and May; only Sanders and Becker were interviewed in March. Although each teacher was interviewed individually, I discuss them together by month because their comments were so similar; it also serves to show Sanders's development of skills over time.

February

I interviewed each teacher in my room at each one's request. Both Becker and Sanders cited the presence of their young children in the rooms after school as a possible distraction. Banks indicated that she welcomed the opportunity to visit a different grade-level hall. Since the February interviews took place more than halfway through the school year, I asked all three teachers to reflect on Sanders's progress from the beginning of the year and the induction supports that assisted with her progress.

All three, including Sanders herself, saw her greatest progression on the list of Feiman-Nemser's Central Tasks of Learning to Teach Continuum (see Table 2 on p. 72 of Chapter 3) in the areas of designing responsive instructional programs and enacting a beginning repertoire for language arts. As Sanders noted, *"I hadn't had any experience in language arts during my certification program other than what I had done as a substitute teacher. I had seen DGP, but I really didn't know anything about teaching it. Some of it I had seen as my son went through sixth grade, but that's not the same as teaching it!"* When Sanders was hired just a few short weeks before the beginning of the school year, Becker said, *"I was able to gather some materials, including textbooks and the state performance standards, for her, but I couldn't meet with her before school started because I was trying to get ready for my new responsibilities."* Concerning these materials, Sanders said, *"When I got the job, I already had a mission trip to Alaska planned two weeks before school started. I took those materials on the 13-hour plane trip, but that was the only chance I had to look at the stuff."*

One key induction support all three teachers cited as critical to Sanders's improvement in the area of curriculum was Becker's availability to meet one-on-one with Sanders during their common planning period. Beginning in preplanning, the days before students started the school

year, Becker reported that she “*worked closely with her on what the standards mean...what they are really asking for. . . and what is evidence of that standard in classroom practices.*” Both Becker and Sanders agreed that they “*met daily for the first several weeks of school during common planning time*” to help Sanders prepare for the next day’s class. According to Becker, Sanders used this time to ask her how to teach everything and “*would write down everything I would say – asking me what questions would you ask, how would you present this, what if they [students] don’t understand this, what would you say, how would you explain it a different way.*” Banks noted, “*Having Becker available was a big help for Sanders. I know they met all the time to start with, and they still talk a lot.*”

Due to Becker’s schedule as the instructional lead teacher (ILT), she had a common planning time with Sanders as well as additional planning time when Sanders was teaching. Becker said she was able to use that time “*to model how to teach some lessons in Sanders’s classroom.*” According to Sanders, “*These experiences were invaluable since I felt overwhelmed with the number of things I needed to address in the language arts curriculum....although I tried to read it and figure stuff out, being able to ask Becker about key things to emphasize was a big help.*” Having the opportunity to both talk to Becker and observe her teaching the lessons gave Sanders strategies to use in presenting the material beyond “*just repetition over and over*” that Sanders said she would have otherwise done. Through observing and talking to Becker about how to present the material, Sanders said she was able to “*see how I could apply strategies I had used in teaching social studies [during her student teaching experience the previous year] to my language arts classroom.*”

As Sanders reported she began to feel “*a little more comfortable with how to present the material,*” Becker said their meetings gradually “*tapered down in frequency until we’re having*

scheduled meetings about once a week now.” Sanders agreed that that the scheduled meetings began to taper off as she felt more comfortable with the curriculum, but she added, “I still run in to her[Becker’s] room several times a week to ask a question or to check on something.”

Becker explained that as Sanders “gained confidence in how to present the materials” . . . , *The focus during our scheduled meetings began to turn to pacing and how to differentiate the material for her students.”* Becker added,

We talked through specific situations. . . to teach her how to kind of spiral the curriculum. . . I tried to get her to focus on the gains the struggling students make and how to constantly ask questions that refer back to previous materials they may not have mastered.

Both agreed that Sanders was now applying this spiraling concept more naturally and, as Sanders said, *“I don’t need Becker to tell me specifically what to say and do anymore.”*

Banks, a former language arts teacher herself, indicated that she “gave her [Sanders] a lot of my language arts materials” at the beginning of the year, but felt that she mainly offered “moral support” in helping Sanders with her curriculum knowledge. She also noted, *“I was there if she had a quick question since, of course, I had taught language arts for years. . . however, nothing could replace that one-on-one time with Becker.”*

Another key induction support all three saw as helping Sanders in the area of curriculum was the language arts curriculum notebooks that had been assembled the previous year. Becker shared that the notebooks had been assembled

as a result of feedback from new teachers over the previous two years. . . they said having ready-made lesson plans would have been a huge help the first year. . . so administrators asked each department to put together the materials for units we did during the year.”

Sanders concurred on the value of the notebooks:

Having units and plans for the entire first quarter was a real life-saver. . . It was a struggle just to learn. . . to stay one step ahead of what I was teaching, but the ready-made lesson plans gave me something to work with.

Becker agreed that the curriculum notebook “gave her [Sanders] a really good place to start, especially the first nine weeks. . . so that she always knew what was coming next and felt a little more confident.” Becker also reported that Sanders had “been more confident, more independent” since the beginning of the second semester, to the point of making her own suggestions to modify the upcoming units.

In addition to the one-on-one time with Becker, Sanders and Becker also referred to grade-level content meetings as another source of support. According to Becker,

Administrators had asked me, as the language arts ILT, to meet with the sixth and seventh grade language arts teachers once a week to help with curriculum planning. The sixth grade meetings, of course, were mainly because of Sanders, but both of the seventh grade teachers were both pretty new as well.

(One seventh grade teacher was in her second year of teaching; the other was in her fourth year. Scheduling conflicts prevented Becker from meeting with the eighth grade teachers, although both of them, one of whom was me, had extensive experience teaching language arts.) Although there was only one other sixth grade language arts teacher, Sanders reported “*These meetings gave me additional ideas and strategies to use in my own classroom. Meeting with two experienced teachers also helped me develop clearer expectations for my students as well as learn the resources and materials that were available.*” By the beginning of the second semester, Sanders reported that she felt “*like I was able to start contributing my own thoughts and ideas of*

what worked and how to tweak lesson plans rather than just absorbing what the others had to say;” Becker made the same assessment: *“By now, she’s offering her own ideas of how we can improve the units.”*

By this point in the year (February), both Becker and Sanders felt their relationship was still a mentoring relationship, although Becker said she saw Sanders *“as moving into a more collaborative role.”* When asked about this, Sanders somewhat agreed although she pointed out, *“I really still have so much to learn.”* Becker indicated that by this point in the year, when they worked together, *“[I] typically will present some different ways I would do it, and then she [Sanders] will pick or we will modify to fit her style.”* Overall, however, Becker reported that Sanders was *“collaborating. . . and more confident. . . able to make changes and feel good about those.”*

All three teachers saw developing a professional identity and creating a classroom learning environment as Sanders’s strongest areas in the Central Tasks of Learning to Teach Continuum when she began the school year. All three attributed her strength in these areas to her years of experience as a substitute teacher in the system. As Sanders said, *“As a sub at the middle school, if you can’t control the kids, you don’t last.”* Sanders said that her years as a substitute helped her *“identify the kind of classroom environment I wanted to create. Since I had worked in all grade levels of both elementary and middle school, I had observed a wide variety of classroom management styles and environments.”* She felt the freedom to *“adopt parts of all that fit my personality.”*

Banks also cited Sanders’s student teaching experience the previous year with these same sixth grade teachers as an important factor: *“Because she had worked with everyone the previous*

year, she already understood the school and grade-level context and expectations for classroom management before she even started.” Sanders agreed that

Student teaching – and being a long term sub - here in the sixth grade last year let me start the year with a clear understanding of how to focus my classroom environment on learning in ways that would help minimize behavior issues.”

Sanders and Banks also cited Sanders’s personal experiences as the parent of a middle-school aged child as instrumental in helping her understand the students in her classroom.

Sanders explained, “*Since he [her son] is currently in the seventh grade, his experiences as a sixth grader are still fresh in my mind, giving me insight into what a sixth grader would struggle with and would enjoy.*” She “*pulled on those experiences when setting her expectations for her students.*” Banks cited these personal experiences as an important factor in Sanders’s success with parent communication: “*She practices what she preaches. She likes to hear from her children’s teachers, and so she made sure she communicated with the parents of our students.*”

Banks also pointed out that the relationships Sanders developed *by being active in the community as a parent are invaluable to her as a teacher. With some new teachers, you are scared to death of how they will act in parent situations. . . she is not a push over, but she does not press buttons and get things stirred up. . . I think that’s a real gift to the other people on her team.*

Although Sanders identified the areas discussed above as strengths, she was quick to point out areas where she felt she needed to improve. She specifically identified “*transitioning from one activity to another*” and “*keeping them [students] focused*” during transitions as an area of need. She explained, “*The problem isn’t so much control during transitions because they are a good group of kids, but they are chatty.*” Becker indicated that she had provided help with

classroom management “*when she [Sanders] had some questions occasionally.*” According to Becker, “*we would talk through the situation and look for ways to modify organization*” to prevent disruptions or to help with transitions. Sanders also reported that dealing with content colleagues in other grade levels was another area where she needed to improve. She felt, “*That will come with time and experience as I learn more about how language arts is vertically aligned at the school.*” [This comment is a vague reference to the monthly department meetings that all teachers participate in. Neither Sanders nor her mentor teachers mentioned these meetings as a source of support.]

Although Banks was able to answer some questions about language arts content, she explained that she felt her main role as a team mentor was “*to offer Sanders moral support as she runs her own classroom for the first time.*” She added, “*she [Sanders] knows that I and the other team members are always available to answer questions or just let her vent without spying...or checking up on her.*” Banks also saw the fact that she and the rest of the team “*are available during a common planning time means that not only can we pop in and check on her, but also that she doesn’t have to pull us out of class. . . because we are there.*” As Banks expressed it,

Having your own classroom is scary in a lot of ways, but it’s also very freeing, and it lets you have that opportunity to try things. You are going to make mistakes. . . you realize most of the mistakes you make are not fatal. . . but life is so much better when you have support.”

March

I was only able to interview Sanders and Becker in March. The interview with Sanders took place in her room for about 25 minutes. Becker preferred to come to my room for the interview, which lasted approximately 30 minutes. These interviews focused on Sanders’s

progress in curriculum areas after a content meeting to review standards they still needed to cover. Although Sanders reported that she still felt like *“I need a great deal of guidance in understanding and implementing the language arts curriculum,”* Becker saw her as becoming *“not only more independent but also more collaborative in our discussions.”* Becker indicated, *“I still offer clarification on the standards as we discuss them, but I feel that Sanders has made great strides in both understanding and articulating the depth to which students need to apply them.”* According to Becker, Sanders was able to *“identify specific successes and struggles each of her classes had with the various standards we had already covered.”* Becker also explained that *“she’s doing a much better job of assessing problems for herself when she’s implemented instructional activities as opposed to relying on me to point out the problems.”* Sanders demonstrated this growing confidence herself when she shared how she assessed the review lesson:

Initially, I thought the lesson was a disaster; however the students really enjoyed the experience. I would do the activity again, but I would use different colored paper for each exercise and be sure that the pods have different colored exercises. This would make it easier to sort. I would make the font bigger so the strips would be bigger and easier to keep up with.

When I asked her to clarify what made her think the lessons had been a disaster, she explained, *“Oh the sentences were all mixed up in the bags or they were scattered across the floor!”* I then asked if she and Becker had together determined the solutions she mentioned, she said, *“No, we discussed how it went, but I thought through those things myself beforehand. I did discuss them with Becker, and she agreed that organization and implementation were probably issues.”* She also admitted that *“some of my classes were a little out of hand. She [Becker] did not have that*

issue with her class.” However, she described the experience as “a great example of you never know what issues might arise during a new lesson. Now I know what to expect, and I can adjust accordingly.”

Both teachers felt that Sander’s classroom management skills, strong to begin with, were continuing to improve. As evidence of this, Sanders pointed out that *“I felt good about implementing a hands-on activity that required students to work in groups and rotate among stations at a point in the year when the students are definitely antsy.”* By this point in the year, Becker noted, *“she didn’t feel the need to have me model the activity before she implemented it herself.”* Sanders was also able to identify some organizational issues she addressed prior to implementing the activity – *“putting sentence strips in zip-lock bags”* and *“cutting the strips ahead of time”* – as well as some issues she identified after implementing the activity – *“use a different colored paper for each station”* and *“reducing the number of activities students were expected to complete.”* Also, students *“were all engaged in the activity, even though things got a little out of hand in some classes with sentence strips becoming all mixed up.”* Thus, as Sanders became more confident in her understanding of the curriculum, her classroom management skills improved to the point that she could better plan for those transition times she had earlier identified as being a problem.

May

I asked all three teachers to reflect on Sanders’s progress on the Central Tasks of Learning to Teach Continuum over the course of the year as well as the induction supports they saw as instrumental in her growth. Because their responses were similar, I discuss them together. I interviewed all three teachers individually in my room; each of the interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes each.

All agreed that although Sanders had made great progress in the central tasks of learning to teach, her greatest growth was in the area of developing a responsive instructional program as well as enacting a repertoire of strategies, particularly as these related to her knowledge of the language arts curriculum and ability to apply it to lesson planning and development. According to Becker, *“we’ve already planned to work together over the summer to go back over all of [the] units and talk about what could be improved...from this year.”* Becker felt that Sander’s experience from her first year would allow her to *“help make some of those decisions. . . [so that] it can become more her curriculum and less my curriculum that she is teaching.”* Sanders agreed that she felt ready to *“teach my own way... make it [curriculum plans] my own”* for the coming year. She pointed to the cross-curricular WebQuest she planned with Banks as an example of her increased confidence, adding, *“I would have never thought at the beginning of the year that I would have planned something to do with Banks.”* Banks pointed to Sanders’s growth in the area of lesson planning when she commented, *“I was impressed that she was willing to tackle something that was cross-curricular.”*

When I asked what supports each saw as instrumental in helping Sanders progress, all three pointed to the meetings between Becker and Sanders during their common planning time. According to Sanders, even though lesson plans were available,

our daily meetings as well as the ability to go to her [Becker] at any time and ask how to teach the material or to have her come into my classroom to model teaching a lesson with my students was invaluable – I’m not sure I could have done it without that.

Becker was also able to teach Sanders *“how to unpack the standards* [identify the specific skills and knowledge required to perform a task that demonstrated the knowledge specified in the

standard] *and apply them to everything in a lesson plan,*” training Sanders indicated she did not receive in her certification program.

Becker felt that the time to meet during common planning time was critical because otherwise, they “*would have to meet after school or before school. . . don’t see that happening as often as we have been able to meet in common planning.*” She added that having that time “*also allowed for visits that aren’t official, just walking down to her room to check on how she’s doing,*” which she also felt was beneficial. Banks concurred that having common planning with Becker “*was a tremendous gift for Sanders that helped her confidence more than anything anyone else could have done.*”

Banks also pointed out that “*the established unit and lesson plans were a big help to Sanders at the beginning since she didn’t have to start from scratch.*” According to Sanders, “*having something to work from and someone to work with helped me understand how to develop a responsive instructional plan,*” which allowed her confidence to grow to the point that she said, “*I began to put in my two cents’ worth*” with the other language arts teachers and to eventually develop her own lessons at the end of the year to implement with Banks.

Becker also cited personal qualities that Sanders possessed as playing an important role in her progress with developing a responsive instructional program. In particular, Becker mentioned “*her [Sanders’s] determination to have a good year, to see all students learn, and do the best that she could do*” as the quality that kept her from becoming overwhelmed by such a vast, new curriculum. According to Becker, “*Sanders approached the curriculum standards with the attitude of I am going to learn [them]. . . attack them, and. . . do everything I can – an approach that has made a huge difference.*” Sanders alluded to this determination when she admitted that “*it would have been so easy to just use the prepared curriculum,*” but instead, “*I*

wanted to learn the standards well enough to put my own mark on what I taught – to make it my own.”

In terms of working together, both Sanders and Banks indicated that they “*felt like colleagues all year long*” rather than having a mentor-mentee relationship. Both agreed that Sanders’s experiences as both a student teacher and a substitute teacher with the grade level the previous year contributed to how well she had learned the contexts of the students, team, and overall school community. According to Sanders, “*That allowed me to start the school year already knowing how things were run.*” Banks, reflecting on Sanders’s interactions with the other members of their interdisciplinary team, said that “*the rest of the team tried to keep an open door that encouraged her [Sanders] to ask questions any time she was uncertain of something.*” Sanders concurred that she felt that freedom. She pointed to one incident in particular at the beginning of the year when a team member helped her set up the grade book program. In fact, Sanders felt that “*they [team members] did not expect me to do anything except teach my class . . . they are just so good about not expecting me to jump in and take on other responsibilities.*”

Banks mentioned team composition as an “interesting dynamic” that may have contributed to Sanders’s strong start with classroom management and connecting to the rest of the team. She specifically pointed to, “*our close proximity in age - the fact that everyone’s [on the team] close to the same age - ranging from their mid-thirties to early forties.*” When I pressed her to expand on why this would make a difference, she said, “*We just have more things in common than we would if she [Sanders] was a 22-year-old fresh out of college.*” Although the other four team members all had from 10 to 13 years of overall teaching experience, Banks said, “*It was the first year that we had worked together. . . so it was like we were all starting fresh.*” Banks also pointed to the fact that “*three of the other four teachers had some experience with the*

language arts, either as a regular or inclusion teacher; thus, they were all able to lend [her] a helping hand.” She felt that these factors combined with the other induction supports to create a “*perfect storm of good things that came together*” for Sanders.

Administrative support was a final area that Sanders mentioned as playing a critical role in her successful first year. She felt that administrators had “*allowed me to just show up and teach my class and know that they [administrators] were going to back me.*” When I asked her to elaborate on how administrators backed her, she described a time she went to Ms. Carlson, the assistant principal when she had not been able to contact a parent over classroom issues with a student: “*She immediately picked up the telephone and talked to the parent and got her to come in.*” This type of support helped Sanders learn strategies to communicate with parents to improve her classroom learning community. She also pointed to the fact that “*they [administrators] gave us [the team] the freedom to decide how we were going to do remediation when summer school was canceled – I really appreciated that freedom.*” Finally, Sanders and Becker both acknowledged that administrators “*deliberately arranged Becker’s schedule so that she could work closely with Sanders over the course of the year,*” something Sanders said made her “*feel supported*” and helped her learn to develop a responsive instructional program and expand her repertoire of strategies. The importance of administrative support was driven home for Sanders in the graduate classes she was taking when she shared that “*teachers [in her class] were in tears . . . because the administrators don’t do anything. . . there is no support.*” She felt “*very supported* and said, “*I know I’ve been very fortunate to be in. . . this position.*”

In light of all the benefits to having common planning time mentioned by Sanders and her mentor teachers, I asked them if they saw any barriers to its use in providing induction supports. Sanders at first looked at me with a blank face before replying, “*I can’t imagine trying*

to provide induction supports to a teacher without using a common planning time!” When I encouraged her to think of anything she had seen over the past year that kept teachers from working together, she finally replied,

Well, I guess it would be hard if one person just didn’t want to work with others – just wanted to do his or her own thing. I guess, too, that it would be hard if I had been assigned a mentor who had a philosophy of teaching that I just didn’t agree with.

Banks and Becker, possibly because they have had more experience working with other teachers, were able to think of possible barriers a little more easily than Sanders had done. Banks, who had taught at schools other than JCMS, thought that “*personality clashes*” could cause problems trying to use common planning time because “*you might find that you just don’t get along with the person you’ve been assigned to work with or that person doesn’t really want to do it except for the money.*” She also pointed out that “*sometimes, the teachers you share a planning period with might not teach the same subject or grade level* [referring to her experience teaching at the high school level] *that you do. . . that would make it hard to provide any really useful induction supports, even if you did have a common planning time to meet.*” Becker, who had taught at JCMS her entire teaching career, admitted that

I’ve seen people who just didn’t believe in collaboration. They either want to keep their good ideas to themselves, or they just don’t seem to care enough to help someone else. That can make it hard for a new teacher who’s trying to figure out how things work at a school.

Summary

All three teachers agreed that Sanders made great progress during her first year in developing the skills needed for effective teaching, particularly in the area of developing a

responsive instructional program and enacting a beginning repertoire of strategies in language arts, which was an area of weakness for her at the beginning of the year. They identified the support that veteran teachers were able to offer during common planning time as key to her development. Content support from the language arts ILT was identified by all three as especially critical. Other team members were able to offer moral and procedural support during common planning time that allowed her to focus on learning to teach her content curriculum during her first year. All agreed that this level of support would not have been possible if they had not shared a common planning time. Teachers also cited personal factors, such as Sanders's life experiences and determination, along with team dynamics, as playing a role in her progress in creating a classroom learning community and learning the contexts of the students, curriculum, and school community,.

Interview with Assistant Principal

I interviewed Ms. Carlson, the JCMS assistant principal, who was the administrator in charge of the induction program. The first interview took place in February. I interviewed her in her office after school for 35 minutes. My focus during this interview was on understanding the context of the school's induction program, the role of common planning time in providing induction supports for new teachers, as well as her observations of Sanders's progress to that point. The second interview, which lasted about 25 minutes, took place during post-planning days in May after the school year had ended for students. She asked that we meet in my room so she could avoid interruptions that would occur if we were in her office. During the second interview, I focused on understanding an administrator's perspective concerning the induction supports offered to Sanders.

February

Most of our conversation focused on information that provided context for the induction program at JCMS as well as how she saw the role of common planning time in providing those supports. I also asked her about the administrative choices involved in providing induction support for Sanders and the benefits she felt accrued from those choices.

According to Carlson,

We [she and the principal] knew from Sanders's experiences as both a substitute and a student teacher at the school, that we wanted her as a teacher at JCMS. She had strong classroom management skills and a good rapport with both the teachers and students with whom she worked.

Her work as a long-term substitute in the sixth grade after her student teaching experience had “*demonstrated to us that she could successfully implement an unfamiliar curriculum with support from other content colleagues,*” referring to the help that Simonton, the sixth grade science teacher and science department head, had given to Sanders during this long-term substitute teaching assignment.

Thus, when a sixth grade language arts position opened up as the result of the creation of a language arts instructional lead teacher (ILT) position toward the end of the summer, “*we [the school principal and Carlson] immediately thought of Sanders as a prospect for the opening.*” They were “*able to structure the ILT's schedule so that she had common planning time with the sixth grade, allowing her to work closely with Sanders on lesson planning and development.*” Administrators also asked the ILT to “*spend time both observing and modeling lessons in Sanders's classroom to provide further assistance – we arranged the schedule so that could happen.*”

Carlson admitted, *“This level of support was new for us. It was possible only because we got to create the ILT position, and we got to be creative with her schedule.”* A more typical situation would have resulted in

relying on a mentor teacher who may or may not have been on the same grade level or in the same content area. If the mentor teacher wasn’t on the grade level, then we would have relied on collaboration between the new teacher and his or her content counterpart on the other team for support with the curriculum.

Collaboration between a new teacher and a content colleague *“doesn’t always work out well, depending on how much experience the content colleague has or if their personalities mesh.”*

She admitted that the more typical method *“did not always have such outstanding results since it depended on both the relationship between the two teachers as well as finding time to meet for success.”* According to Carlson, *“I believe strongly in the value of common planning time for providing embedded professional development, which also includes induction support for new teachers. . . but the tough part is finding the right match of personalities”* because the *“relationship between the experienced teacher and the beginning teacher is so critical.”* As she pointed out, *“Two teachers whose personalities clash, for whatever reason, will not collaborate successfully during common planning time or any other time.”*

May

Technological difficulties with a digital recorder resulted in no recording of this interview with Assistant Principal Carlson, but luckily, I had my field notes for reference. We met in my room for the 30 minute interview. Prior to the interview, I asked Carlson to review the Central Tasks of Learning to Teach Continuum in order to discuss how she felt Sanders had progressed

in developing these skills over the course of her first year. We also discussed the induction supports that contributed to her progress.

At this point in the year, Carlson indicated, *“I’ve been very pleased with Sander’s performance during her first year. . . our [administrators’] expectations that she would have excellent classroom management skills as well as build good rapport with her colleagues have definitely been met.”* Although these were strengths for Sanders at the beginning of the year, Carlson believed, *“She’s improved these skills throughout the year as she came to feel more confident with the curriculum.”* In particular, she mentioned, *“I observed better transitions between activities and better differentiation of activities during my classroom observations (both formal and informal) in her room as the year went on.”* She also felt that *“having opportunities during common planning to talk with various colleagues about how they handled different situations have been very helpful for her.”*

Like both the mentor teachers, Carlson believed that Sanders had made the most progress in her understanding of how to develop a responsive instructional program in language arts by deepening her knowledge of curriculum and standards as well as expanding her repertoire of instructional strategies. She attributed that success *“to the one-on-one mentoring that Becker, the language arts ILT, was able to do with her.”* She indicated, *“This was the first time I can remember that the school was able to set up such an arrangement...unfortunately, while this was an ideal arrangement, it’s not always possible due to scheduling difficulties.”* While Carlson admitted,

I didn’t sit in on any of the planning meetings that Becker and Sanders had. I did frequently observe them in each others’ rooms or meeting with the other sixth grade language arts teacher during their common planning time.

The plan, overall, *“has been successful to this point,”* according to Carlson. She added, *“I’ve both visited frequently in Sanders’s classroom and stopped by her room during planning for some touching-base conversations.”* She cited a twofold purpose for these frequent visits to Sanders’s classroom: *“to provide encouraging, formative feedback on her progress. . . and to make sure she feels comfortable asking me questions.”* She indicated, *“I think I’ve been successful on both counts.”*

I also asked Carlson about the forms of administrative support that Sanders had mentioned as being helpful, specifically helping with parent contacts and protection from outside duties. She agreed, *“We [principal and herself] try very hard to maintain an open door policy for all teachers. . . we’re willing to help in any way we can.”* She did feel that *“the relatively small size of JCMS makes it possible for us to get involved:* she also pointed to *“the relative lack of severe discipline problems overall that allow us [administrators] to support all of our teachers by talking to students and parents – or whatever else we need to do.”* As for protecting new teachers from additional responsibilities outside of the classroom, she agreed,

That’s an intentional decision we’ve made in regards to new content teachers. . . such outside responsibilities are often part of the expectations for some of the connections teachers, but we want new teachers who are responsible for the core content classes to focus on their classroom responsibilities for at least the first year.

Summary

Assistant Principal Carlson, who was in charge of the induction program at JCMS, saw common planning time as a key element in providing induction support for new teachers at JCMS. She indicated that administrators made intentional scheduling decisions to provide Sanders with instructional support from both the ILT and the other language arts teacher during

common planning time in her first year. However, she also admitted that such an arrangement was not always possible since not all subject areas had an ILT teacher. Further, she thought that finding the right match of an experienced colleague to work with the new teacher was a key to successful collaboration during common planning time.

Analysis of Results

Data collected during this phase of the study was used to address the following research sub-questions:

- a. Who provides induction support for beginning teachers? What kinds of induction support are provided?
- b. What are the effects of the induction supports on beginning teachers?
- c. How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?
- d. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?
- e. What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

In analyzing the data gathered from observations and interviews in phase two, I used an inductive constant comparative method to determine both the types of support (e.g., procedural, content, pedagogical, classroom management, etc.) offered to the beginning teacher during the common planning time meetings and the effectiveness of these supports in helping the new teacher develop new teaching competencies. I also looked for themes related to the effect of

common planning time on the provision of these induction supports. Finally, I looked for themes that indicated the perceptions of the beginning teacher, more experienced peers, and administrator related to the value of common planning time in the provision of induction supports as well as barriers to its effective use in this manner.

Question 1: Who provides induction supports? What kinds of induction supports are provided?

I analyzed the data for evidence that would indicate the individuals who provided induction support for Sanders. This evidence was either observed or directly mentioned during the interviews. The results are summarized in Table 7. Sanders received induction support from all of her team members as well as her team mentor. Others who provided support included her content mentor, her grade-level content colleague, and the administrator in charge of the school's induction program. Her mentors and team members also indicated that Sanders had personal qualities and experiences that also provided support.

Beginning teacher. Her team members and mentor teachers all cited some of Sanders's personal qualities and experiences as crucial in her professional development. They pointed out that her experiences as the parent of a middle school student helped her "*know developmentally where a sixth grader is because she had a sixth grader last year.*" Sanders's previous experiences as a substitute teacher in the Johnson City School system as well as her student teaching experience in the sixth grade at Johnson City Middle School the previous year were credited for strengthening her classroom management skills. Sanders's herself agreed with this assessment: "*As a sub at the middle school, if you can't control the kids, you don't last!*" She also indicated that substituting in the elementary and middle school allowed her to observe "*a wide variety of classroom management styles and management. . . [and then] adopt parts of all that fit my personality.*" Banks pointed out that Sanders's student teaching experience at JCMS

Table 7

Induction Supports by Provider

Provider	Induction Supports
Beginning Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences as parent of middle school student • Age (wisdom, maturity) • Prior experiences at school as substitute/student teacher • Desire to learn • Determination to do best • Community relationships
Team Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share behavioral and academic strategies • Listening ear; place to vent • Availability due to physical proximity • Clarification of grade-level procedures • Computer support – set up grade book; enter grades; print reports • Touching base; checking on her • Strategies for dealing with difficult students • Offer break • Offer encouragement • Provide classroom supplies • Model organizational strategies for room • Assistance with content differentiation • Reinforce language arts skills in other contents • Assist with monitoring students • Explain student differences • Explain interdisciplinary unit • Reassurances about work • Adopted strategy used by beginning teacher • Carried other team responsibilities
Content Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragement over progress • Suggest instructional strategies • Suggest assessment strategies • Interpret language of content standards • Share knowledge of instructional resources • Share knowledge about depth of coverage of standards • Praise for work with students • Evaluate activity • Suggest strategies for organization • Suggest strategies for classroom management • Feedback on teaching • Modeling lessons • Provide curriculum materials • Availability from physical proximity • Open access • Guidance on pacing and differentiation • Guidance on spiraling curriculum

Table 7 – continued

Provider	Induction Supports
Team Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share knowledge of standards • Suggest resources • Praise for work on unit • Suggest instructional strategies • Provide encouragement about student progress • Reassurance about work • Offers of help • Availability through physical proximity • Moral support • Provide curriculum materials • Answer questions about content • Place to vent
Content Colleague	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest instructional strategies • Help develop clear expectations • Knowledge of available resources and materials
Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide encouraging formative feedback • Easy access for questions • Assistance contacting parents • Provide curriculum notebooks • Protection from outside responsibilities • Arrange schedule to provide support

the previous year was important *“because she had worked with everyone the previous year, she already understood the school and grade-level context and expectations for classroom management before she even started.”* Team members added comments such as *“she knew how the office worked; she knew the people,” “she knew the climate of the school. . . the mode of operation of the school. . . understood our rules and consequences. . . able to both learn our personalities and see how we handle the kid.”* to indicate the value of these experiences.

Her colleagues pointed to other factors such as her age. According to Walker, the fact that Sanders was *“older and carries herself with a lot of confidence and poise”* strengthened her classroom management skills. Simonton also pointed to the fact that *“she’s wiser. . . not fresh out*

of college” as something that helped Sanders. Banks cited the relationships Sanders had developed

by being active in the community as a parent are invaluable to her as a teacher. With some new teachers, you are scared to death of how they will act in parent situations. . . she is not a push over, but she does not press buttons and get things stirred up. . . I think that’s a real gift to the other people on her team.

Becker pointed to Sanders’s “*desire to learn*” and her “*determination to do her best*” as crucial factors in how quickly she became comfortable with the language arts curriculum. Sanders also alluded to this determination when she admitted that “*it would have been so easy to just use the prepared curriculum,*” but instead, “*I wanted to learn the standards well enough to put my own mark on what I taught – to make it my own.*” Perhaps Marks best summed up the effect of these personal experiences on Sanders’s success: “*Though she’s a new teacher, she just fits in like she’s been teaching here with us a couple of years.*”

Team members. Marks (special education inclusion teacher), Simonton (science teacher), and Walker (math teacher) were on the same interdisciplinary team with Sanders. Insight on the induction supports provided by these teachers came from the interviews I conducted with each one as well as the team meetings in which they participated.

All three teachers provided instructional support in various ways. Both Marks and Walker, because of their special education background, were able to share behavioral and academic strategies that Sanders could use with the special needs and struggling students in her classes. Walker felt that “*I was really non-threatening to her since I no longer taught language arts – it was like it was safe to ask me questions.*” Marks, because he co-taught two language arts classes with Sanders, helped her modify assignments and assessments as needed in those classes.

He was also able to “*pull kids to. . . go to my room and work on something that they’re struggling with.*” Simonton helped her “*increase the content – make the content a little more differentiated or a little more challenging for her gifted classes.*” Simonton also reinforced Sanders’s curriculum in her science class by incorporating vocabulary along with reading and writing skills in the science classroom.

Managerial support was also provided by all three team members. Simonton provided classroom supplies for Sanders at the beginning of the school year; she also shared organizational strategies to help her set up her classroom to make it work more efficiently. Walker provided computer support since “*I’m sort of the techy-person [technology] on our team, so I helped her with things like setting up her grade book, entering grades, and printing progress reports.*” Marks provided assistance with classroom management by “*walking around the room to monitor behavior.*”

Simonton and Walker also provided psychological support by being “*a listening ear – a venting place*” as well as trying to “*stick my head in the door*” to check on Sanders periodically. Since their classrooms were all in close proximity to each other, both were able to do this frequently and easily. Simonton also indicated that she would “*offer her [Sanders] a break*” by allowing her paraprofessional to watch Sanders’s class so that she could go to the restroom or ask Becker a question. Finally, Walker offered procedural support by explaining grade-level procedures to Sanders: “*Whenever I saw confusion on her face in a [grade-level] meeting, I would either clarify the discussion then or make a mental note to explain it to her later in private.*”

Content mentor. Becker, the school’s instructional lead teacher (ILT) was assigned as Sander’s content mentor as soon as she was hired. Most of the support she provided was

instructional in nature. This support began once Sanders was hired when Becker gathered copies of textbooks for Sanders to look over before school started. The two were unable to otherwise meet before school started because Becker *“had to prepare for my own new position [as the instructional lead teacher for language arts]”* and Sanders indicated, *“When I got the job, I already had a mission trip to Alaska planned two weeks before school started. I took those materials on the 13-hour plane trip, but that was the only chance I had to look at the stuff.”* They started one-on-one meetings during preplanning and met *“daily for the first several weeks of school during common planning time”* to help Sanders prepare for the next day’s classes.

According to Becker, Sanders used this time to ask questions about the lessons she was teaching, *“writ[ing] down everything I would say – asking me what questions would you ask, how would you present this, what if they [students] don’t understand this, what would you say, how would you explain it a different way.”* Because administrators were able to arrange Becker’s schedule so that she had an additional planning period when Sanders was teaching, Becker was able to both observe Sanders teaching and model how to teach some lessons in her classes. Becker indicated that *“she would write down everything I said when I modeled those lessons.”*

One of the activities they did was *“unpack the standards and apply them to everything in a lesson plan,”* something Sanders had not done during her certification program. As they did this, Becker *“worked closely with her on what the standards mean. . . what they are really asking for. . . and what is evidence of that standard in classroom practices.”* Becker also helped Sanders interpret the language of the standards and understand the depth to which the standards needed to be covered. They also reviewed the available curriculum resources, with Becker pointing out specific pages to use in order to cover various standards.

Becker offered help with both instructional and assessment strategies during their meetings, using her own practices as examples: *“When I talk about sentence types with them. . . I constantly ask them questions to get at how they know the sentence is a certain type, or how they could change it to a different type of sentence.”* When Sanders expressed frustration over grading writing assignments for her struggling students, Becker suggested, *“Try to focus on finding some success in their papers rather than on everything that was done incorrectly.”* She also reminded her, *“You don’t have to mark everything that was incorrect in the paper – you could focus on corrections in say, one paragraph as well as find at least one thing the student’s done successfully.”*

As Sanders became *“a little more comfortable with how to present the material,”* Becker said their meetings gradually *“tapered down in frequency until we were having scheduled meetings about once a week.”* The focus of their meetings also changed to *“turn to pacing and how to differentiate the material for her students.”* According to Becker,

We talked through specific situations. . . to teach her how to kind of spiral the curriculum. . . I tried to get her to focus on the gains the struggling students make and how to constantly ask questions that refer back to previous materials they may not have mastered.

Rather than tell Sanders specifically what to say or do, Becker was able to *“present some different ways I would do it and then she will pick or we will modify to fit her style.”*

Becker also offered managerial support when they met to evaluate lessons or activities Sanders had implemented. According to Becker, *“We would talk through the situation and look for ways to modify organization”* to prevent disruptions or help with transitions. Becker also provided help with general classroom management *“when she had some questions occasionally.”*

Becker's suggestions to Sanders on how to approach her grading practices were also a form of managerial support. Psychological support was also woven through their conversations when Becker encouraged Sanders over her progress, such as *"That's definitely an improvement over your earlier attempts to get them [students] to write about what they were reading."* She often offered encouragement when Sanders felt discouraged when her students didn't grasp concepts at once: *"I know that having all of your struggling students in one class can be overwhelming for anyone. Just remember that a focus on the students' successes and improvements will make all of you feel better about your work together."* She also praised Sanders's efforts to *"hold students accountable in a way that doesn't crush them."*

Team mentor. Banks was Sanders's mentor teacher during her student teaching experience the previous year and continued in this mentoring role once Sanders was hired as the language arts teacher on Banks' team. Although Banks pointed to Becker as *"a big help for Sanders,"* she, too, offered instructional support throughout the year. A former language arts teacher herself, Banks *"gave her a lot of my language arts materials"* at the beginning of the school year. She also noted that *"I was there if she had a quick question,"* but she felt that she mainly offered *"moral support"* in terms of helping Sanders learn the language arts curriculum.

When the team prepared to begin an interdisciplinary unit that featured the novel *The Cay*, Banks offered instructional support as she and Simonton explained the unit to Sanders. She suggested ways Sanders could incorporate the novel into the writing unit she was currently doing in class: *"You can have the students complete a flip book with summaries of what they read each day. That will help them remember the main ideas of what they read."* She also suggested, *"Why don't you have the students create diary entries by the main character? That would let them use the story details for informational writing."*

Banks also offered instructional support when Sanders created a WebQuest to implement in their classes. She reviewed the standards Sanders had chosen to make sure they applied to the project. She also “*suggested good web sites to use as well as offering. . . input on the historical aspects of the assignment.*” Since Banks has traveled extensively, “*she also had a lot to offer to that part of the assignment. . . to make it more realistic.*” Finally, she provided the inspiration for the focus of the unit that would include the persuasive writing and speaking skills that Sanders wanted to feature.

Most of the support Banks offered throughout the year was psychological in nature. She felt that she was “*always available to answer questions or just let her vent without spying...or checking up on her.*” She would also frequently “*pop in and check on her.*” Perhaps the greatest source of psychological support she offered was the willingness to implement a unit written by Sanders: “*Oh, I’d use anything Sanders created in my classes – she does such a good job! I had her last year for her student teaching experience, and I knew she’d do well.*” As she and Sanders planned the unit, Banks offered much encouragement: “*Sanders really did it all,*” and “*I kept telling her how impressed I was with her computer skills to put all of that together!*” She was also complimentary about the scope of Sanders’s planned unit: “*She could have just cranked out a really easy little web quest and been done, but she wanted – and I applaud her – she wanted to come up with something that would really be worthwhile.*”

Content colleague. Although Sanders did not choose to record any of the grade-level content meetings she participated in [she indicated that her one-on-one meetings with Becker were more helpful], she and Becker both pointed to these meetings as a source of instructional support for her. According to Sanders, “*These meetings gave me additional ideas and strategies to use in my own classroom. Meeting with two experienced teachers also helped me develop*

clearer expectations for my students as well as learn the resources and materials that were available.”

Administrator. Assistant Principal Barbara Carlson was the administrator who was in charge of the school’s induction program. She organized key sources of instructional support for Sanders. First, she organized the development of curriculum notebooks that Sanders identified as a key support for her during the first part of the year. Becker shared that the notebooks had been assembled

as a result of feedback from new teachers over the previous two years. . . they said having ready-made lesson plans would have been a huge help the first year. . . so administrators asked each department to put together the materials for units for plans we did during the year.

After Sanders was hired, Carlson and the school’s principal were “*able to structure the ILT’s schedule so that she had common planning time with the sixth grade, allowing her to work closely with Sanders on lesson planning and development.*” They also arranged for the ILT to “*spend time both observing and modeling lessons in Sanders’s classroom to provide further assistance – we arranged the schedule so that could happen.*” Finally, she assigned both Becker and Banks as mentors for Sanders.

Carlson also provided other sources of support for Sanders. She provided managerial support by protecting Sanders from additional responsibilities outside of the classroom: “*That’s an intentional decision we’ve [administrators] made in regards to our new content teachers. . . we want new teachers who are responsible for the core content classes to focus on their classroom responsibilities for at least the first year.*” She also provided what Bartell classifies as political support (see Table 2) by stopping by Sanders’s room both during class and during

planning to “*make sure she feels comfortable asking me questions.*” When she provided “*encouraging formative feedback on her [Sanders’s] progress,*” Carlson provided professional support as she shared input about teaching norms and practices at the school. Finally, she provided cultural support when she helped Sanders contact a parent for a conference. She pointed out that “*We [principal and herself] try very hard to maintain an open door policy for all teachers. . . we’re willing to help in any way we can.*”

Question 2: What are the effects of induction supports on beginning teachers?

Data results from interviews with the participants of the study indicated that the induction supports provided to Sanders during her first year of teaching had positive effects on her teaching. These results were confirmed in observations of team and content meetings.

The induction supports had perhaps the most significant effect on Sanders in the area of curriculum. According to her,

I hadn’t had any experience in language arts during my certification program other than what I had done as a substitute teacher. I had seen DGP [Daily Grammar Practice – program used by JCMS), but I really didn’t know anything about teaching it. Some of it I had seen as my son went through sixth grade, but that’s not the same as teaching it!

However, her discussions with Becker gave her strategies to use when presenting lessons that went beyond “*just repetition over and over*” that she would have used otherwise. She was also able to see how she “*could use the strategies I had used in teaching social studies [during student teaching] to my language arts classroom.*” Having a language arts curriculum notebook with ready-made lesson plans and units “*was a real life-saver...gave me something to work with.*” According to her, “*having something to work from and someone to work with helped me understand how to develop a responsible instructional plan.*”

She also pointed to opportunities to have Becker observe her teaching as well as to have Becker model how to teach some lessons as *“invaluable since I felt overwhelmed with the number of things I needed to address in the language arts curriculum. . . being able to ask Becker about key things to emphasize was a big help.”* Meeting with both Becker and the other sixth grade language arts teachers *“helped me develop clearer expectations for my students as well as learn the resources and materials that were available.”*

As a result of these induction supports, by the beginning of the second semester, Sanders felt *“like I was able to start contributing my own thoughts and ideas of what worked and how to tweak the lesson plans rather than just absorbing what the others had to say.”* Her increased confidence with the curriculum led to improvement in her classroom management skills. As evidence of this, Sanders pointed out that *“I felt good about implementing a hands-on activity that required students to work in groups and rotate among stations at a point in the year when the students are definitely antsy.”* She was able to address organizational issues before implementing the activity as well as to identify problems that arose during implementation – far different from earlier in the year when she had relied on Becker *“to tell me specifically what to say and do.”* As a result, by the end of the year, she felt ready to *“teach my own way. . . make it [curriculum plans] my own”* for the coming year.

Becker also identified positive effects of the induction supports on Sanders’s understanding of the language arts curriculum. She noted that the frequency of their meetings, from meeting *“daily for the first several weeks of school”* to *“having scheduled meetings about once a week”* by the start of the second semester changed as Sanders developed a better understanding of the language arts curriculum. The topics covered in those meetings changed as well, moving from discussions of *“what the standards mean. . . what they are really asking for*

. . . and what is evidence of that standard in classroom practice” to discussions on “pacing and how to differentiate the material. . . to how to kind of spiral the curriculum.” By the beginning of the second semester, Becker saw Sanders as “collaborating. . . and more confident. . . able to make changes and feel good about them.” Although Becker still offered “clarification on the standards as we discussed them. . . I feel that Sanders has made great strides in both understanding and articulating the depth to which students need to apply them.” By March, Becker noted that “she [Sanders] didn’t feel the need to have me model the activity before she implemented it herself.” By the end of the year, Becker reported “we’ve already planned to work together over the summer to go back over all the units and talk about what could be improved. . . from this year.” Becker felt that Sanders’s experiences would allow her to “help make some of those decisions. . . it can become more her curriculum and less my curriculum that she is teaching.”

At the beginning of the second semester, Banks concurred with Sanders and Becker about the value of their one-on-one meetings: “Having Becker available was a big help for Sanders” and “nothing could replace that one-on-one time with Becker.” Banks also pointed out how Sanders’s personal experiences had positive effects on her classroom practices: “She practices what she preaches. She likes to hear from her children’s teachers, and so she made sure she communicated with the parents of our students.” She also pointed out that the community relationships Sanders had developed served her well in interactions with parents: “With some new teachers, you are scared to death of how they will react in parent situations. . . she is not a push over, but she does not push buttons and get things stirred up. . . I think that’s a real gift to the other people on her team.” She concluded that the combination of supports had combined to create a “perfect storm of good things that came together” for Sanders.

From an administrative perspective, Carlson reported that she was “*very pleased with Sanders’s performance during her first year. . . our expectations. . . have definitely been met.*” She believed that Sanders’s greatest improvement came in the her understanding of the language arts curriculum and standards, pointing to her observations of “*better transitions between activities and better differentiation of activities*” as evidence of Sanders’s growing confidence. Furthermore, she believed that Sanders had “*improved [classroom management] skills throughout the year as she came to feel more confident with the curriculum.*”

Sanders’s growing confidence in both the areas of curriculum and classroom management could be seen in the observations of the content and team meetings. In content meetings, she went from seeking help on a daily basis on how to teach the next day’s lesson by “*writing down everything*” Becker would say to discussing “*pacing and how to differentiate the material*” during weekly scheduled meetings by the beginning of the second semester. By the end of the year, she had written a cross-curricular unit that she implemented with Banks. Although she consulted Banks during the process of developing the unit, Banks insisted that “*Sanders really did it all.*” Sanders admitted, “*Oh, at the beginning of the year, I wouldn’t ever have been comfortable even asking her [her] to implement something I had written or put together.*”

Sanders showed similar progress in team meetings. During the January meeting, she sought help from her team members to understand student differences: “*Why is it that some of these students do fine in my class but not in others or the other way around?*” She also asked the group, “*How do you decide on interventions for different students?*” She accepted the explanations offered without comment except to laughingly admit that keeping a copy of the intervention chart in her plan book, like Simonton suggested, would “*help. I would also have it*

with me when I come to these meetings instead of forgetting it.” She asked for help incorporating the team’s interdisciplinary unit into her curriculum during the February meeting:

We’re in the middle of our writing unit right now, and I’m not sure what I can do beyond using the information from the graphic organizer for a writing piece, and I hate to make them do yet another essay.

After both Banks and Simonton suggested activities she could include, Sanders replied,

I like those. That will be different from the other things they are writing – and it lets them combine their knowledge of the literature with the writing. . . I feel more confident now about incorporating the novel into our current writing unit.

In the March team meeting, however, Sanders began to actively participate by sharing successful strategies she had used with students. When Banks said, *“So maybe that’s a strategy for all these kids. . .”* the team devised a plan to implement the strategy team-wide. She continued to offer input during the rest of the discussion, ranging from insight into academic performance, remediation strategies for at-risk students, motivational strategies for struggling students, and community information and resources that could provide assistance for students. She also participated in finding workable solutions for team efforts and volunteered to inform administrators of the team’s decisions. When the team met with a representative from the other sixth grade team in April, however, Sanders did not participate as actively as she had done in the March meeting. She did, however, share some of her strategies toward the end of the meeting. It seems that she may not have felt as comfortable participating in a meeting involving non-team members as she did with her own team.

Question 3: How does common planning time affect the induction supports provided to beginning teachers?

Almost all of the induction supports provided to Sanders during her first year of teaching were provided during her common planning time. The few exceptions included the curriculum notebook organized by administrators the previous year, the times Becker was able to model how to teach lessons in Sanders's class, and the observations Carlson made in her classes.

Because Sanders shared a common planning period with all of the sixth grade teachers and Becker, the school's instructional lead teacher, she was able to participate in various meetings with them. Becker admitted that having the common planning time was critical to their ability to meet on a daily basis because otherwise, they *"would have to meet after school or before school. . . don't see that happen as often as we have been able to meet in common planning."* She felt that having that time *"also allowed for visits that aren't official, just walking down to her room to check on how she's doing."* Sanders also noted that having common planning time allowed her to *"still run in to her [Becker] room several times a week to ask a question or to check on something,"* even as their scheduled meetings began to occur less frequently. Common planning time with the other sixth grade team also made it possible for Sanders to participate in grade-level content meetings facilitated by Becker; according to Sanders, *"Meeting with two experienced teachers also helped me develop clearer expectations for my students as well as learn the resources and materials that were available."*

Banks also pointed to the fact that the interdisciplinary team *"is available during common planning time means that not only can we pop in and check on her, but also that she doesn't have to pull us out of class. . . because we are there."* She felt this made it easier for the team to *"maintain an open door"* and offer assistance in many ways.

Assistant Principal Carlson admitted that content support Sanders enjoyed from Becker “*was possible only because we got to create the ILT position, and we got to be creative with her schedule,*” which included arranging for her to share common planning time with Sanders. She indicated, “*I believe strongly in the value of common planning time for providing embedded professional development, which also includes induction support for new teachers.*” She admitted that in previous years, a new teacher had to rely

on a mentor teacher who may or may not have been on the same grade level or in the same content area. . . did not always have such outstanding results since it depended on both the relationship between the two teachers as well as finding time to meet for success.

In addition to meeting with the ILT as her content teacher, Carlson felt that “*having opportunities during common planning to talk with various colleagues about how they handled different situations have been very helpful for her [Sanders].*”

It seems that, without common planning time, Sanders may not have had such easy access to Becker or her team members for the many induction supports they provided.

Question 4: What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the value of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

Everyone who participated in the second phase of this study seemed to agree that common planning time was perhaps the most critical element involved in providing induction supports to Sanders. Assistant Principal Carlson admitted that “*this level of support was new for us [JCMS]...that was possible only because we got to create the ILT position, and we got to be creative with her [ILT] schedule.*” The creativity with the schedule entailed being “*able to structure the ILT’s schedule so that she had common planning time with the sixth grade,*

allowing her to work closely with Sanders on lesson planning and development.” Without the ability to be creative with the schedule, Carlson admitted that a successful mentoring relationship would have depended, in part, on the teachers involved “finding time to meet.” Becker asserted that, without common planning time, she and Sanders “would have to meet after school or before school. . . don’t see that happening as often as we have been able to meet in common planning.”

Sanders saw “*our daily meetings as well as the ability to go to her [Becker] at any time and ask how to teach the material. . . was invaluable – I’m not sure I could have done it without that.*” Banks concurred that having common planning time with Becker “*was a tremendous gift for Sanders that helped her confidence more than anything anyone else could have done.*” Banks also pointed to the fact that she and the rest of the team were “*available during common planning time*” meant that they were “*always available to answer questions or just let her vent without spying. . . or checking up on her.*”

It seems that the perceptions of the beginning teacher, her experienced peers, and the administrator associated with the school’s induction program all point to common planning time as a critical element of providing induction support for a beginning teacher.

Question 5: What are the perceptions of beginning teachers, more experienced peers, and administrators regarding the barriers to the use of common planning time in the provision of induction support?

Sanders, Becker, Banks, and Carlson all referred to some form of “*personality clash*” as a possible barrier to using common planning time to provide induction support for beginning teachers. At first, Sanders, possibly because of her own successful experience, could not imagine anything serving as a barrier to using common planning to provide induction support. When prompted to think of things she had seen keep teachers from working together, she finally

pointed to the difficulty of working with “*one person who just didn’t want to work with others*” or someone “*who had a philosophy of teaching that I just didn’t agree with.*”

Banks also knew that sometimes personality clashes might mean that “*you just don’t get along with the person you’ve been assigned to work with*” or “*that person doesn’t really want to do it [provide induction support] except for the money.*” Both instances would make it difficult for a new teacher to receive meaningful induction supports. Banks further reflected that “*sometimes the teachers you share a planning period with might not teach the same subject or grade level that you do,*” possibly reflecting her previous experience teaching at the high school level.

Becker acknowledged that “*I’ve seen people who just don’t believe in collaboration. . . want to keep their good ideas to themselves. . . don’t seem to care enough to help someone else,*” all of which “*can make it hard for a new teacher who’s trying to figure out how things work at a school.*”

Sanders, Banks, Becker, and Carlson all pointed to the relationship between the people involved in a mentoring relationship as a possible barrier to the provision of induction supports during common planning time. Carlson went so far as to say, “*Two teachers, whose personalities clash, for whatever reason, will not collaborate successfully during common planning time or any other time.*” Banks, reflecting her experience at the high school level, also pointed to not teaching the same content or grade level as possible barriers to using common planning time to provide induction support to a new teacher.

Summary

Results from phase two of the study indicated that a wide variety of teachers provided induction supports for Sanders, including her team members, content mentor and colleague, and

administrators. One result that rather surprised me was the insistence by the participants that Sanders had provided some induction supports for herself. They pointed to her experiences as the parent of a middle school student, as both a substitute and student teacher at JCMS, her prior relationships in the local community, as well as personal qualities such as her age and determination to succeed. Key induction supports cited by participants included meetings during common planning time with her content mentor, her grade level content colleague, and her interdisciplinary team; a curriculum notebook that contained lesson plans and units for the entire year; and administrative support that provided scheduling support, protected her from outside responsibilities, and focused on making her feel comfortable.

Data analysis revealed that the induction supports provided had positive effects on the beginning teacher. She became more confident with the curriculum, which also led to an improvement in her classroom management skills. As the year progressed, she needed less help planning her daily lessons, with the result that she and the content mentor met less frequently and the focus of their meetings changed to skills such as pacing of lessons and differentiation of material. After the second semester began, she took on a more collaborative role with her mentors and became more independent in making decisions in her classroom. By the end of the year, she had progressed from seeking support during team and content meetings to offering her own ideas and suggesting strategies for other teachers to use, including writing a cross-curricular curriculum unit that she implemented with Banks in language arts and social studies classes.

Study participants generally believed that common planning time was a critical element in the provision of induction supports to Sanders. Only a few induction supports – a curriculum notebook, observations by an administrator, and Becker's modeling of lessons during Sanders's

classes – did not require common planning time to implement. All saw common planning time as a valuable tool in the provision of induction supports for beginning teachers.

Finally, participants identified the personality clashes between those involved as possible barriers to providing induction supports during common planning time. Those personality clashes might include having different teaching philosophies, not getting along with each other, and a lack of interest in the provision of induction supports. Banks identified teaching in different contents or grade levels as additional barriers to providing induction supports during common planning time. Notably, none of these barriers applied to Sanders's experience.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the conclusions and implications based on the results from my study. I start by discussing my conclusions in light of Feiman-Nemser's Central Tasks of Learning to Teach Continuum (2001) to explore whether the induction supports received by the beginning teacher helped her acquire the knowledge and skills needed to successfully transition from her role as a preservice learner to a practicing teacher. I discuss implications for the provision of induction supports for beginning teachers before ending with suggestions for future research.

Implications for Tasks of Learning to Teach

To draw conclusions from this study and to connect the results to the literature, I returned to the primary purpose of the study - to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia used the structure of common planning time to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. However, I need to get to the heart of the real question: Do these induction supports provided during common planning time make the beginning teacher more effective? To determine the answer to this question, I return to the two frameworks that were used in the study (i.e., Feiman-Nemser's Central Tasks of Learning to Teach (2001) and Bartell's (2005) New Teacher Needs Addressed in Induction Programs).

During data collection, I asked both the beginning teacher and the mentors to assess the new teacher's progress in professional skills using a form based on Feiman-Nemser's (2001)

framework describing the central tasks of learning to teach (see Table 3 in Chapter 3). Feiman-Nemser developed this framework to illustrate the professional learning continuum that should connect preservice teacher preparation, induction, and professional development over the course of a teacher's career. This study focused on the induction phase within the framework.

During data analysis in phase two, I initially coded the observation data using an inductive method to identify the induction supports provided. I looked at the data a second time using a focused coding method based on Bartell's (2005) categories of support needed by beginning teachers: procedural, managerial, psychological, instructional, professional, cultural, and political (see Table 2 in Chapter 3). Using this framework helped me to categorize the types of support offered to or sought by the beginning teacher.

To explore whether the induction supports provided helped the beginning teacher become a more effective teacher, I examined how Bartell's (2005) supports helped the beginning teacher in my study progress in developing Feiman-Nemser's (2001) tasks of learning to teach during the induction phase. First, I relate the induction supports provided by teachers in my study to each of the tasks of learning to teach. I then discuss how the findings compare to findings in the literature. To facilitate the discussion, I identify the phase two participants in Table 8.

Pseudonyms are used for all names.

Table 8

Phase Two Participants

Participant	Role
Sanders	Beginning teacher
Banks	Team mentor; social studies teacher on team
Becker	Content mentor; language arts Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT)
Carlson	Assistant principal; administrator in charge of induction
Marks	Special education inclusion teacher for math and language arts
Simonton	Science teacher on team
Walker	Math teacher on team

Task 1: Learn the Context – Students, Curriculum, and School Community

According to Bartell (2005), “working conditions and the culture of the school and community” (p. 53) are some important aspects that shape the contexts in which teachers work. Feiman-Nemser (2001) includes learning about curriculum materials and resources as well as the curriculum goals for particular grade levels as aspects of learning the context of the curriculum. I found that a combination of procedural, cultural, and instructional supports were provided to help the beginning teacher understand the context of Johnson City Middle School (JCMS).

Procedural. Bartell (2005) cites understanding school and district procedures as an example of procedural support. Interdisciplinary team teachers provided some of these supports. Walker provided computer support to explain to how to use the system’s grade book program; she showed the Sanders how to set up her grade book, enter grades, and print progress reports. Walker also clarified grade-level procedures discussed during grade-level meetings. Other teachers probably did as well, but only Walker specifically mentioned offering clarification. Banks and Simonton explained the team’s procedures for implementing an interdisciplinary unit during a team meeting, explaining the timeline for implementation and grading expectations for the assignments (teachers did not grade some assignments). When team teachers discussed interventions, they identified specific ones they would provide to assist students who were struggling academically, Simonton shared a method for keeping up with the list of student interventions that would also remind Sanders to implement them. Team members also established procedures for holding parent conferences that made time to meet with parents but also protected the teachers’ time to plan for their classes.

Administrators also provided procedural support. Carlson assigned mentors to Sanders before school started, asking Banks to be her team mentor and Becker to be her language arts

content mentor. Administrators had set other procedures in place, which also helped Sanders. One procedure was to protect beginning academic teachers from responsibilities outside of the classroom for at least the first year. The purpose of this decision was to allow beginning teachers to focus on their curriculum responsibilities. Administrators also required each interdisciplinary team to document a minimum of 100 minutes per week spent in collaborative team or content planning. Such a requirement seemed to make teachers more aware of the need to schedule time to work together, which provided more opportunities for Sanders to collaborate with her colleagues. These supports not only eased Sanders's transition into her teaching responsibilities, but they also communicated administrators' expectations for a collaborative environment focused on student learning.

Finally, Sanders's own prior personal experiences at the school as both a substitute and student teacher gave her an initial level of familiarity with school and district policies that the average beginning teacher would probably not have. She already knew the office and support personnel in the school and was familiar with procedures like getting materials copied. She was also familiar with the discipline procedures employed by the sixth grade team, which helped her with classroom management.

Cultural. Bartell (2005) points to school type, student characteristics, collegial relations, and parental involvement as aspects of the school's context (p. 53). Sanders's personal life experiences helped her to understand this aspect of the school. Her experiences as the parent of a middle school student (in seventh grade the year of this study) were cited by all of the participants as a key to helping her understand the characteristics of the sixth grade students she would teach. Because she had lived in Johnson City for many years, she had relationships with many of the students and parents from their interactions within the community. She was familiar

with both the demographics and the expectations of the community, particularly as they related to the school system. Her experiences as a substitute across both the elementary and middle school levels allowed her to already know many of her students when she began teaching.

The teachers on her team also provided support to help her better understand student differences during the first team meeting I observed. Sanders asked the group a question to help her better understand the differences in how students behaved and performed academically in different classes. Walker offered an explanation that pointed to student differences related to medical issues as well as differences related to learning styles. Other teachers supported this explanation by offering illustrations from their own classes. Their answers both provided an explanation and helped alleviate some of Sanders's frustration.

Carlson helped Sanders contact a parent by phone to make an appointment for a conference. Carlson shared her own understanding of the community as she did so. Her actions also communicated administrators' expectations concerning parent involvement at the school.

Instructional. Sanders began receiving some instructional supports that helped her better understand the language arts curriculum implemented at JCMS almost as soon as she was hired. Becker gathered textbooks for Sanders to examine after she was hired a couple of weeks before the start of school. Banks, Carlson, and Simonton all gathered various resources ranging from language arts books and posters to bulletin board materials to classroom supplies. I even shared items from my classroom supplies to help her prepare for the beginning of school.

Since Sanders's original area of preparation was social studies, she was not familiar with the language arts standards and curriculum beyond what she had seen in the classrooms when she served as a substitute teacher. She started meeting daily with Becker during preplanning, and these daily meetings extended through the middle of the second quarter of school before they

began to meet less frequently. During their meetings, Becker did not just focus on helping Sanders understand the material enough to survive the first year; she consistently focused their conversations on helping Sanders understand the language of the standards and what they would look like in classroom practice. They discussed the knowledge and skills students would need in order to meet grade-level standards and objectives. By the second semester of the school year, both Sanders's understanding of the curriculum and her confidence in teaching it had grown to the point that she could analyze student errors for herself and determine ways to correct their understandings. A final form of instructional support for Sanders was the grade-level language arts meeting that she participated in with Becker and the other sixth grade language arts teacher. Sanders indicated that the conversations during these meetings helped her develop clearer expectations for her students in terms of the language arts curriculum. These conversations also helped her become more familiar with the materials and resources available to her. Although these meetings were held only once or twice a month, the additional collaboration added another layer of support that helped her better understand the curriculum.

Professional. Bartell (2005) includes understanding teaching norms and practices in the category of professional needs. The discussions Becker and Sanders had about the language arts standards and their application in classroom practice met these needs.

Political. Bartell (2005) defined political support as activities that help a teacher build relationships with colleagues, staff, and administrators. These activities help a teacher understand how things get done at a school. Carlson, the administrator in charge of the school's induction program, offered this type of support to Sanders in a couple of ways. First, she stopped by Sanders's classroom frequently for informal observations and conversations. She admitted this was an intentional decision, designed to help Sanders feel more comfortable coming to her with

questions. Also, she indicated that she and the principal tried to maintain an open-door policy with all teachers, indicating their willingness to assist teachers in any way. Carlson's assistance in making contact with a parent was an example of this type of support. Carlson's support in these areas helped Sanders better understand the context of the school community and the administrators' expectations for how the school functioned.

Task 2: Design Responsive Instructional Programs

According to Feiman-Nemser (2001), teachers must consider both their knowledge of the curriculum and their knowledge of their particular students in order to decide what to teach and how to best teach it. Teachers must also be able to respond to students' thinking about the material and know how to guide them to better understandings of it. Almost all of supports offered to Sanders to aid her progress in this task of learning to teach were instructional in nature. Although most of her work with the content mentor work was done during their common planning period, Sanders indicated that she would often go to Beckers's room during other times of the day to ask questions about a lesson. Psychological supports were also offered to Sanders that encouraged her efforts to develop a responsive instructional program.

Instructional. Sanders cited curriculum notebooks organized the previous school year, under the direction of Carlson, as being an especially helpful source of support. Having ready-made lesson and unit plans reduced the amount of time Sanders would otherwise have devoted to lesson planning. She was instead able to focus on deepening her knowledge of the curriculum. As she grew more confident in her understanding of the language arts standards and expectations, she began to make her own adjustments to lessons rather than consult Becker for guidance in what she should do.

Another support that Sanders noted as helpful was the classroom observations she did with Becker. Sanders observed Becker teach and had Becker observe her teaching. After such observations, they met to discuss the process. Sanders indicated that this form of feedback was very helpful. Becker asked questions to lead Sanders through the discussion. As the year went on and Sanders's skills and confidence grew, Becker indicated that the tone of their conversations changed as well. They had fewer of the prescriptive conversations Sanders had sought at the first of the school year when she wanted to write down everything Becker said when teaching a lesson. Their conversations began to focus on lesson pacing and curriculum spiraling as well as differentiating assessments.

Finally, Sanders started a master's program in education with an emphasis on language arts at the same time she started teaching. Her collaboration with the faculty and students in these classes also supported her understanding of the language arts curriculum. In fact, her confidence grew to the point that she designed a rather complex WebQuest project that she and Banks implemented together during the last two weeks of school.

Psychological. Sanders received encouragement from both her content mentor and her team members throughout the course of the study. Some of this encouragement was to point out successes she had in implementing her curriculum. At other times, teachers offered encouragement when Sanders expressed frustration because a lesson had not gone as well as she would have liked. Becker grounded her encouraging words in skills she had observed Sanders implement, particularly in the area of writing. She encouraged Sanders by pointing out successes as well as acknowledging how difficult it was to teach writing.

Task 3: Create a Classroom Learning Community

Sanders received many managerial supports to help her with this task. All of the participants in phase two of the study indicated that Sanders entered her first teaching job with strong classroom management skills. They again attributed her success in this area to the effects of personal experiences she brought to the job. One interesting characteristic they pointed out was that Sanders was not the typical 22-year-old beginning teacher who was fresh out of school. They all felt that her age (early 40s) provided her with maturity and wisdom that helped her transition to the classroom. All participants also pointed to her role as the parent of a middle school student as a factor that helped her understand the nature and needs of the sixth graders she taught. Her experiences in sixth grade classrooms the previous year as both a student teacher and a long term substitute teacher gave her a familiarity with their procedures and expectations.

Co-teaching with Marks twice a day provided Sanders with extra assistance in her classroom that strengthened her classroom management skills. Since he often walked around the classroom to monitor behavior while she presented the lesson, Sanders was able to observe Marks handle student disruptions. He was also a resource for strategies designed for special needs or struggling students. Finally, his availability to work with students in small groups allowed her to provide more individualized support for some students.

Both Simonton and Becker provided managerial supports to Sanders that helped her set think through how she organized her room. Simonton not only modeled organizational strategies in her own room, but she also discussed them with Sanders. These conversations helped Sanders think about the classroom routines she wanted to establish. Simonton was able to make suggestions that helped Sanders identify potential problem in her room areas, such as routines for passing out graded papers or textbooks. Becker also shared classroom management strategies in

response to Sanders's questions during their one-on-one meetings. In particular, she guided Becker to think through routines for activities in order to make them run as smoothly as possible.

Task 4: Enact a Beginning Repertoire of Strategies

Feiman-Nemser (2001) suggests that teacher preparation programs should help beginning teachers develop a sound vision of good teaching, while induction programs should help the teachers implement their vision. Sanders received many instructional supports that helped her both enact and expand the strategies she had developed during her preservice experiences. Some of the instructional support also provided professional support.

Becker provided many of the instructional supports that helped Sanders implement standards-based strategies. As mentioned earlier, Sanders was able to observe Becker teach and have Becker observe her teaching. They discussed strategies to promote student engagement as well as elicit student responses after these observation opportunities. As they planned lessons together, they discussed strategies for instruction and assessment. In particular, Becker pointed out ways that Sanders could approach grading writing assignments that would not overwhelm either the students or her with a negative focus.

Carlson also provided encouraging formative feedback based on her formal and informal observations in Sanders's class. In particular, she noted Sanders's efforts to address transitions between activities and content differentiation. Carlson also noted the opportunities afforded to Sanders to talk to her team and grade-level colleagues because they not only shared common planning time, but they also were in close proximity to each other. The opportunity to interact with so many different people about how to handle various situations provided Sanders with a wide range of strategies to consider.

Task 5: Develop a Professional Identity

Feiman-Nemser (2001) points out that constructing a professional identity is a complex process. According to her, “Beginning teachers form a coherent sense of themselves as professionals by combining parts of their past, including their own experiences in school and in teacher preparation, with pieces of the present in their current school contexts with images of the kind of teacher and colleague they want to become...” (p. 1029-1030). Although Sanders received some supports in this area, neither she nor either of the mentor teachers mentioned it as an area of progress. When I asked about it specifically, Sanders indicated that she felt like she still had too much to learn about teaching language arts to really form a good image of the teacher she wanted to become – beyond wanting to be a good teacher.

About half way through the second semester, I began to observe a difference in the way Sanders interacted with the other teachers during the team and content meetings. She began to share her own experiences, strategies, and ideas with her colleagues. Prior to this time, her main level of participation that I observed was to agree either verbally or nod her head to indicate agreement with statements made by the other teachers. During one meeting, the other teachers on her team decided to adopt a strategy she had shared for team-wide use. This type of response from her peers supported the identity she was developing, whether she realized it or not.

Discussions with other teachers in her graduate classes allowed Sanders to see images of teaching that she knew she did not want to become. She indicated that her classmates frequently shared instances when they did not have administrative support for their work in the classroom. These discussions led Sanders to reflect positively on the level of support she felt she had received in her position and the type of teaching environment in which she wanted to work.

Summary

The supports Sanders received from her team and content colleagues as well as the administrator in charge of the induction program seemed to support her efforts to “learn how to teach” (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1026). Her confidence in her ability to teach the language arts curriculum grew over the course of the year as she received support through collaboration with her assigned mentors, team members, and other grade-level teachers. Structures and supports put in place by administrators also helped her become more confident with the curriculum. All of the participants pointed to the one-on-one mentoring with Becker as an important factor in her increased confidence. Improvement was also seen in areas that all participants identified as strengths for her from the beginning, such classroom management. These results seem to indicate that the induction supports offered to a beginning teacher through collaborative interactions with more competent peers does improve the beginner’s level of competency more quickly than he or she could have accomplished alone, as suggested by Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development.

Connections to Literature

Findings from my study support many aspects of the literature on induction and professional development. These results are summarized in Table 9 below.

From the conclusions discussed in the previous section, it seems that the beginning teacher in the study received supports in all categories that Bartell (2005) includes in her framework, although some categories did not include as many supports as others e.g., political support). The most intensive supports Sanders received were in categories that addressed what could be considered the most immediate needs of a first-year teacher: presenting the curriculum and managing the classroom. The predominant form of support she received was instructional in

nature, reflecting the fact that language arts was not her initial area of certification. The managerial and psychological supports she received were focused on supporting her classroom efforts. Professional and political needs received the least support. The focus of the supports provided to Sanders seems to be on her classroom survival, a primary concern of most first-year teachers, as noted by researchers such as Giles et al. (2001) and Watzke (2007). The number and diversity of supports provided reflects Ingersoll and Smith's (2004) finding that beginning teachers tend to receive a variety of induction experiences rather than just one.

Table 9

Summary of Connections to Literature

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- Number and diversity of supports received (e.g., Ingersoll & Smith, 2004)
 - Importance of instructional support during common planning time (e.g., Garet, et al., 2005)
 - Opportunities to observe model teaching and be observed (e.g., Eberhard et al., 2000)
 - Extended collaboration with other teachers (e.g., Parsard et al., 2001)
 - Number and diversity of support providers seems to support social constructivist epistemology (e.g., Bickmore, Bickmore, & Hart, 2005; Mullen, 2005)
 - Importance of content-specific support through content mentor (e.g. Luft et al., 2007; Lee et al. 2007) and graduate program (e.g., Giles et al., 2001; Kelley, 2004)
 - Administrative support (e.g., Angello, 2002; Wood, 2005)
 - Benefits of common planning time (e. g., Erb, 1987, 1998; Erb & Doda, 1989; Mertens et al., 1999; Warren & Payne, 1997)
-

All of the phase two participants pointed to the instructional support that Sanders received as being the most beneficial to her progress during her first year of teaching. Most of this support occurred during the common planning time she shared with her mentor teachers, team members, and other grade-level colleagues. This supports findings by Garet, et al. (2005) which indicate that professional development that focuses on academic subject matter and takes place during working hours is more likely to be perceived as enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers. Eberhard et al. (2000) found that opportunities to observe model teachers and working with effective mentors were induction supports deemed most helpful by beginning teachers (3 years or less of experience) in 25 Texas school districts. This may explain, in part, why the study participants identified the one-on-one mentoring provided by the content mentor as the most beneficial induction support provided the beginning teacher. This focused content support was especially important for the beginning teacher in this study since she had in-field certification on the basis of passing a standardized content-area assessment, rather than extensive coursework in the field, indicating that her content preparation may not have been adequate for the deep levels of understanding required to teach to high standards (Killion, 1999).

Supports that enhance the content knowledge of beginning teachers seem to help them develop responsive instructional programs and enact beginning repertoires of teaching strategies. Luft et al. (2003) found that beginning science teachers who participated in content-specific induction programs developed more student-centered practices and used more technology-based materials than did their peers who participated in general induction programs. Lee et al. (2007) found that participation in content-specific induction developed the pedagogical content knowledge of beginning science teachers, particularly in the areas of Knowledge of Student Learning and Knowledge of Instructional Strategies. Although Sanders did not participate in a

university-sponsored induction program, as was used in these studies, her work with the Instructional Lead Teacher for language arts produced similar results.

Sanders began a master's program in language arts education soon after she started teaching. The readings, discussions, and assignments in these classes also contributed to her improved understanding of curriculum and instructional strategies as well as student learning. The use of university-based graduate programs to provide induction support to beginning teachers has been examined in the existing literature. Giles et al. (2001) found that beginning teachers participating in the Teaching Fellows Program in Missouri indicated an awareness of student needs as a dominant concern during the first semester – a time when many beginning teachers are focused simply on survival. Kelley (2004) reported similar results for the Partners in Education program in Colorado. Participants in this university-sponsored induction program had the opportunity to work towards a master's degree as part of the program. Both the beginning teachers who participated in the program and their principals indicated high levels of satisfaction with the mentoring provided by the program and the teacher growth that resulted. Although the program that Sanders participated in was not specifically designed to provide induction support for beginning teachers, it did enhance the induction supports provided to her at work.

Collaborative activities that involve joint work with other teachers have been identified as an important part of professional development activities. Parsard et al. (2001) found that the frequency with which teachers participated in collaborative activities, such as common planning time for team members and collaboration with other teachers, was related to the extent to which they felt their participation improved their classroom teaching. Teachers who participated in professional development activities lasting more than 8 hours were more likely to report improved teaching practices than those who participated in activities of shorter duration. The

beginning teacher in my study collaborated with her content mentor, grade-level content colleague, and her interdisciplinary team, which included her team mentor. Results indicated that their collaborative interactions focused on content planning, strategies to assist struggling students, and improvements to classroom organization and management. The discussions on classroom organization and management were designed to improve the classroom structure to better facilitate learning by students. Given the frequency with which the beginning teacher met with both her content mentor and the members of her interdisciplinary team, the literature supports her assertion that their meetings were beneficial.

Storm and Lee (2001) found that the quality of the relationship between the mentor and beginning teacher is an important component in the development of reflective practice in beginning teachers. The assistant principal in my study also identified the relationship between a mentor and a beginning teacher as a key determinant in whether or not they do any sort of collaborative planning. From both the observation and interview data, I could tell that all of the study participants respected and enjoyed working with each other. This relationship may have been a key factor the progress the new teacher made in learning to teach over the course of the study.

The induction supports received by the beginning teacher in my study were provided by the members of either the content or interdisciplinary teams, as well as the assistant principal who was in charge of the induction program. The mentors and new teachers who participated in the Bickmore et al. (2005) study indicated that interactions with the people involved in the provision of induction support – interdisciplinary team members, administrators, and mentors – were more helpful to the new teachers than information gained from the induction activities (orientation and unspecified professional development activities) in which new teachers

participated. The value placed on collaboration with other more competent peers (at least in terms of experience) supports the social constructivist epistemology of my study.

Beginning teachers in the Bickmore et al. (2005) study indicated that having a regularly scheduled common planning time provided the opportunity to develop collegiality and camaraderie with their more experienced peers as well as share pedagogical strategies. The beginning teacher in my study experienced these same results with her team and content mentors and colleagues. Team members were important sources of encouragement and emotional support for the beginning teacher. The assistant principal also noted that the beginning teacher benefited from the opportunity to talk to a variety of colleagues about how to handle various situations. The findings confirm the importance of collaborative opportunities with peers for making a new teacher feel a part of the school culture. This finding supports Mullen's (2005) suggestion that several people share the traditional mentoring role, allowing mentoring be viewed as a process rather than a person.

The value of content-specific induction programs for improving student-centered practices and pedagogical content knowledge for beginning science teachers has been cited in induction literature (Lee et al., 2007; Luft et al., 2003; Luft et al., 2007). Although the beginning teacher in my study did not participate in university-sponsored workshops specific to her content area, she did begin a graduate program in language arts education. Her coursework in these classes provided her with knowledge of student-centered instructional strategies, such as the WebQuest unit she designed and implemented at the end of the year with the assistance of the social studies teacher on her team. The instructional lead teacher assigned her as a content mentor discussed instructional strategies that the beginning teacher could use. The ILT also

helped the beginning teacher understand the both language of the curriculum standards as well as the depth of knowledge required for her grade level.

The importance of administrative support is also noted in the literature. According to Angello (2002), effective middle school principals make frequent visits to classrooms, both formally and informally, and they offer teachers immediate feedback based on these observations. The administrator in charge of the school's induction program indicated that she intentionally decided to make frequent classroom visits and to provide formative (her words) feedback to Sanders. As a result, she believed that Sanders felt comfortable coming to her with questions. Ongoing classroom visits and formative feedback focused on teaching and learning, such as the ones done by Carlson, are considered elements of formative evaluation Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007). The purpose of formative evaluation is to "assist and support teachers in professional growth and the improvement of teaching" (Glickman et al., p. 288) rather than provide the measures of accountability needed for summative evaluation. Formative evaluation builds trust and rapport as well as develops collegial relationships between the evaluator and teacher, as seemed to be evidenced in my study.

Wood (2005) indicated that principals are responsible for building a school culture that supports standards-based teaching and learning as well as creating structures that support the mentoring program. Administrators at JCMS appear to have done both. Creating the Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) position was done to support teaching and learning at the school. In addition, administrators not only provided common planning time for teachers, but they also required teams to document a minimum of 100 minutes of collaborative planning each week with team and content colleagues. Thus, administrators provided both a school-wide collaborative

environment that supported the beginning teacher as well as intentionally created time for one-on-one content mentoring to provide an additional layer of support for her.

Not all of the induction supports provided to the new teacher in my study seemed to directly support development of a central task of learning to teach. Those that did not seem to apply to a specific task of learning to teach were all psychological in nature:

- Listening ear/place to vent
- Offer break
- Offer encouragement
- Reassurances/praise about work
- Praise/encouragement for work with students
- Moral support

While these supports may not help a beginning teacher develop specific competencies needed to be a successful teacher, they do seem to provide the emotional support needed to adjust to the demands of a complex job like teaching, something Feiman-Nemser (2001b) asserts is still an important component of mentoring.

The results of my study confirmed not only findings in the literature on induction, but also findings in the literature on common planning time. Erb (1987, 1995), along with Erb and Doda (1989) found that teachers on teams with common planning time experienced more collaboration on student issues as well as curriculum and instructional concerns. This increased collaboration also led to increased teacher satisfaction (Erb & Doda, 1989) and improved work climates (Flowers et al., 1999; Warren & Payne, 1997). The participants in my study indicated similar benefits. They reported extensive collaboration on both interdisciplinary and content teams; they further indicated that such collaboration made their work more enjoyable.

Collaboration with colleagues focused on issues of teaching and learning is an example of a form of professional development known as job-embedded learning. Wood and Killian (1998) define job-embedded learning as “learning that occurs as teachers and administrators engage in their daily work activities” (p. 52). For the individual teacher, job-embedded learning is often more relevant than other forms of professional development because it occurs on the job site and addresses individual goals and concerns that arise from classroom practice (Zepeda, 2008). In seeking to address the individual needs of teachers, job-embedded learning takes into account the job role and experience level of each individual (Rae & O’Driscoll, 2004), which allows both beginning and experienced teachers to benefit from this type of learning. As teachers and administrators in a school interact to solve problems that arise in their daily work, they learn new strategies and develop new skills that they can immediately apply in their practice (Wood & McQuarrie, 1999). This type of collaboration and professional dialogue among teachers and administrators creates a school climate and culture that encourages positive changes in practice and views learning to teach as a career-long process (Middleton, 1999), much like Feiman-Nemser’s (2001a) continuum of learning to teach.

Traditional formal professional development activities such as workshops and conferences often take place away from the school site. Job-embedded learning encourages the use of informal activities that take place at school. Examples of these activities include curriculum planning groups, discussions with colleagues, observations of other teachers, peer coaching, study groups, book studies, and lesson study (Ponticell, 1995; Wood & McQuarrie, 1999). As teachers implement what they have learned from these activities in their classroom practice, reflection and feedback become important tools that help them refine their practice. Personal reflection along with constructive feedback from colleagues helps teachers evaluate

their implementation of new strategies and skills (Zepeda, 2008). This process of learning, implementation, and analysis through reflection and feedback helps teachers improve practice on an ongoing basis. Sanders, the beginning teacher in my study, engaged in this process as she worked with her content mentor during their common planning time. Lankua and Scandura (2002) studied job-embedded learning that occurs in mentoring relationships and concluded that, among other things, mentors can help their mentees develop better working relationships with colleagues.

When Wood and Killian (1998) examined practices associated with school improvement, they found that professional development based on school improvement goals and embedded in the daily work of teachers had the most impact on schools. They found that school administrators played an important role in the school improvement process. Principals had to create a school environment that encouraged teachers to collaborate on learning activities. They also had to connect these learning activities to school improvement goals so the teachers' work resulted in positive change for the entire school. The administrators at Johnson City Middle School created an environment that encouraged collaboration when they required teachers to document the time they spent each week in collaborative activities during their common planning time. They created a collaborative environment specifically for beginning teachers when they designed Becker's schedule so that she shared common planning time with both the sixth and seventh grades in order to work with Sanders and a second year teacher in the seventh grade.

My study not only confirmed findings in the literature, but it also extended some of these findings. While Ingersoll and Smith (2004) reported that beginning teachers tend to receive a variety of induction experiences, they do not provide any indication of the quantity or quality of these supports. The case study design of my study allowed me to develop a detailed portrait of

both the quantity and quality of induction supports provided to Sanders. I was also able to extend the literature on support providers, which tends to focus on a single mentor (e. g., Algozzine et al., 2007; Johnson et al., 2004; Youngs, 2007) to highlight the diversity of colleagues who can provide induction support for a beginning teacher.

My study also extends the literature on how to provide the comprehensive induction support recommended by researchers. Providing the level of support generally considered most effective is an expensive proposition. For example, California's acclaimed Best Support and Teaching Assessment model (BTSA) costs as much as \$5,500 per new teacher per year to implement (Breux & Wong, 2003; Moir, 2003). Such a price tag is prohibitive to many school systems, particularly small systems such as the one in which I work. My study is an example of how a small middle school can provide intensive support by utilizing organizational supports such as common planning time and content and interdisciplinary teams. Intentionally arranging the ILT's schedule so that she would have common planning time with Sanders provided time for the two to work together without releasing the ILT from teaching duties.

Finally, although some research examines the experiences of beginning teachers who are delayed entrants into the field (e. g., Johnson, 2004), little research has been done on the qualities and experiences that delayed entry beginning teachers bring to the job. One factor that emerged from my study as an important source of support for Sanders was her life experiences prior to the start of her teaching career. In particular, her colleagues cited experiences such as her age, being the parent of a middle school student, and working as both a substitute and student teacher in the school. As a result of these experiences, they saw her transition to teaching as very different from that of the traditional beginning teacher in his or her early twenties.

Implications for Future Research and Practice

The literature on professional development and teacher induction suggests that teachers, and beginning teachers in particular, need extensive time during working hours to collaborate with more experienced colleagues (Parsard et al., 2001). It seems natural to conclude that the common planning time closely associated with middle schools would also be associated with the provision of induction supports for beginning teachers. However, I found only one study in my review of literature that focused exclusively on induction at the middle school level. My study helps to address that gap. While it does not close the gap completely – more than one study would be needed to accomplish that feat – it does lend support to the value of using common planning time as a tool in new teacher induction. Additional research is needed on the use of common planning time in providing induction support to beginning teachers, not only at the middle school level, but also at the elementary and high school levels.

I examined the effect of the induction supports on the classroom practices of the beginning teacher by asking her and her mentor teachers about it during our interviews. I also examined transcripts of her meetings with the content mentor and interdisciplinary team. Future research should include classroom observations for a more complete picture of the effects of induction supports on teacher practice. Student achievement data should also be examined as a measure of the effectiveness of induction support on the classroom practices of beginning teachers.

Many proponents of comprehensive induction programs call for full-time release mentors to be assigned to beginning teachers (e.g., Bartell, 2005; Glazerman et al., 2008). The use of full-time release mentors refers to experienced teachers who have been released from all regular classroom responsibilities in order to provide induction support for beginning teachers. Although

the content mentor in my study was released from some classroom teaching responsibilities due to her responsibilities as the Instructional Lead Teacher for language arts, she was not fully released. While full-time release mentors may be more feasible for large school districts who hire many new teachers, it would not be a good choice for a small district like Johnson City. Creative scheduling, however, can be used to provide common planning periods for a mentor and a beginning teacher to work together, just as administrators at JCMS did. Although common planning time is a structure associated with middle schools, teachers in other organizational structures do have planning at the same time. Administrators could intentionally schedule a mentor and beginning teacher for a shared planning period in order to provide time for them to work together. This possibility should be explored not only in middle schools, but also in both elementary and high schools.

The participants in my study all cited Sanders's previous experiences at Johnson City Middle School as both a substitute and student teacher as key factors in easing her transition to teaching. Because she was already familiar with the school culture, she and her mentors were able to devote their attention during her first year to teaching to developing her craft in teaching language arts. Providing learning experiences for teacher candidates in a real-world setting is the purpose of Professional Development Schools (Doolittle, Sudeck, & Rattigan, 2008; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2000). Professional Development Schools, or PDS, represent a partnership between P-12 schools and teacher preparation programs. NCATE (2000) compares them to teaching hospitals that combine academic programs with clinical preparation in real-world settings. Learning for both professionals and students is grounded in both research and practitioner knowledge in the real-world setting of a school. Researchers with the teacher preparation program partner with the school to ground their work in

research-based strategies. School practitioners work with teacher candidates as they apply their academic knowledge in the real-world setting of a classroom. Practitioners also share their knowledge in teacher preparation classes at the college or university site. Finally, college courses are taught at PDS sites to provide on-going professional development opportunities for teachers at the school. The PDS partnership represents an opportunity for large school systems that hire many beginning teachers to introduce these new teachers to the school before they are even hired.

Final Thoughts

At the end of my dissertation defense, one of my committee members posed the following question: What made this experience work? I think it does represent what Banks (personal communication) called “*a perfect storm of good things*” that occurred. However, those “good things” did not just happen accidentally. My father has always told me that you can “look to the top” when both good things and bad things happen in an organization. He was certainly correct in this case. Administrators at the school made deliberate decisions that, intentionally or unintentionally, provided a supportive environment for Sanders during her first year of teaching. Their decision at the end of the 2007-2008 school year to mix up all the academic teaching teams at the school put together a new team for Sanders to join. Although these teachers had worked together for several years on the same grade-level, this was their first year together as a team. Thus, Sanders was able to join them in forging new working relationships.

According to Carlson, school administrators made the decision to hire Sanders despite her initial lack of certification in language arts because they felt she would be a good fit for both the school and the grade level for which she was hired. They saw helping her learn to teach a new content area as their responsibility. Although the school did not provide a formal induction

program per se due to the small number of new teachers hired, they used the existing school structures of common planning time and an ILT for language arts to provide the support she needed.

Thus, in my view, the provision of effective induction support for new teachers begins with school administrators. When they take seriously the need to support new teachers as they transition from preservice learners to practitioners, they can use the organizational structures and resources of the school to provide that support. They will keep the needs of beginning teachers in mind when they arrange teaching responsibilities and schedules. This can happen not only at the middle school level (closely associated with the structure of common planning time), but also at the elementary and high school levels. Meeting the needs of beginning teachers leads to improved teacher quality, which in turn leads to improved student achievement.

Thus, an educational journey that began with my quest to improve the achievement levels of my students ends, at last, with some answers. If I had received the kinds of induction support that Sanders received, I might have become an effective teacher much earlier in my career. I can now arm my passion for supporting new teachers with my own research-based knowledge that such support produces positive effects for teacher quality.

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APPENDIX A

COMMON PLANNING TIME (CPT) INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Common Planning Time (CPT) Interview Protocol



Middle Level Education Research SIG
National Middle Grades Research Project
Common Planning Time (CPT) Interview Protocol

School Name: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee Name & Number: _____

Team name: _____

[Please identify this person with the number assigned in the table on page 2 of the observation protocol.]

Interview location: _____

Grade level: _____

Duration of interview: _____ hrs _____ mins

Reminders:

*The purpose of this interview is to engage in a purposeful conversation with the participants regarding their experiences of common planning time. **Before you start** make sure that you have:*

- ☐ *received a copy of the signed Informed Consent and given a copy to the participant*
- ☐ *checked the recorder settings for proper recording*
- ☐ *extra batteries and tapes if you are using an analogue recorder*
- ☐ *an extension cord for recorders that need a power source*
- ☐ *read the provided review of literature to become more knowledgeable about the topic you will be discussing in the interview*
- ☐ *tried to ensure that the interview is taking place in a quiet location*

Introduction

Thank you for allowing me to interview you regarding your experiences with common planning time. You indicated in the Informed Consent Letter that you would allow me to tape this session in order to ensure an accurate account of what you are saying. I do want to remind you that everything you say is confidential and that your name will never appear on any of the documents or reports related to this research project. Additionally, the name of your school will not be used in any reports.

In this interview, I am interested in understanding what you think about common planning time—what your experiences are.

Let's start with some basic demographic information about you.

Demographic Information

1. How long have you worked as a teacher?
2. How long have you worked in a middle-grade school?
3. How long have you worked in this school?
4. Do you work full-time in this school?
5. With which grade level do you spend the majority of your time?
6. Do you work on a cross-grade team? (e.g., 6/7th grade, 7/8th grade)
7. How long have you worked with/on this team?
8. How many other teachers work with you on this team?
9. Approximately how many students are on your team?
10. What percentage of your teaching time is spent with students on your team?
11. Do you have regularly planned CPT?
12. How many times each week does your team typically meet for CPT?
13. Typically, how long (# mins) are your CPT meetings?

I would like to switch our conversation to exploring what you understand about the purpose of common planning time and the relationship of common planning time to your teaching and classroom management. Please remember there are no right or wrong answers. I really want your honest opinions about these issue and examples of your experiences.

Teacher's Understandings of CPT (e.g., purpose, goals, value)

14. Has anyone from the school or the district explained to you why you have CPT?
If yes, please explain.

15. What do you consider to be the purpose of CPT?

16. Has CPT changed the way you teach? If so, please provide an example.

17. Has CPT changed the way you manage your classroom and student behavior?

18. If so, please provide an example.

19. How would you react if you lost your CPT?

Let's move now to looking at how you use your common planning time.

Teacher Use of CPT

20. What does your team spend time working on or discussing during common planning time?

Note to Researcher: If the interviewee needs a prompt for question “a,” the list below is taken from the observation protocol and can be used to help generate conversation.

Prompts:

- Planning special team projects or activities
- Developing and using consistent curriculum
- Coordinating curriculum across subject areas
- Integrating curriculum across subject areas
- Developing interdisciplinary units
- Monitoring and coordinating student assignments and tests
- Developing consistent assessment standards across subjects
- Discussing student learning and behavior problems/issues
- Integrating technology into the curriculum
- Developing or coordinating communication with parents
- Plan or implement strategies to increase parent involvement
- Budget or fiscal issues
- Preparation of student progress reports, report cards, attendance/behavior reports, and so on.
- Updates/reports on school-wide committee meetings, team leader meetings, and so on.

21. What activities or topics consume most of your time during CPT? Please explain why these activities and topics take so much of your common planning time.

22. What do you view as the major accomplishments of your team during this current school year?

23. Does your team or representative meet with other teams? Please explain why those meeting occur or why not.

24. In what ways does the school principal or other district administrator (e.g., curriculum specialists, superintendent, middle grade supervisor, and so on.) influence your CPT work?
25. Describe the most effective use of CPT (what teachers would be doing, and so on.) in an ideal school setting.

Professional preparation is important to the success of any endeavor. The following questions relate to your teacher preparation program and the professional development experiences you have had since you started teaching. Again, I ask that you respond honestly to these items.

Professional Preparation

26. Did you receive any preparation in your teacher education program related to CPT? Please explain and provide examples.
27. What professional development have you had to better prepare you to use common planning time? Did the idea for this professional development originate with the principal, the district office, or your team of teachers? Please explain and provide examples.
28. What additional preparation and/or skills do you think you need to be more successful in implementing CPT?
29. Do you believe that teachers at your school are adequately prepared (i.e., have the necessary knowledge and skills) to implement CPT? Please explain.

We are almost finished with the interview. I truly appreciate your time and the honesty of your responses. The next set of questions deals with the benefits you see from having common planning time.

Perceived Benefits of CPT

30. What do you believe are important benefits of having CPT?

31. What benefits do you see resulting from CPT for teachers? Please explain.

For students? Please explain.

For the school as a whole? Please explain.

For the team? Please explain.

32. In what ways has CPT contributed to your effectiveness as a teacher? (*Prompts: parent involvement, classroom management, instructional practice, curriculum planning, assessment strategies, job satisfaction*)

33. How do you think your CPT influences student learning and achievement?

The final set of questions deals with the difficulties you have experienced with common planning time.

Perceived Barriers of CPT

34. What do you find to be a difficult part of having CPT? (*Prompts: lack of time, personalities, control*)

35. Do you see any negative effects of CPT on teachers? Please explain and provide examples.

On students? Please explain and provide examples.

On your team? Please explain and provide examples.

On the school as a whole? Please explain.

36. What factors influence CPT effectiveness? (*Prompts: personalities, certification/licensure type, teaching experience*)

37. What distracts from CPT effectiveness? (*Prompts: personalities, certification/licensure type, teaching experience*)

<p><i>Before we conclude, I have one final question that I would appreciate your thinking about.</i></p>
--

38. Discuss any school or district level policies that affect the usefulness of your CPT.

Final Question (Wrap-up)

39. Is there anything you would like to share with me that I did not ask?

I want to thank you for spending this time with me and sharing your thoughts and understandings about common planning time. You have made a significant contribution to the research on common planning time and I would be pleased to share the results of this research as they become available. If you think of something that you would like to share with me, I would be pleased to talk with you. We can arrange a time and place for that purpose. Again, thanks for sharing your perspective and experiences.

APPENDIX B

COMMON PLANNING TIME (CPT) OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Common Planning Time (CPT) Observation Protocol



Middle Level Education Research SIG
National Middle Grades Research Project
Common Planning Time (CPT) Observation Protocol

School Name: _____ Date: _____

School Address: _____

Observer: _____ Team name: _____

Meeting location: _____ Grade level: _____

Time allotted for CPT meeting: _____ Meeting start time: _____ Meeting end time: _____

Non-team members present:
 (title/position) _____

Topics to be discussed:

 (if known)

Descriptive questions to answer while observing CPT meeting

1. What is the physical arrangement of teachers in the team meeting?
2. Is there an agenda for the CPT meeting? *[Note: if offered a copy, please include this with the data you submit to the national project.]*
3. Did a team member record minutes of the CPT meeting? *[Note: If you are offered a copy of the minutes of this or the past meeting, please accept it and forward with the data to be sent to the national project.]*
4. Were there any interruptions during the CPT meeting (e. g, announcements, fire drill, students needing to see teachers)? Please note the frequency of interruptions.



MLER SIG National Middle Grades Research Project

Please have the following table completed prior to observation of CPT meeting.

Description of Teachers in CPT Meeting

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Certification	Subjects taught
1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment/Gifted <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Phys Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Electives/Exploratory <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment/Gifted <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Phys Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Electives/Exploratory <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment/Gifted <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Phys Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Electives/Exploratory <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
4.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment/Gifted <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Phys Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Electives/Exploratory <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
5.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Enrichment/Gifted <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Phys Ed <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/Technical <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Electives/Exploratory <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Certification	Subjects taught
6.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
7.	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Black/ African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Native-American / American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary <input type="checkbox"/> Special ed <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Science <input type="checkbox"/> Language arts <input type="checkbox"/> Social studies <input type="checkbox"/> Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

Observations of CPT meeting

Please indicate the amount of time (in minutes) spent on each activity and record all observations made for each activity/behavior. Include specific, rich descriptions of all activities/behaviors you observe.

Code	Description of Activities / Behaviors	Comments & observations	Time spent (mins)
CI	Planning special team activities		
CI	Developing curriculum	For what subjects?	
CI	Coordinating and integrating curriculum across subject areas	For what subjects?	
CI	Integrating technology into the curriculum		
CI	Coordinating and/or developing student assignments		
A	Coordinating and/or developing student assessments		
A	Coordinating test preparation and state testing		
S	Discussing student learning problems/issues		
S	Discussing student behavior problems/issues		

Code	Description of Activities / Behaviors	Comments & observations	Time spent (mins)
P	Discussing activities related to parent involvement		
B	Reporting/discussing budget or fiscal issues		
B	Preparing student progress reports, report cards, attendance/behavior reports, etc.		
B	Reporting on school-wide committee meetings, team leader meetings, etc.		
B	Dealing with school-wide issues		
PD	Engaging in professional development activity		
OB	Engaging in other behaviors		

Summary Table of Observed CPT Behaviors

Please refer to the Table on p. 3 to calculate the total time spent on each category. For example, for the “Curriculum & instruction” category, sum up the six “CI” activities/behaviors on p. 3 and place the sum within the CI category in the table below.

Code	Summary Categories	Total time spent (mins)
CI	Curriculum & instruction	
A	Assessment	
S	Student	
P	Parent	
B	Business	
PD	Professional development	
OB	Engaging in Other Behaviors	

Researcher Summary

Describe your general impressions of what occurred during this CPT meeting (attach additional pages if necessary).

APPENDIX C
PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Information Sheet

MLER SIG National Middle Grades Research Project on Common Planning Time

Utilizing quantitative approaches, middle grades researchers have addressed the positive effects of interdisciplinary teaming with common planning time (CPT). Research has documented positive effects on student outcomes including student achievement, better social adjustment, and more positive school climate. Positive benefits to teachers include more positive work/school climate, higher levels of efficacy, and higher levels of engagement in interdisciplinary team and classroom instructional activities. While the results of this research are promising and support the need for common planning time, there still remains an unknown—what teachers do when they meet for common planning time. This, then, is the focus of this national research endeavor.

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected over the life of this project. We will start with the qualitative data collection which includes data obtained through interviews, structured observations of team meetings, and demographic/contextual information. Data will be co-owned by the principal investigator and the MLER SIG. A national database will be constructed from the data that are submitted by researchers.

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – PHASE ONE

Informed Consent Form – Phase One

An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher" conducted by Cathy Carter, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Gayle Andrews, Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education, University of Georgia (706-542-4244). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia uses the structure of common planning time to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. If I volunteer to take part in the first phase of the study, I may be asked to do the following things:

1. Allow the researcher to observe one interdisciplinary team meeting during my common planning time, which should take no more than one hour.
2. Participate in an interview, which should last no more than one hour. The interview will be audio taped and later transcribed.

No monetary compensation will be provided for my participation. I may receive educational benefits related to providing induction support to beginning teachers from my participation in this research. Society may also benefit from this research through improving both the retention rates and teacher quality of beginning teachers through the provision of induction supports to them. I am not expected to incur any discomfort, stress, or harm as a result of participating in this study.

This study is connected to the National Middle Grades Research Project on common planning time, sponsored by the Middle Level Education Research Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. Participant researchers will combine their data in a national database that can be used for large-scale studies of the use of common planning time. Pseudonyms will be used for the names of all participants during data collection. The actual school name will be used in the data transferred to the national database so that other researchers accessing the national database can make comparisons between schools but will not be used in any reports or presentations that result from this research project. New pseudonyms will be used for both names and schools in any publication or presentation of findings. Data transferred to the national database will be maintained on a secure, password-protected server housed at Portland State University. Only researchers who have participated in a training session for the national project and agreed to abide by the guidelines will be given access to the national database.

All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet, maintained by the researcher. Digital audio recordings will be stored on a dedicated external hard drive and stored in this locked file cabinet. All data will be maintained for three years after completion of the study in case they are needed to publish or present findings. Audio recordings will not be publicly disseminated.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project by phone at (706)425-4578 or email at catcart@uga.edu. I may also contact Dr. Gayle Andrews by phone at (706)542-4244 or email at gandrews@uga.edu.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Cathy Carter

 Name of Researcher
 (706)425-4578; catcart@uga.edu

 Signature

 Date

 Name of Participant

 Signature

 Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – PHASE TWO

Informed Consent Form – Phase Two

An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher" conducted by Cathy Carter, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Gayle Andrews, Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education, University of Georgia (706-542-4244). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia uses the structure of common planning time to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I may be asked to do the following things:

1. Allow the researcher to observe up to 6 interdisciplinary or content team meetings (some of which may be videotaped) held during my common planning time, which should last no more than one hour each.
2. Participate in up to two interviews, which should not last more than one hour each. The interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed. I may be asked to complete the form "Central Tasks of Learning to Teach" prior to each interview. I may also be asked to review video clips of observations during the interview.
3. Maintain and share a reflective journal that records my thoughts about the supports provided during these common planning time meetings and the skills that develop as a result.
4. Share documents related to either the induction program or the use of common planning time.

No monetary compensation will be provided for my participation. I may receive educational benefits related to providing induction support to beginning teachers from my participation in this research. Society may also benefit from this research through improving both the retention rates and teacher quality of beginning teachers through the provision of induction supports to them. I am not expected to incur any discomfort, stress, or harm as a result of participating in this study.

No individually identifying information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission, except if required by law. Pseudonyms will be used for my name and the name of my school in any data collected as well as in any publication or presentation of the findings.

All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet, maintained by the researcher. Digital audio recordings and video clips will be stored on a dedicated external hard drive and stored in this locked file cabinet. All data will be maintained three years after completion of the study in case they are needed to publish or present data. Video clips may be included in the publication or presentation of the findings, subject to my permission (see below). Audio recording will not be publicly disseminated.

Video clips can be included in the publication or presentation of findings. Yes _____ No _____

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project by phone at (706)425-4578 or email at catcart@uga.edu. I may also contact Dr. Gayle Andrews by phone at (706)542-4244 or email at gandrews@uga.edu.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Cathy Carter
Name of Researcher
(706)425-4578; catcart@uga.edu

Signature

Date

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX F

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – PHASE TWO – ADMINISTRATOR

Informed Consent Form – Phase Two - Administrator

An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "An Investigation of Induction Support Provided through Common Planning Time for a Beginning Middle School Teacher" conducted by Cathy Carter, a doctoral student under the direction of Dr. Gayle Andrews, Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education, University of Georgia (706-542-4244). I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to examine how one middle school in the state of Georgia uses the structure of common planning time to facilitate induction activities for beginning teachers. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I may be asked to do the following things:

1. Participate in two interviews, which should not last more than one hour each. These interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed.
2. Share documents related to either the induction program or the use of common planning time at my school.

No monetary compensation will be provided for my participation. I may receive educational benefits related to providing induction support to beginning teachers from my participation in this research. Society may also benefit from this research through improving both the retention rates and teacher quality of beginning teachers through the provision of induction supports to them. I am not expected to incur any discomfort, stress, or harm as a result of participating in this study.

No individually identifying information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission, except if required by law. Pseudonyms will be used for my name and the name of my school in any data collected as well as in any publication or presentation of the findings.

All data collected will be stored in a locked cabinet, maintained by the researcher. Digital audio recordings will be stored on a dedicated external hard drive and stored in this locked file cabinet. All data will be maintained for three years after completion of the study in case they are needed to publish or present data. Audio recordings will not be publicly disseminated.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project by phone at (706)425-4578 or email at catcart@uga.edu. I may also contact Dr. Gayle Andrews by phone at (706)542-4244 or email at gandrews@uga.edu.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Cathy Carter

 Name of Researcher
 (706)425-4578; catcart@uga.edu

 Signature

 Date

 Name of Participant

 Signature

 Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

APPENDIX G
ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Administrator Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for allowing me to interview you regarding your experiences with common planning time. You indicated in the Informed Consent Letter that you would allow me to tape this session in order to ensure an accurate account of what you are saying. I do want to remind you that everything you say is confidential and that your name will never appear on any of the documents or reports related to this research project. Additionally, the name of your school will not be used in any reports.

In this interview, I am interested in understanding what kinds of induction support your school or system offers to beginning teachers. In particular, I'm interested in how you see what you think about common planning time from an administrator's point of view

Let's start with some basic demographic information about you.

1. What is your position at this school?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What are your responsibilities for the induction program offered to beginning teachers at your school?
4. What induction supports do you offer the beginning teachers at your school?
5. How effective do you think this support is for the beginning teachers? For the support providers?
6. How is common planning time for your interdisciplinary teams used in the provision of induction support?

7. How effective do you think common planning time is for providing induction support for beginning teachers?
8. How valuable do you think common planning time is for the teams as well as the beginning teachers?
9. What do you see as barriers to the use of common planning time?
10. Is there anything you would like to share with me concerning your induction program or the use of common planning time?

I want to thank you for spending this time with me and sharing your thoughts and understandings about common planning time. You have made a significant contribution to the research on common planning time and its use in providing induction support for beginning teachers. I would be pleased to share the results of this research as they become available. If you think of something that you would like to share with me, I would be pleased to talk with you. We can arrange a time and place for that purpose. Again, thanks for sharing your perspective and experiences.

APPENDIX H
BEGINNING TEACHER

Beginning Teacher

Central Tasks of Learning to Teach – Induction Phase

Researchers have identified five central tasks that help beginning teachers learn to teach. Brief descriptions of examples for each task are provided. Think about the supports offered during your common planning time meetings over the past month. What new skills do you think you have developed during this time?

1. Learn the context for the students, curriculum, and school community
Expectations for students at your grade level, available materials and resources, understanding of content curriculum, parent communication, knowledge of individual students

2. Design responsive instructional programs
Deciding what to teach based on knowledge of content and students, eliciting student responses, responding to student responses

3. Create a classroom learning community
Set up classroom environment, establishing rules and procedures, manage disruptions, encourage intellectual risk-taking for students

4. Enact a beginning repertoire of strategies
Use of a range of curriculum, instructional, and assessment strategies that encourage student engagement and promote active learning

5. Develop a professional identity
Address images of the teacher and colleague you want to be as well as the kind of classroom you want to create

APPENDIX I
EXPERIENCED COLLEAGUE

Experienced Colleague

Central Tasks of Learning to Teach – Induction Phase

Researchers have identified five central tasks that help beginning teachers learn to teach. Brief examples for each task are provided. Think about the supports offered to the beginning teacher during your common planning time meetings over the past month. What new skills do you think this teacher has developed during this time?

1. Learn the context for the students, curriculum, and school community
Expectations for students at grade level, available materials and resources, understanding of content curriculum, parent communication, knowledge of individual students

2. Design responsive instructional programs
Deciding what to teach based on knowledge of content and students, eliciting student responses, responding to student responses

3. Create a classroom learning community
Set up classroom environment, establishing rules and procedures, manage disruptions, encourage intellectual risk-taking for students

4. Enact a beginning repertoire of strategies
Use of a range of curriculum, instructional, and assessment strategies that encourage student engagement and promote active learning

5. Develop a professional identity
Address images of the teacher and colleague the beginning teacher wants to be as well as the kind of classroom he or she wants to create