TRIALS, TRIUMPHS, AND TRANSITIONS: EXAMINING PERCEPTIONS OF NEW TEACHER INDUCTION IN RELATION TO MENTORING AND SCHOOL CULTURE

by

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Abstract

It is a well-known fact that entering the teaching profession can be a challenge for nearly anyone (Kronowitz, 2004). Recently, the discussion has shifted to looking at strategies to assist the new teachers in making the transition (Portner, 2005; Sweeny, 2008), with an attempt in the province of Ontario through the implementation of a provincially mandated New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) legislated 2006. Yet, since programs like Ontario’s NTIP are still fairly new, concerns exist as to the effectiveness and ideal structure of induction programs (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Tait, 2005; Cherubini, 2009; Robinson, 1998; Johnson & Kardos, 2010), with little recognition of the role of school culture only peripherally addressed within induction literature. Therefore, the intent of this study was to examine the experiences of new teachers who have previously completed the Ontario NTIP program in order to understand the impact of induction programs on the process of new teacher socialization. In order to carry out this study, a combination of document analysis and individual interviews was used. The findings reveal an emphasis upon evaluation within the program documents, unclear roles, the absence of school culture, and little information to ensure proper implementation of the program. Three themes emerged from the interviews. First, the participating new teachers identified the need for support beyond the first year of teaching. Secondly, there seemed to be a general confusion about NTIP with regards to elements, outcomes, and roles among the participants. Finally, responses indicated that mentoring was important for a teacher to feel comfortable in his or her role. Implications of this research extend to the design and long-term support specifically needed for new teachers, establishing the need for direct consideration of school culture and teaching context upon a new teachers’ transition. This
research suggests that NTIP documentation be revised to consider all elements more appropriately and for school boards and schools to recognize the role of a new teacher within the environment, and attempt to establish a mentoring culture.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

My teacher education practicum placement experiences differed greatly from the expected welcoming and supportive school atmosphere. I was surprised to discover the impact that staff relations and resentment had upon my teaching. The lack of cohesiveness amongst the teachers created a very unproductive learning and teaching environment. Although such experiences could be simply a result of being a teacher candidate placed in the school for only a short period of time, I was surprised at the unfriendliness and lack of support I received. This experience made me wonder what it might be like when I finally got my first full-time teaching contract. Novice teachers do not necessarily have positive experiences upon being assigned to a full-time position. Ultimately, I began to feel concerned for teachers entering the profession.

My experiences, as outlined above, represent, in my opinion, the truly complex nature of schools. At the culmination of my teaching practicum, I began thinking about what it means to be a beginning teacher and the different situations a new teacher could encounter as a novice? Could each school be similar to my associate school? How can a new teacher survive in such a tense environment? What would be considered a successful transition? How can I prepare myself for these transitions and what is being done about these problems? What follows is an account of the research process I undertook to glean some answers to these questions.
Rationale

Deciding to become a teacher is not a decision to be taken lightly. Often unprepared for these unique environments, new teachers enter the schools and unfortunately face an immediate deficit in how to thrive within the environment (Kronowitz, 2004; Martin-Kniep, 2008; Robinson, 1998). Appropriately named the “sink or swim” method, for decades new teachers have been thrown into teaching situations with little support beyond their teacher training program. Although the issues faced by new teachers have been identified for many years, only recently has the focus shifted to determining solutions to improve the situation. Given the strong link with new teacher success, teacher retention, and student success, it is in the best interest of school boards to dedicate attention to inducting their novice teachers (Cherubini, 2009).

Induction refers to the sustained training and support for new teachers, typically over the span of a few years and is designed to train and acculturate new teachers (Wong, 2005). Wong (2005) stated that effective induction programs possess three characteristics: the program is comprehensive, meaning there is a structure involving several activities and many people involved; the program is coherent with an appropriateness of the activities and people involved; and the program is sustainable with long-term intentions for new teacher support. Induction programs that have clear outlines for goals, an action plan, and structures that encourage collaboration and effective mentoring are the basis for sustained professional development upon which teacher effectiveness can begin.
Mentoring is the intentional pairing of an inexperienced person (protégé) with an experienced person (mentor) to guide and nurture the protégé’s development (Pitton, 2006). The helping could be in the form of advice, strategies, resources, connections, common practices, etc. In the case of new teachers, being mentored offers a way to gain valuable information that simply cannot be learned in pre-service education (Moir, 2005). Mentors help to provide answers to new teachers as they enter the classroom by providing advice, asking and answering questions, modeling techniques, offering feedback and a relationship.

Details regarding the different induction programs are still emerging across North America. However, it was in the early 2000s that the province of Ontario, Canada, started to address the need to assist their teachers (Niedergesaess, 2004; Tait, 2005; OCT, 2003). In 2005, the Government of Ontario and the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) announced the creation of a professional program to be implemented into all publicly funded schools within Ontario. The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) was legislated in 2006, and is designed to help new teachers entering the field with many aspects which may seem challenging at first (Ministry of Education, 2010). The key elements of the program include: orientation, mentoring, on-the-job-training, and two evaluations of each new teacher by the school principal (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; OCT, 2003; OCT, 2012). While NTIP is mandated by the provincial government of Ontario, the implementation of the program falls to the responsibility of the school boards. The variation in how each program is implemented causes inconsistencies in what professional development program is offered to teachers. It also results in the
specifics relating to socialization being unique to each school context. Doerger (2003) described that each schools’ unique culture and context cannot be forgotten in planning effective induction programs, with one-size-fits-all models failing to recognize that each school functions in its own unique way and is composed of different individuals. Therefore in order to learn more about induction practices and mentoring, school culture must be considered given the subjective nature of each school and implementation practices of each school board towards the induction program.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of new teachers who have previously completed the Ontario NTIP program in order to understand the impact of induction programs on the process of new teacher socialization. The intent was to examine new teachers’ perceptions in relation to how mentoring influenced their entrance to the profession by understanding their transition into individual school cultures. The primary research questions were:

1. What is the structure and mandates of Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program?
2. What role is assigned to the implementation of the program in individual schools within the NTIP mandate?
3. What is the role of school culture and collaboration as outcomes for new teachers and staff within the program outline?
4. What is the perceived role of an individual school culture in a new teacher’s successful induction experiences?
5. What is the impact of the mentoring relationship established as part of NTIP on new teachers’ transition into a school?

6. What is the lasting significance of the established mentoring relationship beyond the prescribed program period?

**Significance**

The significance of this research lies in its potential contributions to both practice and policy. In qualitative research, contributions to practice involve the production of a description and interpretation of a particular event, which over time, may contribute to a larger body of knowledge on best practices (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Through examining teachers’ perceptions of induction, NTIP, and mentoring, all with a focus on socialization, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge in this area. It presents a different look at the topic of induction than seen in other literature-- and highlights the connection between school culture and successful induction. By examining teachers’ perceptions of induction, the elements included in NTIP, both teachers, administration, and teacher preparation programs may curtail their practices to create more successful transitions. In terms of policy contributions, research could help to examine procedures, implementation, and modifications of a particular policy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A primary focus of my research was to learn the experiences and perceptions of new teachers who have participated in the NTIP. Therefore, the results of this study may contribute to change in practices and policy implementation approaches.
**Thesis Overview**

Chapter One provided a rationale, purpose, and significance of this research. Chapter Two is a discussion of relevant literature that supports this research, such as new teacher induction (including NTIP), socialization, and school culture all contributing to and proving the need for research in this area of education. Following this review of literature to set the context, Chapter Three is a review of methodology and methods used in this research. A presentation of the findings from both the document analysis and individual interviews is contained within Chapter Four. Drawing on these findings in Chapter Five is a discussion of the findings, implications, and considerations for future research in this area.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the following section, I provide an overview of relevant literature pertaining to socialization, new teacher induction, mentoring, and school culture. Intertwined are the descriptions of the NTIP and the outline of recent research and reviews pertaining to this program. Highlighted first is the need for assistance for new teachers in their entrance into the teaching profession, and followed by the need for more information on induction program practices, new teacher mentoring, and the impact of school culture upon a new teachers induction into a school. To understand how culture is present in schools, Schein’s (2010) framework for identifying and interpreting a schools’ culture is discussed.

Socialization

Entering any new organizational situation can be a challenge as being the “new person” is never easy and it can take several months to feel comfortable in your new surroundings. Socialization refers to a newcomer entering an organization or environment and the process of that person gathering information about the particular organization (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2002). Schein (2010) outlined that once a group has a culture, the elements of the culture are passed on to new members, being sure only to reveal such elements as the new members gain permanent status within the group. Schein highlighted that the process of socialization and acculturation are the same in that only once the newcomer knows the operating norms and assumptions of the group are they are both acculturated and socialized into the particular group. However, the process of a
newcomer learning the operating norms and assumptions is done through a combination of self-socialization and support from the group members (Schein, 2010). Schein stated that a person cannot simply learn the culture without contributions from both, rather a newcomer deciphers the norms through rewards and punishments for actions governed by the members of the group.

In relation to education and as an example of Schein’s process of socialization is the situation of when a new teacher enters a school and has to learn about the school’s culture, such as the way in which meetings are held, how the teachers interact with each other, common lunch room practices, how resources are shared, which teachers are considered the leaders, etc. All of these aspects are unique to each school and cannot be learned prior to one’s entrance into a particular school. This is where learning to be a teacher extends far beyond the formal teacher education programs as stated by Barrett et al. (2009).

In a recent publication by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), 2012 survey results indicated that 71% of teachers out of their bachelor of education programs are unemployed and only one in 4 first-year teachers were in regular teaching positions, slightly worsening since survey results from 2011 (OCT, 2012, p. 8, OCT, 2013, p. 6). This means that teachers are finding employment elsewhere; while the lack of positions continues, some are working as an occasional teacher, or some are leaving the profession altogether. Moir, Barlin, Gless, and Miles (2009) declared that new teachers will seek employment elsewhere if they don’t feel effective and if there are no structures in place to support them. Ultimately, the success of a new teacher is attributed to their first
teaching experiences (Pitton, 2006). Therefore, as an attempt to curtail the problem of new teacher attrition and offer the critical support for new teachers as they enter the profession, a formal induction program entered legislation in the province of Ontario in 2006 (OCT, 2012). The program is legislated at a provincial level, with the ministry outlining the components of professional development, mentoring, and orientation to be provided for the new teachers to help ease their transition into the profession.

**Teacher Induction**

The gap between learning and employment opportunities has caused a great need for extra assistance for new teachers when they do make this transition (Niedergesaess, 2004). Induction is a process involving comprehensive, coherent, and sustained professional development program implemented by various jurisdictions in the attempt to support, train, and retain new teachers upon their entry into the teaching profession (Wong, 2005). An effective induction program encompasses an environment of improved teaching and student learning, and increases the likelihood for lifelong learning. Induction programs contain several features, such as a welcome centre for new teachers, administrative support, tours of the school, seminars, etc. (Wong, 2005).

Induction programs can be found in several different parts of the world including Switzerland, Japan, New Zealand, China, and in several areas of the United States. However, in Canada, new teacher induction provisions vary by province (Kutsyuruba, 2012). Results of a pan-Canadian document analysis of new teacher induction and mentoring provisions revealed supports offered at different levels: provincially mandated support (program), teacher association or federation level support, hybrid support
involving partnerships such as between teacher associations, universities, community groups, and the last form of support found was at a decentralized level (school board level) (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2013). While many provinces have induction-like practices and mentoring within their school boards and teacher associations, only two provinces were found to have implemented formal induction programs and policies at a provincially legislated level (Kutsyuruba, 2012).

In the case of Ontario, NTIP has been implemented for just over five years and discussions on program structure are still happening (Cherubini, 2009). In 2010, a report was published as an official evaluation of NTIP for the years 2006-2009. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education, this report looked at results from a combination of surveys and interviews collected over the three-year term. The results indicated that new teachers felt the program was helpful and that it contributed to their transition, although some elements of the program were not working (Kane, 2010). The problems were the lack of orientation to the new schools and the structure of the mentoring (i.e., time allotment, observations, communication, matching) (Kane, 2010). Cherubini highlighted the need for research and information on Ontario-based new teacher induction program elements, and given the relative recent implementation of NTIP, it would be interesting to see if there are any perceived longitudinal benefits to the program now that the new teachers are past the induction phase of their teaching career.

**Mentorship**

Common to most induction programs for teachers is the incorporation of a mentoring element (Barret et al., 2009; Wong, 2005). Essential in the mentoring process
is the willingness of both the mentor and protégé to participate (Doerger, 2003). In an early study on mentoring new teachers that looked at 300 new teachers in the first three years of their teaching career, the desire to participate in the mentoring relationship was an important factor in how the relationship progressed (Gehrke & Kay, 1984). This finding coincides with the concept of a culture of mentoring when there is support and eagerness to participate in a mentoring relationship (Zachary, 2005). When the participants, both the protégé and mentor along with other teachers and school staff are willing to participate, encourage participation, and support the mentoring relationship, then the mentoring has a greater chance for success. Zachary claimed that organizations must take mentoring seriously, support those participating and strengthen the process due to the strong impact mentoring relationships can have upon the organizations environment. However, in order for mentoring relationships to be the most beneficial for new teachers and mentors alike, the mentor must receive appropriate training and support in the same way the new teacher receives it (Moir, 2005). Ultimately, it should not be assumed that all experienced teachers are good at sharing their knowledge and teaching adults.

In a recent document outlining survey results from 2011 titled Transitions to Teaching Survey in 2011 (OCT, 2012), teachers who participated in NTIP felt they received positive assistance with many elements of teaching. Despite this finding, the survey results indicated (well over 50%) that the mentor requirements were not met in terms of the mentor observing the new teacher. This problem indicates that there may be a discrepancy in the way a “mentor” is perceived in the relationship. This problem was
also noted in a paper written on the development of NTIP and critiquing the approaches and key elements (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007). The critique questioned the sustainability of the program given that the OCT has reported that not all new teachers are enrolled in the program (most recently, about 92% of full-time teachers (OCT, 2012)) as well as discussing how the mentoring element of the program has not happened as planned. According to Glassford and Salinitri, the mentor selection often falls to the “overworked principal” (p. 25), who has to find those who are willing to mentor the eager new teachers.

Concerns regarding the mentoring aspect of the program were also questioned in the article by Barrett et al. (2009) entitled the *Hidden Agenda of a Teacher Induction Program*. This article suggests that the program encourages the transmission of knowledge leading to assimilation and conformity. Moir (2005) stated that all too often mentoring programs are more like “buddy systems” where the interaction is informal, the pairing is assigned, and the new teachers are left with little support as the mentors are not properly trained on how to support their needs, unfortunately leading to the inevitable “sink or swim” method of teacher induction. As stated by Pitton (2006), the goal of mentoring is not to create clones, but to help the protégés reach their best potential, and in the case of teachers, the best teachers they can be. Moir (2005) suggested that induction programs need to consider these aspects and when implementing a mentoring component, they must consider the role of the new teacher along with the mentor, as both have a stake in the process. It is worthwhile to focus on this area and as Barrett et al. (2009) found,
selecting the most appropriate mentor based on the new teacher’s needs is best, rather than assigning one.

NTIP has been amended to include the way in which the mentor/mentor relationship is conducted, adding a *strategy form* that the mentor and mentee must both sign (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007). Once again, the flaw is that the culmination of the strategy (and form) ends with a signature of approval from the principal, not the mentor. Glassford and Salinitri even went so far as to state that a more appropriate name for the program is new teacher *evaluation* program rather than the new teacher *induction* program. Given this structure, the value is not placed on the relationship, but rather as a transaction between school members. While all programs need evaluation and mentoring can be assessed so that the relationship may be improved, evaluation is not a component of mentoring (Feiman-Nemser et al., 1999).

The lack of clarity surrounding mentoring and the different conceptions of it was the focus of a research study by Johnson and Kardos (2010) in which their ultimate goal was to learn more about the experiences of those involved in mentoring programs. Johnson and Kardos found inequities in the relationships between mentors/mentees when they worked in different areas of the curriculum. Furthermore, Cherubini (2009) found that when induction programs are catered to meet the needs of new teachers, the programs and new teachers were most successful. Therefore, given this research, some new teachers in Ontario are finding that the mentor/mentee relationship doesn’t suit the protégés needs and the willingness of the mentor and that what is considered a successful mentor/protégé relationship in the case of new teachers is not clear. Doerger (2003)
outlined that important in any mentoring relationship is a willingness and a preparedness of the mentors. If the mentor and protégé don’t have a relationship, the chances of the positive mentoring experiences are unlikely. In order to learn more about the mentoring relationship, organizational culture theory must be considered.

**Organizational Culture**

Schein (2010) defined organizational culture as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions, learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p.18).” Schein stated that culture can be examined at three different levels, i.e., levels that are most visible to the observer of such culture. These different levels (artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions) are what Schein called the “three levels of culture.” The first level, artifacts, includes aspects of the culture that you would immediately notice, such as language, products, creations, physical environment, stories, etc. It is here that climate or the atmosphere of the school would be evident. The second level, espoused beliefs and values, refer to how the group handles problems and the approach they would take to solving new issues. The methods and approaches are learned or encouraged by certain members of the group and validated by the rest, which over time become standards of practice or shared assumptions that the approach used is the most appropriate as a solution. The goals of the organization can be found in this level of culture. The final level of culture identified by Schein (2010) is the basic underlying assumptions, namely a deeper level of understanding that can help to
identify patterns and predict behaviours. When a group becomes used to a particular approach to problems, their solution turns into an unnoticed action. They no longer question the solution as they have had repeated success with it in the past, therefore assume it will continue to work. Any challenge or question regarding these basic assumptions will cause defensiveness and anxiety, losing their confidence in the group or in the groups’ decisions. Schein (2010) stated that in order to understand a group’s culture, the basic underlying assumptions must be learned and once this has been achieved, only then can the learning process by which these assumptions evolve be understood.

However, the concept becomes unclear over the determination of which term, climate or culture, is better suited to the concept. Some research employs the use of the term culture and some refer to it as climate when speaking to the importance and creation of a collaborative school environment. Deal and Peterson (2009) identified that schools have a climate or ethos, but it is only through looking at a school’s culture where the norms, traditions, and rituals can be determined. This coincides with Schein’s (2010) view of organizational culture that outlines the process of a group using certain procedures or solutions for long periods of time, and these actions turn into assumptions, eventually becoming unconscious to those utilizing them. Schein stated that the power of a school’s culture lies in the idea that the actions come from unconscious assumptions and are taught as the correct way to act given the situation. More recently, Van Houtte and Van Maele (2011) set out to determine a conceptual clarity between the use of the terms school climate and school culture. Their findings side with Deal & Peterson (2009)
and Schein’s (1985) model, in that the use of the term climate should be reserved for more broad constructions, encompassing culture into it. In contrast, culture is created through beliefs and shared assumptions (Van Houtte & Van Maele, 2011).

The clarification of what is meant by the term culture is under scrutiny (Sewell, 2005) as the term has been borrowed, transformed, and curtailed across several disciplines resulting in a lack of conceptual clarity. Culture has two different meanings. First, identifying anything as culture or cultural, results in claiming it to a particular academic discipline, such as anthropology (Sewell, 2005). Yet, when speaking of “cultures,” we refer to beliefs and practices (Sewell, 2005). In this research, the concept of culture will refer to the common practices, habits, values, and mindset of a particular school.

**School culture.** When one enters a school, it doesn’t take long to get a sense for how it functions (Deal & Peterson, 2009). Certain schools thrive with optimism and the love of learning and teaching can be seen in all aspects, teacher’s work well with each other, resources are shared, and processes are appropriate. Yet, in other schools, the tension is overwhelming and it seems as though teachers and administration are all “walking on thin ice,” with some teachers hiding in their own classrooms, small groups of teachers gossiping and being in cahoots with each other, and a very poor attitude for learning is fostered (Cranton & Carusetta, 2002; Smylie & Denny, 1990). The differences between these two types of school environments are extreme but it demonstrates that there is no consistency in how schools operate.
In the 1930s Willard Waller observed that schools definitely have a culture of their own, noting “complex rituals, traditions, and codes with which teachers operate by” (Deal & Peterson, 2009, p. 5). Despite these early observations, not much had been written on the idea of school culture until the 1980s onward, when it was realized that the success of individuals within the school relies heavily upon how a school functions (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Deal & Peterson, 2009). By improving these school cultural dynamics, schools as a whole function better which in turn provides for the best possible learning environment for students and new teachers alike (Huffman & Jacobson, 2003). Deal and Peterson (2009) argued that not only is it “clearly time to reconsider and rethink the importance of school culture in today’s educational environment,” but that “everything in the organization is affected by the culture and its particular form and features” (pp. vii, 7). Lindahl (2011) stated that many schools that attempt to change or improve fail to recognize the strong influence school culture has and a proper assessment of it needs to happen before any changes can begin.

An ideal solution is to create a collaborative school culture, where the underlying values, norms, beliefs and assumptions support high levels of collegiality, teamwork, dialogue, and a shared vision (Edmonson et al, 2002; Peterson & Brietzke, 1994; Saphier & King, 1985). Aside from offering a greater likelihood of successful new teacher induction, collaborative school cultures offer problem-solving, stronger networks for information sharing, opportunity for risk-taking and innovation, increased job satisfaction, and continuous attempts to improve the school (Corrie, 1995; Peterson & Brietzke, 1994). School changes and developments must look at schools as workplaces,
and the environments must be developed to encourage ongoing learning, the development of teachers and skill (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Once an examination of a school’s culture is under way, and provided the teachers and all staff are on-board with the examination and enacting changes, then a collaborative school may be achieved (Elbot & Fulton, 2008; Smith & Scott, 1990). Key elements in the process of encouraging collaborative practices are: establishing the act of improving the schools culture as a communal responsibility rather than only being a problem for administration; creating opportunities for dialogue in relation to professional development; teachers taking responsibility and being accountable for their actions in order for changes to occur; teachers need and should be encouraged to participate in the decisions regarding changes to be made, and appropriate resources need to be available to help encourage the changes (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Smith & Scott, 1990). Saphier and King (1985) identified the 12 norms of positive school culture, collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, reaching out to the knowledge bases, appreciation and recognition, caring and humor, involvement in decision making, protection of what’s important, traditions, and honest communication. Building these norms depends of teachers’ will and commitment, much like the need for their commitment for mentoring.

**NTIP and school culture.** In a research study by Cherubini (2009) on the implementation of NTIP by an unspecified school board in Ontario, the participants (new teachers) were asked to keep a journal of their experiences throughout the school year as well as to participate in focus groups. The themes Cherubini found in the data were “the
emotional effect of teaching upon beginning teachers, the pervasive influence of school administrators, the perceived inequity of status, and a sensitivity toward school culture” (p. 190). Interesting here is that the themes all pertain to the social aspects of teaching, rather than for example, a teacher’s preparedness for lesson planning, assessment, or classroom management.

Commenting on new teacher success, Tait (2005), identified that it is easier to adjust to the teaching role when novice teachers have long term connections to other people and that learning resilience should be promoted, which is identified as stemming from “collaboration, critical thinking and active participation” (p. 13). Tait advocated for a focus in formal induction programs to include social skills and communication. Similarly analyzing new teacher induction and models of practice, Robinson (1998) stated that immersion into a school’s culture is paramount to a teacher’s effectiveness and, more openly, that not “fitting-in” is the one of the major factors causing the challenges upon entry into the profession.

The research by Cherubini (2009), Tait (2005), Robinson (1998), and Doerger (2003) all identified the important implications that school culture has in the induction of a new teacher. NTIP structure allows for schools to implement the program according to the opportunities and needs in those schools (school culture). Interestingly, the most recent survey results regarding new teacher perceptions of NTIP by the OCT in the Transition to Teaching Survey 2011 and 2012, failed to incorporate neither questions on the new teachers’ integration into a culture, nor a focus on teacher-teacher relationships.
Summary

This literature review has outlined the need for comprehensive support for new teachers; the awareness of a distinct culture present within schools; consideration of school culture within new teacher induction programs; the possibilities for mentoring as an induction element to support new teachers with their transition and socialization; as well as some challenges of Ontario’s NTIP. Given the focus of the need and implementation of new teacher support in schools, the role of school culture within the discussions has been overlooked in literature. Although the literature recognizes the benefit of mentoring within the processes, there has been no formal exploration of the link between socialization of new teachers into school and mentoring as a method to aid in this process. The following chapter outlines the process that was undertaken to explore these identified areas.
Chapter 3

Methods

This chapter presents the method of inquiry used to explore NTIP and new teacher experiences. The aims of this research were to look at the mandated program structure and elements of NTIP coupled with the experiences of teachers who participated in the program. Based on these intentions, a qualitative research approach was selected. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3), “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive material practices that makes the world visible…qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them”. In line with qualitative inquiry, a phenomenological approach was used that seeks to understand the lived experiences of individuals and the meanings those experiences have for them (Patton, 2002). Patton described that capturing and describing how people experience a phenomenon means to explore “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (p. 104). Patton stated that the phenomenon might be an emotion, relationship, program, organization, culture, or program. Therefore, the phenomenological approach allowed for perceptions of induction and experiences of teachers to be gained.

Patton (2002) described that there are three different kinds of data collection that produce qualitative data, including in-depth interviews, observations, and written documents. In this research, data was derived from a combination of interviews and
document review. Interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge, which aligned nicely with the phenomenological approach that guided this research. The use of interviews elicited the perceptions of new teachers as stakeholders most directly affected by the policy.

Presented first is an overview of methodology of document analysis and specific procedures used in this study. Following this section is an overview of interview research methodology and specific method for conducting interviews in this research.

**Document Analysis**

The prevalence of using document analysis within research has increased over the past few years and holds a number of benefits for conducting qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). Bowen stated that document analysis “is a systematic procedure for or evaluating documents, both in print and electronic material” (p.1) where data from the documents can be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning much like the methods of qualitative research. While the popularity of this research method continues to spread, Bowen contended that the weakness lies in the lack of detail by researchers regarding the process that was involved in conducting the document analysis. When used properly, document analysis as a form of inquiry offers an avenue for data triangulation, elimination of bias, and a more careful selection of data (Bowen, 2009). The documents are often readily available (via public domain), they don’t experience any impact, are more stable than participants, and allows for researchers to be precise in their statements (Bowen, 2009).
Documents allow for thorough background knowledge or insight into a situation, which assists researchers in their understanding of the history of events and also allows for changes in the situations to be monitored more efficiently (Bowen, 2009). Given that this research refers specifically to NTIP and to the induction of teachers within South Eastern Ontario, a document analysis for the consideration of program elements was necessary in order to understand the current experiences of new teachers in Ontario. This analysis made it possible to engage in informed discussions with teachers about the current teacher induction practices within the province which coincides with Bowen’s claim that looking at documents in conjunction with other research methods allows for the generation of questions and ideas that may otherwise not have been gained. The interviews with teachers were held once the document analysis was completed.

In addition to gleaning a better sense of the program to inform conversations with research participants, there were particular questions that would be best answered via a document analysis. First, by looking at the core program documents made available online by the Ministry of Education, the question regarding the structure and mandate of NTIP was explored, as well as an examination of the role that is assigned to the implementation of the program in individual schools within the mandate. Document analyses can include documents of various formats and from different locations, both online and in print, of books, brochures, letters, newspapers, charts, program proposals, to name a few. Typically, these types of documents come from libraries, archives, organizational or institutional files, online, etc. (Bowen, 2009). Bowen warned that it is not about how many documents are included, but it is more important to select quality
documents that are specific and relevant to the topic and research questions. As it is
further explained in the following procedural section, it was recognized at the start of this
analysis that a third research question was appropriate. Namely, what is the role of school
culture and collaboration as outcomes for new teachers and staff within the program
outlines? Ultimately, research questions 1-3 have been explored through the NTIP
Induction Elements Manual, the Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Requirements
Manual, and program resource handbooks, all made publicly available online by the
Ministry of Education under the NTIP section of the website.

Following document selection, there are many considerations that shape the
analyzing component. From a broad perspective, Gibson and Brown (2009) suggested
that there are a number of questions a researcher should ask upon looking at a document
for the first time, such as the author, intended audience, details of the publication, and
format, to name a few. Asking these questions leads to other information and approaches
to inquiry that serves as a foundation for further research to follow. The purpose and
origin of the documents must also be recognized. For example, a policy document may
have more formal implications than a document based on a topic of interest since it is
produced by the government.

This research study included publicly available documents that were all the result
of formal policy, legislated by the Ministry of Education and Government of Canada. As
described by Downey (1988, as cited in Delaney, 2002), conducting a policy analysis
generates information that can then inform subsequent policy-making processes.
Gallagher (1992) contended that “policy analysis is synonymous with problem
solving…with aims of providing decision makers with information that can be used to make reasoned judgments in finding solutions to practical problems” (Delaney, 2002). From a different perspective, Pal (1987) suggested that policy analysis is the careful “application of intellect to public problems” (Delaney, 2002), involving cognitive activity, collective activity, and application of intellect. Ultimately, Pal simplified this process when he stated that [policy analysis] is the ability to predict actions and consequences through the organization of information.

Adding detail to the process, Pal (1987) identified that there are three general styles to policy analysis: descriptive analysis, process analysis, and evaluation-based analysis (Delaney, 2002). Descriptive analysis uses a combination of both examination of content and a presentation of previous events leading up to the policy. Process analysis focuses primarily on the process involved in the inclusion of particular content, such as debates, decisions, compromises, etc. The last style of policy analysis identified by Pal is an evaluative analysis style that seeks to judge the policy rather than describe it. Subcomponents of this last style are a logical examination (looks at the policy’s consistency and rigor), empirical evaluation (attempt to learn the outcomes), and ethical evaluation (looks at value systems of right and wrong). In this particular research, in order to analyze the policy documents related to NTIP, a descriptive approach was followed with implications and suggestions made as a result of the analysis coupled with participant responses.

In a more broad sense without considering the kind of document (regardless if it is policy-based or another kind), there are two main approaches for analyzing the
documents. These are a hypothesis driven approach (deductive orientation, or analytically focused) and a content-driven approach (inductive or analytically filtered) (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013). Hypothesis driven or an analytically focused analysis is a method that generates data in response to the research question, whereas content-driven or analytically filtered analysis selects pre-existing documents and filters data according to the research problem in more of an exploratory manner.

**Method for Document Analysis**

**Context.** Ontario’s NTIP is a mandatory program for teachers in all publicly funded schools throughout the province. While the document analysis looks at the documents for the program in its entirety that are offered to school boards within the province, the teachers who participated in individual interviews were from one area of the province. School boards must take the NTIP policy documents and implement the program. No additional, specific implementation-related documents at the school board levels were included in this research.

**Procedures.** To analyze the documents, a content analysis approach was used which involved stages of domain definition, sampling, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation (Merriam, 1998). Figure 1 shows the process undertaken to conduct the document analysis in this research study. As shown in Figure 1, the first step was to identify possible sources and documents.
Figure 1. Document analysis process

Upon initial inquiry into the documents that might be appropriate to include, it was evident that they were all readily available for public access on the Internet, via the
Ministry of Education website (www.edu.gov.on.ca). While many sites discuss teacher induction practices, this research only sought to include publicly available documents specifically related to the Ministry mandated NTIP program. Therefore it was not deemed necessary to explore other documents in other locations, such as documents produced by school boards relating to NTIP. Since the program is mandated at a provincial level and the research question seeks to know and outline the specific elements of the program, the only destination for document searches was the Ministry of Education Website (www.edu.gov.on.ca). Found under the ‘Teachers’ section of the website and via ‘Supporting Teaching Excellence’ section, the Government of Ontario listed all information about the program for new teacher induction. This includes the appropriate documents that compose the program (NTIP Induction Elements Manual), evaluative tools used in the process, appropriate forms and worksheets for school boards to manage the program, and resources that may be required by any individual of various roles whom are participating in the program or seek further information. Also found were handbooks on a variety of topics, such as classroom management, literacy, numeracy, assessment, first nations, and other areas that new teachers may seek in assistance. The Ministry of Education, in anticipation of questions or concerns of new teachers, school board staff, or others, created a section where they address common questions in regards to the program.

Salminen, Kauppinen, and Lehtovaara (1997) noted that once a set of documents are identified (domain definition), the next step is to separate the identified documents into sub-domains where they are then used in further analysis (Salminen et al., 1997). As shown in Figure 1, once the source and documents were found, they were sub-divided
according to the type of document and analysis began. After the sampling of documents was completed and candidate documents had been identified, the next step involved three reviews of the documents.

The first review occurred during the selection of documents phase, involving a quick identification of the document titled to determine relevance. Based on the relevance, the document was then electronically stored and printed. They were then organized into files where they were placed in order of importance or as units to be coded. The identification of the documents and placement for coding takes into account the suspected contribution of each document determined through the sampling phase. The documents were selected based on their contribution to answering the research questions, the order of the presentation of the documents on the website, and selecting what is most appropriate, rather than all that were on the website. Therefore, the order of the seven documents analyzed is as follows:

- **NTIP Induction Elements Manual (MOE, 2010)**
- **Partnering for Success: Handbook for Mentors (MOE, 2010)**
- **Partnering for Success: Handbook for Principals (MOE, 2010)**
- **Compilation of Professional Development Core Content to Support the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP): A Resource for Board NTIP Teams (MOE, 2010)**
- **NTIP Implementation Continuum (MOE, 2010)**

The next phase of the analysis included a more thorough reading of the documents where key sections and information were identified and marked. During the review, the primary goal was sense-making of the document within relation to the research questions and in line with the content-driven, inductive research approach (Guest et al., 2013). The
multiple reviews of the documents contributed to the process of identifying and coding attributes in all of the documents, which identified elements to be included in the analysis. No themes or codes had been predetermined, but were emergent within the progression of the analysis.

Sections were flagged that included excerpts, quotations, passages, lists, which were then organized into categories based on their relevance and contribution to answering the first three research questions. The themes/categories for this analysis were: program structure, roles and responsibilities, and program elements. A method of constant comparison in the development of categories was used, involving many reflexive moments in the theme/category developments, sampling, data collection, data coding, data analysis, and interpretation (Miller & Alvarado, 2005).

To present findings in each of the themes/categories identified, Pal’s (1987) descriptive policy analysis style was used (Delaney, 2002). What is presented in the findings chapter relates to what is in the policy, a historical analysis, including a review of preceding events. This process helped to establish a better understanding of new teacher induction within the Ontario context that helped to further support the findings of this research.

Individual Interviews

Following a phenomenological approach to research, the second method used in this research was individual interviews. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), phenomenological studies in qualitative research refer to participants’ perceived experiences towards a particular event. With an emphasis on the interpretation of the
event from the persons examined, phenomenological studies gather these descriptions and use them to indicate a sense of reality. This approach to qualitative research is appropriate to this research since it allows examining the perceptions of new teachers to explore the perceived milestones and developments and even challenges that can be used to describe their entry into the teaching profession, school induction, and NTIP.

As described by Guest et al. (2013, p.113), individual interviews are effective for “topics that are sensitive, confidential, or emotional, the one-on-one setting maximizes the ability of the researcher to gain rapport, ensure confidentiality, and extend empathy.” Guest et al. continued, “individual interviews are almost always, in part or in whole, about how and why, helping researchers to understand their interviewees’ views of processes, norms, decision making, belief systems, mental models, interpretations, motivations, expectations, hopes, and fears” (p. 116).

There are different structures that researchers can use for interviewing. Qualitative research often involves the use of open-ended questions so that the perceptions of participants may be accessed. However, with the open-ended questions, the procedures for asking the questions can be placed on a spectrum. On one side is researchers who may use a great deal of structure when conducting the interview, including listing all interview content and organizing each component so that the participants are each asked the same questions, verbatim. On the other side is an unstructured approach where there is no pre-determined set of questions, but rather the interviewer has a topic and engages freely in conversation, asking questions based on each response. In the middle of these two contrasting interview approaches is a semi-
structured format where questions are outlined and an interview guide is created to ensure that each participant has the same opportunities, but the interviewer may pose additional questions based on the responses of the participants. The additional, spontaneous questions are a technique called probing. Probing refers to an inductive, unscripted question asked by an interviewer based on a participant’s previous response that could include a clarification or expansion of a respondent’s answer and should be phrased in neutral language (Patton, 2002, p. 148). There are indirect probes that encourage the participant to keep talking and direct probes that asks a more specific question. From a phenomenological approach to qualitative research, the interviews must follow a less-structured format with attention to staying on task (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviews are typically an hour in length and tape recorded for analysis.

Following the collection of data, analysis commences. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) indicated, “qualitative analysis is a relatively systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (p. 367). The process involves the collection of data, organization, transcribing the data into segments, coding, describing codes, categorization, and developing patterns, resulting in the presentation of findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Individual Interview Method**

As mentioned previously, from the initial planning phase of the research, it was clear that a discussant format would be most appropriate. The perceptions serve as the informal responses to formal policies (of NTIP) by various stakeholders (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).
Originally, the research plan was to conduct focus group interviews with a group of teachers from each kind of school board involved, one Catholic and one public. Ethical approval to conduct focus groups was granted on October 26th, 2012 (see Appendix A). The topics of these focus groups would include topics related to new teacher experiences, perceptions about a schools’ culture, interactions with teachers, mentoring, professional development, and the role of the principal. However, due to difficulties in gaining participants for the focus groups, a change to individual interviews was made. The original ethical approval was amended and granted on March 13th, 2013 (see Appendix B).

Although not expected, it was suspected that some individuals may find aspects of these topics difficult to discuss in a group situation and sensitive depending on their experiences. Furthermore, there was some risk involved that participants may share the identities of others involved. Therefore, in holding individual in-depth interviews rather than focus group meetings, participants may express their experiences and thoughts without fear of being judged by others. The interviews were held at a location determined by the researcher and interviewee. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Field notes were also used to record information during the interviews. Participants were given a letter of information (see Appendix C) and signed a consent form (see Appendix D).

Questions asked in the interview followed a semi-structured format (see Appendix E), meaning that there was a specific set of questions that were asked to each participant listed in the interview protocol guide. However, an emergent design was used as relevant discussion ensued as a spin-off to questions or based on participants’ interest. The
emergent design allowed for interesting, relevant discussion and experiences to be included in this research.

**Participant selection.** This research aimed to explore Ontario’s NTIP program, including reflection of experiences, program elements, specific school implementation, and last results. Based on these intentions, it was felt that it would be most important to speak with teachers who participated in the program and have been teaching full-time for three to five years.

The participants in this study were new teachers within their first three to five years of teaching in a full-time position and who have completed NTIP in the past. Participants were both male/female and their teaching levels varied between primary/junior, junior/intermediate, and intermediate/secondary. Ten teachers in total responded to the call for participants and a total of six participants were selected to participate in my research. Given time constraints, interviews were only done with six out of the ten teachers interested. The participants were from both a public school board and a Catholic school board within Southeastern Ontario. This variety in the two school systems helped to determine the extent of NTIP along with the forms of school culture found within these different school boards.

Several approaches were used to attract participants. After receiving ethics clearance from the required school boards, both school boards issued their own message to teaching staff, stating that the school board supported the research. From here, the school communications person was contacted and asked to distribute the research flyer and letter of information to all teaching staff within the board via email (see Appendix F
for research flyer). In contrast to the public school board, the Catholic school board offers any approved researchers a template form designed by the school board for describing the research details that they distribute to teachers and to principals. In addition to this research information package, an email was sent to a group of teachers who may meet the criteria. This email included the research flyer and letter of information. In addition to these calls for participants, the need for participants was discussed with fellow graduate students friends whom also passed on the research flyer and letter of information to any teachers they were familiar with and whom may meet the research criteria. All participants were given a pseudonym and no school or school board is identified to protect the anonymity of participants. Four participants were gained from the Catholic school board, although more teachers expressed interest in participating. Only two teachers from the public board were obtained.

**Interview procedures.** The participants in this study corresponded with the researcher via email. As a result of the call for participants, the participants emailed the researcher expressing his or her interesting in participating. General information was returned to the participant, typically including details of the study, the participant component, the letter of information and consent form. Included in this email was a suggested day or time for the interview. Since the method for discussion was individual interviews, participants’ were met at a time and location that suited him or her best. Five of the interviews occurred at the university of the researcher and one interview was conducted at a teacher’s current school.
All of the interviews were held in a private office or meeting room. Each interview lasted about an hour and included the following components: welcome to participants, a review of the research purpose, reading and signing the consent form, completing the first section of the interview protocol guide that asked identification and descriptive features (i.e., size of school, school demographics, education background, etc.). From here, particular procedures of the interview were mentioned (no wrong answers, recording device, etc.) and the audio recording began. After asking all questions, the participant was asked if he or she had any additional comments or questions, and following these other topics, the audio recorder was stopped. The participants were informed that the recordings would be transcribed and that they would receive a copy of it to review. If there was any concerns or amendments to statements, they were encouraged to contact the researcher. The analysis began once approval of the transcript was granted from the participant.

In preparation for the interviews, an interview protocol and guide was created (see Appendix E). The development of these documents provided the researcher with an opportunity to reflect on and organize the questions that would be asked in the interviews based on the research intentions and details of the document analysis. Typically, an interview protocol is often accompanied with an interview guide. The interview guide served as a way to align the questions and to ensure that all participants have the same opportunities for sharing their experiences. According to Patton (2002), an interview guide “provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject”
allowing the interviewer some flexibility to pursue more detail or particular topics raised by the interviewee, all the while retaining focus on the predetermined subject. In contrast to the specifics of the interview, the interview protocol serves to help the researcher in determining rapport and appropriate behaviours. It provides an overview of the interview procedures and demeanor to be shown by the researcher.

Aside from organizing the procedures for the interview (logical flow from welcoming the participant to signing the appropriate forms, and even including a note to start and stop the audio recording devices), the guide also listed the questions in a format appropriate to the suspected flow of the conversation. The questions for this research followed a semi-structured format, meaning that the questions that were pre-determined to be appropriate to answering the research questions were asked, however the interview was not restricted to only these few questions. A number of possible probing questions that could be used only if appropriate were placed as subcategories of each main question. For example, the first question had participants thinking back to their first impressions of their school (upon entrance as a full-time, new teacher). Possible probing questions listed asked the participants to describe the atmosphere and characteristics of the other teachers (ages, level of experience, etc.). In other instances, the probing questions asked were not listed on the guide, but were derived from participant responses. During each interview notes were made on the interview guide of which questions and probes were asked along with making some field notes. Following the interviews, a series of notes were made based on interpretations of the interview. These notes contributed to the analysis and implications sections.
Following the production of transcripts from the interview audio recordings, rigorous procedures for interpretation and organization of the data began. The transcripts from the focus groups were entered into the data analysis program, QSR.NVivo, where the transcripts were read and the audio recordings listened to several times. This data management program helped to organize the information, and allowed for the process of identifying particular information, creating codes as identifies, establishing categories for the codes, and eventually determining themes in the data. Each section of the transcripts was reviewed and key words or statements were highlighted and given a code name. The codes were categorized under their own list, ultimately drawing statements from multiple interviews. After all the transcripts had been reviewed, these codes were then reviewed and grouped together according to their topic. Through grouping the codes and in response to the research questions, three themes were declared. Namely, feeling unprepared beyond the first year of teaching, NTIP confusion, and mentoring as the key to success.

**Trustworthiness**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a researcher should compare “different sources, situations, and methods to see whether the same pattern keeps recurring” (p. 379). The credibility of this research is verified through data triangulation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Triangulation involved using the multiple perspectives of the new teachers at the different phases of their entry into the profession. Not only do the different groups of teachers provide a different perspective of the phenomenon, but since the new teachers will be selected with no particular emphasis on a school, and may
come from two different school boards, and contracted via the NTIP program coordinator or communications person, it means that participants come from various schools and backgrounds. The responses from the individuals interviewed were examined and themes and categories were noted. The transcripts were sent to the respective participant for verification that the data is correct. After entering the transcripts into the data management program where interesting comments and experiences were noted and assisted in developing categories and themes.

As stated in the introduction of the thesis, my past experiences as a new professional were part of the rationale for conducting this research. However, it was not the intention to allow the experiences and perspective of myself as a teacher to craft the outcomes of the research. Careful consideration of the data following an inductive research method helped to reduce this bias. The process of reviewing the transcripts involved strict procedures that meant reviewing each statement and words from the participants were necessary. This eliminated any avenue for my personal bias to enter. After this was done the grouping of the codes gave way to the themes which are presented as findings and conclusions/implications made following.

Ethical Approval

The original method of discussion to be used in this research was focus group interviews. Ethical approval was granted on October 26th, 2012 (see Appendix A) for the use of focus group interviews, however a few months after receiving approval, there were particular difficulties encountered in gaining participants for the research that made scheduling the focus groups impossible. It was decided that given time constraints and
lack of participants, that it would be appropriate to amend the original method plan for the research from focus group interviews to individual interviews. Many of the procedures and details remained the same despite the change in format. Amendments to the original ethics application were granted on March 13\textsuperscript{th}, 2013 (See Appendix B).

**Summary**

This chapter outlined the methods and procedures used to conduct this research. The partnering of document analysis and in-depth individual interviews was a valid approach to collect data on new teacher experiences in Ontario in relation to NTIP, mentoring, and school culture. The results of these methods are presented in the following chapter.
Chapter 4

Findings

Two methods of data collection were employed in this research: document analysis and individual interviews. The findings from each research method are organized and presented according to each method. Thus, the findings from the document analysis are presented in the first part, and findings from the individual interviews are presented in the second part.

Document Analysis

The document analysis involved an examination of publicly available documents produced by the Ontario Ministry of Education. Early stages of the analysis revealed different categories of documents related to new teacher induction practices in the province of Ontario. There were mandatory documents (*NTIP Induction Elements Manual; Teacher Performance Appraisal Technical Elements Guide*), optional resources relating to NTIP (a handbook each for new teachers, principals, and mentors; professional development guide), and optional resources relating to new teacher induction in general or that may be of interest to new teachers (links to websites, resource books on different areas of the curriculum, etc). In total, based on these distinctions, six documents were selected for inclusion from two categories: (1) mandatory Ministry of Education NTIP documents, and (2) optional documents offered by the Ministry with specific relation to NTIP. The documents included:

- *NTIP Induction Elements Manual (MOE, 2010)*
The results of the document analysis are presented in relation to the research questions pertaining to the document analysis methodology: the structure of NTIP as mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education (research question 1); the role of the school in the implementation of the program (research question 2); and the role of school culture within the mandated structure (research question 3). Illustrated in Figure 2 are the findings of the analysis in relation to the research questions.

*Figure 2. Conceptual model of document analysis findings*
In reviewing all six documents the program structure of NTIP was clearly defined, presenting a complete picture of required and suggested structure including, aims, roles, and elements. The roles and responsibilities of individuals outlined within the program are placed as two distinct elements of the program structure given the suggestive nature of the actions found within the documents as opposed to the document containing only mandatory responsibility descriptions. Finally, the findings of the document analysis pertinent to the role of school culture within the program documents are presented in accordance with the respective sections where it was found.

**Program Structure**

In the early 2000s, the Ontario Ministry of Education responded to research on new teacher induction by working with particular stakeholders in the creation of support for new teachers (MOE, 2010, p. 6). The result of these collaborations was the creation of the Ontario New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) and subsequent *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* outlining the program. Produced in 2010, the document titled *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* is the current manual that outlines the structure and elements of new teacher induction support within all publicly funded schools in the province of Ontario. Although a product of the Ministry of Education, the program was created in partnership with several stakeholders, such as, teachers’ federations/associations, councils, and university faculties of education. The current *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* replaces the original version from 2009, which received minor updates, including an expansion of the definition of new teachers. The program is available for all new teachers within the province, regardless of whether they are new to the profession or if
they have experience in teaching elsewhere and have just moved to Ontario (MOE, 2010, p. 8). The program spans 24 months, commencing once teachers are assigned a full-time position or a long-term occasional position (LTO) with a minimum of 97 consecutive days. Occasional teachers are not included in this program until they receive an LTO position (with a minimum of 97 days) or once they gain a full-time position (p. 8).

The contents of the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* follows a logical progression, starting with an overview of the program, including a definition of whom the program is designed for, the intended outcomes of the program, the format in which the program participants will be assessed, the roles and responsibilities of all members, and the intended elements of the program. The manual is not outlined or intended to be a resource for only one particular role within the program; rather it is written in a format that allows for it’s use by all members identified (such as board members, principals, new teachers, and mentors). The identified roles (shown in Figure 2) are school boards, principals, mentors, and new teachers (MOE, 2010). Each role has its own section with suggestions for role actions, as well as an accompanying optional handbook with more information.

**Program Aims**

As stated in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*, NTIP is described as being the second part of the professional development continuum occurring after completion of formal teacher training programs. Ultimately, NTIP is coined as offering “another full year of professional support so that new teachers can develop the requisite skills and knowledge that will enable them to achieve success as experienced teachers in Ontario
According to the *Partnering for Success: Handbook for New Teachers*, the “NTIP is designed to help [new teachers] acclimatize to [the] new school community, learn and grow with the support of a colleague and role model, and experience increased success during [their] first year in the program” (MOE, 2010e, p. 3). In the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* (MOE, 2010), however, there is no section titled aims, rather a section on program outcomes. This section outlined that teachers who complete NTIP will have achieved a demonstration of their competences as per the TPA; orientation to the Ontario curriculum and context, school board, and school; acquisition of improved skills and confidence (via mentoring); progression along the continuum of professional development, and proven successful teaching (MOE, 2010, p. 5).

**Roles**

The program requires attention from several positions within the school system (MOE, 2010). Although the program is mandated at a provincial level and the Ministry has produced the required *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*, each school board must take the manual and requirements of NTIP and ensure implementation within their school board. With these supports and design in place, it is up to the school principal, mentor, and new teacher to follow through with the program and report back to the school board who then reports the program completion (success) to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010, p. 11). Found within the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* and other supporting NTIP specific documents are roles at the following levels: Ministry level, school board level, and school level (principal, mentor, new teacher). These roles are the only actors identified within the NTIP specific documents. It was found that there were no roles
identified for other teachers, staff members, or community members included in the documents. As discussed below, the detail regarding each role varies, with many suggestive sentences for actions the principals or mentors “should” do as opposed to declarative statements on what must occur.

**Ministry level.** The role of the Ministry of Education in NTIP, aside from mandating new teacher support and creating the program to satisfy the Education Act Law on new teacher induction requirements, is the production of the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*, and to develop and maintain the NTIP portion of their website. Furthermore, the Ministry offers a particular amount of financial support to school boards to assist in offering the program and makes a commitment to providing the school boards with further resources to aide in the implementation of the program (MOE, 2010, p. 15). Finally, as a process of review, the Ministry receives details on a frequent basis regarding the success of new teachers within the program.

**School board level.** As stated in the manual, each school board within the province must adhere to the Education Act section that requires that new teacher support be offered, and therefore, as per the law, all publicly funded schools must follow the Ministry-mandated New Teacher Induction Program (MOE, 2010, p. 4). The first step in the process of establishing NTIP is the assignment of a board member as the superintendent of NTIP who works under the direction of a board executive member. The superintendent has the responsibility of forming an NTIP Steering Committee (MOE, 2010, p. 6) that may be comprised of many individuals. Outlined as possible participants for school boards to consider are: new teachers, mentors, principals, local federation
affiliates, superintendents with focus on the area of induction and performance appraisal, faculties of education, and others (MOE, 2010, p. 6). The superintendent must also distribute and manage NTIP funds where appropriate, offer board-wide orientation and professional development, oversee the evaluation of new teachers, continue to monitor the program throughout the year and conduct reports regarding the program’s structure and effectiveness at the beginning and end of each school year (MOE, 2010, p. 11).

The NTIP Steering Committee was designated as an element of the program based on the Ministry’s recognition of it as a good practice (MOE, 2010, p. 7); the committee follows in the same approach as the Ministry through collaboration with other education professionals in the creation of the specific program implementation for a particular school board. The NTIP Steering committee must collectively decide elements of the program that will take place within their schools for each particular school year, such as the kinds of support that will be needed by teachers, determining mentor selection criteria, and offering training to the mentors (MOE, 2010, p. 7).

**School level.** The roles and responsibilities of NTIP at the school level, according to the program documents, can be broken down into three types: the principal, the new teacher, and the mentor.

**Principal.** Working under the direction of the school boards’ NTIP Steering Committee, the school principal has many responsibilities in the implementation of NTIP (MOE, 2010). The principal must balance his or her time conducting new teacher evaluations, offering orientation, and arranging for professional development whilst reporting back to the school board. The school principal is to welcome the new teacher to
the school prior to the start of the teaching assignment or very early in the start of their employment. The principal must meet with the new teacher and “communicate to the new teacher, those induction elements in which he or she is required to participate…and the requirements of NTIP (MOE, 2010, p. 12).” With the new teacher present, the principal must explain the teacher performance appraisal system and have the new teacher fill out the appropriate documents to accompany their participation in the program (MOE, 2010, p. 12). The principal continues by identifying teacher mentors within the school in a manner that coincides with the school board NTIP Steering Committee guidelines for selection, ultimately resulting in the assignment of a mentor to the new teacher. It is the principal’s responsibility to ensure that orientation to the school is provided and may work with other schools within the school board to offer board-wide professional development. Furthermore, the principal must permit particular times for the mentor and new teacher to engage in mentoring discussions and completing their appropriate forms. The principal must conduct two teacher performance appraisals (TPA) for the new teacher, within the first 12 months in the program. Finally, the principal must also revisit the needs of the new teacher periodically as the year goes on.

The optional *Partnering for Success: Handbook for Principals* serves as an additional source of more details regarding possible methods for implementing the program within a particular school (MOE, 2010c). The document lists elements of the program, outcomes, and briefly reviews the roles and responsibilities (MOE, 2010c, p.1). Following this section is a step-by-step overview of the implementation of the program at the school level. These steps include:
1. Identifying Eligible New Teachers
2. Assigning New Teachers
3. Reviewing the Individual NTIP Strategy Form
4. New Teacher Orientation (school-based)
5. Professional Development
6. Mentoring
7. Teacher Performance Appraisal
8. Reporting Completion of the NTIP

Attached to the handbook is a checklist for principals regarding procedures, a sample orientation checklist, a copy of the required Individual NTIP Strategy form, many pages of conversation starters and questions regarding the core content of NTIP professional development (each page covering a specific topic, such as classroom management, assessment and evaluation, literacy and numeracy, etc.), and finally web-based resources (a reference to the Ministry’s webpage on teacher induction). Other than reviewing the program elements, offering the checklists, and conversation starters, the handbook mentions that the “role of the principal as instructional leader in a school is pivotal to the integration of a new teacher” and via the development of professional relationships between the parties involved, the principals “exercise their critical role as catalysts for professional development who contribute to the shaping of teachers’ work and skills” (MOE, 2010c, p.4). Other specific recognition of the principal’s role is listed in the performance appraisal section (MOE, 2010c, p. 4) that notes that the principal has a “critical role in support new teachers’ professional growth through the appraisal process, and through the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the new teachers to deepen their understandings of what it means to be a teacher.” Although declarative statements regarding the importance of the principal within the program were found, no further details regarding the specific actions of the principal were found.
**Mentor.** The mentor’s role outlined within the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* is given little detail, with sentences often starting with the term “should” in front of each action rather than “will” or “must”. Simply, they must be an experienced teacher who will provide ongoing support and help the new teacher in determining the new teachers’ needs in order to fill out the Individual NTIP Strategy form (MOE, 2010, p 13). The mentor should provide ongoing support to help the new teacher improve confidence and skill level and as outlined, the Ministry sees the relationship as being “a supportive one, with the mentor acting as a role model, coach, and advisor to the new teacher, sharing his or her experience or knowledge on an ongoing basis (MOE, 2010, p.18).” Also highlighted in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* is that training for mentors must be offered by the school board and there are a number of suggestions for mentoring that “should” be followed (MOE, 2010, p. 18-20), with emphasis that they should be structured, supportive, and differentiated.

The *Partnering for Success: Handbook for Mentors* (MOE, 2010d) includes an introduction that notes the reasons for mentoring, a mentor’s role, and suggested process procedures, followed by a framework for mentoring, worksheets for monthly planning, a copy of the NTIP Individual Strategy form, pages describing the PD Core Content and tools topics, and a link to the online web-page resources. Unlike the handbook for the principal, the handbook for the mentor covers only their role. This document also makes note the expectations a mentor can have regarding the support they will receive from the school principal. The handbook states exactly the same as the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* that the relationship should be “a supportive one, with the mentor acting as a role
model, facilitator, coach and advisor, and sharing his or her experience and knowledge with the new teacher” with the Ministry summarizing their role according to three C’s: consultant, collaborator, and coach (MOE, 2010d, p. 3). The handbook defines each section in more detail, noting that the consultancy position requires the mentors to assist with the Individual Strategy form completion, working with the new teacher in planning and problem-solving, and guiding the new teacher through aspects of professional practice. Each monthly planner includes key ideas according to the time of the year and suspected new teacher stages of development, to be used as support in working with the new teachers (MOE, 2010d, pp. 23-51). In the same fashion as the *Partnering for Success: Handbook for Principals* (MOE, 2010c), the mentors have topic pages on the areas identified by the Ministry for professional development directions. These pages include questions that a mentor might ask a new teacher in relation to the PD topics.

**New teacher.** Despite the brief identification of the new teachers’ responsibilities on the organizational chart in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* (MOE, 2010, p. 11), there is no section specifically outlining in detail the role of the new teacher within the official program documents. The organizational chart indicates that the new teacher is responsible (via consultation and development) for the Individual NTIP Strategy form, individual PD/training, selection and matching of mentors, mentoring relationship, and teacher performance appraisals.

The *Partnering for Success: Handbook for New Teachers* provides some details on the role of the new teacher within NTIP, stated only in the first few pages. The handbook has sections related to the purpose of NTIP, some details of the elements
(orientation, professional development, mentoring, and teacher performance appraisals) each noting what a new teacher can expect, and finally, an overview of the principals role and their role as a new teacher. The handbook includes monthly personal planner pages with brief details of what they can expect from the mentor), the NTIP Individual Strategy form, pages on the topics from the PD Core Content and tools guide including questions the new teachers could ask in relation to the topics regarding their performance, and as with the other handbooks, a link to the online web-resources. The role of the new teacher section is reduced to a very brief section stating that “as a new teacher, you will play a very active role as a partner in the mentoring process,” and that effective new teachers are (p. 6):

- Risk takers
- Willing to learn from others
- Reflective
- Positive and optimistic
- Respectful of their mentor
- Willing to work as part of a team
- Attentive listeners
- Willing to set goals and follow through
- Able to advocate for their needs and take initiative
- Trusting

No further details or explanation of these qualities and how they relate to the NTIP supports and outcomes were found in any of the documents.

**Program Elements**

Revealed within the document are a number of program components including: orientation, mentoring, professional development and training, along with the necessity to complete two performance appraisals within their first 12 months in NTIP (MOE, 2010).

As stated the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* (MOE, 2010, p. 10), it is through a
combination of the elements and the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) process that the creation of learning communities and instilling a need for continued professional growth are possible. Despite this claim of contributions from multiple elements, the only element that is directly linked to a new teachers’ completion of NTIP is the TPA’s. According to the Ministry, specifics of the new teacher, including needs, skills, attitudes, and areas for further development, are addressed within the performance appraisal (MOE, 2010a). Other support and goal creation is done in conjunction with the principal and mentor, whom suggest different areas of development that may be of interest or benefit.

**Emphasis on TPAs.** At the beginning of the document, the program requirements are listed in bullet-format, reading: orientation, mentoring, and professional development. Written directly below this section, with a space between the bullet points distinguishing that it is a separate statement, is the statement that there is the requirement for two performance appraisals in conjunction with other elements. This component is very important as the manual states that in “accordance with the Education Act, new teachers complete the New Teacher Induction Program when they receive two *satisfactory* ratings in performance appraisals in the first 12 months after they begin teaching” (MOE, 2010, p. 4). Once a new teacher receives both appraisals with satisfactory ratings then as stated in the document, they have then met the criteria for success outlined by the Ministry of Education and subsequent NTIP completion notation is placed in their teaching record concluding their time in the program. As stated on page 5 of the *Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Guide* (MOE, 2010a), “teachers are considered ‘new’ until they successfully complete the NTIP or until 24 months have elapsed since the date
on which they first began to teach for a board.” Only under particular circumstances shall their 24-month period be extended for 90 school days. Reasons for the extension include poor performance appraisals, starting at a new school/school board, and upon written request from the teacher (MOE, 2010, p. 23-24). While the first few elements of the program that are outlined are orientation, mentoring, and professional development, further investigation into these core NTIP documents revealed that the only determinant of success are the performance appraisals conducted in the first 12 months.

In contrast to the first description of the program where the mention of the TPA follows underneath the other elements of mentoring, professional development, and orientation, a following section titled ‘program outcomes’ lists the demonstration of new teacher competencies has TPA listed first with the other elements following below. All of the outcomes are discussed individually, except the outcome of proven successful teaching, which is not mentioned beyond the TPA section.

Many of the other elements of the program (mentoring, professional development, etc.) are detailed in a manner that suggests methods, but tend to lack detail and frequently used the term “should” rather than clearly outlining particular processes. In contrast, there are specific sections that state that the principal “will” or “must” do something, therefore suggesting that word choice was very carefully selected while producing the manual. Despite these sections being very small and vague, the sections of the document regarding the evaluation of the new teacher were quite large and very detailed. Furthermore, accompanying the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*, as the second core
text, is the *Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Guide*. This document outlined the processes for the evaluation of both new and experienced teachers.

In the *Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Guide*, section 4.3 states that “for new teachers, the appraisal process builds on the orientation, mentoring, professional development, and training provided through the NTIP to help them develop into confident and proficient Ontario teachers (MOE, 2010a, p. 12-13).” However following this statement it lists the timeline for appraisals, two within their first twelve months, must be an active participant in the assessment, and sign the subsequent summative report acknowledging the performance and decision. It is only when the new teachers receive a “development needed or unsatisfactory” rating that they must continue with appraisals, provide input on NTIP by identifying elements that would help improve their performance, and finally, outline the steps that may help them to improve their performance (MOE, 2010, p. 13). At no other point, in both documents, is feedback from new teachers on the boards’ NTIP mentioned.

**Vague mentoring details.** As evident in the mentor’s role section, having a mentor to support the skill and confidence development of new teachers is a component of NTIP (MOE, 2010). However, in a similar way to many other components of the program, the mentoring section of the program manual includes some details, but the majority of the process is a suggestion rather than as a mandatory action, with the constant inclusion of “should” incorporated into each statement.

**Professional development.** In addition to orientation to the school, school board, curriculum, and Ontario education system, the new teachers may also receive PD that is
appropriate to their needs, differentiated based on experience and culture (if they are new to Ontario), be “manageable, relevant, and timely” and “be made available throughout the year” (MOE, 2010, p. 21). Furthermore, PD for new teachers may be done via board-level sessions that could use PA days allotted for teacher professional development. PD on the following topics must be made available: literacy and numeracy; student success; safe schools; politique d’aménagement linguistique (French School Boards); inclusive education; early learning; classroom management; planning, assessment, and evaluation; communication with parents; and teaching students with special needs (MOE, 2010, p. 22).

Based on the brief listing of these topics that must be offered, there are none that specifically address the professional workplace environment that the new teacher faces. The Compilation of Professional Development Core Content to Support the New Teacher Induction Program resource book for board NTIP teams (MOE, 2010f), is intended “as a guide to foster discussion and professional development and training planning with the new teacher/mentor/principal team in order to meet each individual new teachers’ professional development and training needs” (MOE, 2010f, p. 2). The guide states that professional development and resources must include appropriate content to meet the specific needs of new teachers whilst considering the unique skill set that they bring to the profession. Furthermore, professional learning has its “greatest effect when it is clearly focused, practical, guided by research, and shared among educators in a supportive risk-free learning community (MOE, 2010f, p. 3).” Also found was the repeated statement that professional learning is most effective when it relates purposefully to
school and board goals and to the Ontario Curriculum (MOE, 2010f, p. 3). The following pages of the handbook are topic pages for the areas of professional development that were identified by new teachers as being important, including classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and communication with parents/guardians. The other pages are Ministry identified initiatives on the topics of: equity and inclusive education, literacy (K-6 and 7-12), Mathematical literacy/numeracy (7-12 and k-6 (numeracy only)), safe schools and healthy schools, student success/learning to 18, teaching English language learners, teaching First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, teaching French as a second language, and finally, teaching students with special education needs (MOE, 2010f, p. 3). Of these areas that are identified by the Ministry and new teachers, they are topics that could be for any range of experience in teaching and not specific to a new teachers’ role.

The absence of school culture. In addition to the mentoring component of the program, the concept of working well with one-another is present throughout the entire NTIP Induction Elements Manual. It is through the “creation of partnerships among stakeholders of the program (MOE, 2010, p.6)” that is key to the implementation of the program. Recurring four times in many different sections of the document (MOE, 2010, p. 6, 10, 11, 15), the exact statement was written, “developing strong professional relationships between principals, new teacher, and new teachers and mentors, is instrumental to professional growth.” Despite addressing these important connections, no further details regarding the development of strong professional relationships are provided. Furthermore, this statement illuminates the exclusion of other members of the
school staff such as administration, other teachers, and support staff that also may require the new teacher to have a strong professional relationship with.

The trend of few details in accompanying claims was frequently found. In the documents’ overview of effective induction practices (MOE, 2010, p.15), it states that assignments for new teachers “should be guided by a culture that supports the assignment of new teachers” and “ensure that new teachers have support in the school.” Furthermore, “the goal of the program is to foster a collegial and collaborative mentoring culture that builds professional capacity (MOE, 2010, p. 19).” Likewise, in the Teacher Performance Appraisal: Technical Requirements Guide, it states that the TPA system “can also promote the collaboration and relationship building essential to create and sustain an effective learning community” and that “learning communities thrive in a culture of sharing, trust, and support” (MOE, 2010a, p. 7). Yet, no further details or mention of the specific connections to other elements was found.

As a component of the TPA, new teachers are assessed based on only half of the 16 teaching competencies outlined by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2010a, p. 19). The competencies are grouped by a domain, and include: commitment to pupils and pupil learning, professional knowledge, teaching practice, leadership and community, and ongoing professional learning (MOE, 2010a, p. 20). Of these domains, the eight competencies that new teachers are assessed on are commitment to pupils and pupil learning, professional knowledge and just over half of the competencies for teaching practice. Therefore, new teachers are not assessed upon leadership and community and ongoing professional learning. These include competencies such as collaborating with
other teachers and school colleagues, working with colleagues to enhance student learning, and engaging in ongoing learning. Furthermore, they are not assessed on their ability to adapt and refine their teaching strategies and use of appropriate technology in teaching and professional practices.

Summary

The first part of chapter 4 presented the findings from the document analysis. As explained in detail, the key findings suggest despite the roles being identified, details of responsibilities of those roles are unclear. Furthermore, it was found that there is a great emphasis on the performance evaluation component with the evaluations as being the only link to a new teachers’ completion of the program. The following section of chapter 4 presents the findings from the individual interviews.

Individual Interviews

This section presents an overview of the experiences and perceptions of new teachers regarding their transition to the teaching profession. Three themes emerged from the data analysis: a) feeling isolated beyond the first year of teaching, b) NTIP confusion, and c) mentoring as the key to success. The findings are presented according to these categories following a cross-case analysis format that draws upon comments and particular experiences from all individual interview participants.

Participants

The table below details some background information of the teachers and their position assignment. The teachers included in this research were within years 3 to 5 of teaching full-time and in most cases were subject to teaching in multiple positions in
these few years. Table 1 assists in accurately presenting the experiences that are referred to through the following report on findings.

Table 1

Participant Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant Details</th>
<th>Maria</th>
<th>Kelly</th>
<th>Christina</th>
<th>Joan</th>
<th>Rachel</th>
<th>James</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position details</td>
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<td>Full year LTO position</td>
<td>Itinerant Arts Teacher</td>
<td>LTO directly out of B.Ed for 3 years prior to Itinerant Arts position</td>
<td>Position directly out of B.Ed</td>
<td>Position directly out of B.Ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3+ (Rotates)</td>
<td>5+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>K, Gr. 7, 8</td>
<td>Gr. 9-12</td>
<td>K- Gr. 8</td>
<td>JK- Gr. 8</td>
<td>Gr.7; 9-12</td>
<td>Gr. 3/4 French Immersion 2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeling Isolated Beyond the First Year of Teaching

For the teachers involved in this research, feeling isolated as new teachers was common. As discussed below, it was found that the new teachers felt isolated as a result of multiple factors and situations encountered in their first few years in the teaching profession. The main theme is comprised of multiple sub-themes that all influence the overall theme.

Feeling nervous and unprepared. With a slight giggle, Kelly, a full time teacher, reflected upon her first impressions of teaching in a full time position as a new
teacher: “Completely terrified is how I felt” she immediately blurted out, recounting that she was faced with the experience with only days to prepare. “I was excited to have a job,” she continued with another chuckle and further declaring “it was overwhelming at first, just because when you’re in your practicum, you’re very sheltered so you’ve got someone else, but there, you’re on your own” (Kelly, p. 1). Kelly’s feelings of uncertainty about her new position were not unique. All six of the interview participants responded to the question of how they felt as a new teacher with such descriptors as “nervous,” “scared,” and “terrified,” sometimes even using these terms together in one sentence. The reflection of their first impressions often pertained to either a full-time contract or with a long-term occasional position. Variance was found in the method the new teachers ascertained their positions, ranging from last minute placements in the position (such as October, early in September, or mid year) to months to prepare in advance over the summer school break. Kelly stated that the first day was “shocking just because you don’t know what to expect. I hadn’t even had my class list or anything until I got there so it was overwhelming at first” (p. 1). She continued on to share how the uneasiness continued until the lunch break where she met another teacher who had many resources and lessons outlined in advance to support her.

After reflecting on their initial nervousness, albeit excitement in many cases that they had garnered a position, of concern for many of the teachers was their strong feeling of unfamiliarity regarding the curriculum subject area they were assigned. Many of the teachers described how they found themselves in a position in which they felt entirely unprepared for, with some stressing that they found themselves in a completely different
subject area than they had prepared for in teacher education programs. The stress of worrying about the subjects and identified lack of preparedness in their teacher training programs contributed greatly to the feeling of nervousness for their first teaching positions. Rachel described how she had just finished Teachers’ College and applied on a full-time position with the intention of gaining interview experience. To her surprise, she “won” the position as she described, stating that she immediately returned to talk with some of her Teachers’ College professors since she was so nervous and didn’t feel as though the “university prepared me for intermediate classes,” particularly because she was assigned to teach balanced literacy despite not knowing anything about it. Maria, stated that an emphasis was placed on having a “locally developed” class in her teacher training program, however once she entered the school on her first day, she realized that the students were at an advanced university level, and thus quickly perceived that they would not find her introductory games to be of value (p. 1).

In contrast to the teachers who were faced with last minute planning and frantically learning the subject matter, Rachel, one of the teachers who entered the position directly after completing her teacher training program, described that she spent the entire summer preparing for her role only to find out she had focused her efforts in the wrong area:

Perhaps even the first week or two I felt prepared to the extent I thought I had to be, but then I quickly realized that the preparation I had done wasn’t correct or effective preparation for what I would need to do. I spent a lot of time concerning myself with the physical layout of my classroom, the various room decorations, since I was starting in Elementary school and thought this was an important element. I realized that I was not prepared for the level of planning that I needed
to put into a given day, month, etc. I was not prepared in my previous education and personal preparation (p. 1).

Christina commented that she felt prepared for teaching, but was not equipped to deal with the first day where routines are set. Joan noted that it was a lot more work outside of the school than what she had initially anticipated and was intensified since she entered right around mid-term time in the school year. Rachel stated that although she felt her teacher training was good, the isolation of practicum experiences fails to provide teacher candidates with a perception of a flow of the school year, thus contributing to her feeling of uncertainty (p. 7).

Multiple identified needs. Found in many topics of the interviews were a long list of needs from the new teachers. Rachel admitted that she had many needs as a new teacher although as she stated, these needs were not as evident to her at the particular time: “Tons of stuff. It’s definitely more so in hindsight since going through the entire year I don’t think I thought that there was anything wrong or anything ‘off’ about my lack of assistance with certain things. I sort of thought, ‘okay, this comes with the territory’ (Rachel, p. 7).” She continued on to say that she would have benefitted from good mentoring in the form of scaffolding based on her needs, planning, classroom management, observing others to see how they interact with parents, subject area support and professional development that is specific to her subject assignment, further admitting that having a good mentor would have helped to satisfy these needs.

Maria was also able to identify several needs, but was mainly concerned with having little resources. She lamented that as a result of teaching French immersion “I felt a little bit removed from them [other teachers] because my curriculum area was a bit
different so it was difficult for me to borrow resources” (p. 2). Similar to comments of nearly all of the new teachers interviewed, writing report cards was also a big concern for Maria. However, she continued on by saying that she was able to solve some of her concerns as a result of working at two schools as there were “double the teachers to ask (p. 6),” also admitting that she was surprised with “the amount of clerical stuff that we were expected to do, like cheese orders, and Scholastic orders, and all kinds of stuff that went beyond any kind of curriculum planning and assessment that I was already quite overwhelmed with (p. 4).”

Rather than stating the specific areas she needed support with, Kelly noted the support she feels she needed from other members of the school. She declared, “I think administration and other teachers need to just be open to the fact that new teachers, although just ‘fresh out,’ still need guidance… I think just being available for your new teachers and allowing them to try new things is really important…Just knowing they have someone there is important (p. 5).” The idea of trying new things relates to her feeling that she did not know much about opportunities she could have, such as grant writing, teaching strategies, and even release time to with your department to plan alongside.

Christina indicated that she would have appreciated a checklist or further details on how the first day of school may happen, learning details of how to set up a routine, setting up the classroom, and figuring out her intentions, collecting resources, classroom management, and how to write report cards. She described how she thinks it is important for an environment “where you feel the students understand where you’re coming from as a person and as a teacher in terms of what your expectations are, in terms of your
personality” (p. 10). In addition to being in agreement with the needs already identified, Joan, James, and Rachel all mentioned that they would have liked help with planning according to the school expectations. Joan stated:

I remember my first year in the high school, my first year teaching, I didn’t understand that you were supposed to have a culminating activity… to me a culminating activity happens at the end. I didn’t realize you should have it done by a certain time in the semester. So when I had a divisional meeting, Janice, who ended up being my mentor, she said ‘okay everybody should have their culminating activities finished by now’. I hadn’t even assigned one, so I went home and had a panic attack that night and thought how could I secretly get it done without her realizing I missed the deadline, and then I finally just realized I needed to be honest with her, so I emailed her and said ‘I wasn’t aware, I apologize.’ She said ‘no, I apologize, I should have checked in as the head of your department’ (p. 19-20).

Little recognition of new teachers. Many of the teachers noted that the first day, first week, and prior to the start of their position, they didn’t have anyone checking in on them as a new teacher. The teacher’s indicated that there was little to no occurrence of any discussion of their needs as a new teacher while in the role, whether it be at the individual level, school level, or board level. Particularly, Joan and Christina highlighted that in the itinerant arts role they never had anyone asking about their needs, but rather would find that the teachers would leave immediately when they came in the classroom since they were taking over for a period or two. They stated that they didn’t want anything to do with them or the program other than some time away from the class and for details on how the teacher could use it for report card purposes.

Only James indicated that he received specific support from administration regarding his role in the school as a new teacher. James described that he had a positive experience with a principal who was very concerned with his transition to teaching
providing resources and assistance if needed. Although, despite this initial positive experience, James further highlighted that he only ever received the help if he pursued it, instead of it being under the principal’s initiative.

Nearly all of the teachers who started teaching early in the school year began the discussion regarding professional development and meetings by sharing that they had a welcome event or meeting early at the start of the school year. It was found that there was no mentioned of the role of the new teachers at these events or discussed with the school staff. No other meetings occurred where teachers met and talked about their needs were described aside from standard staff meetings that followed a specific agenda. Those new teachers who were placed at multiple schools in their role stated that they were often told that they did not need to attend any meetings. Most of the teachers indicated that they did not participate, nor did they know of much professional development at the school level.

Christina reflected on her time at the school board office as the teachers gathered for development, stating that “everyone has specific questions they need answered, but when you go in you feel that it is your first time at the Board and you’re freaked out! It’s just nice to have people around so you can see other people, but you don’t want to overwhelm them [with questions] (p. 7).” She further shared that she found it very frustrating that in a role where she needed to travel to many schools she was denied resources such as books and development specific to her needs because the school board did not permit funding for such needs, rather only for conferences and meetings with a mentor. Laughing at the situation she said, “you can’t use [the money] for personal resources, which is what you need as a new teacher. You need those books (Christina, p.
Furthermore, Christina shared that the restrictions from the school board in regards to any professional development day: “sometime we [the arts teachers who travel to different schools] request for the PD days that are set aside for report cards or something like math or literacy to see if we can’t get together at a central location and just talk, have dialogue about our work, but we always have been refused (p. 11).” Ultimately, as described by Christina, the itinerant arts position means she must divide her time amongst several schools resulting in constant transitions, new environments, and often feeling like she doesn’t fit in which is a constant reminder of feeling new to the profession. As a result of this position, she is reconsidering her desire to teach the arts. She stated:

“I’ve been thinking about it [what position I want to be in] because there are some positions [full-time at one location] coming up that I know of. I was thinking about applying but I like teaching the arts so I’m sort of torn between how long do I deal with all this other stuff to teach what I love” (p. 3).

**The unpredictability of administration.** When reflecting on the role of the principal, the teachers described many details and experiences. Maria stated that support from administration is important, further noting that the support should be in the form of allowing teachers to make mistakes without the sense of someone “breathing down your neck” (p. 15). Rachel highlighted that the principal met with her and another new teacher prior to the start of their position and officially welcomed them to the school, leaving her with a good first impression. Joan noted that in her school, she immediately perceived that the staff was “lovely” yet they had some issues with their principal. (p. 3). The comments and side remarks in regards to the principal were very noticeable to her as a new teacher and she quickly discovered that there were particular expectations from the principal regarding her position and in seeking permission to conduct activities and use
resources. Joan stated that she had been warned about the principal’s controlling behaviour prior to her assignment at the school so she was prepared to accept and follow the expectations. However, although she was fine with adhering to the principal’s rules, not all staff at the school agreed and the tension was reflected in their relationship with the principal. Joan described that when the principal eventually left, the teachers held a big celebration. The challenging situations described by Joan didn’t end with this experience as she continued describing that her experiences only got worse after leaving this school. She stated, “I learned that the principal in my last school was a ‘hands-off’. He didn’t want anything to do with the teachers, didn’t want anything to do with the students, so don’t ask for an evaluation because you will never get it (p. 6). According to Joan, this principal was also equally as uninvolved in the school, stating that “the staff absolutely detested, and I use that word lightly because they really did not like this principal so that very much dictated the atmosphere of the school” (p. 10). Joan declared in a serious tone:

It was a closed door. Her door was always closed and the blinds were drawn. I got along with her fine, but I also knew that I was there for two months so there was no real issues I have with her, but to watch her interactions with the staff, you could cut the air with a knife. She organized her own retirement party, because nobody in the school would. They were all very happy she was retiring. They couldn’t understand how I could carry a conversation with her. When I did encounter her I was pleasant. I personally had no reason not to be… and one day I want to move on so I wanted to give the impression that I could work with different personalities (p. 10).

Many of the teachers noted that they had hardly any contact with the principal, stating that the principal was too busy or would never check in to see how they were doing in the position of new teacher. As evidenced in Joan’s experiences, placement at
several schools for the first teaching experiences resulted in interactions with multiple principals and administration staff. The teachers were forced to have to determine the organization of each school and to learn as quickly as possible the expected procedures that were different at each school. Adding to the complexity of the relationship is the concern for leaving a good impression so that the teacher may someday gain a position or a good reference.

**School details, interactions with teachers, and school culture as influence on feeling isolated.** Adding to the feeling of comfort in the role of new teacher, Maria commented that the size of the class was an element of relief for her, stating that she was very happy to learn she had a small class. With a small class she anticipated less behavioural and classroom management challenges – another area of concern as a result of her lack of experience and training in the area. Christina who was placed in a rotating arts position where she spends time at many schools throughout the year, indicated that she immediately noticed differences between rural and urban schools, “with the city schools it felt as though these kids had seen more and they come from tougher backgrounds that the ones out in the rural schools. A lot of them [children in rural schools] were related so there were less instances of bullying since they feared a family member might find out” (p. 1). She described the rural schools as having a community feeling and felt more comfortable in that environment. Likewise, Joan who was in an arts position was assigned five schools and visited each for two or three months before moving on to the next school also noted that the smallest urban school she worked in was her favorite since she felt it was more “community oriented” (p. 4).
Not all of the teachers were faced with small schools and class sizes. Kelly noted that her school was a “maze” being comprised of many students and staff. In this environment she was very nervous about her role, also noted by James who stated “it’s easy to get lost and just be forgotten” (p. 2). The feeling of isolation as a new teacher was found with all participants despite the variance in positions (LTO, full-time contract, etc.).

Maria struggled to determine possible reasons for the behaviours of the other staff creating her feeling of hesitancy towards teaching in the school:

I feel like at my first school people were sort of in their own little worlds in terms of their grade level that they were teaching or their subject area and they didn’t really spend a lot of time thinking about the world outside of their classroom. There were of course instances of collaboration between teachers, but I felt a bit removed from that, and I think as a new teacher I just didn’t really feel much a part of things (p. 7).

The teachers who were based at a school for a short period of time described that it was hard to feel a part of a school community despite some making best efforts. Nearly all of the teachers indicated that they found it quite noticeable that each division or department within the school, all divided by subject, would tend to be isolation from each other. Christina stated how she felt as though she was on an island with it being very tough to get any information or feel welcomed (p. 2). Other teachers commented that although there were the noticeable divisions in subject areas, they felt quite happy working and interacting over lunch break with their immediate co-subject teachers. Kelly shared in this feeling of departmental isolation stating that you would stay with your department versus interacting with all other staff on a frequent basis such as over the lunch break. “My first semester there they gave me a timetable and I was the only one
teaching all the classes so I had nobody to talk to. It was like ‘you’re new to the school, here’s your desk, you’re not teaching with anyone’ so I didn’t really talk to anybody my first semester” (p. 1). James stated that the division splits in subject area and school size meant that he rarely was able to work with other teachers in his area, commenting that he had to make an effort to go see them.

Many of the teachers shared some positive memories of their observations and interactions with staff. Particularly, Maria presented her feelings towards the complex relationships at one of her schools in an interesting form when she said, “I’d say there are people that I would be more likely to spend time with outside of school, but as a staff I am fortunate that we all get along very well and support each other (p. 12).” Joan commented that at one of her schools she was so happy there that she would have never left had she been permitted to stay. She described that “they constantly had members of the community coming into the classroom, doing lunch programs with the other teachers and there were very sweet kids, very sweet staff and they were very supportive (p. 4).” Joan further admitted with a bit of uneasiness in her tone that when she had to deal with the loss of an immediate family member she felt very supported and was touched by the concern of the other teachers. Her strong sense of belonging for this school stayed with her at her new school challenging her relationship with her new colleagues. They felt frustrated with her always referring to her past experiences as being ‘her school’ and her constant comparisons in style and operations.

Like Joan, some teachers reflected on the other teachers as being friendly, nice, and helpful, with some who shared very detailed stories of their experiences in evidence
of their claims. Others did not report such positive experiences. Rachel described her
disappointment that although everyone has stresses (i.e., report cards), she has witnessed
a large amount of conflict amongst the staff with little resolutions made. James noted that
at his school (the newly built school) he has noticed that many of the teachers don’t get
along. He shared that the administration is always sending out new notices that conflict
with previous statements of priorities which causes confusion and conflict amongst the
staff. As a result of the multiple schools coming together to make one new school, he
noted that there are two groups of teachers with two different teaching styles and beliefs.
Furthermore adding to the complexity, he has entered the situation as a new teacher and
has noticed significant isolation between the subject divisions within the school. He
described how he managed to stay together with some other new teachers who equally
sense the awkwardness. James commented, “There’s three of us that spend lunch together
and we try to go in the staffroom and integrate ourselves with everyone else, so usually
the three of us talk about problems (p. 11).”

Further adding to the isolation of the new teachers was the large absence of any
reference or in-depth discussion of culture of the schools in which they were placed.
Many of the initial statements from the teachers included terms such as “friendly,”
“open,” “relaxed,” with comments about the school’s academic standing and behavioural
issues. In discussing a perceived negative school culture, Maria contemplated her reasons
for such a statement eventually resolving that it could have been the dynamic of people.
Other statements made were that the new teacher was too busy to get involved in the
culture, whereas other teachers noted that the culture of the school were more “up and
coming” or currently a focus at their school. However, in response to the question of whether the culture of the school was ever discussed, only two teachers were able to respond positively. Maria noted that schools’ culture in connection to bullying was under discussion, and another teacher stated that they were informed at the beginning of the year as to what the “culture” of the school was, but no further discussion ensued. James highlighted that at his school that was newly built (a combination of two local schools to make one in a new school for the area), he noted that the school culture was mentioned at the beginning of the year by the principal who was looking for the teachers to work together to decide on what the values and directions would be for the new teaching institution. James felt that the activity was only a ploy of the principal who just chose the values and directions alone after the meeting was adjourned.

Joan shared that as a new teacher she was placed at a school where the community was very involved in the culture of the school. Coined as being the “traditionalists,” the parents and community related to Joan’s school are very involved, encouraging events and making sure that things are done the way they have been for many years, despite new staff members. Joan shared her frustration of the process of considering the “traditionalists’” needs while attempting to get familiarized with the school as well as learning to teach new subjects and grades. She highlighted that despite challenges, the communities’ influence upon the school’s culture seems to be positive. James indicated that at his school the conflicts between the groups of teachers were so noticeable that the parents have been making complaints. The parents and surrounding community are concerned with the perceived unfriendliness demonstrated by the staff’
during interactions and do not want such a school within their community. James suggested that the likely source of the observations is the students, describing that “it’s usually where the parents hear it, too, just about how staff doesn’t seem too happy in the hallways and it’s hard to hide it from the kids” (p. 12). As a result of the concerns, the administration has been working with the teachers regarding their behaviours and outlining appropriate protocol, such as how to greet community members and smiling while outside. James doubts that the problems are due to the size of the school, but rather “any size of staff can create a community that works well” (p. 6) and having more staff social functions might help to alleviate the tension. James described that the staff room is divided, with one group sitting at one table engaged in tense conversation about policies and procedures, whereas the other table where he sits is much more friendly and easy going, often laughing at the amount of conflict witnessed at the other table. With a more serious tone, James stated that in the initial meeting, where the principal announced the community complaints, the teachers in one group were in complete shock, whereas everyone else was thinking that it was about time the complaints were made.

Reluctance to ask for help. Found to be a contributing factor to the new teachers feelings of isolation, was a strong impression that as a new teacher, it was important not to “bother” anyone with their questions, fearing that they had their own responsibilities, time pressures, and to avoid seeming like they are a “rookie”. Maria mentioned this idea multiple times:

Since I was coming into an LTO position it was quite difficult to contact the previous teacher, and I didn’t feel comfortable taking up too much of her time … I could just sense that people were very busy with their own stuff and I did have a
much smaller class and I didn’t feel I wanted to burden people with too many questions. The other teachers are too busy with their own stuff and everybody is always helpful, but they are not necessarily going to go out of their way to help. The other [teachers] were all too busy doing their thing. It’s not that they are not involved, but they were interested in only keeping the classroom neat and that sort of thing, which takes up a lot of your time (p. 1-2).

Aside from personal perceptions of ability, preparedness, and feelings, the teachers also identified external factors that influenced their role and perceived performance. Such external factors were others’ perceptions of them as a new teacher and the size of the school (and class). Kelly described how she could sense the students judging her due to her age contributing to her concern for her assignment in the role. She noted how she knew they were questioning her ability as a result of her young looks and age would not appear to support her certification as a teacher, but rather they “think you’re a student teacher and you still feel like a student teacher” (p. 1). Even now in a different position with other younger staff present, Kelly commented that she still feels that they question their role due to their ages. This fear for Kelly was not only limited to student interactions as she described how in her interactions with parents she could sense that they were concerned about her age and the suggestions she was making in regards to their children.

James noted how when he entered as a new teacher in October due to a last minute change, he knew that the students were very familiar with their old teacher so he sensed that the students saw him as “coming in to break up the classroom” causing him to be very nervous for not only entering the position in a high school with many staff members, but as well for being worried about his own classroom (p. 1). Joan also noted that as a result of her last minute assignment she found the students to be curious about
the circumstances that led their teacher to leave and for them to be suddenly faced with a new teacher for the remainder of the year. In contrast, Maria who had some occasional teaching experience at the school where she was teaching full time mentioned that she noticed a big difference in her role as a full-time teacher. She outlined that this change occurred at the “level of respect from the kids. I was still the same person, but they have a different approach to you as a classroom teacher. I felt that they could sense that the other teachers saw me as more part of the staff as well,” further reasoning that “I guess being the person who was going to be writing their [student’s] report card and who they’re going to be seeing every day and not just for an hour anymore” was the motive for the reassuring change in perception (p. 1).

Maria stated that she was definitely one of the few younger teachers in the school whereas Kelly noted that at the one school many of the teachers were close to retirement, but there was also eight teachers there on temporary contract positions with a small student population. At her other school, Kelly noted that the majority of staff were also close to retirement but she has noticed a big difference between the schools she has worked at as a new teacher. As previously described, at the first school she felt very welcomed and part of the community despite of the presence of other new teacher’s because the more senior teachers were ready to “take them under their wing” and support them with any of their needs (p. 2). In her second school, Kelly highlighted that the senior teachers were very resistant to the new teachers as many were “stuck in their ways” and not willing to accept the new teachers with the “great ideas.” (p. 2) Kelly
noted that as a result of the resistance the new teachers felt forced to listen and to oblige since they were the majority.

Another element contributing to the feeling of isolation is the active choice of new teachers to be careful not to “rock the boat” as termed by Rachel. Joan shared “I learned how to ‘play the game’ (p. 2) with each school in terms of finding out the atmosphere and how to fit into it. James stated that his approach was to “just go into the staffroom and talk to everyone just to get yourself known with everyone so then you don’t have problems with them” (p. 3) and likewise for Rachel who commented that in response to tension amongst staff she found that it is a part of her character to not “ruffle any feathers” but even more so since she was the new teacher (p. 2). Voicing a concern was generally not a common action for Rachel, but she admitted that it “was difficult not to take those feelings home with me and be mulling things over” (p. 2). However, now onto her fourth year, Rachel declared that her nature is still not to “ruffle any feathers,” and will on occasion “respond in a diplomatic manner,” especially if it would help to resolve a problem (p. 3). The concern for their position and “authority” as a new teacher was particularly present with the teachers who were required to travel to multiple schools in the year and for those with an LTO. With many teachers and administration to work with, these teachers were concerned that they needed to ensure a good rapport with each in fear that they may need a reference or may result in working full time at the school in the future.
NTIP Confusion

A major finding from the individual interviews was an overall sense of confusion in regards to NTIP both from and as perceived by the teachers. The perceived confusion is a product of multiple factors and experiences as detailed below.

Poor communication of NTIP details. The teachers all noted a lack of awareness and problems in the implementation of the program. Some teachers indicated that they had heard of NTIP while completing their teacher training programs, but also admitted that they didn’t learn too much about it and/or did not seem to think it was much of a concern to them. Once in the position, the teachers reported that they were informed of the program via a letter or email, but that the program was not discussed or presented to them by the school administration. In one case it was shared that the principal acted as an advocate for the new teacher to get them enrolled in the program. In contrast, Christina described that she felt like she had “got left off the list” in regards to communication of the program and its details and another teacher indicated that they received a package, and were told that the school board would contact them and selected mentors, however, this never happened. Furthermore, the program was never mentioned unless the new teacher made a direct inquiry. Another teacher mentioned that the school board never mentioned it at all, but when a fellow colleague mentioned it, she pursued the program. The lack of clarity surrounding the program was particularly evident in responses from James who noted that he put the program on hold due to him thinking that he did not have a mentor for long enough. He didn’t realize that he could have finished the program had he just pursued his Teacher Performance Appraisal’s. Furthermore,
Rachel declared that she didn’t even know that the Teacher Performance Appraisal’s were a component of the program.

Adding to the confusion, Maria mentioned that she didn’t find administration to be very involved, stating that, “they seemed often really confused about what their role was within the program (p. 9).” Furthermore, Kelly shared that she was hired at the mid-point in the school year and was not informed about the program until the following school year, but then proceeded to inform her that since she was in the role for a certain amount of time she was no longer permitted to use the financial resources allocated to her as a new teacher.

**Variance in NTIP supports.** The lack of clarity surrounding the program seemed to influence the perception of the program for the new teachers. Variance was found among the teachers in regards to the NTIP components made available to them. All of the teachers indicated that they participated in the mentoring and was subject to the teacher performance appraisals, but not all teachers shared that they had professional development or an orientation session. Some teachers indicated that they were not informed of such events and others commented on the fact that they were denied particular support requested as a result of the timing in the school year or protocols for the financial resources allocated to them as a new teacher in the program. Kelly stated that at her orientation session in October, she was informed that she would have $2000 to spend on professional development and supplied a list of dates. Kelly described how she and others requested certain conferences from the board, but was told that she would not be able to attend any since the funding expired in December, only two months after
finding out that she had funds allocated to her since she was a new teacher in NTIP. She responded to this reflection with “I was too overwhelmed to even think about it at that point so I bought a few books, but I didn’t get to go to any conferences or anything… other than the orientation (p. 6).” Christina shared a similar experience stating that, “there’s more professional development at the board office, but I don’t know if I missed the memo, but I didn’t get a lot of that when they take you out [of the school for development] (p. 6).” Despite her disappointment, she supports the program and said that with changes, they could be giving new teachers a solid foundation. Kelly shared that she was disappointed with the program, elaborating that she would liked to have known more about the program since she thinks NTIP or support for new teachers is a good idea and that as a new teacher or in a LTO position, you should get it (the program) right away.

**Little perceived value of NTIP professional development and orientation.** The experiences of the new teachers in regards to orientation and professional development within NTIP were quite varied. Kelly, Christina, and James identified that they went to the school board orientation day at the beginning of the year, although James was unsure if it was in relation to NTIP or is just standard practice. Joan declared with sarcasm in her voice that although she received word of the program and that the school board would be in contact with her and her mentor, she never actually received any communication and as a result did not participate in any orientation or professional development.

Most of the teachers had difficulties remembering specific details of the professional development sessions at the board office offered as a part of NTIP. Christina noted that she didn’t find it particularly memorable, stating “I think I probably had one
workshop that I came away with something I could actually use. A lot of it was more kind of giving us a chance to talk and reflect on our learning and that was great, but there wasn’t really anything that stands out” (p. 5). James stated that he really enjoyed the sessions that were specific to his subject area and that he was able to use some of the funding to attend two conferences in his curriculum area. In contrast, two of the teachers stated that they had great difficulty in using any of the funds allotted to them by the school board through the program, noting their lengthy conversations with the finance department of the school board. None of the teachers identified any professional development offered to them at the school level.

**Inconsistent application of TPAs by principals.** The majority of comments made by the teachers in regards to administration or the principal were in regards to the Teacher Performance Appraisal component of NTIP. All teachers except Christina had both of their TPAs done by the principal at the school. Christina had one evaluation done by the superintendent of the itinerant arts program and another by a principal at one of the schools. Once again, the teachers all indicated very different experiences in regards to their TPAs. The timing of the appraisals also varied. Maria and Christina stated that their TPAs both occurred in the first year, Kelly shared that hers were only two month apart since she was under the impression they had to be done immediately, while Joan reported that hers were delayed for quite some time as a result of her travelling to different schools, and James highlighted that he had one in his first year and not again until a few years later. The eagerness of the principals to complete the appraisals also varied, with some teachers stating that they were happy to help and were quite prompt with organizing
the event and outlining the procedures, whereas others were not that enthusiastic about setting up a time to come in and had to persuade them to participate, ultimately feeling like it was just “ticking off the box and it was done” (p. 9-10).

The format for the appraisals also varied. Some principals would ask for the new teachers’ lesson plans in advance and at a later time would come observe for a full period of teaching. Others commented how the principal would just appear in their classroom and watch for about 10 minutes without any previous documents collected with no further observations. Other teachers stated that the principal would “pop in” on their teaching on multiple occasions before feeling like they had collected enough evidence to properly assess the individuals. After the initial observations, the follow up also varied. Some teachers stated that they had follow up meetings to discuss the appraisal whereas others said nothing ever happened beyond the initial review. None of the teachers stated that the principal ever followed up on the comments after some time had passed to check on progress. The initial TPAs were the only discussions the teachers had with the principal regarding their needs as a new teacher and performance.

**Confusion between the real and ideal outcomes of NTIP.** The intended results of induction programs do not match the experiences of the participants. It was quite apparent that Christina did not enjoy her NTIP experience, as she noted that she felt relieved that she didn’t have to do it anymore (p. 14), further reporting that the outcome of the program was paperwork and multiple evaluations in a year. Rachel described that after her first year she was transferred to a high school and subsequently relived all of the feelings she had in her first year. She stated:
Even if I had the opportunity to teach elementary school the second year, I’d say you’re still pretty “fresh” and I wouldn’t be surprised if other people, teachers and administration, NTIP designation aside, would consider me new. I wouldn’t be offended by that, I would welcome that because it’s acknowledging the process… it didn’t make sense to say at that point you’re no longer new (p. 13).

Maria struggled a bit with reflecting on the idea of her identification as a new teacher or not. She justified her final response of still feeling in many ways as a new teacher with many reasons, despite completing NTIP and after having a few years experience. Maria described how the constant change in positions, much like Rachel, makes it difficult to feel comfortable, also stating that perhaps she may always feel a bit uncertain given that teaching is a challenging career. Maria did reason though that she does feel more confident and competent with certain areas now that she has done it a few times.

Rachel and Joan both stated that they would have benefited from NTIP-like support extending beyond the initial program structure. Rachel was clear that the difference lies in the program being more catered to my needs and through having a more appropriate mentor. Joan shared that with her newly assigned position that was very different than her last position as itinerant arts teacher, she didn’t find it beneficial as “it would have been great if I had the mentor in the school with me and could do more professional development with staff” (p. 15).

Evident in the discussions and as stated by the participants, all of the new teachers still feel as though they are a “new teacher”. This feeling was sometimes described in an immediate response “yes”, whereas other teachers considered that their most current role is a cause of the feeling, such as due to the unfamiliarity of the school, teaching multiple
subjects that are always a new assignment, claiming that once they get settled then they hope these feelings leave. Another teacher wondered if a teacher ever stops feeling as though they are not a “new” teacher, noting though that regardless of the identification, it surely must get easier at some point. Ultimately, it was found that the question of identification of being a new teacher was multi-faceted with many elements to consider than just a simple declaration in response to a time lapse. Rachel stated that in response to whether the change of identification on her record as no longer being a new teacher due to her completion of NTIP is was not an appropriate statement for her abilities given her continued feeling of being new to the profession.

Mentoring as the Key to Success

Although the analysis revealed a common feeling that many of the NTIP supports they participated in were not of great benefit to them in their induction. However, the responses and experiences of the formal mentoring component and informal mentoring they received was seen as influential upon their successful transition.

Mentoring component seen as most helpful NTIP element. Many positive comments regarding NTIP were in reference to the element of mentoring. Linked with comments about their perceptions of the program, the teachers made many statements specific to the mentoring component. Maria insisted that “the mentoring piece was the most helpful, and I think that could make or break your experience depending on the mentor that you select or have selected for you (p. 9) and Rachel stated:

“I really support the idea of mentorship…so I think the concept is absolutely necessary, and I had a pretty good experience with it, but in terms of how it went
it was fine, but not overall things that I needed, and I couldn’t really say that when I go to teach now that there’s anything that was directly from NTIP (p. 13)”. Many of the other teachers shared wonderful stories of meeting outside of school, visiting each other’s home, “becoming friends,” or being in such a position where the mentor calls herself a “work mom” to the mentee. Maria described that her mentor was very eager and “honored” to be selected as a mentor. Maria commented that she had specifically wanted someone who had knowledge in the area of teaching French, but that she was given the opportunity to decide by the mentor. Maria went on to describe their positive relationship, describing that her mentor was warm, friendly and open to discussing any challenges faced by Maria. She noted that her mentor shared quite a number of her own personal experiences and was easy and willing to talk about other staff and quirks, making Maria feel very happy. With excitement in her voice, Maria described that although time has passed their relationship has both mentoring and friendship involved:

I don’t know if I’d give her advice because she’s such an expert teacher, but I would maybe offer a similar experience that I had and would certainly feel comfortable if I had something to share in regards to what she was going through. I wouldn’t say we’re still on a mentor/mentee kind of relationship, and we never really were, that was just her personality, she’s very open (p. 12). Maria stated that she no longer has a much contact with her mentor, although she knows she would gladly share any resources, but that Maria feels she has a great colleague now, and its easy to access help if it is required.

Kelly stated that she had to make a tough decision between three ladies within her department but ultimately ended up selecting one to be her mentor. With great enthusiasm Kelly reflected on her experiences of her mentor who would find ways to
help her without being to direct. Kelly stated that “when she was with the kids or when she was with people, you knew her reaction and thinking was ‘black or white’ or this is how it is. But I loved it about her (p. 15).” Kelly shared how she felt supported to try new things and they ended up presenting at a conference on their curriculum area, something that she would have never done on her own and was always encouraged by her mentor to be actively pursuing professional development. Kelly further shared that she felt she was a confidant, there for emotional support, and always in close proximity ready to help. Even when Kelly was devastated in finding out she was considered redundant, her immediate reaction was to contact her mentor for advice and support, stating that she walked her through the process and assured her that it would be ok in the end.

**Mentor selection: The importance of good mentor/protégé matching.** For many of the teachers, they were able to pick a person to be a mentor. Kelly, Maria, Rachel, and Joan all carefully selected their mentor, a person also working at their schools. Although James did initially select a specific mentor, he had to change to a new school after a time and ended up choosing to not continue his mentoring relationship with that person given the different locations. For a few years James was stalled in NTIP since he had difficulties selecting another mentor, eventually finding a teacher in his division to “just get it done (p. 8).”

Reasons for the selection of these individuals all had to do with them being a teacher of the same subject. Christina and Rachel presented different experiences with their mentor selection. Christina found it very difficult to select a mentor as a result of being new to the school board and being placed in an itinerant arts position. She shared
that the deadline for picking the mentor was the end of October and at that point she had
only been at one school and would be moving on shortly. She stated that the deadline for
mentor selection was looming and there was only one person who she felt she could talk
with and felt comfortable with so she picked that person. Rachel stated that she had a
passive role in the selection, ultimately being persuaded by the principal’s suggestion to
work with a particular teacher in the school.

In contrast to the of Kelly and Maria, Christina, Rachel and Joan noted that they
encountered some challenges with their mentor. Christina described how she has
struggled to stay in contact with her mentor after she began her time at the next school on
her itinerant arts list position. She met with her to fill in the appropriate paperwork, but
beyond those meetings of which she can count on one hand, she has not spoken to her
since. Rachel discovered that her mentor was not interested in participating in the
relationship and described how she only met with her once to do the paperwork and then
proceeded to work alongside another new teacher and her mentor who was working at the
same point in NTIP. Joan stated that she picked her mentor because she had been given a
positive impression of him prior to her employment at the school. She noted that she had
to seek permission for the selection of this individual, but was advised by the NTIP board
staff that any mentor was fine as long as she would feel that the person would be able to
support them in the program. Joan stated that aside from meeting a few times to sign the
documents, most of their conversations were done online. Joan stated that she was always
able to get a hold of her if she needed assistance, extending well beyond her time in
NTIP.
Mentoring or collaboration as potential avenues for answering questions.

Many of the teachers indicated that they felt there were certain characteristics of a person that extended beyond their mentoring relationship into the greater school environment. Christina declared that with “teaching, mentoring just comes naturally…you’re naturally going to be drawn to people who have been doing it a long time and they’re going to offer advice” (p. 13). Maria concurred with a statement that her mentor at the second school was extraordinary with not just her, but with the whole school. Rachel stated that she always finds herself asking questions and speaking with colleagues and those who she feels comfortable with, regardless of them not being in a formal mentoring relationship under NTIP. Furthermore, Kelly stated that she feels that there is always one person who takes on a new teacher, taking them under their wing, regardless of the official NTIP mentor/mentee label. She also admitted that having their roles identified as mentor/mentee within NTIP allowed for more opportunities for release time to answer the important questions that one has as a new teacher.

Despite the feelings of isolation, each of the new teachers identified a source they went to with questions at various points in their role as a new teacher. The persons who the teachers would go to with questions or for guidance varied. Christina and Joan both shared how they would go to colleagues whom they have known for some time and are also teachers, such as other new teachers who work at other schools. Similarly, James, Maria, and Kelly all mentioned that they went to other teachers at their school who seemed to have experience in their subject area or grade level, while Maria noted that she found it difficult since she “didn’t really have too many other people in my life who were
currently teachers. It’s sort of ironic that it’s only after you get into teaching that you meet everybody (p. 3).” Christina also shared that both of her parents were teachers and she would go to them if she needed further help, commenting that they helped her to prepare for her role prior to the start of the year.

The rationale for selecting these people as their “go-to person” for questions had to do with three main reasons. These are proximity and availability, perceived knowledge, as well as the person being open to communicating about their practices and needs of the new teacher. Christina noted that she chose particular people who she was more confident in approaching, whereas Rachel and James each described how they would seek out the person who would likely be able to provide them with the best assistance. Rachel noted that she had memories of being in the school as a student many years ago and noted that it was a difficult class in terms of behaviour so when she learned that her teacher for this class was still working there, she went to him for advice.

**Summary**

Part II of the research findings section presented the major themes found in data analysis of the individual interviews. The themes are feeling isolated beyond the first year of teaching, NTIP confusion, and mentoring as the key to success. The following chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the research questions, drawing upon relevant literature and noting implications of the findings.
Chapter 5

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusions

This study was conducted to explore the experiences of new teachers in regards to Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), mentoring, and school culture. As the final chapter of the thesis, chapter five restates the research problem and specific questions that guided this research. The major sections of this chapter summarize the results of each research question, drawing in relevant literature to expand the discussion and highlight resulting implications.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of new teachers who have previously completed the Ontario NTIP program in order to understand the impact of induction programs on the process of new teacher socialization. The intent was to examine new teachers’ perceptions in relation to how mentoring influenced their entrance to the profession by understanding their transition into individual school cultures. The primary research questions were:

1. What is the structure and mandates of Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program?
2. What role is assigned to the implementation of the program in individual schools within the NTIP mandate?
3. What is the role of school culture and collaboration as outcomes for new teachers and staff within the program outline?
4. What is the perceived role of an individual school culture in a new teacher’s successful induction experiences?

5. What is the impact of the mentoring relationship established as part of NTIP on new teachers’ transition into a school?

6. What is the lasting significance of the established mentoring relationship beyond the prescribed program period?

In order to carry out this study and fully address the research questions, a combination of document analysis and individual interviews was used. The document analysis was the first method utilized. This included the search, collection, review, and organization of content, themes, and categories in order to determine the structure and elements of NTIP according to the policy as well as the implementation role given at the school level. The interview participants were new teachers who had been teaching for three to five years and had completed NTIP. Individual interviews were conducted with two teachers from the Catholic school board and four teachers from the public school board. Findings of this research are presented below in response to each of the research questions.

**The Structure and Mandates of Ontario’s NTIP: Clarification Needed**

The Ministry NTIP documents mandate that new teachers demonstrate teaching competencies, orientation, acquisition of skills, and confidence, along with progression along the continuum of professional development, and proven successful teaching. The *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* elaborates on particular components of this mandate, including mentoring, orientation, professional development, and two performance
appraisals. However, despite the inclusion of the four components in the NTIP documents, the analysis revealed that the only elements that are indicative of NTIP success are the performance appraisals. The other components of the program were merely suggested and implementation varied in form and content.

Furthermore, the list of the elements of the program always appears within NTIP documents in the same manner: professional development, orientation, and mentoring all listed in bullet points, while in the paragraph directly below these brief listings, the teacher performance appraisal (TPA) program component was found. Given that the additional information on teacher evaluations does not follow the same format as the other program elements, it’s possible for a new teacher to overlook the predominance of the TPAs within their actual experience of NTIP. The manner in which the program elements are listed within the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* and supporting NTIP documents, suggests that the Ministry of Education does not want to place emphasis on the appraisal component. This finding is contradictory to the outcomes of the program since the only element that is the determining factor of a new teachers’ completion of the program is the TPAs.

Furthermore, the TPA sections contain very detailed information with use of terms such as “will” and “must” indicating required actions. In contrast, the other elements of the section contain many phrases like “should” and “may” suggesting that the actual event could be much different from what is outlined in the documents. The emphasis on the TPAs with regard to the language further supports the sense that the TPA element of NTIP is viewed as the most important for a new teachers’ induction.
The documents indicate that a new teacher completes the induction program after teaching for 24 months, or after completion of two satisfactory TPAs. However, analysis revealed that TPAs typically occur within the first year of teaching in a full time position. Only on rare occasions would a new teacher extend the program to the full 24 months permitted. It is only when a new teacher receives an unsatisfactory standing during the appraisal, or if a teacher can describe in writing, the benefit of extending the program, is the option for program extension even considered. The *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* assesses “successful teaching” through the TPA process. This suggests that the TPA’s are indicative of a teacher’s abilities and needs as a new teacher.

Findings from the individual interviews support the assertion that NTIP emphases TPA, rather than the actual needs of new teachers. All of the teachers who participated in the interviews expressed confusion over the elements of the program, and with the exception of their TPAs, all had very different experiences than what the Ontario Ministry of Education outlined in the NTIP mandates. Even though the TPA component of NTIP was emphasized above the other components of the mandate, the surveyed teachers revealed that this component was poorly carried through as well. Nearly all of the teachers identified the struggle they encountered in pursuing the principal to conduct the evaluation. Even more exacerbating, the method of the evaluations varied, with some staying only for a few minutes in the class observing the teacher on one occasion, to another teacher who talked about the lengthy process undertaken by her principal in frequenting her class at different points of the day until she felt ready to make an assessment. TPAs are perceived as being the core component of NTIP due to the strong
presence of TPAs within the Ministry of Education NTIP documents, the fact that they are the indicator of a new teachers completion of NTIP, and coupled with the experiences of new teachers.

The concerns presented in findings of this research are similar to other NTIP specific research. After thoroughly outlining the shift in Ontario government and subsequent focus on teacher education, Glassford and Salinitri (2007) presented a preliminary discussion based on the goals outlined in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*. Of particular note was the fact that NTIP replaced the Ontario Teachers’ Qualifying Test (OTQT) and only by successfully completing both the induction program and the performance appraisals would the original OTQT standard be met. Glassford and Salinitri stated that given the structure and appraisal component of the program, “one is left with the nagging feeling that the program is labeled induction, but at the end of the day it is in reality evaluation”. Glassford and Salinitri expressed concern over the appraisals being seen as appropriate indicators of new teacher performance, given that under the NTIP mandate, principals have the authority to conduct TPAs however they see fit. This concern is echoed by the testimony of teachers interviewed for this research, in that most of the principals discussed by the participants did not play an active role in the new teachers’ induction process.

These concerns about the evaluation component of induction programs like NTIP are common among many school boards across Canada (Kutsyuruba, Godden, & Tregunna, 2013). A pan-Canadian document analysis on new teacher induction provision documents found online for each province, teacher association, and school board has
outlined variance in the kinds of supports offered across the country. Programs were found at the provincial level, teacher association/federation level, a hybrid level composed of partnerships between teacher associations, unions, universities, community groups, and at a decentralized school board level. Nearly all of the induction supports found at the decentralized level contained an element of evaluation, with many of the supports as a direct component of teacher evaluation procedure. Given the emphasis on evaluation within NTIP Ministry documents, and the consistent concern regarding this focus on evaluation (above mentorship and induction to school culture), it’s worth asking if NTIP program implementation actually succeeds at fulfilling its own mandate. Consideration of how to support new teachers without an emphasis on evaluation is needed to determine induction best practice.

A finding unique to this research is how NTIP documents use misleading language to disguise the reality of how the NTIP mandate is implemented. The documents are vague and use suggestive terms such as “should” and “may” in contrast to the few occasions where terms such as “will” or “must” are used. The variation in the terms used in relation to the program elements creates a sense of flexibility and interpretation on the part of the school board who must oversee the implementation of the program. However, this ambiguity is responsible for the varied experiences teachers had vis-a-vis their experience of NTIP. While the program documents state that orientation, professional development, and mentoring are components, the experiences of the teachers interviewed identify great variation among the kinds of orientation, professional development, and mentoring that a new teacher may receive. Ultimately, as a result of the
local-level implementation, some teachers are receiving the intended support, whereas others are not. Further consideration of the school board level implementation procedures and documents would help to clarify the responsibilities and specific details of new teacher support.

The teachers stated that the professional development and orientation components of the program were underemphasized. In certain instances, such as when a new teacher was hired at a mid-point in the school year, they were offered orientation only after months had passed since their arrival. Moreover, some teachers noted the welcome meetings at the start of the year with other school staff, but commented that these meetings were rare occasions, often taking place only at the start of the school year. Counter to the infrequency of the meetings, the teachers shared stories about how, when they did attend the meetings, they really enjoyed meeting other new teachers, making “connections”, developing a “group sense of identity”, and getting to know the staff. Given the finding of strong feelings of isolation as a result of their novice new position in a new profession, the teachers all placed value on those moments when they felt “comfortable” and “safe” with other staff.

Adding to the perception of disharmony between the implementation of NTIP and novice teachers is the unity of testimony reporting a lack of discussion surrounding their needs as a new teacher at all levels. The teachers were easily able to each identify a list of areas in which they would have appreciated support, such as report cards, communication with parents, conducting the common clerical duties of their position, classroom management, which were all above and beyond specific subject knowledge in relation to
the curriculum. Within the document analysis findings, it was also found that at no point were the needs of the new teachers ever described to be a feature of the program, aside from goal setting between the mentor and mentee.

Barrett et al. (2009), noted from their research on teachers who participated in NTIP reported that new teachers stated they needed specific skills and need to be encouraged to think about their abilities and role within the classroom in addition to learning the on-site specific task knowledge. In line with the findings from Kane (2010), the teachers largely reported that the professional development offered was according to “pre-determined ministry priorities” and school board selection rather than according to the needs of the new teachers themselves. This is no surprise, however, given that the NTIP Induction Elements Manual and supporting documentation clearly indicated that professional development is most effective when it aligns with the Ministry objectives. The only avenue for which new teacher needs is addressed is via the Individual NTIP Strategy form.

The variance in elements and emphasis on evaluation suggests alternative motives for the program. The multiple roles that a new teacher may encounter no longer suit the initial definitions of a new teacher’s role as outlined by NTIP Ministry documents. Consideration of these multiple contexts, the unique working environments of a school, and importance of collaborative interactions are needed to make NTIP more effective at introducing new teachers to their new schools. Further examination of possible program restructuring would help to improve the experiences of new teachers in the province.
Board and School Level Implementation of NTIP: Unclear Roles

The responsibilities of all stakeholders in NTIP were found to be a separate function of the roles outline in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* and other NTIP documents offered by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The analysis revealed that the Ministry’s outlines of NTIP are outlined in a suggestive manner and that the school board must consider the components and required elements upon the creation of their NTIP Steering Committee. The committee must then put the Ministry’s suggestions into action for the new teachers within their school board. The only time the role of the Steering Committee was discussed in any of the documents was found in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual*, which included a list of possible people to consider for the committee and outlining some responsibilities that they should address.

Glassford and Salinitri (2007) identified that the Ministry of Education has been mindful of respecting “local sensibilities” during the outlining of the implementation. This statement suggests that they have responded to the clear need for new teacher provisions, yet needed to craft a replacement for the OTQT that would better suit school boards. With such a large role, as evident in both the document analysis and individual interviews, school boards should be given more information so that the program may be implemented under the intended circumstances as mandated by the provincial government.

Even more decentralized, the implementation of NTIP also occurs at the individual school level under direction from the specific school board. The implementation of the program at the school level falls to the principal, new teacher, and
to some extent, the mentor. The responses from the new teachers identify a lack of communication in regards to the program in general, procedures, and elements available. While a few teachers reported that they had heard of NTIP in brief during their teacher training, others identified that they had no idea the components or process, despite receiving a brief email. Kane et al. (2010) also identified varied communication of the program within their studies’ respondents. The inconsistencies and various formats for communication are suggested by Kane to be systemic problems. Ultimately, as a result of the program miscommunications between the various levels, in many cases the teachers had to act as their own advocate, taking on learning about yet another program and process whilst already dealing with other challenges of entering the teaching profession. This miscommunication contributes to the variance in critical support that new teachers experience, counter to what the mandates and other literatures details as necessary for successful transition into the profession.

These communicative problems suggest a number of concerns. First, the Ministry of Education does highlight that the establishment of a Steering Committee to oversee the program, however though, the vague detail given to the description results in a possible failure to comply with the request. Further, at the school level, only two principals mentioned NTIP with the teachers, with one of the teachers highlighting that the principal acted as their advocate, getting him into the program and providing support. This positive acknowledgement and consideration of the program by the principal meant that during the time the teacher was placed at that particular school, he had a successful NTIP experience. However, for those who didn’t have a principal who was actively involved,
interested, and aware of their needs, then those teachers commented that elements other than the mentoring component were of no applicability.

Given that the implementation of NTIP occurs at the decentralized level, these research findings support the need for more awareness of the program. As evident in the experiences, many of the principals showed reluctance towards the program, avoided the TPA’s, and often weren’t aware of the procedures involved. These experiences are counter to the intentions laid out in the NTIP Induction Elements Manual. This finding is also in line with the research by Kane et al. (2010) who noted disconnect in the principals’ role within the program and participation in overseeing the program.

Contributing to the lack of communication, the teachers involved in this research demonstrated variability in the role of new teacher within a full-time position. Namely, there were teachers in long-term occasional positions (LTO); teachers who were in an itinerant arts position where they travelled to multiple schools providing an on-site arts curriculum; teachers who entered a full-time contract position immediately after finishing their teacher training. The variability in the roles as new teachers presents another challenge for NTIP procedures and supports. Specifically, the program is designed for teachers who enter a full-time position or LTO of greater than a certain number of days. However, teachers in an itinerant arts position, or teachers in an LTO position are frequently changing schools. Teacher interviews make evident that elements of NTIP were not designed to facilitate these varying positions. For example, teachers in itinerant arts positions noted how they struggled each time they entered a new school, recounting the tough moments they faced as a new teacher. Further, the professional development
and orientation offered to them was not appropriate to their needs. The documents all highlight that professional development is best aligned with Ministry of Education objectives and with teacher needs. However, teachers in itinerant arts positions noted how they would have appreciated support and development specific to their role, although this area is not highlighted as a Ministry of Education objective. Therefore, the teachers have to make a request to the school board for their own professional development meeting, involving itinerant arts teachers from the school board, but found their request subsequently denied.

Overall, the experiences of the new teachers indicates that some if not all of the elements outlined by the Ministry of Education in regards to NTIP were offered to new teachers. At a mandated level, the policy regarding new teacher support should be outlined in sufficient detail with emphasis on best practices and necessary elements in contrast to the mere current suggestive nature of NTIP. As revealed, the Ministry of Education has outlined the program, but much of what they outline is ultimately the responsibility of the school board, and, as shown by the responses of the participants, the principal and new teacher at the school level. Therefore, further exploration is needed to determine if more school boards in Ontario are merely adhering to the NTIP guidelines, or are they moving beyond for more sustained and committed new teacher support.

Ontario is one of two Canadian provinces with policy mandated new teacher induction provisions (Kutsyuruba, 2012). A comparison of the management of the Northwest Territories, the other Canadian province/territory with provincially mandated support,
might yield interesting details about induction best practice within a Canadian context. In addition, this inquiry might help to indicate a better system for managing the provisions.

**The Absence of School Culture in NTIP Mandates**

The third question this research set out to explore was the role of school culture and collaboration as outcomes for new teachers and staff within the program outlines. This element was not found to be a component of the documents reviewed in any great detail. As noted in the findings chapter, in a few instances terms were used such as “collaboration and professional relationships,” however no further expansion of these concepts was provided. Only more senior teachers are assessed in their TPAs for these skills or professional standards. This could suggest that a new teacher does not need to possess social skills, networking abilities, and communication skills for making the transition into the profession. Regardless of the level of experience, the inclusion of these attributes suggests they are measurable concepts, although, with no further explanation of the professional standards or skills, it is unclear as to how an evaluator (principal) would be able to adequately assess these standards/skills.

Furthermore, the documents fail to mention the role of any staff other than those identified in the program, namely, new teachers, mentors, and principals. In spite of the exclusion of the other members of the school, the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* does note “teacher induction practices should be guided by a culture that supports the assignment of new teachers; and to ensure that new teachers have support in the school.” However, once again, this is not identified in any further detail. Nor is it clear as to whose responsibility it is for ensuring that genuine support actually exists.
These findings are counter to the recognition of new teacher challenges as a result of entering a school’s culture. Feiman-Nemser, Carver, Schwille, and Yusko (2003) stated that in addition to learning to teach, incorporate educational standards, and address the needs of students, new teachers undergo a process of enculturation. For the first few years, a new teacher “depends largely on the conditions and culture of teaching” (Fieman-Nemser et al., 2003, p. 2). As evident in the findings, the needs of the new teachers may have initially resulted from a lack of resources, or unfamiliarity with the subject or grade level, for example. However, the needs also seemed to have strong ties to emotions that in turn, influenced performance and self-perception. Apparent in the experiences of new teachers, the lack of resources meant that the teachers needed help, but the social dynamics of a school did not always facilitate the necessary conversations and therefore, created a feeling of isolation for new teachers. Doerger (2003) stated that these emotional needs must be addressed during the first year and if designed well, induction programs offer a viable solution. Doerger (2003) contended that more effort is needed in preparing teachers for their individual schools that cannot be achieved through orientations or evaluations. However, the implementation of induction programs often is clouded by the need for fulfilling ministry mandates rather than looking at the context specific situation (Doerger, 2003).

Those teachers who indicated positive school culture aspects such as communication, positive attitude, caring environment, also indicated that they felt supported in the school as a new teacher. The influence of school culture is intimately linked with school improvement and performance (Lindahl, 2011). Saphier and King
(1985) stated that if elements of a school’s culture are strong then “improvements in instruction will be significant, continuous, and widespread” and that outside influences such as workshops or ideas will have little effect. Rather, any changes to negative cultures must occur at the school level (Corrie, 1995; Edmonson et al., 2002; Little, 2002; Peterson & Brietzke, 1994; Stolp, 1994). Yet, despite the understanding that school culture is intimately linked with success, this research has identified the absence of it within NTIP documents.

**The Importance and Presence of School Culture in a New Teacher’s Transition**

The teachers included in this research were easily able to identify elements of the school culture at multiple points in the discussion, demonstrating that they were aware of the culture of the school and their role within it. Some of the teachers noted the friendly atmosphere, the kindness and approachability of the staff, the attitude of the students, performance levels, location of the school, and number of teachers and staff within the school as being indicators of a school’s unique culture. All of these characteristics could influence a school’s culture in a positive manner. This is evident in the responses of the teachers who noted that schools with closely-knit teachers who respected each other in a professional manner were nice environments to work in. In contrast, one teacher shared an interesting experience of a school that has multiple members on staff who all had difficulties getting along and interacting in a professional manner. This teacher very clearly described the difficulties this environment presented for him as a new teacher and for other staff members. In contrast, another teacher shared a positive experience, noting the safe and comfortable feeling she sensed when she met the other staff who were all
ready and willing to help her in her role as new teacher in their school. For her, the positive interactions and helping attitudes seemed to shape her positive experiences.

Evident in the responses from the individual interviews is that each new teacher perceived the culture in their own unique way. Although the new teacher’s were able to identify elements of a culture that coincided with Schein’s (2010) levels of culture, they did not speculate as to how a school’s culture would ideally function. This was not asked in fear of leading the participants in the discussion, so the details provided of the school culture made it difficult to determine if the elements are indicative of a positive experience. It was interpreted that elements of friendliness, communication, types of interactions, feelings of comfort, level of perceived care are all indicative of a positive culture. Furthermore adding to the complexity, the teacher’s were constantly switching between reflections of their time at multiple schools so they were comparing the culture of one school with that of another. However, each school is comprised of it’s own unique context and therefore they cannot be compared. Sewell’s (2005) discussion regarding the complexity surrounding the definitions of culture is appropriately aligned with these findings. Each teacher and member of the culture defines the culture differently as they are influenced by previous experiences.

Elements of the culture were gleaned from multiple points in the interview discussion. Commonly noted by the new teachers was the feeling of isolation as a new teacher and observed within their school environment. The teachers indicated very difficult experiences as a result, particularly if they had no immediate support by division or department staff. Little (2002) stated that schools that are described as being isolating
are figuratively composed of a cellular like structure with common centers connecting each section. Little described how the exchanges would be infrequent, short, and dominated by personal motives, suggesting that new teachers would struggle to survive in such an environment and as a staff, the culture would become “toxic” as described by Deal and Peterson (2009). Stolp (1994) recommended that changing a school’s culture could only occur if the culture is recognized and discussed. Yet, the research findings demonstrate little recognition of a school’s culture at the school level as observed and experienced by the new teachers.

The teacher’s experiences clearly demonstrate their needs within the role of novice teacher. The reaction of these teachers in response to facing induction challenges is a direct result of their employment environment. More specifically, although a new teacher may find their first few days in the role of full-time teacher to be challenging, if they are greeted and supported by other school staff then they may view the experiences as more of development as opposed to a struggle. Feiman-Nemser et al. (2003), argued that “keeping new teachers in teaching is not the same as helping them become new teachers,” noting that the first years of teaching should be viewed as a phase in learning to teach and surround new teachers with a professional culture that supports teacher learning (p. 1). Ultimately, they will be more likely to manage the stress differently and vocalize their needs if it is done so in an environment that permits such discussions.

As demonstrated, the role of school culture cannot be omitted from Ministry level documents on new teacher provisions. School culture greatly influences a new teachers’ transition into the role and specific school environment (Little, 2002). With the drastic
variations in the roles a new teacher may encounter and the multiple teaching contexts they may face, support is needed to help the new teacher navigate the culture and become socialized into the school. It is not acceptable to disregard the function of school culture within NTIP documents and procedures. Deal and Peterson (2009) have identified that the principal’s role within the development and change of a school culture is fundamental. Any leader of the school must be aware of the current state of the culture, understanding the school and community culture in the past, present, and future, via observations, listening, discussing, and interpreting. The experiences of the teachers demonstrate that in many cases, the principal had a “hands-off” approach to dealing with the teachers and new teachers. In many cases, these teachers also indicated feelings of isolation when the staff wasn’t able to establish a collaborative culture independent of support from the principal.

**Mentoring as Vital to a Successful Transition**

The fifth research question was to evaluate the impact of the mentoring relationship established as part of NTIP on new teachers’ transition into a school. Much in the same way as other NTIP research literature (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007; Kane, 2010), mentoring was seen as the most beneficial venture in their induction under NTIP as a new teacher. The teachers shared many stories of success regarding the positive mentoring relationships established as part of NTIP.

The document analysis revealed extensive ambiguity within implementation of the NTIP mandate. Unsurprisingly, the actual experience of mentorship that teachers reported was quite unlike the image of mentorship presented by the NTIP documents. In
the instances where the mentoring component of NTIP was not seen as beneficial to their induction, the outlined cause was a mismatching between mentor and protégé, or that the circumstances upon which the mentoring was founded were not facilitative of such a relationship (i.e., the itinerant arts teachers who had to travel between schools). Kane (2010) identified that mentor and protégé matching is a barrier to the success of the program. The challenges of selecting a mentor when in a teaching role that requires constant changes in schools as identified to be a reality of the new teachers suggests a further complexity to the process of mentor and protégé matching. Central to mentoring success is the need for strong communication that can be achieved by frequent interactions and proximity between the mentor and protégé (Doerger, 2003). However, the program and experiences of teachers suggests that this challenge has not yet been addressed as a concern for NTIP implementation.

Despite instances of poor mentor/protégé matching, the teachers all indicated a person or multiple people to whom they go for support when they need it, independent of the ostensible mentorship support provided by NTIP. Teachers fortunate enough to have kind, friendly, and supportive mentors were likely to describe the relationship as “wonderful”, and instrumental to their development of confidence when facing challenges inherent to teaching. Key to this identification was that the new teachers valued having a person or mentor who was readily available and would assist them in any capacity. This finding suggests that careful consideration needs to be placed upon the ability to communicate and commitment to mentoring support from the mentor, which aligns with suggestions from Doerger (2003). Those teachers who were available and
took initiative in supporting the new teacher seemed to be described as having a positive mentoring experience. Those new teachers were more likely to take risks and engage in professional learning as outlined by Feiman-Nemser et al. (2003).

Furthermore, the findings from this research suggest that the behaviour of a mentor exceeds the mentor/protégé relationship, with the new teacher noticing interactions between the mentoring teacher and other staff members. When the protégé views this dynamic as a common feature within the social group, the new teacher feels a sense of ease within their role and environment, alleviating their struggles and transforming them into apprenticeship. Often, the new teachers identified that this type of support was reciprocal, demonstrating the spontaneous creation of a culture of mentoring. Ultimately, although the new teachers may cease to be mentored by their NTIP mentor, mentoring-like situations arose between particular individuals. Those willing to help seemed to have a commitment to the new teacher, professional learning, and/or their school community. Portner (2005) stated that induction and mentoring must be embedded into the culture of the school in order to be effective. This is done through what Portner termed as “collaborative-doing,” which identifies the needed commitment and preparedness of all members of the culture in order to embed a mentoring culture. This research identified that the new teachers may go to someone or a group of people beyond their immediate school environment. Possibly, the culture of mentoring is extended to a group of individuals beyond an immediate environment. Furthermore, the individuals who the teachers would go to did not necessarily conform to the traditional mentor type that is described in the NTIP documents. Namely, those who the teachers went to for help
were found to be other teachers, but some were much more experienced whereas others were at the same level of experience. This finding demonstrates that the new teachers and teachers within the school board are already demonstrating collaborative elements which would influence their own teaching environment. Ultimately, having a mentoring culture positively influences the school culture as it holds value for more than one person. Not just mentor and mentee as evidenced, but the interactions of the mentor and other staff influence the self-perception of the new teacher and positively impacts on the culture.

Perhaps a consideration of the influence multiple persons may have upon a new teachers’ induction should be considered. Consideration of the multiple opportunities for mentoring within a larger group in NTIP would help to influence the creation and sustenance of collaborative environments in Ontario schools.

**The Possibility for Continued Mentoring: Transitions from Formal Mentoring to Informal Mentoring**

The final research question that guided this study was to determine the lasting significance of the established mentoring relationship beyond the prescribed program period. Findings from the document analysis reveal that this is not an element of the mentoring culture outlined in the *NTIP Induction Elements Manual* or support NTIP documents. No direct mention of the relationship lasting in an extensive capacity beyond the necessary program timeline were found. Indeed, some teachers identified forms of contact they still have with their NTIP mentor, in spite of having completed the program. Often, these relationships are described as being periodical discussions about the new teachers current teaching situation, which include suggestions and support as needed.
Such informal mentorship relationships are more like friendships, which are about sharing experiences, with elements of mentorship mixed into the aura of mutual friendship.

Doerger (2003) contended that a mentor’s commitment to a teacher as a mentor is indicative of a long-term mentoring relationship and contrived collegiality is derived from mentoring relationships that are forced. The new teachers indicated that they still feel as though they are a new teacher despite having worked for a few years. Even after gaining some experience in the profession, they still identified many needs, often not very different from their needs upon their initial transition. Therefore, lasting mentoring relationships would be of value for the teachers. Despite the possible benefit from a more long-term mentoring relationship, a relationship beyond the intended program guidelines (until successful completion of TPAs) is omitted from NTIP documents. Therefore, Doerger’s (2003) statement that simple address of ministry mandates becomes the focus for induction programs remains true.

The positive mentoring relationships described by the new teachers clearly demonstrate the potential for strong bonds of trust and mutual support between mentor and protégé. However, the particular circumstances of a given novice teacher influenced their potential to engage in mentorship relationships. Teachers who were placed in an LTO position who had to move on to another school, or teachers in an itinerant arts position for only a short amount of time had a good mentoring experience, but not quite as important as described by those who were able to build a lasting relationship over a longer period of time. Although Doerger (2003) identified the importance of context
specific induction programs, this suggests that consideration of the specific context in which the new teacher is placed would also help to influence a more positive mentor/protégé match.

As indicated, further support for more long-term mentoring stems from the suggestion of the mentoring being embedded into the culture of the school. This situation is informally occurring in many situations as identified by the new teachers, however more formal recognition of the need for collaborative cultures or cultures that embrace mentoring would help to solidify the possibilities. Portner (2005) stated that collaborative school cultures begin with the school principal. Yet, the findings of this research suggest an absence in program documents and in practice regarding any explicit discussion of mentoring and school culture.

**Research Implications**

**Implications for Theory**

This research offers contributions to the Schein’s (2010) levels of culture framework and to theories of new teacher induction. First, the perceptions and experiences of teachers in relation to school culture presented many different elements. As explained in the methods chapter, the definition of school culture was not described with the individual interview participants for fear that it may mislead their responses. Rather, participants were asked questions regarding their interactions, feelings upon entering the school, observations of staff members, and in some cases, to describe the culture of the school. Together these responses provide some details of the culture of the schools about which the teachers were speaking of.
The discussions of school culture demonstrate how a teacher has many perceptions and complex notions related to what the culture of the school may be. This research indicates that it is not easy to elicit understandings of the culture given the context of teaching. This was evident as all the teachers spoke of being placed in many schools upon their entry into the profession and therefore they had to learn the culture of many schools, rather than just one. The multiple schools may have had an impact on their transition into a new school as they were more familiar with the other school culture and would transfer over their beliefs and assumptions to their new culture. Ultimately, since the teachers moved to and from the cultures so frequently, it was hard for them to have gained a complete sense of the culture. Schein (2010) identified that the poor recognition of the culture is in line with the first of the three levels. It is only once the observer (new teacher) is in the culture for sufficient time that the underlying assumptions become clear, moving the teacher onto the next level of Schein’s framework. According to Schein, difficulties occur when the newcomer fails to hold the same assumptions or foundations of the culture, as they are seen then as a foreigner. Therefore, the testimonies of teachers regarding the culture or aspects of it are comprised of multiple experiences and might contain only some aspects of the particular culture that supports Schein’s levels of culture framework.

Despite the support, Schein’s (2010) model only considers one organizational culture in the level’s of culture, but as highlighted, this research demonstrates that a newcomer must also balance previous beliefs and assumptions from another culture while integrating into a new culture. Furthermore, one participant presented the situation of a
new school being created that combined two formerly individual schools. This element presented difficulties for the culture of the school to be established as the two previous cultures were attempting to remain intact. Further consideration of these influences is needed in the teaching profession.

The second implication for theory as an outcome of this research pertains to perspectives on teacher induction. In addition to adding to the discussion regarding the already established need for new teacher support, this research also assists in confirming the appropriateness of particular elements to assist a new teacher in a successful transition into the teaching profession. Evident is the possible value of professional development and orientation when they are offered and are specific to new teacher needs. Clearly apparent is the importance and value of mentoring for new teachers which supports the inclusion of it in the induction literature.

However, the NTIP contains an evaluative component that was found to be a questionable, and sometimes unfitting, element based on experiences of the new teachers. This finding raises concerns over the presence of evaluation within induction supports. Further research is needed to determine if evaluative components are present in many other induction supports and a closer look at the outcomes of the evaluations would help to determine if evaluation is important for the process of induction.

**Implications for Practice**

This research looked at the lived experiences of new teachers who reflected upon their transition into the teaching profession. Clearly established is the importance of recognition of new teacher challenges, needs, and supports to assist in the making a
successful transition. While the Ministry of Education has recognized the challenges faced by new teachers, in reality, the program was found to be far from the ideal. The experiences of the new teachers indicated that much of the support outlined in the policy documents was not what the teachers received. Better communication between the Ministry and those implementing the program with regards to the specific needs of current new teachers would help to reconfigure the program outlines to better suit the teaching contexts.

This research also supports the need for conversations regarding collaboration, communication, and professionalism to better support new teacher needs and create positive collaborative environments where mentoring plays an important role. As evident in the findings, the mentoring element of NTIP was overwhelmingly successful as it appropriately addressed more than one facet of new teacher needs. Further consideration of the mentoring element is needed, in addition to considering the creation of a collaborative culture where mentoring is a component.

**Implications for Policy**

The research findings were founded on a content analysis framework that looked at a specific policy and the documents that comprise it rather than being an overall program evaluation. Essentially, this method partnered the lived experiences of teachers with the written mandates and details outlined in the policy. This research only examined Ministry mandated, publicly available documents regarding NTIP and did not examine any private documents that may exist from the two school boards included in the study. Therefore, any direct recommendations to the school board level of implementation
cannot be derived. Rather, the experiences of the teachers suggest particular needs which are then compared to the policy provided by the Ministry of Education.

In looking at these two methods of research, the experiences of the new teachers did not match the outlined policy documents from the Ministry. It was found that the terms used to describe the programs and implementation of the program at the school board/school level means that teachers may not receive the intended provisions. Potential exists within NTIP to facilitate positive induction experiences, insofar as the emphasis is taken off evaluation, and placed upon methods such as mentoring, customized professional development and long-term support to induct a novice teacher into school culture and, create collaborative and positive work environments. The findings suggest that gaps in communication and program implementation structure are influencing the experiences of a new teacher in their participation in NTIP. However, further research is needed to determine the exact source of the communication gaps and implementation guidelines created and offered by school boards to assist with the implementation of the program.

In addition, this research has identified the importance of school culture in the teaching profession and impact on new teacher socialization. Literature regarding the importance of school culture often addresses the concept from the school level. However, this research has illuminated the need for an extension of the importance of school culture to be present within educational policy. As evident, school culture is an important factor and requires more formal attention in policy that will take the concept from the periphery of discussions and give it a more pronounced role within the educational sphere.
Implications for Methodology

This research combined the use of document analysis and individual interviews as methods for exploring the outlined research intentions. In using both research methods a more comprehensive look at the experiences and perceptions of NTIP was gained. Value was found in conducting the document analysis in advance of the individual interviews as it helped to inform discussions, set the context and as a result, present a more thorough picture of new teacher experiences within the two school boards. Further, the document analysis as a inquiry into practice-based policy recognized many important elements to policy documents such as document language, layout, phrasing, and components. Considering these elements through the document analysis enhanced the findings and connected well with the results from the individual interviews. It helps to explain some of the perceptions and experiences found while also creating more thorough implications that could be applied at school, school board, and Ministry levels.

Limitations and Implications for Further Research

This research was based on only a few experiences of new teachers within South Eastern Ontario with details presented regarding the implementation of NTIP at a school level from only a few locations. In order for a more comprehensive examination of new teacher induction within Ontario, widespread discussions with new teachers and school professionals would be beneficial.

This research provides the foundation for discussions of the importance of awareness and influence of school culture within new teacher induction. Further research is needed to determine the implementation procedures for the two school boards
examined and to determine if the implementation of NTIP is occurring as per the ministry intentions in other school boards in Ontario. Consideration of important elements in the induction process would be beneficial to determining how a more long-term form of support may be offered to new teachers that are specific to their needs. The mentoring component of induction has been demonstrated to be influential in aiding the new teacher in their transition and in impacting the school culture. Exploration of this topic in other induction programs may offer contributions to learning more about culture within schools and a new teachers’ socialization into the culture.

**Concluding Thoughts**

This research journey began with the hope of sharing the experiences of new teachers in making the transition into the profession with a particular emphasis on the role of school culture. It was quickly realized that simply looking at new teacher experiences would not suffice to accurately present the experiences. In looking at the NTIP coupled with the testimonies of new teachers, a more comprehensive understanding of current new teacher realities was gained.

This inquiry only begins to address the importance of school culture within a new teacher’s successful induction and for the teaching profession. As reflected in the opening statements, a school’s culture is a powerful element that can often be hard to determine. This research speaks to the multi-faceted nature of school culture and the complex ways it is incorporated into every aspect of the teaching profession.
References


Niedergesaess, D. R. (2004). Some suggestions for an induction program for novice teachers in one school board in Ontario (Master’s Project Thesis). Queen’s University: Kingston, ON.


Appendix A: Original Ethics Clearance Letter

October 26, 2012

Miss Leigha Tregunna
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Duncan McArthur Hall
Queen’s University
Kingston ON K7L 3N6

Dear Miss Tregunna:

Re: GREB Ref #: GEDUC-642-12; Romeo # 6007473
Title: "GEDUC-642-12 Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in Relation to Mentoring and School Culture"

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled "GEDUC-642-12 Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in Relation to Mentoring and School Culture" for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the TCPS Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been cleared for one year. At the end of each year, the GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at https://services.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Adverse Event Report). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To make an amendment, access the application at https://services.queensu.ca/romeo_researcher/ and click Events - GREB Amendment to Approved Study Form. These changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Gill Irving, at the Office of Research Services or gillir@queensu.ca for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Stevenson, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair
General Research Ethics Board

cc: Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Faculty Supervisor
    Dr. Don Kinger, Chair, Unit REB
    Eric Wickham, Dept. Admin.
Appendix B: Amended Ethical Clearance Letter

March 13, 2013

Miss Leigha Tregunna
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Duncan McArthur Hall
Queen’s University
511 Union Street
Kingston, ON K7M 5R7

Dear Miss Tregunna:

RE: Amendment for your study entitled: GEDUC-642-12 Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in Relation to Mentoring and School Culture; ROMEC# 6007473

Thank you for submitting your amendment requesting the following changes:

1) To change from conducting two focus group meetings with approximately 5-7 participants in each meeting, to holding individual interviews with teachers who meet the pre-determined criteria for this research;

2) To add a $20 gift card to Chapters as incentive to participate in the research.

3) Revised Letter of Information;

4) Revised Consent Form.

By this letter you have ethics clearance for these changes.

Good luck with your research.

John Freeman
Acting Chair, GREB

cc: Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba, Faculty Supervisor
Appendix C: Letter of Information

Letter of Information

"Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in Relation to Mentoring and School Culture"

This research is being conducted by Leigha Tregunna, Master’s student, in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen’s policies.

What is the study about? The purpose of this research is to describe the phenomenon of new teacher induction into a school and the profession recalled by new teachers who have participated in the New Teacher Induction Program. I am hoping to determine: (a) what is the perceived role of an individual school culture in a new teacher’s successful induction experiences? (b) What is the impact of the mentoring relationship established as part of NTIP on new teachers’ transition into a school? (c) What is the lasting significance of the established mentoring relationship beyond the prescribed program period?

What does this study involve? The study will require an individual interview of approximately 60 minutes in length. The interview will take place at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University or at a location that better suits your schedule which will be decided upon by you and the researcher. It will be audio-recorded and you will be given an opportunity to check the interview transcript in order to verify the information is accurate after the interview has been transcribed. Your review of the transcript will take a quick 15 minute meeting or maybe conducted via email where I will send you a PDF version. There is minimal risk associated with this research study. Upon consent to participate in this research as interview participant, you agree to keep the content of discussions confidential. No names or specific identifiers will be reported in any document(s) resulting from this research.

Is my participation voluntary? Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason, without pressure or consequence of any kind, and all data you provided will be removed from the research. You should not feel obliged to answer any questions that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable. To withdraw from the research please contact the researcher, Leigha Tregunna (leigha.tregunna@queensu.ca).

What will happen to my responses? We will keep your responses confidential to the extent possible. Only the researchers will have access to this information. The data may be published in professional journals or presented at conferences, but any such presentations will be of general findings and will maintain individual confidentiality to the extent possible. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity. Organizations will not be named in any publications so as to keep the teachers’ identity confidential to the extent possible. Others involved in the research will have access to the data after the pseudonyms have been inserted by the researcher who collected the data. If the data is made available to other faculty or researchers for secondary analysis it will contain no identifying information. Data will be retained for five years after which time it will be destroyed. Should you be interested, you are entitled to a copy of the findings.

Will I be compensated for my participation? You will receive a $20 Chapters gift card as compensation for your time.

What if I have concerns? Any questions about study participation may be directed to the research investigator, Leigha Tregunna at leigha.tregunna@queensu.ca or to Dr. Benjamin Kibyurubu at ben.kibyurubu@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca or 613-533-6081.

What do I do if I am interested in participating in this study? If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact Leigha Tregunna (leigha.tregunna@queensu.ca) to arrange an interview. If you agree to participate, please sign the accompanying consent form and bring it to the interview. There will be an additional consent form at the interview if needed. Please retain a second copy for your records.

Sincerely,

Leigha Tregunna

Master’s Student, Faculty of Education, Queen’s University
Appendix D: Consent Form

Consent Form for Teachers

“Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in Relation to Mentoring and School Culture”

Name (please print clearly): ______________________________________

1. I have read the Letter of Information and have had any questions answered to my satisfaction.

2. I understand that I will be participating in the study called Trials, Triumphs, and Transitions: Examining Perceptions of New Teacher Induction in relation to mentoring and school culture. I will take part in an individual interview where I will be asked to describe the strengths and challenges of entering schools as a new teacher, talk about the mentoring relationship I participated in within the New Teacher Induction Program, and to talk about how my school’s culture influenced my induction into the profession and into the particular school. I understand that the interview will be digitally recorded, take approximately 60 minutes, and be conducted at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University, or at a location decided upon by myself and the researcher. I agree to keep any discussion content confidential.

3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without consequence. If I do withdraw, I understand that all data I provide will be removed from the study. I understand that the researchers will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. Only the researchers at the Faculty of Education, Queen’s University will have access to this data. The data may also be published in professional journals or presented at conferences, but any such presentations will be of general findings and will maintain individual confidentiality to the extent possible. Should I be interested, I am entitled to a copy of the findings.

4. Any questions about study participation may be directed to the Educational Researcher, Leigha Tregunna at leigha.tregunna@queensu.ca or to Dr. Benjamin Kutsyuruba at ben.kutsyuruba@queensu.ca. Any ethical concerns about the study may be directed to the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at 533-6081 or chair.GREB@queensu.ca.

I have read the above statements and freely consent to participate in this research.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________

I would like to request a copy of the results of this study sent to the following email or postal address below.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to Leigha Tregunna. Retain a second copy for your records.
Appendix E: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

At the beginning of each interview, I will share with the interview a brief history of myself including, where I am from, what I have studied, etc. I will explain that the research intentions of this study are to learn about new teacher experiences in Ontario, with connections to the mandated NTTP. There will be a particular focus on mentoring and school culture. Prior to starting the interview, the consent form will be reviewed and signed by the participants and the expectations of the participants will be discussed.

To begin each interview, I will ask the following question: Think back to before you started teaching full-time, please tell me how you were feeling, what were you excited about, did you have any concerns, what did you think would happen when you entered the school and the position?

Since this is a qualitative study, only one question will be asked at a time. Any other questions not listed in the interview guide will be asked as the interview proceeds in order to clarify and expand responses.

These types of questions may include:
“Can you tell me more about that?”
“Can you give me an example of what that means to you?”
“Please describe your feelings at that moment”

Other communication during the interview may include verbal and non-verbal actions such as head nodding, facial and/or hand gestures, to indicate that I am listening and to continue in their stories.

Following the interview, I will ask the participant if they have any other comments or would like to revisit a topic. If something is shared that is of particular importance, I will ask the participant if they could restate the point while recording.

I will give them the option of contacting me via email or phone if they think of anything they would like to add. I will describe that they will be sent a copy of the transcript for review in a few days. The participants will be asked to review the transcript to ensure that no information was missed, misinterpreted, or wrong.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview will be conducted in English and in a location agreed upon by the interviewee. In advance of the interview, the interviewer will remind the participant of the date, time, and location of the interview. The participants will be sent the letter of information and consent form for the research. Copies of these forms will be prepared in a package for participants.

Letter of information
Consent form - review and go over, sign it now, collect
Recording and confidentiality (using pseudonyms)
Ability to withdraw

PERSONAL DETAILS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
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<td>Address:</td>
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<td>Phone:</td>
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<td>Email:</td>
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<td>Age:</td>
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</table>
Education:

Position details (Have they only worked at this school? Have they always been in the same position?):

School Board:

Size of school (Students, teachers, etc. include range of grades):

Are there any new teachers at the school?

What grades do you teach?

Year they completed NTIP:

------Begin recording------

Who I am, what I am looking to learn, no wrong answers, just hoping to learn your points of view

You have signed the consent form indicating that you agree that material from this interview may be used in the production of the research thesis and subsequent publications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Interview Questions</th>
<th>Purpose of Question</th>
<th>Purpose of Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment on their position with the school, what grades do they teach, subjects, etc. to warm up.</td>
<td>To get the teachers talking about their experiences and to gather information on their perceived preparedness for entering schools and their first impressions.</td>
<td>To learn about the perceived role of an individual school culture in a new teacher’s successful induction experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Think back to when you first entered the school. Tell me how you were feeling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Please tell me what/explain more on what you were excited about?</td>
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<td>- Did you have any reservations? What were you nervous for?</td>
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<td>- How were you prepared for entering the school?</td>
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<td>- Based on your statements, would you say that you were not prepared?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Describe your first impressions of working in your school?</td>
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<td>- Tell me more about the demographics of the school? (Senior teachers, young teachers, male/female, interests) etc.</td>
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<td>- How would you describe the atmosphere? Did this change as the year went on?</td>
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<td>3. You mentioned the teachers in the previous statement, tell me more about your first interactions with other teachers and administration?</td>
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<td>- Have these interactions changed now that you have more experience?</td>
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<td>- How would you describe your principals (vice-principals) role in the school?</td>
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<td>4. What are the elements that you feel to be very important in working with other teachers and administration?</td>
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<td>5. You have participated in the New Teacher Induction Program and have been finished the program for a while. Please tell me about your time in the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What supports were made available to you in the Program?</td>
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<td>- Did you participate in all of the offered professional development?</td>
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<td>- How frequent was it?</td>
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<td>- What kinds of professional development did you receive?</td>
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<td>- Was there any areas that you would have liked help with but did not receive?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Describe the kinds of support that would have been beneficial in learning your role as a new teacher in the school? (such as communication, team building skills, caring/supportive work environment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Was there any development offered that only involved the people within the school in relation to how the school functions as professionals/culture of the school?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Is the culture of the school ever discussed? Who discusses it?</td>
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<td>6. Can you tell me about your relationship with your principal while participating in NTIP?</td>
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<td>- Tell me about their role in your progression through the program.</td>
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<td>- How frequently did you meet? How often was this regarding your role as a teacher within the school? How long were your meetings with the principal?</td>
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<td>- What is your relationship with your principal since completing the program?</td>
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<td>7. Can you tell me about the areas of focus that you received further assistance with?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Assessment? Communication with parents? Classroom management?</td>
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<td>- Is there anything else you would have liked help with?</td>
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<td>- Do you still identify as a new teacher?</td>
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<td>8. How would you describe your mentoring experience in the program?</td>
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<td>- how frequently did you meet?</td>
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<td>- please tell me about your interactions with your mentor, what did you do together?</td>
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<td>- are you still in touch with your mentor now that you have finished the program?</td>
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<tr>
<th>To get the teachers describing their experiences of NTIP and how the program was implemented in their school. Also, the teachers will identify areas of support needed and the areas that were offered by the program.</th>
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<tr>
<td>To determine the supports provided through their schools' NTIP and to explore the impact of the mentoring relationship established as part of NTIP on new teachers' transition into a school.</td>
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</table>

Do you have anything to add?

-----Stop recording-----

- Follow up meeting to go over transcript or via email. They will be sent the transcript by the end of the week and will have a few days to review the transcript where they may add a comment, clarify, or select to remove certain comments.
- Present gift card.
Appendix F: Research Flyer

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Queen’s University

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN
NEW TEACHER INDUCTION EXPERIENCE

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study that examines new teacher experiences within schools in the South-Eastern Ontario Region.

For this study, I am looking for:

- OCT certified teachers who are currently working full-time in a school (either with Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board or Limestone District School Board)
- You must have participated in Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program
- You must be within years 3 to 5 of teaching full-time

As participants in the study, you will be asked to take part in an individual interview in early March. The interview will last about 60 minutes. As a participant, you will receive a $20 Chapters Gift Card as compensation for your time.

For more information about this study or to volunteer to participate, please contact:

Leigha Tregunna
Graduate Student in the Faculty of Education
At
leigha.tregunna@queensu.ca or (613)-929-3244