

An Analysis of the Experiences of New Teachers Involved in an Induction Program:

Closing the Gap between Expectations and Reality

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**Abstract**

International literature on induction within education consistently states that induction programs provide a variety of benefits for new teachers. In Ontario in 2006, to support new teachers, the Ministry of Education introduced the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). The NTIP consists of three main components: an orientation for new teachers, individual mentoring for new teachers, as well as ongoing professional development opportunities tailored to new teachers. In 2006-2011, the NTIP underwent an evaluation by a research team from the University of Ottawa charged with evaluating the implementation and efficacy of the program. To date in Ontario, there is a gap in the literature on the qualitative experiences of new teachers involved in induction programs. This study, as part of the larger evaluation, sought to address the lack of empirical work in this area by presenting the lived experiences of new teachers in Ontario. Data have been generated through semi-structured interviews with 20 new teachers at the high school level in Ontario, six of whom are presented as typical cases of a range of new teacher experiences. Three existing induction programs are profiled and through an analysis of the experiences and observations of the new teachers in this study, six essential elements of induction have been described. It is anticipated that the results of this study will help inform future policy and practice in the area of induction programs.

## Table of Contents

|                                                          |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                                  | <i>ii</i>  |
| <i>Abstract</i>                                          | <i>iii</i> |
| <b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>                         | <b>1</b>   |
| Teacher retention                                        | 2          |
| How induction programs help new teachers                 | 4          |
| <b>Research Context</b>                                  | <b>5</b>   |
| Challenges for New Teachers                              | 5          |
| The Teachers' Voices                                     | 7          |
| <b>Research Questions</b>                                | <b>7</b>   |
| <b>Challenges for the researcher</b>                     | <b>8</b>   |
| <b>Terminology</b>                                       | <b>10</b>  |
| New Teacher                                              | 10         |
| Mentoring                                                | 10         |
| Orientation                                              | 11         |
| Professional Development                                 | 11         |
| Chapter Summary                                          | 12         |
| <b>Chapter Two: Review of the Literature</b>             | <b>13</b>  |
| <b>Teacher Retention</b>                                 | <b>13</b>  |
| The Effects of Low Retention Rates                       | 15         |
| A Changing Workplace – What Teachers Need to Know        | 18         |
| Induction                                                | 21         |
| <b>Features of Effective Induction Programs</b>          | <b>23</b>  |
| The New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz, California        | 23         |
| The Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick | 25         |
| The Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme                    | 27         |
| Summary                                                  | 28         |
| Effective Mentoring                                      | 28         |
| Chapter Summary                                          | 30         |
| <b>Chapter 3: Methods</b>                                | <b>31</b>  |
| Rationale for Qualitative Research Design                | 31         |
| Rationale for Phenomenological Research Design           | 33         |
| Rationale for Cross Case Study Research Design           | 34         |

|                                                                                |                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Ethics Procedures</b>                                                       | <b>35</b>         |
| <b>Participant Selection</b>                                                   | <b>36</b>         |
| Teaching as an Emotional Practice                                              | 38                |
| <b>Data Collection Procedures</b>                                              | <b>40</b>         |
| Interview protocol                                                             | 40                |
| <b>Data Analysis</b>                                                           | <b>41</b>         |
| <b>Trustworthiness</b>                                                         | <b>42</b>         |
| <b>Transferability of Data</b>                                                 | <b>43</b>         |
| <b>Researcher's perspective</b>                                                | <b>44</b>         |
| <b>Chapter Summary</b>                                                         | <b>45</b>         |
| <b><i>Chapter Four: Findings</i></b>                                           | <b><i>46</i></b>  |
| <b>The Beginning New Teacher</b>                                               | <b>47</b>         |
| Clive                                                                          | 48                |
| Gail                                                                           | 53                |
| Joanne                                                                         | 60                |
| <b>The Experienced New Teacher</b>                                             | <b>65</b>         |
| John.                                                                          | 66                |
| Leslie                                                                         | 71                |
| Elizabeth                                                                      | 75                |
| <b>Cross-Case Analysis</b>                                                     | <b>84</b>         |
| The Beginning New Teacher                                                      | 84                |
| The Experienced New Teacher                                                    | 90                |
| <b>Differences between beginning new teachers and experienced new teachers</b> | <b>96</b>         |
| Induction to the school                                                        | 96                |
| Experience of being a new teacher                                              | 97                |
| The Induction Program                                                          | 97                |
| Mentoring                                                                      | 98                |
| <b>Advice and avenues for improvement</b>                                      | <b>98</b>         |
| <b>Expectations of teaching</b>                                                | <b>99</b>         |
| <b>How NTIP closed the gap between expectations and reality</b>                | <b>99</b>         |
| <b>Chapter Summary</b>                                                         | <b>100</b>        |
| <b><i>Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions</i></b>                         | <b><i>101</i></b> |
| <b>Orientation</b>                                                             | <b>102</b>        |
| <b>Quality Formalized and Supportive Mentoring</b>                             | <b>102</b>        |
| <b>Professional Development</b>                                                | <b>103</b>        |
| <b>Appropriate Teaching Load</b>                                               | <b>104</b>        |
| <b>Evaluation of New Teachers</b>                                              | <b>104</b>        |
| <b>Mentors as Evaluators</b>                                                   | <b>106</b>        |
| <b>Evaluation of the Induction Program</b>                                     | <b>107</b>        |

|                                                           |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Flexibility</b>                                        | <b>108</b>        |
| <b><i>Contributions and Limitations of this Study</i></b> | <b><i>109</i></b> |
| <b>Contributions</b>                                      | <b>109</b>        |
| <b>Limitations</b>                                        | <b>110</b>        |
| <b><i>Directions for Future Research</i></b>              | <b><i>111</i></b> |
| <b><i>Concluding Comments</i></b>                         | <b><i>112</i></b> |
| <b><i>References</i></b>                                  | <b><i>113</i></b> |
| <b><i>Appendix – Interview Schedule</i></b>               | <b><i>126</i></b> |

## Chapter One: Introduction

Here they come. And I'm not ready. How could I be? I'm a new teacher and learning on the job.

--Frank McCourt, *Teacher Man*, 2005

This study has attempted to examine the phenomenon of being a new teacher in Ontario in light of significant changes to support systems for new teachers. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the experiences of six new teachers in Ontario in 2006 taking part in the first year of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), at the time, a newly mandated induction program for all new teachers<sup>1</sup> in Ontario. It was anticipated that the findings from this study would inform schools and policy makers in giving them a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of new teachers. While a number of studies exist that analyze components and efficacy of induction programs, it is rare to hear directly from new teachers themselves. This research used qualitative case study methodology to illustrate the phenomenon of being a new teacher involved in an induction program. The six participants in this study were purposefully chosen from a larger field of twenty new teachers as they represented an important sub-set of new teachers. Three of the participants represented the beginning new teacher, that is, new teachers that during the time of the interview were experiencing their first year as a full-time teacher. The other three participants represented the experienced new teacher, new teachers that

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<sup>1</sup> The Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) defines new teachers as those certified by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) who have been hired into permanent positions – full-time or part-time – by a school board, school authority or provincial school to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario on or after the start of the 2005-2006 school year.

had previous teaching experience, whether in the private system in Ontario, out-of-province, or outside Canada altogether.

This chapter begins with an overview of the issue of teacher retention, followed with an explanation of why teachers leave the profession in their early years, the expenses this poses for school boards and the effect on academic outcomes for students. A brief description of the introduction of NTIP in Ontario is presented, followed by a discussion of the importance of listening to new teachers' experiences. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the challenges faced by the researcher and an explanation of some of the terms that will be used in this thesis.

### **Teacher retention**

New teachers are faced with a variety of challenges, including managing classroom behavior, facing a lack of administrative support, dealing with personal and professional expectations, teaching courses with limited teaching resources, handling communication with parents, not to mention the often surprisingly heavy load of paperwork that is part of any teacher's life (Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Huntley, 2000; Dias-Lacy & Guirguis, 2017).

Unfortunately, teaching is a profession that has traditionally "eaten its young" and the experience of being a new teacher has often been described as "trial by fire" or "sink or swim" experience (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kutsyuruba, Godden, Covell, Matheson & Walker, 2016). In this context, if new teachers are not given the proper support in their early years, they will be less likely to remain in the profession, thus adversely affecting student achievement (Kutsyubura et al., 2018).

Teaching, as a career, traditionally experiences high turnover rates (Ingersoll, 2007). In the United States, poor retention of teachers is a documented problem. Half of new teachers leave the profession in their first five years (Ingersoll, 2007). Other studies show that 40-50% of leave within their first five years of teaching (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010). In Canada, national retention rates are more difficult to gather as statistics are collected by provincial ministries of education. However, a major study in 2004 stated that 30% of new teachers were leaving the profession in the first five years (Canadian Teaching Federation, 2004). In Alberta, this number rose to 40% in 2010 (Clandinin et al., 2015). In Ontario, one in five teachers were at risk of leaving teaching early in their career (Jamieson, 2003).

Decline in public respect, increased workload, isolation, inadequate resources and support, lack of time to prepare, difficult teaching assignments, and dealing with stress are among the documented reasons for teachers leaving the profession (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2006; OECD, 2005, Kutyruba et al., 2016). Sarah Gambrell, a Masters student at Brock University, offered a compelling description of her reasons for leaving teaching altogether as a young teacher. In her thesis titled, *Why I am not a teacher: A self-study examining why I made the decision to exit the teaching profession*, Gambrell notes the “myriad” of difficulties teachers face:

“the student discipline, the difficult parents, the lack of sufficient teaching materials, student motivation problems, understanding the complex school policies and systems, meeting the needs of students...[lack of] professional respect, the sense of powerlessness...poor leadership and poor communications” (Gambrell, 2006).

Losing teachers, particularly those early in their careers, is detrimental to both schools and students (Kutyuruba & Walker, 2017, Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino & Felsher, 2010). Schools and school districts inevitably lose money invested in their teachers and have to spend money to hire and induct new teachers (Watlington et al., 2010; OECD, 2005). Most importantly, students are negatively affected by high teacher turnover as teachers' teaching abilities and performance are seen as the most significant factors contributing to student achievement (Cochran-Smith, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kutyuruba et. al, 2016). Students in disadvantaged schools are further at risk where retention rates are higher than at more affluent schools (Burgess & Mayo, 2012; Watlington et al., 2010). Furthermore, teacher retention problems have a severe impact on at-risk students and schools with lower-performing, poor and minority students have more difficulty hiring and keeping teachers; this further adversely affects student academic performance (Watlington et al., 2010).

### **How induction programs help new teachers**

In response to high teacher turnover, and the resulting adverse effect on student outcomes, induction programs have become more common internationally (OECD, 2005; Todderdell, Bubb, Woodroffe and Hanrahan, 2004; Ingersoll & Kralik; Cameron, 2007). Research consistently shows that induction programs have a positive impact on new teachers experiences and their retention (Glazerman, Isenberg, Dolfen, Bleeker, Johnson, Grider & Jacobus, 2010; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kutyuruba & Walker, 2017).

Furthermore, research states that induction programs help new teachers meet classroom challenges and the performance expectation placed on them. They have been documented to ease

the stress, anxiety and issues of self-efficacy that new teachers often struggle with (Kane & Francis, 2013).

### **Research Context**

In Ontario in 1995, under the Conservative government, funding for education was drastically cut. Services deemed non-essential, including programs that supported the induction of new teachers, fell victim to new government policy (Glassford & Salinitri, 2007). However, with the change in government, since 2006, support in the form of an induction program for new teachers became a priority for the Ontario Ministry of Education. In 2006, the Ministry introduced the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) across all Ontario elementary and secondary schools. The Ministry of Education stated that the NTIP “gives teachers, as well as students and parents, the assurance that beginning teachers will get the assistance they require to effectively translate their initial training and commitment to success in the province’s classrooms.” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, pg. 1)

### **Challenges for New Teachers**

In 2006, new teachers in Ontario were struggling. The 2006 Transition to Teaching Report surveyed 4,300 teachers who were in their first five years of teaching and is published by the Ontario College of Teachers. The report stated that while teaching was a desirable profession for young people wanting to make a difference in the lives of students, new teachers were dealing with the stresses of poorly fitted grade and subject assignments, a lack of preparation in areas such as classroom management, motivating students, adapting their instruction to different learning styles, covering the breadth of the curriculum, finding classroom resources, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and communicating with parents (Ontario College of

Teachers, 2006).

However, the NTIP, introduced in 2006, provided a much-needed support system for struggling new teachers in Ontario. The program has three components; first, an orientation wherein new teachers are welcome to the board and school; second, ongoing professional development for new teachers and mentors; and third, mentorship, wherein experienced teachers mentor new teachers. In 2008, an evaluation of the first year of NTIP was published by a research team lead by Professor Ruth Kane from the University of Ottawa. Among its findings were that “new teachers reported feeling better about themselves as teachers as a result of their participation in the NTIP. New teachers reported that the NTIP enabled them to be welcomed and supported in their schools and most report increased levels of confidence and satisfaction in their roles as teachers” (Kane, 2008).

The more recent 2017 Transition to Teaching Report shows that teachers are feeling happy about their career choice and are satisfied with their day-to-day work. However, they do feel unprepared to teach First Nation, Metis and Inuit perspective and cultures, support English language learners, , prepare report cards, and teach combined grades (Ontario College of Teachers, 2017). New teachers identified the following areas in which they felt they needed more training: mental health, addictions and well-being, teaching students with special needs, special education, classroom management and organization.

Notably, echoing the report from the University of Ottawa, new teachers reported a high degree of satisfaction with the NTIP, with particular emphasis on the impact of their mentor’s guidance. The teachers in the 2017 report showed a strong appreciation for the support provided by their mentors, and this is indeed echoed by the participants in this study. However, this study

aims to hone in on new teachers views of what elements of induction are most helpful and what areas need to be improved to support them in their early career.

### **The Teachers' Voices**

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report *The Experience of New Teachers* (Jensen, Sandoval-Hernandez, Knoll, & Gonzalez, 2012) described the proliferation of new teacher induction programs internationally wherein most new teachers work in schools with either mentoring or induction programs. While acknowledging the necessity and benefit of these programs, the report questions their effectiveness. Among its key findings was that new teachers in induction programs did not receive any more feedback on their teaching from mentors than other new teachers. The report also described how all induction programs are not created equal; while one school district may provide an orientation session for new teachers and term it “induction,” another may also provide deeper mentoring opportunities.

It is vital then that authentic teacher voices help to inform induction programs and ensure that they are serving their intended purposes. This study aims to shed light on the lived experiences of new teachers participating in the New Teacher Induction Program in Ontario.

### **Research Questions**

We can see that teaching as a profession is demanding and complex and that new teachers need support in the first years of their career (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004). Furthermore, partly in response to this (as well as to low retention rates among new teachers), new teachers are receiving a new wave of support, as evident in the introduction in Ontario of the New Teacher

Induction program.

The main research questions are thus:

(a) What can we learn from new teachers themselves about their experiences of induction programs? (b) What are the expectations placed on new teachers? (c) In what ways (if at all) has the New Teaching Induction Program assisted new teachers to meet such expectations? (d) How do the experiences of new teachers in Ontario compare with their expectations upon entering the profession?”

### **Challenges for the researcher**

In her description of qualitative research, Kathy Charmaz states that despite the researchers’ claims of neutrality, no analysis is neutral (2005). Upon embarking on this study, I was aware that as a high school teacher, I undoubtedly see teaching through a certain lens. When I heard about the crazed, hectic first few days of a teacher’s first year, a common experience among my interviewees, my natural inclination was to talk about my own experiences as a new teacher. I resisted this temptation, as I wanted the comments to be their own; I did not want their comments to be coloured by my experiences. While semi-structured in nature, the researcher erred on the side of formality. I felt that an informal interview might have come to resemble staff room chatter. So, while I could not attempt to achieve neutrality, I did attempt to limit my input in the interviews and to put some space between myself and the subject (Charmaz, 2005).

My overriding belief upon entering this project was that new teachers would indeed benefit from being involved in an induction program. Before conducting the interviews, I predicted that responses to the induction program would be generally positive. Implicit in this attitude is that

new teachers all experience some common challenges in their first year. In the literature on induction, particularly in policy documents, new teachers tend to be lumped into a homogenous group (Schaefer, Long and Clandinin, 2012). To be able to generalize findings and offer some sort of solution to the plight of new teachers, it makes sense to present them as one entity. The reality, however, is that new teachers have varying backgrounds; many have switched careers, some have unexpectedly found themselves in teaching, while others see teaching as a calling (Schaefer et al., 2012).

This situation is reflected in the Ontario College of Teachers' report *Transition to Teaching* published in 2017. Among the 3,420 new teachers within a five-year period who took part in the survey, there were teachers new to Canada, Indigenous teachers, French as a second language teachers, English language teachers, part-time teachers, supply teachers, and teachers of various ages many of whom had switched careers. This speaks to the diversity amongst the new teacher ranks and to the importance of seeing each new teacher as a unique professional with individual needs. A forty-five-year-old new teacher with a background in finance and a twenty-two-year-old teacher graduate directly out of teachers' college will have different realities and past life experiences to draw on. Schaefer, Long, and Clandinin (2012) have cautioned against the "one-size-fits-all" approach, whereby all new teachers are treated the same. They highlighted the importance of valuing "the knowledge and past experiences they [new teachers] bring to the professional landscape" (p. 117). It is important to understand that while we can offer support for new teachers, it must pay attention to their individual needs.

## **Terminology**

This study explores the experiences of new teachers involved in the New Teacher Induction Program in Ontario. It is therefore important to clarify the ways in which terminology related to induction programs is used in this study. The work of New Zealand researcher Marie Cameron (2007) is useful for defining the concepts of mentoring and induction, while the definitions for new teacher and orientation have been taken from the NTIP Induction Elements Manual, 2006.

### **New Teacher**

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) has articulated a definition for “New Teacher” which is applied within the operation of the NTIP. New teachers are defined as:

all new teachers (including teachers trained out-of-province) certified by the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) who have been hired into permanent positions – full-time or part-time – by a school board, school authority or provincial school to begin teaching for the first time in Ontario on or after the start of the 2005-06 school year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, pg. 8).

### **Mentoring**

Mentoring is a formal coaching relationship in which an experienced teacher gives guidance, support, and feedback to a new teacher (Cameron, 2007). Cameron (2007), contends that high quality mentor programs include mentor training, pair first- and second-year teachers with mentors in similar grades and subject areas, and provide release time and common planning time for mentors and mentored. She states that induction goes beyond mentoring to provide an extensive framework of support, professional development, and standards-based assessments and

evaluations. Comprehensive induction programs vary in their particular design, but essential elements include a high-quality mentor program, ongoing professional development, access to an external network of beginning teachers, and standards-based evaluations of beginning teachers and the program itself (Cameron, 2007).

### **Orientation**

Orientation is one of the requirements of the NTIP. New teachers are provided with an overview of the NTIP and ensure that new teachers are familiar with their classroom, their school and the school board. The NTIP Induction Elements Manual states that orientations should be “differentiated for teachers new to the profession; trained in Ontario but new to a publicly funded Ontario school board; trained in another Canadian province; and trained outside of Canada” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, pg. 16). New teachers are required to attend both a board and school orientation.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development, along with orientation and mentoring, is one of the three elements of the NTIP. To fulfill the requirements of Ontario’s NTIP, new teachers need to complete a professional development framework wherein they pursue professional development opportunities both with their mentors and independently. The OECD’s publication *Teachers Matter* (2005) defines professional development as activities “that seek to update, develop and broaden knowledge teachers acquired during initial teacher education and/or provide them with new skills and professional understanding” (p. 121).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter began with an introduction to this study then provided an overview of the issue of teacher retention. This was followed with an explanation of why teachers leave the profession in their early years, the expenses this poses for school boards and the effect on academic outcomes for students. A description of the NTIP and the challenges faced by new teachers in Ontario was then presented. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the importance of listening to new teachers' voices followed by an explanation of some of the terms used in this thesis.

The remainder of this thesis is organized into four separate chapters: (1) the Review of the Literature (chapter 2) looks closely at the research in the area of new teacher induction programs; (2) the Methods chapter (chapter 3) describes the research methodology that was used as well as a description of qualitative research and case study methods followed by a description of the data collection, data analysis, and trustworthiness; (3) the Findings chapter (chapter 4) presents the six case studies followed by a cross-case analysis of the six participants; (4) the Discussion and Conclusions chapter (chapter 5) describes the findings for each of the research questions as well as themes that have emerged followed by the contributions of the thesis and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter Two: Review of the Literature**

This literature review will serve as an introduction to three important areas of research and scholarship that are directly related to the experience of being a new teacher in Ontario today: teacher retention, the changing workplace, and the nature and impact of induction programs for new teachers. In addition, three existing teacher induction programs will be used as illustrations of the ways in which induction programs can affect the transition of new teachers into the profession.

### **Teacher Retention**

The quality of the professional experience in the early years of teaching is recognized as a crucial influence on the likelihood of leaving the teaching profession (OECD, 2005; (Clandinin etl al., 2015; Kutsyubura & Walker, 2017). Low retention rates among new teachers are well-documented internationally (Boreen, Johnson, Niday, & Potts, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Lindqvist, Nordanger, & Carlsson, 2014; Kutsyubura et al., 2016). In April 2002, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched an international review of 23 countries' policies related to the recruitment, retention, and support of teachers. The publication *Teachers Matter* (2005) is the product of this review and is arguably the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken of teacher policy at the international level. According to the OECD report (2005), teacher retention is a global concern and is alarmingly low among those in their first three years of teaching. More recently, according to the OECD's *Teaching and*

*Learning International Survey* (2013)<sup>2</sup>, an average of 10% of teachers (among the twenty-three countries surveyed) in their first one to three years of teaching leave the profession. The report stated that attrition rates among developed countries differ. In Germany and France, less than 5% of the teaching force leave the profession in the first five years. In Sweden, however, attrition rates have risen sharply from the late 90s (18%) to 2008 (32%) (Lindqvist et al., 2014). A similar pattern exists in the UK, where 40% of teachers leave teaching within the first three years, and in the United States, where only 60% of those who graduate from initial teacher education programs actually enter teaching (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). Among those who do enter teaching in the US, 40-50% leave the occupation within the first five years (Ingersoll, 2007). In 2014, a group called Alliance for Excellent Education stated that roughly half a million US teachers leave the profession each year, citing lack of support and poor working conditions as well as low wages and lack of respect.

In Canada, there are statistical accounts of the results of dissatisfaction among new teachers. In 2004, teacher turnover was at 30% within the first five years (Canadian Teaching Federation, 2004). An article (2015) published by the Canadian Education Association (CEA) titled *Teachers in Crisis: A Crisis in Teaching*, stated that in 2013, according to McGill University professor Jon G. Bradley, an estimated 30% new teachers in Canada were leaving the profession within the first five years. In Alberta, in 2010, 40% of beginning teachers left

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<sup>2</sup> Information for TALIS was gathered via paper-and-pencil or on-line questionnaires from 20 teachers in 200 schools per country. The main data collection window was a three-months period towards the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

teaching within five years, while 25% of graduates from Alberta teacher education programs did not take up teaching positions in Alberta (Clandinin et al., 2015).

Retention of new teachers is also a documented problem in Ontario. In 2003, an Ontario College of Teachers news release stated that almost one in five teachers were at risk of leaving teaching altogether early in their career (Jamieson, 2003). In 2006, in their document titled *Growing into the Profession*, the Ontario College of Teachers reported that annually approximately 10,000 new teachers enter the profession, while 3,500 leave full-time classroom teaching before retirement. Additionally, the Canadian Teachers' Federation (2000) survey reported that more than 60 per cent of Ontario School Boards found that retaining new teachers is a challenge.

While attrition rates vary from province to province, the research shows that attrition rates in Canada are highest among teachers in their first five years (Kutsybura et al., 2018).

### **The Effects of Low Retention Rates**

The early career loss of teachers is both costly to schools and detrimental to student learning (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017). The OECD has stated that low retention rates for new teachers have a range of long term effects. First, a great deal of money is invested in programs to certify teachers, a poor investment when a high percentage of graduates leave the profession citing dissatisfaction with teaching. Second, schools are left to scramble to hire replacements as teachers leave before they become effective as classroom practitioners. Third, schools have to incur costs of inducting new teachers often with poor results in terms of retention. Fourth, students and parents in schools with high teacher turnover can become disenchanted with a

school that cannot hold onto its most valuable resource. Finally, students inevitably suffer from the lack of stability that results from high teacher turnover (OECD, 2005).

These adverse effects are compounded for disadvantaged schools since they typically suffer from the lowest retention rates. For example, in England, teacher turnover rates are substantially higher in inner London in lower income areas than in northern England (Allan, Burgess, & Mayo, 2012). This trend is evident in the Netherlands and in the United States, where turnover rates are higher in schools where the enrolment of minorities from the lower end of the economic spectrum is greater (OECD, 2005; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

While attrition is natural in any profession, within education it is of particular concern, considering it is often the most talented, ambitious, and energetic new teachers that are inclined to leave (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017). This phenomenon has been proposed to be largely due to new teachers receiving the most difficult teaching assignments (Bloom & Davis, 2003). As Linda Darling Hammond writes,

Most teachers start their careers in disadvantaged schools where turnover is highest, are assigned the most educationally needy students whom no one else wants to teach, are given the most demanding teaching loads with greatest number of extra duties, and receive few curriculum materials and no mentoring (2003, p. 280).

Gary Bloom and Barbara Davis used an effective analogy to describe the situation in the United States:

Imagine a hospital where senior surgeons confine their work to tonsillectomies and where new residents are marched off, alone, to the operating theatre to perform brain surgery. We do the equivalent when we assign new secondary teachers multiple preps

and remedial classes, while senior faculty teach five periods of honors, or when we assign the new male elementary teacher all of the second-grade rowdies because “men are good with discipline.” (2007, p. 7)

While teaching as a profession has always seen some attrition, and indeed some attrition is desirable and expected, research suggests that teacher morale in Ontario in the early 2000s was unprecedentedly low and more teachers were being lost to other professions than ever before. In their report titled *The Schools We Need: A New Blueprint for Ontario*, a research team from the Ontario Institute of Educational Studies (OISE) documented the eroding appeal of teaching as a profession:

Policy changes over the past seven or eight years have increased pressure and accountability for teachers, but with no corresponding increase in support or resources to meet these higher standards. The escalating atmosphere of conflict and rancour added to the problems, with teachers feeling under attack from the government. In the short run, the situation has been almost uniformly debilitating for teachers’ professional commitments and levels of stress; it has left them feeling demeaned and demoralized. While some resistance to change is to be expected, the current situation has eroded the appeal of the profession, creating recruitment and retention problems for the years ahead. (Leithwood, Fullan, & Watson, 2003, p. 13)

One of the many recommendations presented in the above report is that new teachers are in need of increased supports in the form of induction programs.

The introduction of the New Teacher Induction Program was, in part, a reaction to the low retention rates and lack of support for new teachers in Ontario. A 2006 press release from

the Ontario Ministry of Education stated that “effective mentoring programs over the beginning years of a teacher's career are vital to improve new teacher retention and development for beginning teachers” (p.1). The importance of induction programs to a new teacher’s development is repeatedly emphasized in the literature (Kutyuruba & Walker, 2017; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Clandinin et al., 2015).

### **A Changing Workplace – What Teachers Need to Know**

Teachers today need to know about integrating technology into their teaching, using student performance assessment techniques, implementing curriculum and performance standards, maintaining order in the classroom, addressing the needs of students with disabilities, meeting the needs of students from diverse cultural back- grounds, working with parents, and helping students with limited English proficiency (Levine, 2006).

As evident in research on school reform, schools have undergone a myriad of changes that inevitably pose challenges to new and experienced teachers; the mission of schools has changed dramatically over the past few decades to educate more diverse learners, and prepare students to achieve higher learning standards (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2000). In this environment teachers need to know, simply put, a lot about everything. Teachers today need to have a deep understanding of their subject matter, be able show how ideas connect across subjects and day-to-day life, know how to draw upon students’ previous knowledge in a given area, and know how to have them connect it to new knowledge. Secondary teachers must also understand adolescent development and be able to teach in ways that resonate with students. Additionally, they must be able to listen to students’ concerns and react to them as well as motivate them.

Teachers must also know how to communicate effectively with other teachers, administrators, and parents (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

In the United States, the demands placed on teachers today is particularly telling when compared to what was expected of teachers in past generations. As Michael deCourcy Hinds (2002) wrote in the Carnegie Report on Education: “Just 15 or 20 years ago, in many lagging schools – a quality teacher was one who maintained order in the classroom, covered the required texts and topics and made sure that most students were learning” (p. 3). Expectations for teachers today in the United States are notably different. Within an increasingly global economy, teachers are under pressure to teach all students to “world-class standards” and teachers are seen as vital in preparing a highly qualified labour force (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Schools are also facing an increasingly complex society in which they must educate “the most diverse student body in history to higher academic standards than ever before” (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 149).

In Ontario, schools are similarly faced with increasing pressures and difficulties. Goodson, Hargreaves and Moore (2006) documented the dramatic change in schools in the last 40 years as seen through the eyes of a group of teachers at a middle-class high school in Ontario. Teachers in the study reported increasing discipline problems among students and a general decline in their work habits, while students 30 years ago were “ready to learn and able to learn” (p. 58). Teachers in the study also reported that, in contrast to generations past, students today no longer see their schools as the “social hub” of their lives (p. 58). New teachers, therefore, are commonly entering unstable and unpredictable school environments. This phenomenon, coupled

with the documented isolation that first-year teachers often feel can be extremely discouraging (OCT, 2006).

In July 2005, the Ontario College of Teachers conducted a representative sample survey via telephone of more than 1,000 teachers. They were asked to rank the challenges they faced as teachers in their schools. The top four challenges were (a) large class sizes, (b) students who were identified as “at risk,” students with special needs, or students new to Canada, (c) a lack of support staff, and finally, (d) student discipline.

The Ontario College of Teachers 2015 Transition to Teaching Report also documented a highly challenging environment for new teachers. The new teachers surveyed reported that they were

not well prepared to incorporate First Nations, Métis and Inuit history, perspectives and world views and also to teach assignments beyond their initial teaching qualifications, Teaching English language learners and teaching combined grade classrooms... less well prepared for daily occasional teaching, to teach students with special needs and for mathematics curriculum and pedagogy, report card preparation, school administrative routines, working with assistive devices and communicating with parents. (2015, p. 38)

In response to high teacher turnover and the concerns of teachers, administrators, policy makers, and parents, induction programs are increasingly common in educational settings (Cameron, 2007). As schools are becoming more complex and expectations for teachers increase, induction programs such as the NTIP have become the norm, both in Canada and elsewhere. In their extensive systematic review of teacher induction and

mentoring in Canada, Kutsyuruba, Godden, Covell, Matheson and Walker stated that “induction programs and high-quality mentoring programs have positive impacts through increased teacher effectiveness, higher satisfaction, commitment, improved classroom instruction and student achievement, and early-career retention of novice teachers” (2016, p. 9). In New Zealand, empirical evidence demonstrates that effective induction programs help retain teachers, as well as support new teachers to build on the early foundations provided in their initial teacher education programs (Cameron, 2007).

### **Induction**

According to Cameron (2007), there exists some confusion in the literature as to the difference between mentoring and induction. Often the terms are used interchangeably. Wong (2005) proposed that induction goes beyond mentoring to include a broad range of supports. In most of the literature consulted, mentoring is identified as the pivotal element of more extensive induction programs. The relationship between the new teacher and his or her mentor is presented as just one, albeit essential, element of induction. Beyond mentoring, induction programs typically include an orientation and ongoing professional development for new teachers (Wong, 2005).

The literature on induction consistently states that induction programs have a range of benefits for new and experienced teachers (Glazerman et al., 2010; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Kutyuruba & Walker, 2017). In their study on teacher retention, Joftus and Maddox-Dolan (2005) stated that new and veteran teachers in the U.S. stayed longer in their profession because of induction programs. They noted that “both existing research and anecdotal evidence suggest that induction programs lead to

significant gains in teacher's retention, efficacy, and satisfaction" (2005, p. 12).

The benefits of induction programs have not gone unnoticed by education policy makers. Todderdell, Bubb, Woodroffe and Hanrahan (2004) described the international presence of induction programs: "In America, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England, induction related to specified new standards of performance which are expected of new entrants to the profession has become the norm" (p. 9). In New Zealand, induction for teachers has been the practice for more than twenty-two years and its programs have received praise from a variety of international sources (Cameron, 2007). In their study on effects of induction programs on the retention of teachers in the U.S., Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) found that there is "empirical support for the claim that assistance for new teachers and, in particular, mentoring programs have a positive impact on teachers and their retention" (p. 1). In their literature review on the relationship between induction and retention mentoring, Guarino, Santibanez, and Daley (2006) stated that induction programs played a key role in teachers' decisions to stay in teaching (p. 197).

The concept of including multiple induction components is seen in the research as being integral to the success of mentoring programs. In his review of international induction programs, Kearney (2014), highlighted the following integral components of an effective induction program:

- a one- to two-year mandated program that focuses on teacher learning and evaluation,
- the provision of a mentor,
- the opportunity for collaboration,
- structured observations,
- reduced teaching and/or release time,

- intensive workplace learning,
- beginning teacher seminars and/or meetings,
- professional support and/or professional networking, and
- part of a program of professional development.

Ingersoll and Kralik (2004) stated that programs with multiple components have a much more positive impact on teachers involved and teachers who have been involved in more than three components are much less likely to leave the profession.

### **Features of Effective Induction Programs**

While the impact of induction programs is clearly beneficial for new and experienced teachers (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002), it is important to understand exactly what makes induction programs successful. Three exemplary induction programs are described in detail below.

#### **The New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz, California**

The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP) is widely acknowledged as the “gold standard” for induction programs. SCNTP district leaders have consistently noted that the SCNTP accelerates teacher learning, making first-year teachers look like third-year teachers (Walsh, 2004).

The Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP) began in 1998. Its stated goal was “to provide a program of support and assessment in which the advancement of skills and knowledge is a continuous flow from pre-service through the first two year of teaching and beyond” (Walsh, 2004). Recent findings by an evaluation team have been encouraging. After fourteen years, fewer than five percent of teachers involved in the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project have left the

profession. This contrasts with a nationwide attrition rate of between forty and fifty percent (Ingersoll, 2007). The program is a state-wide effort and is a joint undertaking of the University of California Santa Cruz's Teacher Education Program and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education.

The SCNTP has three main components. First, beginning teachers have weekly contact with an advisor. Advisors in the New Teacher Project are released on a full-time basis from their teaching in order to support a small group of new teachers. This is a distinguishing factor of the SCNTP. In all programs studied in the literature on induction, advisors or mentors generally have access to release time, but they are usually still working as full-time teachers (OECD, 2005). Advisors in the SCNTP observe and coach the beginning teacher, offer emotional support, assist with planning, aid in designing classroom management strategies, assist with short and long-term planning, teach demonstration lessons, provide curriculum resources, and facilitate communication with the principal. Advisors and new teachers keep an interactive journal to enhance communication, problem-solving, and reflection (Walsh, 2004).

Secondly, beginning teachers are formally assessed according to the district regulations. A professional portfolio serves as the vehicle for documenting the teacher's growth over time.

Third, beginning teachers have access to professional development opportunities in the form of workshops, seminars, and release time. Beginning teachers attend monthly seminars, which are designed to build a support network among their peers. Seminars are also developed to assist beginning teachers with meeting the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. Each seminar provides teachers with an opportunity to learn about effective teaching strategies and to reflect on them with other beginning teachers. Curriculum standards

are emphasized. Release time is also provided to new teachers to observe veteran teachers, plan curriculum, attend professional development trainings, and assess their progress (Walsh, 2004).

An evaluation of the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project has reported a number of favourable outcomes for program participants (Walsh, 2004). New teachers reported an increased sense of efficacy and greater confidence in their teaching. Both new teachers and veteran teachers reported that they are more likely to engage in collaborative relationships because of the program. New and experienced teachers also said that the SCNTP increased their ability to be reflective about their own teaching and to thus make adjustments to the way they teach, focusing/giving increased attention to issues of diversity and student achievement. More importantly, student achievement has improved as a result of the SCNTP. A thorough analysis of the program undertaken in fall 2013 and spring 2015 shows that students of SCNTP teachers gained two to three-and-a-half months of additional learning in reading compared to students in the classes of control teachers (New Teacher Center, 2015).

### **The Beginning Teacher Induction Program in New Brunswick**

New Brunswick's Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) involves pairing each new beginning teacher with a mentor. Opportunities provided to beginning teachers in the BTIP include orienting them to the profession, helping them gain greater subject area and pedagogical confidence, and assisting them in the development of good classroom management practices (Gill, 2005).

The University of New Brunswick conducted the tenth annual evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program (BTIP) in 2005. The evaluation consisted of both surveys and interviews. All four participant groups - beginning teachers, mentors, principals, and district

coordinators - strongly supported the continuation of BTIP. Ninety-two percent of the beginning teachers felt they benefited from the program and 92 percent of their mentors agreed (Gill, 2005).

As part of the BTIP evaluation (Gill, 2005), 335 beginning teachers were interviewed. The data collected from these interviews show a high level of satisfaction among the beginning teachers. Gill reported that the program was highly organized and well-run. Program activities such as barbecues and informal meetings were seen as highly beneficial. The new teachers also expressed an appreciation for the collegial atmosphere that the program fostered within their schools. Overall, beginning teachers were highly positive regarding the program.

While the respondents from the BTIP program, including beginning teachers, mentors, principals and district coordinators, reported high levels of satisfaction in the surveys and interviews, some respondents believed that there are some problems with the program. Principals and district coordinators reported that the BTIP suffered from a lack of time available to fulfill its mandate. The same group also reported that the overall expectations for the program were unclear. Some beginning teachers reported that their classrooms were too far from their mentors' while others reported personal incompatibility issues with their mentors. As well, mentors and beginning teachers complained that their teaching assignments were often different in terms of what subjects they were teaching (Gill, 2005).

In response to the concerns raised in the report, some changes were made to the BTIP for the 2005-2006 school year. First, the BTIP was expanded into a two-year program. The second year of BTIP includes a greater emphasis on professional development on pedagogical practice, as well as expanded teaching and assessment strategies. Second, a new Coordinating Mentor

(CM) position was formed. The CM's role is to provide experience and guidance to new mentors so that they can become more effective (Yeamans, 2006).

### **The Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme**

In 2002-2003, after a thorough and wide-ranging review of its education system, the Scottish Government altered its teacher induction program. Previously, new teachers in Scotland needed to complete a two-year probation period before they gained Full Registration with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. According to Tom Hamilton, Director of Educational Policy for the General Teaching Council of Scotland, this two-year probation period became increasingly problematic because of the difficult employment situation. While some new teachers did gain full-time permanent contracts, many experienced short-term employment in multiple schools and it consequently took them considerably longer than two years to gain Full Registration. This was further complicated by the fact that there was little continuity or support during their probation period and introduction to teaching. (Hamilton, 2010, p. 26)

Under the guidelines of the new induction program, new teachers graduating from their initial teacher education are guaranteed a post for one academic year. During this year they are assigned a 70% teaching load with 30% of their time devoted to continuing professional development (CPD). New teachers are also assigned a mentor; 10% of the mentor's time is allotted to this relationship. The mentor observes the new teacher in the classroom and, at the end of the first year, the mentor assesses the eligibility of the new teacher for Full Registration.

According to Hamilton, the program has been a "major success," as evident in its very high completion rates. Since 2002-2003, 98% of all new teachers had gained Full Registration. This

was echoed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which stated in a 2007 education review that “Scotland’s approach to teacher induction is world class” (p. 15).

### **Summary**

The SCNTC, the BTIP, and the Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme incorporate a variety of elements into their programs. Each program provides orientation and mentoring program for new teachers, release time for new teachers and mentors, as well as ongoing professional development. The programs also conduct regular evaluations, which allow them to adjust their programs based on the needs and concerns of new teachers and mentors.

### **Effective Mentoring**

While mentoring is not the only support program of most induction programs, it is a vital one (Cameron, 2007). Research has shown that new teachers who receive mentoring are more effective in their early years of teaching (Odell & Hollaway, 2001). Other benefits include greater job satisfaction, higher retention rates, and personal development (Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Glazerman et al., 2010).

For mentoring to make a positive impact on new teachers, it is important to understand what constitutes “effective” mentoring. While the concept of effectiveness is arguably subjective and thus difficult to define, the literature on mentoring consistently describes what effective mentoring entails. As early as 1991, Maryann Jacobi, in a literature review on mentoring, wrote that mentoring definitions range from “a process, to a learning relationship, to a form of professional socialization where mentors were considered counsellors, guides, facilitators, advisers, or sponsors” (p. 507).

Clarke (1997) views the mentor as a coach, working side-by-side with the new teacher as a “co-investigator.” The mentor must listen to the new teacher and know when to intervene. In helping the new teacher improve, the mentor is simultaneously reflecting on his or her own practice. Clarke believes that in order for mentors to achieve the above attributes, they must be professionally ready, carefully selected, and continually supported by the administration.

Danielson (1999) proposed that mentoring allows new teachers to confidently face challenges; through professional conversations and reflective activities, they improve their teaching practices as they assume full responsibility for a class.

More recently, Wong (2005) advanced the notion of mentoring within education as a formal “coaching” relationship wherein an experienced teacher gives guidance, support, and feedback to new teachers. Effective mentoring programs provide training for their mentors, ensure that mentors are paired with new teachers in similar grades and subjects, and provide adequate release time and common planning time for the mentor and new teacher.

In the interest of providing new teachers with “professionally ready” mentors, existing and emerging mentoring programs within education commonly incorporate the training of mentors into their programs. In the United States, two mentoring programs – the New Teacher Project in California and the New York State Mentor Teacher Program – emphasize the importance of selecting capable mentors and ensuring that they receive ongoing training in effective mentoring. So while mentors need to be experts in their field, as well as being patient, insightful, empathetic, and enthusiastic, they must also be prepared to receive additional training in coaching and adult learning theory (Walsh, 2005).

In Ontario, The College of Teachers (2006), recommends that mentors receive training on

topics such as “adult learning, mentoring roles, needs of beginning teachers, communication skills, skills of reflective practice, coaching strategies including observation and conferencing” (p. 15). Ontario’s New Teacher Induction Program guidelines advocate for school boards to ensure some level of training for mentors.

As mentoring programs evolve, new teachers increasingly reap the benefits. Research indicates that beginning teachers who have been mentored are more effective than those who do not have a mentor because they do not have to rely solely on trial and error to advance their teaching practice but have the benefit of guided practice and support (Odell & Huling, 2000).

Research shows that mentoring relationships has a positive influence on the mentor as well. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (2000): “While new teachers can benefit greatly from a mentor, mentors also learn from their protégées--developing new insights into their own and others' teaching, new relationships, and a renewal of enthusiasm and commitment to their craft and career” (p. 1). Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004) also concluded that mentoring is highly beneficial for both the mentor and new teacher.

## **Chapter Summary**

In order to support new teachers for an increasingly complex and demanding profession, induction programs have become commonplace internationally, including within Canada broadly and in Ontario specifically. Effective induction programs seek to provide thorough orientation programs for new teachers, focus on rich mentor/mentee relationships, and offer release time for new teachers and mentors to pursue collaborative professional development. Established induction programs, both internationally and in Canada, have shown to improve retention rates (or decrease attrition rates) and to allow new teachers to build upon their learning in their initial

teacher education programs. Induction programs are also proven to have positive impacts on teacher effectiveness and satisfaction as well as student achievement.

### **Chapter 3: Methods**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the experiences of six new teachers in their first year of the NTIP in Ontario. The researcher aimed to document the lived experiences of three beginning new teacher at the outset of their careers and three more experienced new teachers who had previous teaching experience. To understand the phenomenon of being a new teacher participating in an induction program, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (a) What can we learn from new teachers themselves about their experiences of induction programs? (b) What are the expectations placed on new teachers? (c) In what ways (if at all) has the New Teaching Induction Program assisted new teachers to meet such expectations? (d) How do the experiences of new teachers in Ontario compare with their expectations upon entering the profession?

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study, specifically the use of qualitative research, phenomenology, and case study methods. Then the following areas are discussed: (a) participant selection, (b) overview of the data collection, (c) a description of how the data was analyzed, (d) issues of trustworthiness and transferability, and (e) an overview of the researcher's experiences as a new teacher.

#### **Rationale for Qualitative Research Design**

This study followed a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research attempts to explore a problem or societal issue and to “hear silenced voices” (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research studies the “human experience” and how “social experience and is created and given

meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 13). Quantitative studies, by contrast, focus on experiments that produce quantities, numbers, amounts, and statistics; while qualitative researchers are interested in the “rich descriptions of the social world”, quantitative researchers are “deliberately unconcerned with rich descriptions” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 16). In this study, the experiences of new teachers taking part in an induction program in Ontario have been explored. The purpose of this study is not to evaluate the New Teacher Induction Program but rather to understand the elements of the program through the eyes of the new teachers involved. As Creswell and Poth (2013) state, “detailed understanding of the issue can only be established by talking directly with people...and allowing them to tell the stories unencumbered by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature” (p. 4).

A post-modern, post-positivist approach has been adopted for this study: post-modern in that the researcher understands that there is a great deal of complexity in each participant’s experience; the participants’ diversity and presentation of multiple realities is acknowledged and embraced. The study is post-positivist in that the researcher acknowledges society’s ambiguities, complexities, and variables that are ultimately open to interpretation. A single, objective and formulaic answer, or what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) referred to as the “modernist master narrative,” to what it means to be a new teacher has not been offered. Instead, as is common in qualitative studies, the multiple realities of the participants have been presented (McMillan, 2004; Creswell, 2014).

In the interest of gaining access to rich and in-depth data, hearing the voices and studying the diversity of experiences of a small group of new teachers involved in NTIP, the project is solely qualitative in nature.

### **Rationale for Phenomenological Research Design**

To gain access to the experiences of new teachers, a phenomenological approach has been adopted. Creswell (2014) defines phenomenological research as “a design of inquiry in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants” (p.14). Moran, 2012, writes that phenomenology “emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena” (p.5). Objective knowing or truth should be “bracketed” or sidelined; instead the researcher must focus on the individual, lived experiences of the participants (O’Leary, 2007). Good phenomenological studies aim to (1) “provide concrete portrayals of lived experiences” and (2) “offer insightful reflections on the meaning of those experiences” (van Manen, 2002). van Manen, 2002, poses important questions for the phenomenological researcher to consider: “How does this person ‘see’ things? What is important in this world? How does this person interact with his or her environment?” (p. 62). In this type of study, the ‘truth’ comes from what is experienced and it is these experiences that we as researchers try to understand (van Manen, 2002).

In this study, the researcher was required to put aside any ‘objective’ understanding of a new teacher’s experiences. Moran, 2002, states that the researcher must avoid “all misconstructions and impositions placed on experience in advance, whether these are drawn from religious or cultural traditions, from everyday common sense, or, indeed, from science itself” (p. 4). Each new teacher has a distinct experience that must be honoured. It is vital that the researcher put aside any preconceived notions of what it means to be a new teacher.

### **Rationale for Cross Case Study Research Design**

To present the varied experiences of the new teachers in this study and to highlight the differences that emerged among sub-sets of new teachers, a cross-case study approach was adopted. Case studies are commonly used in qualitative studies as they “search for meaning and understanding, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collections and analysis,...and the end product is richly descriptive” (Merriam, 2002). Yin (2003) views case studies as an “essential form” of investigation that allow researchers to draw on many sources of evidence to then present a broad rather than narrow understanding of the participants or phenomenon being studied. What distinguishes case study research, is that it focusses on a phenomenon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). While case studies often focus on an individual such as a teacher, principal or librarian, it can also narrow in on a phenomenon such as an event, program, activity or situation. Stake (1995) elaborates saying that a case study could be a student, a classroom, a school or an innovative program whereas a more general study of reasons for student behavior or a focus on why programs are effective are not case studies. The case study, according to Stake is “a specific, complex, functioning thing” (p.2). Hancock & Algozzine (2006) state that case study research is:

richly descriptive, grounded in deep and varied sources of information, employing quotes of key participants, anecdotes, prose composed from interviews, and other literary techniques to create mental images that bring to life the complexity of the many variables inherent in the phenomenon being studied. (p.16)

The case study approach fits this study as each new teacher presents a deeper understanding of a complex social phenomenon as they see it from their individual, nuanced, lived experience (Yin, 2003).

### **Ethics Procedures**

A province-wide evaluation of The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), as commissioned by the Ministry of Education, was conducted from 2007-2011 by a research team from the University of Ottawa. The team, headed by Professor Ruth Kane, administered province-wide questionnaires and wrote thirteen interview-based case studies of new teachers, mentors, and principals involved in the induction program. The ultimate goal of the evaluation was to evaluate the implementation, lived experiences of participants, and effectiveness of the program in its inaugural years of operation.

This Masters thesis is nested within the larger NTIP evaluation and draws on a subset of interviews with new teachers that I conducted in three Ontario high schools during a three-week period in May 2007. From February 2007 to July 2007, I was a member of the research team and conducted interviews during the three-week period in May 2007. The data I gathered, along with the data gathered by the other members of the research team, was used in the final report. Permission to use the data from the NTIP evaluation for this study was granted by Professor Kane and The Ontario Ministry of Education.

The research team received ethical approval from the University of Ottawa to conduct their study. For my project, I applied for ethical approval for secondary use of data from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB). Since my project is housed within the larger project, I applied under the category of “research based on secondary use of data.” I

subsequently obtained approval to use the data from this research project in my thesis.

## Participant Selection

Twenty new teachers at the high school level who were participating in the New Teacher Induction Program participated in semi-structured interviews. Of this group, six participants' transcripts were selected after the interviews by the researcher and the six participants' cases are presented in this study. These six have been chosen particularly because they represent different sub-groups of new teachers within the group of twenty new teachers. The first three, Clive, Gail and Joanne are beginning new teachers; that is, they are in their first year of full-time teaching after graduating from their initial teacher education program. Table 1 profiles their current teaching situation and provides their demographics. The second group of three teachers, John, Leslie and Elizabeth are experienced new teachers. They have a variety of previous teaching experiences, whether as long term occasional teachers in Ontario or as teachers in other provinces or in another country. Their information is presented in Table 2.

Table 1

### *The Beginning New Teacher: Participants' Profile*

| <u>Pseudonym</u> | <u>Gender/Age</u>  | <u>Previous career</u>                              | <u>Teaching assignment</u>                                                     | <u>School</u>                                                                              | <u>Represents...</u>                                            |
|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Clive            | Male/<br>Early 50s | Veteran<br>jazz<br>musician,<br>producer,<br>writer | Music, drama,<br>French – Grades 9-<br>12; member of 3<br>departments; 6 preps | Large high school (2200<br>students, 90 teachers) in<br>large urban, multi-ethnic,<br>area | New teachers who have<br>switched careers to<br>become teachers |

|        |                  |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                         |                                                                                       |
|--------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gail   | Female/Early 20s | Teaching is her first career | English, Computer Science, Life Skills – Grades 10-12; member 3 departments; 4 preps; teaches ‘K’ courses – not-for-credit courses designed for students designated with Mild Intellectual Development | Large high school (2000 students, 75 teachers) in large urban area                      | New teachers for whom teaching is their first career following post secondary studies |
| Joanne | Female/Mid 20s   | Teaching is her first career | Applied and essential English and Science – Grades 9-12; member of two departments; 5 preps; serves as the new teacher induction representative                                                        | Relatively large high school (1100 students) situated in a suburb of a large urban city | Joanne was given the job of ‘New Teacher Induction Representative’                    |

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Table 2

*The Experienced New Teacher: Participants’ Profile*

|      | <u>Gender/Age</u>  | <u>Previous teaching experience</u>                 | <u>Teaching assignment</u>                                     | <u>School</u>                                                 | <u>Represents...</u>                            |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| John | Male/<br>Early 40s | 9 years of teaching in secondary schools in England | English, Drama – Grades 9-12; member of 2 departments; 5 preps | Large high school (2200 students, 90 teachers) in large urban | New teachers with extensive experience overseas |

|           |                    |                                                                   |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                            |                                                                                                      |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leslie    | Female/<br>Mid 40s | 20 years teaching in high schools in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan | Religion– Grades 11-12; member of 1 department; 4 preps; 15 students with IEPs                                                     | Large Catholic high school (2000 students, 75 teachers) in a suburb of a medium sized city | New teachers who have extensive experience within Canada but not Ontario                             |
| Elizabeth | Female/Late 20s    | Teaching is her first career – has experience working as an LTO   | English, Business, Religious Studies – Grades 9-11; member of 3 departments; 5 preps; teaching work-place and college prep courses | Large high school (1300 students) in a medium sized city                                   | New teachers who have previous experience as a Short-Term or Long-Term Occasional teacher in Ontario |

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### **Teaching as an Emotional Practice**

Andy Hargreaves (1998) refers to teaching as “an emotional practice” (p.3). With the multiple pressures of day-to-day teaching, teachers are often working through feelings of inadequacy, frustration and guilt.

The guilt that Hargreaves refers to is associated with new teachers feeling that they are not doing a job properly and are not fulfilling their duties. Since the demands placed on teachers are so high, it is arguable whether it is possible for new teachers to fulfill all the expectations placed on them. Indeed, from my experiences, most new teachers (and many experienced teachers) would have to work well into the night and on weekends to complete all of their marking and preparation.

During interviews with the new teachers, I was concerned about their emotional well-being, in two areas in particular. Firstly, new teachers are typically under a great deal of stress, as they have often not established themselves in a stable position within their school (OECD, 2005). As detailed in the literature review, new teachers are generally given a heavy load in their first year in terms of teaching the classes that are often perceived to be the most challenging to work with. In Ontario, alongside of participation in the New Teacher Induction Program, new teachers are required to undergo two Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPA) within the first year. In order to move forward to registration, the new teachers must achieve “satisfactory” on both of the TPAs. If they do not achieve a satisfactory rating one or more of the TPAs, they must repeat the NTIP program the following year. This appraisal, with eight tested competencies, is conducted by the principal, which undoubtedly adds to the anxieties that new teachers are facing.

On top of all of these sources of stress, I was concerned that the interviews would add yet another challenge to their hectic workday. This could leave them feeling uneasy about the process and ultimately could impact the validity of their responses. As Zina O’Leary (2004), a writer on the research process in education, wrote:

What’s the biggest barrier to gathering credible data through the interview process?

That’s easy—it’s people. If respondents feel judged, ashamed or offended, or, on the other hand, deferential or awestruck, gathering credible data is far from assured (p. 162).

To minimize the risk of the participants feeling overwhelmed, I tried to keep them at ease throughout the interview through basic welcoming strategies (O’Leary, 2004). Before the

interview officially started I chatted with the participants and tried to calm their nerves.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

### **Interview protocol**

The interview protocols were created to allow a constructive dialogue with the respondents to examine their lived experience of the being a new teacher. They were designed to generate data that would reveal the respondents' experiences of being a new teacher involved in the NTIP. Construction of the original interview protocols was guided by the research questions. Interview protocols were developed initially in draft form with the input of the full research team. Draft protocols were then sent to the Ministry, teachers federations and the expert reference panel for feedback and subsequently trialed through interviews with three new teachers in our local community. These trial interviews were conducted in a setting with an adjacent viewing room where the research interview team could watch the interview live on a television monitor. Following each interview the interview team met with the participant for a discussion on the clarity and coverage of the interview. Pilot interviews were audio-recorded and used later by the team to assist with further refinement of the protocols.

The data were collected entirely from these interviews. According to Kvale (1996), "the qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (p. 1). Data were collected through personal, in-depth interviews in which participants were given ample opportunity to "reflect, expand and elaborate on their remembrances of the experience" (McMillan, 2004). All interviews were conducted at the teachers' respective schools and the researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol

developed by the NTIP evaluation team (see Appendix A).

O’Leary described the semi-structured interview as “flexible” wherein interviewers start with set questions. This leads to a more natural conversation where tangents and segues are explored (2004, p.164).

Interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes and were conducted in conference rooms during the teachers’ spare periods, or teachers were released and their classes covered by the parent project. The format of the interview followed the NTIP evaluation protocol, and I ensured that participants were given every opportunity to describe the experience of being a new teacher involved in an induction program. During the interviews, I wrote notes in a field notebook with my own observations as well as thoughts recorded directly after the interviews. My notes were then transferred to a master interview log and were subject to content analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for each participant. Each interview was analyzed before moving on to the next. Through each step of analysis, my field notes were placed side-by-side with the interviews. I made sure to consult my field notes throughout the different stages of analysis.

The initial step in analyzing each interview was to read through the data, highlighting important, meaningful text, then writing notes and comments in the margins. Data analysis began with open coding, which is the close examination of small sections of text consisting of words, phrases, and sentences (Creswell, 2007). Following the initial coding, certain categories emerged that both fit into pre-existing categories but also created new categories that emerged (Creswell, 2007). These categories included the following pre-existing categories: ‘induction’,

‘orientation’, ‘mentoring’, ‘being a new teacher’, ‘NTIP’ and ‘improvement’. The new categories that emerged include: ‘teaching load’, ‘pressures on new teachers’, ‘positives’ and ‘challenges’. These categories, both pre-existing and emerging, created connections and themes that were then used to form the narrative of what it means to be a new teacher involved in an induction program.

After this initial coding and analyzing of categories and themes, each case of individual new teachers was created. The voice of each participant was used as much as possible to accurately portray their lived experience (Seidman, 2006).

Finally, a cross-case analysis was conducted to present the differences and similarities that emerged among the beginning new teachers as well as among the experienced new teachers. In addition, similarities and differences that emerged across the two sub-sets of new teachers were presented.

While it is not my intention to offer generalizable findings that apply to all new teachers in Ontario, it is expected that the findings offer a highly credible view of six new teachers and their experiences.

### **Trustworthiness**

As part of the larger NTIP evaluation, the interview schedule was reviewed by a group of external experts. The final interview schedule (see Appendix A) is a product of their input and evaluation. The researcher has been trained in the process of interviewing and is cognizant of his relation to the subject (as a teacher himself) and ensures that his own views and biases did not in any way effect the participants’ feedback.

New teachers may be in a state of flux in their first year as they are often concerned with

making a positive impression on their co-teachers and on the administration (Smith, Goldblatt, Engemann, Kitchen, & Cherubini, 2008) and may therefore be hesitant to be critical of their colleagues. The interview questions are general enough that they do not ask for teachers to directly comment on their colleagues. However, without exception, the names of colleagues and administrators were mentioned by all interviewees. Participants were told before the interviews that, to ensure their privacy, their names and the names of their colleagues and schools would not be recorded on the interview transcripts and where references to individual participants was made, pseudonyms would be used. Schools would be referred to in terms of demographic information only such as: large urban school, or small rural school. This allowed the participants to speak freely about issues concerning them, their colleagues, and the schools in which they taught. Participants completed a consent form after being told the purpose of the study, the amount of time needed to complete the interview, and plans for using the results from the interview. Furthermore, participants were informed that they could stop the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable with the line of questioning.

Interviews with new teachers for this study were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each transcript was sent to the participating new teachers for verification of the transcript as a form of member checking.

### **Transferability of Data**

Transferability refers to the degree to which data from one study can be used or transferred to fit contexts outside of that study (Creswell, 2007). While I cannot claim that all the experiences within this study represent the experiences of all new teachers, I am confident that the results are applicable to other induction programs and offer valuable insights for

policymakers, board representatives, and anyone interested in designing or improving existing induction programs. However, it should be noted that each school board and the school within each board has different needs and that not all the recommendations from this study will be applicable to all schools.

Furthermore, trustworthiness has been achieved through the inclusion of participants who appeared to represent different types of newly hired teachers.

### **Researcher's perspective**

As a relatively young high-school teacher with fourteen years of experience at a variety of schools in Ontario and British Columbia, I am interested in the process by which new teachers are oriented into their profession. Since 2000 I have taught at five different high schools, three in Ontario and three in British Columbia, and have been considered a “new teacher” in each of these schools. My own journey as a new teacher has contributed to my interest in new teacher induction.

My experiences as a teacher have a place in this study and may have an influence on my findings. As Charmaz (2005) stated, “No analysis is neutral – despite research analysts’ claims of neutrality. We do not come to our studies uninitiated. What we know shapes, but does not necessarily determine what we ‘find’” (p. 510). As a teacher, my natural instinct is to try to relate to the hardships faced by new teachers. I want to help them and to further their cause. This reflects my belief that educational research should take on areas in need of assistance (of which there are many) and that research in the social sciences should strive to solve a social problem and to help a group in need of support (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

## **Chapter Summary**

This chapter described the research methodology used in this qualitative study. First, a description of qualitative research was discussed followed by a rationale for a phenomenological approach. This was followed by a rationale for the cross-case analysis of the participants. Then the process of participant selection was outlined with the aid of two tables presenting the demographics of the six new teachers profiled in this study. A brief discussion of the importance of addressing participants' emotions during the interview process as well as a discussion of the protection of the privacy of participants follows. The data collection process, including the interview protocol, is described then a description of the data analysis including issues of trustworthiness and transferability is explored. Finally, the researcher's perspective and issues of neutrality are presented. The findings that have emerged from the data analysis are presented in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

Twenty new teachers working in Ontario public high schools were interviewed one-on-one. The interviews lasted from roughly 45 to 60 minutes. Without exception, the new teachers were not hesitant to speak their minds and welcomed the opportunity to offer their perceptions of their experiences in the NTIP.

One of the main challenges I faced in this study was deciding what form my participant sampling would take. I wanted, above all, to present the diverse experiences of the participants. However, presenting the separate experiences of each of the twenty participants would be unrealistic. Therefore, in the interest of conveying an authentic and compelling story, I have formed sub-groups of new teachers. Through a thorough analysis of the interview data, the observations of the new teachers have been coded. It became evident quite early in the interview process that new teachers in Ontario have very diverse experiences. In this study, eight of the twenty participants were actually new to the profession while twelve had varied levels of teaching experience either in Ontario or elsewhere. Six participants were then selected and were placed in two categories: the beginning new teacher, and the experienced new teacher.

The findings from the interviews have been coded into the following sub-headings: expectations, positives, challenges, NTIP – mentoring, NTIP – Professional Development, and NTIP – Overall Perceptions. These sub-headings are the consequence of my analysis and reflect the nature of the questions posed to the new teachers interviewed, aimed at answering the primary research questions: What can we learn from new teachers themselves about their experiences of induction programs? What are the expectations placed on new teachers? In what ways (if at all) has the New Teacher Induction Program assisted new teachers to meet such expectations? How

do the experiences of new teachers in Ontario compare with their expectations upon entering the profession?

Following the findings on the selected six participants, I have conducted a cross-case analysis to highlight the differences among the beginning new teachers followed by the differences among the experienced new teachers. I have then summarized the differences that emerge across the subsets of the beginning new teachers and the experienced new teachers.

### **The Beginning New Teacher**

Eight of the participants were what one might traditionally think of as new teachers: recent graduates from a teacher education program. Some of these teachers had had short- or long-term stints as supply teachers, but during the time of the interview they were experiencing their first year as a full-time teacher. Five of these teachers were female, three male. For the purposes of this study I have profiled three of the beginning new teachers: “Clive,” “Gail,” and “Joanne.” All teacher and school names are pseudonyms. During the interview process, I noticed two types of new teachers: the new teacher who was following a new career path after establishing themselves in another field and the new teacher for whom teaching was a first career. I chose to profile Joanne because she was given the role of “New Teacher Representative.” In this role, Joanne served as an intermediary between the principal and the new teachers in the school. Joanne's main duty in this role was to call bi-weekly meetings for new teachers. According to Joanne, the principal created this role to allow an environment for new teachers to meet and discuss their experiences. In the detailed section on Joanne, I elaborate on the meaning of this role.

**Clive.** Clive, a bilingual, male teacher in his early 50s, was selected because I believe he represents a certain cohort of new teachers who enter teaching after successful careers in another domain. In Clive's case, his skills are quite specialized. He is a veteran jazz musician with three decades of experience writing, producing, and teaching music. During the interview, he continually drew on his experiences – from leading his big band in various jazz festivals to writing songs for various car commercials.

Clive was in his first year of teaching music, drama, and French to students in Grades 9-12. His school was situated in the middle of a large urban city in Southern Ontario. With roughly 220 students and 90 teachers, he described his school as “massive” and said:

It's a challenging school, very diverse in terms of ethnicity, but also economically and in terms of the kind of work people do...there are a lot of good kids here. I find that the music and arts ones are more focused. But there are a lot of un-parented kids. There are a lot of un-socialized kids, who have close to no idea how to be around people kind of thing. So consequently, there is phenomenally rude behavior sometimes.

***Expectations.*** At the outset of the interview, Clive was asked to comment on the expectations placed on him by the administration at his school. His comments revealed that his workload was typical of new teachers in that he belonged to three separate departments and taught six different courses in five different classrooms. In the language of teachers, he had six “preps,” meaning he was required to prepare lessons for six different courses.

***Positives.*** When asked to comment on some of the positive experiences he had had during his first year of teaching, Clive excitedly highlighted his ability to inspire his students:

The reward is seeing the kids getting into whatever the project is, or a light going on...somebody who was having difficulty understanding a point that can be, for myself, like breathing kind of a thing. And then trying to put yourself in a place to say, now how can I get this person to feel what this is we're talking about. When you're actually able to do that, it's quite delightful.

Clive found his day-to-day work with students and the resulting relationships that came out of this work to be the most satisfying part of teaching. He also stated that fostering relationships with students was the real reason why he pursued teaching in the first place.

***Challenges.*** Clive found the behavior of his students to be among his most significant challenges in his first year: "There are a lot of them who are completely indifferent to their own success or failure, and that's a hard thing to get a handle on." He partly blamed this indifference on the Ontario government's "Student Success/Learning to 18" program (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, in particular the policy in Ontario high schools concerning late assignments. In Ontario, high school teachers are told that the practice of deducting marks from late assignments should be used as a last resort (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1).

All alternatives to deducting marks should be tried. These alternatives include, as listed on the Ministry of Education website: "peer tutoring, provid[ing] the student with another opportunity to complete the assignment, hold[ing] a parent conference or tak[ing] other

appropriate measures” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1). According to Clive, students are aware that teachers’ hands are tied by the late assignment policy. This results in a general apathy among the students:

Most of my working life, by far most of my working life, I’ve been working for myself, often the helm at some kind of a project for which I had sole responsibility for the outcome. So the complete lack of responsibility amongst 75-80% of the students here is astonishing. The apathy, the indifference to their own success or failure...

Clive's frustrations with the late assignment policy in Ontario are clear. He referred to the ambivalence the policy has fostered in his students numerous times in the interview.

***Expectations vs. experience.*** Clive was asked to compare his experiences as a new teacher with his expectations upon finishing his teacher education program. He immediately stressed that he was not an idealist coming out of Teachers College: “I don’t think I had stardust in my eyes.” It seemed, however, that he was not prepared for a school whose objective was to “keep the mass out of the water.” He referred to his school as a “leaking ship” (low staff morale and poor leadership) where a lot of the work has a “metal on metal feel to it” (poorly run professional development and a lack of communication among staff and between staff and the administration). He was particularly critical of the principal:

We have a potentially outgoing principal who is like a hermit, and emerges to make the odd call on the letter of the law, and goes back into the office. Whereas a place like this needs, and I’m a father, a proud father of daughters, 24 and 22, what this

place probably needs for a principal is a large male who is smart, sociable, and can improvise.

Clive told an anecdote of an assembly at the beginning of the year where young students from feeder schools were invited to get a look at their potential high school. The principal's first line in addressing the students was "for your information, we have a no hat policy."

Clive was quick to point out that he had had a very positive experience in another school during his teaching practicum where the staff and students had a strong "esprit de corps." Clive's comments speak to the importance of a strong pro-active principal. Of interest, as well, in Clive's comments was his expectation that school leaders today need to be more than just an authority figure; they need to inspire and motivate both staff and students.

***NTIP – mentoring.*** After discussing his experiences in his first year of teaching, Clive was asked to discuss how the induction program assisted him in meeting some of the challenges he faced. A large portion of our conversation concentrated on his work with his mentors. Clive had three mentors, one from each of his departments. One was the performing arts department head, one an experienced French teacher, and the other was an experienced music teacher. While Clive did consult with his colleagues, mostly around behavioral issues and classroom management practices, he was somewhat hesitant to seek them out because of the fast-paced setting of his school:

I said to one of my mentors...if you've got somebody who is really floundering, put me on the back burner, by all means, you know. I appreciate what you're doing, but you don't have to prioritize me. So my mentoring experience has been absolutely minimal. You know, so, it's a nice idea. Nobody has time, you know, everybody is

run off their feet, you know.

Clive was of the opinion that the mentoring component was “thought up by someone in an ivory tower” who had no idea of what was actually happening in tough, inner-city schools.

***NTIP – professional development.*** Clive stated that he had a difficult time pursuing workshops out of school, as he did not want to fall behind in his preparation and marking. He shared two anecdotes from his classes to stress how far behind some of his students were. One day in mid-May he was reviewing past units to prepare for the course-culminating task<sup>3</sup> with his Grade 10 French class. One of the students put up her hand, and when acknowledged by Clive, asked, “what does ‘elle’ mean?” In his Grade 11 Drama class, Clive, in a moment of frustration, gave the students a speech about their poor work habits and asked them why they were being so apathetic. There was a brief silence. One of the boys then yelled out, “what does ‘apathetic’ mean?”

Clive shared these stories to stress the difficulty in teaching in an environment where kids simply don’t know how to behave in class. Clive spent so much time settling his classes down and getting them to focus that he was unable to get through lessons and units.

Clive was able to attend three workshops, two out of school and one in school. Two of the professional development workshops that he attended focused on classroom management. Clive was particularly happy with one of the in-school sessions that focused on specific strategies on how to engage students in his specific school setting:

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<sup>3</sup> The course-culminating task (CCT) is an assignment completed by the students at the end of the school year that shows their understanding of the course material.

Actually, the best one was in-school, run by the Head of Performing Arts, who teaches Drama here, and it was like a drama...having some of her acting students, act as difficult students, acting out. And then, instead of the audience members (i.e., new teachers) saying and proposing things to do, you had to wade into the scene and do things. And that was really good, now that's getting into the right direction, you know. Sitting around, you know, talking about, I feel your need, or some god-damned thing, is just, forget it. I don't need this.

As for the sessions offered through NTIP by the school board, Clive stated that the sessions were not helpful and he feared that by attending the sessions he risked falling behind in his planning, marking and progress with his students. He then stressed that he would rather take a "mental health day" than attend a board workshop.

***NTIP – overall perceptions.*** Clive was certainly among the most dissatisfied teachers interviewed. The targets of his criticism included the leadership of the school, the culture of the school, as well as the NTIP program. A recurrent theme within his interview was the notion that while the goals of NTIP made sense to him, it simply was not viable in his school. What he needed as a new teacher was to learn practical strategies to address the needs of his specific students. He believed that the NTIP did not do this. Clive was of the mind that until the culture of the school was vastly improved, until the "leaking ship" mentality of his school was addressed, NTIP could do little to help new teachers.

**Gail.** Gail is a female teacher in her mid-twenties. I have chosen her case since she represents the young new teacher – the teacher often referred to in policy and in the literature: young, recently graduated from university, and embarking on her first career. Gail taught

English, Computer Science, and Life Skills to students in Grade 10-12 in a large urban high school in a major city in Southern Ontario. It would be remiss of me not to mention that Gail seemed exhausted at the time of the interview. Her subsequent responses helped to explain why.

***Expectations.*** When asked about some of the expectations that the school's administration had of her, Gail was very direct in her criticism of the culture in her school that allows new teachers to be handed "the short end of the stick:"

I was frustrated, I was angry, overwhelmed, just sort of flabbergasted that they would just sort of throw such an assortment of courses that nobody knew about at somebody so new without any resources particularly. I also felt there was a lot of injustice in throwing the least experienced teacher in with no resources to these MID [Mild Intellectual Development] students who actually have the highest level of need and not providing them with their needs at all and I just felt that that particular corner of the student body, all year, is just constantly overlooked and they tend to put either new teachers there or people that they don't want to deal with elsewhere.

Similar to Clive, Gail was teaching many new courses; she had four separate courses this semester and consequently had four "preps." What made her teaching load extremely difficult, however, was not just the number of courses but their nature. She was assigned a combination of "K courses" – not-for-credit courses designed for students by the teacher designated with Mild Intellectual Development (MID). While she was qualified to teach Special Education, she had no experience or qualification in the area of MID. In her first few days at her school, she came to understand that the K-designated courses only had "four lines of curriculum attached to them." Consequently, on top of teaching her courses, Gail, on her own initiative, took on the task of

researching and developing the K courses.

In discussing her course load as a new teacher, Gail had a suggestion as to how courses could be assigned to starting teachers:

Why throw new teachers to the wolves, that doesn't make sense, it creates a weakness in your department too, and I think the belief is throw new teachers to the Grade 9s, well the Grade 9s are the ones who need the experienced teachers so...maybe when [new teachers] come in...a trajectory of learning so OK you're going to try these courses this year, then move to these courses, then these courses.

In my experience, it is always the forward-thinking, progressive departments who pay close attention to course assignments for new teachers. It is counter-intuitive to give an overwhelming course load to new teachers; functional departments consider best-case scenarios for all teachers in the department come the time for course assignments.

***Positives.*** Gail's eyes immediately brightened when she described her students. Like Clive, she stated that her relationships with her students was key to her satisfaction as a teacher. As time went on, Gail found she was able to gain the trust and respect of her students and that many of them went from "wary and suspicious" to "trusting and open."

Gail was also enthusiastic about her experience with her mentors. She observed that once she became adjusted to her school, she was able to seek out colleagues for advice. She refers to her two mentors who helped her shape her courses and teaching style:

They were very helpful in helping me shape a course that made sense. I've learned a lot about how students learn to read, how they interact, learned particularly with the level of kids that I'm working with, the relationship with them is often more important

than the learning for them and it's not until you have that relationship, they're willing to do the learning.

Gail knew that it would take time to establish a rapport with students but was thankful that her mentors validated this idea and reinforced the notion that teachers teach students first and subjects second.

**Challenges.** Beyond the daunting challenge of her teaching assignment, Gail was discouraged by the attitude of some of her colleagues, who she felt mistrusted her motives for attending workshops:

Maybe this is my own feeling but I was feeling guilty for attending all these workshops and not being in the school. I don't know how that could be remedied but I certainly needed to go to the workshops. I mean they changed really what I was doing in way that was really productive. I feel like a lot of other people view workshops as something you do to get out of school and for me they were really something to save myself because I don't know what I'm doing.

Because of her difficult course load she pursued Professional Development opportunities through the NTIP and the release days available at her school. For a total of roughly five working days, Gail had to leave her class to attend workshops on reading strategies, classroom management, and on the MID courses that she had been assigned.

Gail believed that the other teachers judged her partly because of a lack of awareness among staff around professional development. The majority of the staff was not pursuing professional development opportunities; some assumed that those who were pursuing them were not doing so for the right reasons. According to Gail, her colleagues simply did not understand

the importance of the workshops she was attending and this misunderstanding led to tensions which were not surfaced through discussion.

***Expectations vs. reality.*** When asked if the reality of her experience as a new teacher met with the expectations she had upon graduation from her initial teacher education program, Gail was not very optimistic:

I was prepared for the students...the type of students and the type of activity that would be needed through my B.Ed. program but not the hard things like assessment and evaluation...really understanding curriculum, how it works, how to implement it, how to report it, those sorts of things but no...they [the expectations and the reality] don't balance out. This school...I think there is a lot of unhappiness here...people who are unmotivated here because of that.

Gail attributed the general unhappiness among the staff to an unhealthy school culture. Since there was distrust among teachers who questioned the motives of those pursuing professional development opportunities, the general default was for most teachers to simply not pursue further career learning.

***NTIP – mentoring.*** Simply put, Gail stressed that the mentoring component was the best part of the New Teacher Induction Program. The administration had notified new teachers of the mentoring component of the NTIP program in the late summer. They were told that they could either be paired with an experienced teacher or they could choose the option to pick someone on their own initiative. Gail opted to select her mentor and chose a teacher with experience and qualifications in the area of working with students with Mild Intellectual Development. She comments on her work with her mentor:

We're friends...she's the person I eat lunch with so...it's a good relationship, it's a professional relationship and a personal relationship so it's really helpful. She's very positive. I know a lot of the time I feel like I'm not doing my job or I don't know what I'm doing or these kids are getting nowhere because of me and she's good at making you feel OK about that.

Throughout the interview, Gail continuously highlighted the impact her mentor had on her emotional well-being. In Gail's case, her mentor served as a shoulder to lean on, someone to validate her work as a professional. While Gail did lesson and course planning with her mentor, she was proactive in searching out other opportunities for professional learning.

***NTIP – professional development.*** Gail believed that her positive attitude around professional learning would serve her well as a teacher:

Obviously new teachers, all teachers actually need constant professional development, constant contact with other people. Otherwise, it's just stagnant, you don't grow, you can't have gone to teacher's college in 1969, not learn any new strategies or new information since then...it is helpful for everyone, not just new teachers.

From September to early May she had already attended eight workshops, four through the NTIP program and four through her school board. She drew a sharp distinction between the NTIP workshops – what she termed “non-specific” workshops - and the subject specific workshops that she attended that were not offered by the NTIP. She observed,

I think a lot of the teachers have gone to the non-specific workshops where you end up playing games all day and that is irritating. You know yourself as a teacher,

you're on all the time, so you want to go and just be a passive learner, just tell me something, I dance all day every day, don't make me dance all day today, just tell me stuff.

Gail's comments here differ from Clive's observations regarding professional development. Clive enjoyed playing an active role in professional development sessions while clearly Gail prefers taking on the role of observer.

***NTIP - overall perceptions.*** Gail stressed that the two-year model of induction needs to be expanded:

I don't think all the development takes place in the first two years, I think something like a 5-year model would be better because the first two years you're just catching your breath basically. It's after that you have more time to think about your practice because you kind of have a handle on the day to day stuff so a longer period of time is needed I think, maybe what I'm learning in teachers college is just the tip of the iceberg.

In addition, Gail was very praiseworthy of the program's intentions but she saw some serious flaws in the way it is administered. She was puzzled as to why more attention wasn't paid to the timetabling for new teachers. If the overall goal was to support new teachers, why were new teachers still being, as Gail says, "thrown to the wolves." Her suggestion was that department heads and administrators could meet to design a trajectory of learning for new teachers. This trajectory would then influence the teacher's timetable for the next few years so that the teacher could have a firm understanding of their subject matter. Instead of being handed the leftover subjects and courses after the rest of the department had their say, new teachers

would be given a specifically designed timetable.

**Joanne.** Joanne is a teacher in her mid-twenties. She taught English and Science at a relatively large high school (1,100 students) situated in a suburb of a large urban city in Southern Ontario. I have chosen Joanne's case partly because she was the "new teacher induction representative"<sup>4</sup> at her school and could offer an insider perspective to the induction process. At the time of the interview, Joanne was actually on her second year of full-time teaching. The previous year, she had worked at the same school covering for a maternity leave. What now made her a "new teacher" under the NTIP was that she was working as a permanent contract teacher.

**Expectations.** Joanne's previous experience covering for a maternity leave meant that she was quite comfortable working with colleagues and was familiar with the school in general. During the interview, she came across as professional and confident; this impression did not escape her colleagues, and this resulted in Joanne taking on more than her share of extracurricular activities. Beyond being the new teacher induction representative, she was the teacher representative for the student council (a very demanding role at the high school level), and track and field coach. At the time of the interview, she was spending most weekends either at the school catching up on her lesson planning or attending track meets. Joanne was obviously very positive and energetic when talking about

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<sup>4</sup> This position was designed by the principal of Joanne's school and is not officially part of the NTIP program. In this role, she organized bi-weekly meetings of new teachers to discuss their experiences in the NTIP.

her commitments. She did stress, however, that she was worried that all of her work outside the classroom might take its toll on her both professionally and personally:

I haven't learned to say no yet so I said before I don't think my classroom teaching has suffered but I fear that with, as I get older, with less energy and a bit more drain, I'm afraid that maybe my standards in the classroom might start to slip with taking on too much outside. So that's been a stress I feel- that I've had very little personal time in the last two months. I fear that with a high needs academic community and taking on a lot of extra stuff that I could burn out.

Joanne's comments speak to a common practice in schools. Teachers who are willing to take on extra duties are leaned on heavily. In each of the four schools I have taught in, there have been two or three of these teachers who take on a bevy of demanding extra-curricular tasks, from coaching to setting up concerts to leading clubs. While schools cannot run well without this teacher involvement, they run the risk of burning out the teachers they lean on so heavily.

***Positives.*** Throughout the interview, Joanne highlighted many positives from her first two years of teaching. She had learned a great deal in terms of goal-setting for long-term outcomes and setting realistic expectations in her lesson planning. In terms of the school community, she felt she had been helpful in supporting new teachers and had found a lot of satisfaction in being involved in athletics and in the student council.

***Challenges.*** Beyond the stress of being overtaxed with extracurricular duties, Joanne found that she had some adjustments to make in her classes. During her first few days at the school, Joanne was quite taken aback at the level of academics at her school:

I was given an essentials<sup>5</sup> class to teach in English and I had prepared a really small assignment for them and I was sure that it would insult their intelligence and I was really shocked when they couldn't read the words on the assignment. I wasn't prepared for that at all.

Joanne entered teaching with the hope and expectation that she would be teaching academic English courses. But she quickly realized that instead of analyzing Steinbeck and Faulkner, she'd be teaching students the basics:

...it's a huge drain on my energy levels in the classroom because there is absolutely no down time because I find that students won't work here unless you're right on top of them. I've taught one academic class in the last two years and that was really eye-opening. It was far less work than the applied and essentials level courses that I've been teaching.

While Joanne viewed her teaching assignment as a new teacher as unfair, she seemed much more resigned to it than Gail:

I haven't complained about it because... the first couple of the years I feel you are paying your dues. I think there probably is at this particular school a monopoly on the coveted courses by more senior teachers and I try not to get resentful about that but it exists and that's just the way it goes.

While Gail was quite puzzled, indeed angry, at the common practice of giving new

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<sup>5</sup> Essential courses, also called "locally developed," are compulsory credit courses for students who need more flexibility and support or, in some cases, who are in special education programs.

teachers a heavy course load while awarding senior teachers with the desirable courses, Joanne dismissed it as something that was just part of the job.

***Expectations vs. reality.*** Joanne believed that it took her a solid year for her to start looking like the teacher she imagined she'd be upon graduating from her initial teacher education program:

I think what I hoped I would look like as a teacher is most closely resembled maybe now. I had always hoped that personally I would be calm, somewhat organized and flexible. In terms of changing lives and all that stuff, whatever...but I think that it's coming to that now.

***NTIP – mentoring.*** Joanne was very enthusiastic about the mentoring component of NTIP. Her mentor was the head of the English department. They had formed a good working relationship before the introduction of NTIP. Once Joanne was told to suggest a mentor that she would like to work with, her mentor immediately came to mind. Joanne's mentor helped her primarily with planning, assessment and classroom management. They took advantage of three of the five days of release time offered through NTIP to plan and discuss their strategies.

Joanne felt very fortunate that she was paired with a mentor who was an “exceptionally good teacher” and was aware that not all new teachers were as lucky as her:

I know talking to some of the people that I knew at various workshops, some people talked about how their mentors were not of the highest quality. If the board wants to put money into this, making sure that the mentor/mentee relationship does go on and that the mentor is someone who is a person of really high caliber.

Joanne was able to observe her mentor teach on a number of occasions. During the first week of school she watched her teach one class per day. Her mentor also observed her teaching three separate times. Joanne felt this was an important part of her professional learning. On one hand, she was able to see a “master teacher” at work; on the other hand she received specific feedback on her teaching.

***NTIP – professional development.*** Joanne stressed that her mentor was very active in counselling her on good professional development opportunities. Throughout the year, she attended three workshops on reading strategies to use in her English classes.

Joanne commented on what makes Professional Development workshops effective:

When they give you concrete resources and not just picture books, when they give you graphic organizers and this is what to do in this case. It’s not helpful when we have to talk about our feelings on chart paper, it’s useless...very frustrating.

Joanne was happy that there was an orientation session offered through NTIP at her school but was critical of the NTIP board-level orientation: “Some are too long. The orientation session at the board for example, there was a long list of guest speakers repeating what we had already heard.”

***NTIP – overall perceptions.*** When asked if NTIP made her a better teacher, Joanne had an interesting response:

Maybe not the program itself because I see the program only being as strong as the mentor/mentee relationship and only being as strong as the individuals involved in it. But the actual relationship that has come out of it has... I’ve been able to see classroom teaching from someone with a very high standard so I think it’s upped my

own expectations of myself.

Implied in this answer is that if a new teacher were to have a poor relationship with their mentor, the impact on their teaching could be equally destructive. As a form of “mentor quality control,” Joanne believed that mentors should be “principal-sanctioned.” That is, the mentor/mentee relationship should be approved by the principal who is ideally in a good position to see what would best suit the needs of the new teacher.

### **The Experienced New Teacher**

Under the provisions of NTIP, teachers with experience outside of the Ontario public system are still considered new teachers to the Ontario education system. The Ontario Ministry of Education web site offers a clear explanation of this on its FAQ page:

Although a teacher may have experience teaching in another jurisdiction or within the private school system in Ontario, all teachers new to an Ontario publicly-funded school board, are required to successfully complete the NTIP and be appraised according to the scheme for new teachers. (2010)

As mentioned earlier, 12 of the 20 participants were not new to the profession. These teachers had previous teaching experience, whether in the private system in Ontario, out-of-province, or outside Canada altogether. It is safe to assume that their experiences with NTIP would be different from those of the beginning new teachers. To find out the nature of these differences and to compare the experiences of this group to the beginning new teachers, the same categories in the previous section will be used here. During the time of the interview these teachers were experiencing their first year as a full-time teacher in Ontario. Seven of these teachers were female, five male. Included here are profiles of three new teachers: John, Leslie,

and Elizabeth. Again, all teacher and school names are pseudonyms. During the interview process, I noticed three groups of new teachers: the new teacher who was following a new career path after establishing themselves in another field, the new teacher for whom teaching was their first career, and the teacher for whom teaching was their first career but who had previous teaching experience as a Long-Term or Short-Term Occasional teacher.

**John.** John, a male teacher in his early forties, came to Toronto with close to a decade of teaching experience in two secondary schools in England. John was teaching Grades 9-12 English and Drama at a large urban high school. Articulate and reflective, John offered a unique perspective on working as a new teacher in Ontario. I chose to profile John because he represents the new teacher with solid experience as an accredited teacher in a different jurisdiction.

**Expectations.** John was initially taken aback by the difference between England and Ontario:

I think some standards are not quite what I'm used to. A question I'm thinking, as a teacher, do I need to lower my standards somewhat? I'm used to a certain standard of, say, evaluating work. If I had to do that here, quite a number wouldn't pass, you know. I mean, I'm not just talking about here but I mean that's the sense I have. There is kind of accent on wanting everyone to succeed, which is great, but at what cost do we do that?

John also discussed the behavior of students in Ontario compared to his former students in England. He characterized the relationships between student and teacher in Ontario as

"respectful and meaningful." Teachers in Ontario, according to John, had strong connections to students, whereas in England, teachers are seen much more as an authority figure, not to be "liked" or challenged. This last comment is compelling: as teaching shifts from the old transmission model of stand and delivery and rote learning to a more inclusive model wherein students are engaging in projects of inquiry, the old teacher-student dynamic is shifting. John commented that the colleagues that I respect most do not simply "control" their classes but rather engage and challenge their students. Perhaps the most effective teacher is one that can balance being authoritative while maintaining a culture of caring and compassion in the classroom.

***Positives.*** John was very positive about his experience with students.

In the classroom I have a good rapport, generally, with the kids that I teach. It's that feedback that I'm communicating well with them, you know, generally speaking. It's not always going to work that way. There'll be some who don't want to learn but yes, it's generally positive feedback. I sense from the kids that there's a confidence in me as a teacher.

He also pointed out throughout the interview that his colleagues were generally a very collegial and supportive group: "...from the staff, I've felt a real sense of caring from the staff, particularly the ones I work with departmentally, but also people I meet in the lunchroom."

***Challenges.*** Other than struggling with the issue of differing academic standards between England and Ontario, John found that he spent too much of his time on behavioral issues. This was not just a problem in Ontario necessarily:

I think that's pretty global as well. It's just the way society changing... and young people are different today than 15...10 years ago. You adapt to that, which has its

own advantages too. We don't want the rigidity of the old days but just sometimes it's harder work on a teacher to kind of expect good classroom management at times.

***Expectations vs. reality.*** John was asked if his experiences met with his expectations upon arriving at his new school. He stated that, largely because of his previous experience in England, he did not come into his new school with “rose-tinted glasses” but instead understood that there would be difficult days ahead. Experience had taught him to “celebrate the small victories” and to “not cry over spilt milk.”

***NTIP – mentoring.*** John laughed when recalling how he was paired with his mentor. At some point in the first month of school he realized that he needed to choose a mentor as part of NTIP. Unaware of the process by which he was meant to select a mentor, he took the initiative and approached his department head, who agreed to work with him.

Throughout the interview, John commented on the confusion among the staff in terms of what was required to fulfill the requirements of NTIP: “I think there's been a little confusion as to, okay, what is the role of the mentor, what is the relationship here, you know, how structured should it be or how formalized should it be?”

Almost by default it seems that John and his mentor worked in a very informal fashion. From choosing his mentor - “okay, can you be my mentor?” - to the day-to-day work, their relationship was similar to two friendly colleagues sharing best practices and to John, never seems like a formal agreement.

John repeatedly stated that there was general confusion among the staff at his school about NTIP:

Initially to be honest, when I was told that I needed a mentor, I didn't really

understand it at that point as being part of a structured, formal program. “Oh, I’ve just got to have a buddy,” and that sort of thing. That’s how I understood it initially until things filtered through. I think a lot of people were kind of swimming, you know administration too weren’t quite sure what it was all about either so maybe because it’s a new thing as I understand and there just needs to be a little more organized.

John was clear that, due to his teaching experience, he was satisfied with the informal nature of the work with his mentor. If, however, he had been a beginning new teacher, he believes that he would have had a hard time with the lack of clarity around the requirements. He offered some advice on how to lessen the confusion:

Instead of filtering through there should be something at the start, a package or something, “this is important,” then you take it as important. I think maybe having an hour or two on it, and then I think having done so, “this is what you need to do,” it was probably mentioned in passing but it probably needed to be dealt with more, then starting at school, it would be seen in a more serious light I suppose.

School administrators and teachers are inundated with paper work (class lists, student education plans, course outlines, curriculum documents, etc.) at the beginning of every school year. The first staff meeting of the year, after a lengthy layoff, is often overwhelming for everyone. However, NTIP, as John says, should be given added importance; to this length, perhaps administrators could hold an NTIP specific meeting.

***NTIP – professional development.*** At the time of the interview, John, through NTIP, had taken two release days to attend two workshops – one concerning strategies on how to

deal with students with special needs and one on how to communicate with parents. Both sessions were designed specifically for new teachers. In both workshops, veteran teachers presented their experiences in their respective specialties. John was of two minds when describing the workshops; while he found the personal experiences of some of the presenters very valuable, he found that the speakers tended to ramble: “What I didn’t find helpful is a speaker trying to get into forty-five minutes as much as they could. You know, you just switch off after a while... I’ll read it later.” John’s suggestions on how to improve the workshops echoed many of the participants in this study. He wanted more practical tips provided by those with experience in the classroom.

***NTIP – overall perceptions.*** John’s decade of teaching experience seems to have given him some insight into the importance of a collaborative and positive staff. When asked if NTIP met his needs as a new teacher, he commented on how his particular school aided him in his induction:

Now, if it wasn’t a staff that I was confident in, you know, and you’re just left to your own devices, I think I would have felt more keenly that I don’t know what the hell I’m doing. But that hasn’t been the case. So, it suited my individual program if you like.

Implied in this statement is an obvious belief that for teachers new to the profession, for teachers who were not in his “individual program,” NTIP, as implemented in his school and board, would not fulfill its mandate. John sees the concept of NTIP as important and needed but he believes that it needs to be more formalized and that communication to the new teachers and mentors needs to be more effective and thought out.

Finally, John believed that NTIP needs to be adjusted in order to cater better to teachers in his situation:

I went in as a new teacher but I have nine years teaching experience and there are others similar, coming out of province, but most were just straight out of school, brand new teachers. Now needs are different, questions are different, some accommodation should be given to that.

John clearly expressed that the requirements of NTIP should be adjusted to suit the needs of both beginning and experienced new teachers.

**Leslie.** Leslie, a female teacher in her mid-forties, has taught in high schools in Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan since 1994. She now teaches Grade 11 and 12 Religion at a large Catholic high school (1,400 students) situated in a suburb of a medium sized city in Eastern Ontario. I chose Leslie's case because she was able to offer a unique perspective: that of a teacher who has been part of induction programs in two provinces outside of Ontario. At the time of the interview, Leslie was roughly three quarters of her way through her first year of teaching in Ontario.

**Expectations.** Since she was new to the school system in Ontario, Leslie had to quickly acclimatize herself to the requirements both of the province and her school. She immediately found that the assessment practices in Ontario differed a great deal from Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan. In her previous teaching assignments, she had always averaged out a student's marks to come up with an overall mark. In Ontario, the Ministry requires teachers to follow the practice of "most recent, most consistent." During her interview,

Leslie stressed that changing the way she had evaluated students after twelve years of teaching was certainly not easy.

***Positives.*** Leslie was very positive about her school: “This is the largest school I’ve worked in and yet I felt most supported, I felt encouraged from the minute I arrived to today. There’s always a support staff, someone asking if there’s anything you need.”

She was immediately impressed upon her arrival in late August when she realized that she would be paid for the orientation sessions provided at the board and school level. In Saskatchewan, where she had participated in an induction program, teachers were expected to attend workshops with no pay. This, in her mind, devalued them as professionals.

Leslie also stressed that, to her surprise, she greatly benefited from NTIP:

The interesting part for me was the fact that I was involved with this program because initially I thought, I’ve taught a number of years, I really saw this as unnecessary and I’m just amazed at how much I have benefited from it. Teaching is... you get so caught up in the individual and the number of students and the multi-issues and that sort of thing that often it’s difficult to seek out specifically who and where and how does this work so I just can’t say enough about it, I thought it was a wonderful program.

Finally, Leslie highlighted some of the community projects she worked on with her students. She also talked about the contracts regarding deadlines for assignments that she drew up with her students and how she valued and respected her students.

***Challenges.*** Upon her arrival at her new school, Leslie had to be trained on how to use a software program for report cards. She also talked about the arrival of fifteen IEPs

(Individualized Education Plan)<sup>6</sup> in her mailbox at the beginning of the year. Each IEP had a detailed description of a student in her class with exceptionalities. Also listed in the IEPs were accommodations that Leslie could use to tailor her lessons to the needs of these students. While Leslie had experience in Special Education, never before had she received as many as fifteen IEPs.

***Expectation vs. reality.*** Leslie stated that she left Teachers College with “rose-coloured glasses.” She admits that she had often wondered if she would survive in teaching. She cited her maturity – she was 32 when graduating from Teachers College – as the main reason why she had survived. Leslie believed that the challenges now facing teachers are even greater than when she was herself a young student. She referred to a school system that coddles its students:

What I wasn’t prepared for was the discipline problem, the fact that I was coming from a generation where there was accountability from students, from parents and from teachers. It was jointly owned. I came into a school system and it was all about “what I could do for a student,” not “what could they do for themselves?”

Parents, she believed, were also to blame: “There was a tremendous sense of parents enabling students, there wasn’t any accountability and responsibility.” Finally, Leslie stated that in all of her courses at university, not one professor discussed the simple notion that high school

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<sup>6</sup> An Individual Education Plan (IEP) identifies the student's specific learning expectations and outlines how the school will address these expectations through appropriate accommodations, program modifications, and/or alternative programs as well as specific instructional and assessment strategies.

students can be lazy: “When I left I thought this will be great and this will be fun and the kids will all buy into it, I won’t have to be reminded three times a day that ‘this is boring’ and ‘I don’t want to do it.’”

Leslie was quite shocked that her teacher education program did not prepare her to motivate those that do not want to learn.

***NTIP – mentoring.*** Leslie described her mentor as a “wealth of knowledge.” Early in the school year Leslie strategically selected her mentor based on her mentor’s specialty. Instead of choosing someone in her specialty – Religion – Leslie found an experienced Resource teacher who had years of experience working with students with special needs. When asked why she made this selection, Leslie explained:

Everybody is coming from a different background in terms of needs and for me it wasn’t classroom management. I was really concerned about this inclusion program because I came from an experience where it was a pullout program.

So, in selecting her mentor, Leslie wisely evaluated her needs based on her experience working in schools where students with special needs were pulled out of the classroom. In Ontario, students with special needs generally stay in the classroom. Leslie knew she would need help in navigating this new environment.

***NTIP – professional development.*** At the time of the interview, Leslie stated that she had not been active in pursuing Professional Development opportunities. She owed this to a resistance to leaving her classroom:

I don’t feel badly about it because the first run through I’m basically dancing as fast as I can with what I’m doing, the content and I have been in programming before

where I've had too much professional development and I was all over the place in trying to deliver curriculum.

While this resistance was evident in most of the teachers interviewed, Leslie was the only teacher who did not pursue any Professional Development workshops.

***NTIP – overall perceptions.*** Leslie was clear in her praise for the program: I thought it was brilliant. As a matter of fact, when I finally got on board with this and knew I had to participate, all I could think about, truly, with my own history was, wow, how do people make it without having the sense of that support system? I thought it was great because the demands of teaching are far greater than they have ever been and when you don't have someone specific to go to you can be left wondering.

In her interview, Leslie repeatedly referred to how demanding a job teaching was and that her mentor was instrumental in guiding her through the difficulties of her day-to-day teaching. Leslie emerged as one of the more vocal proponents of the NTIP among all the interviewees and explicitly stated that she would have had great difficulties without the guidance of a mentor.

**Elizabeth.** Elizabeth, a teacher in her late twenties, had taught as a Long- Term Occasional (LTO) teacher for two years in Ontario.<sup>7</sup> Each contract involved covering for a teacher for the entire school year. At the time of the interview, she was teaching Grades 9, 10,

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<sup>7</sup> Long-term occasional teachers sign a contract with a board for a determined period of time (15 or more school days in the same assignment) within the school year replacing a specific teacher and assuming his or her duties.

and 11 English, Business/Media Studies and Religious Studies at a large high school (1,300 students) in a medium-sized city in Eastern Ontario. I chose Elizabeth's case because she represents a cohort of teachers involved in NTIP who have previous teaching experience working as Occasional Teachers. I was interested in how this previous experience colored their experiences as new teachers hired on a permanent basis. At the time of the interview, Elizabeth had nearly completed her first year as a permanent full-time high school teacher. As an LTO, she had not been required to take part in NTIP; as a permanent teacher, this was her first year taking part in the program.

***Expectations.*** Elizabeth's two years of experience as an LTO did not seem to be a factor when she was allocated her course load at the beginning of the school year. While she had expected to be allocated a reasonable teaching load, she was shocked to find out that her assignment had been changed without her knowledge:

I had prepped all summer long for a specific course that needed to be delivered in a completely different way. The audience that I thought I'd have, nobody told me differently that it was actually a different group that I'd be teaching to. So I had structured a course that was predominantly for university-bound students and now it had to be delivered to work-place and college bound students and the focus just changed right around. So the first few weeks, I was treading water.

Elizabeth was clearly disappointed with the lack of communication among the faculty in her school. Someone in a decision-making role, whether an administrator or her department head, had "dropped the ball." As a professional who took her course planning seriously – she spent an estimated 40 hours planning the university prep course – she was dismayed to think that

her planning ended up being a fruitless exercise, and while she likely could modify her lessons to fit another audience, she felt “taken advantage of.” Certainly, she had expectations that her two years of service as an LTO would have given her some seniority in terms of course selection. Initially, Elizabeth was given the impression by her department head that she would have some control over her course selection:

I thought wow this will be great, and it was also tabled in a fashion, you know, I will have control over what text books are going to be ordered and I’m designing this course that is going to be my baby and so yeah, I ran with that but it wasn’t at all what I signed up for.

Once again, this speaks to a common practice of handing new teachers tough teaching assignments, a practice the participants expressed needs to change.

***Positives.*** While Elizabeth was slightly “shell-shocked” in the first week of her surprise assignment, she adjusted to her new clientele. She was quick to point out that while the early going was quite difficult, she was able to turn things around:

I had a great time with the FOCUS<sup>8</sup> kids but it was a struggle, it was a distinct learning curve for me, learning how to deal with that clientele. I don’t know whether I would want to teach it again as part of the Focus program. There were a lot more obstacles to overcome than I had anticipated but, we chose, myself and another

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<sup>8</sup> FOCUS Programs are packages of courses that concentrate on a particular field of interest or training to provide students with both (academic) curriculum-specific and workplace experience, which help build a foundation for a career sector.

teacher, we team-taught a lot of the time and we did choose meaningful activities, the students latched onto them, did very very well.

Elizabeth was quite understated when she listed some of the accomplishments of her students. One of the highlights of the year was her students' first-place finish in a national Podcast competition for the Media Awareness Network. From her comments, it was readily apparent that Elizabeth took great pride in her work and was a highly-dedicated teacher.

When asked if there were any positive experiences beyond her work in her Media Studies class, Elizabeth mentioned a particular Professional Development session at the beginning of the year. It focused on brain-based research and classroom management. Elizabeth used many of the strategies in her day-to-day teaching. It had what she termed a "profound" impact on her teaching:

I'm spending a lot less time on classroom management and more time on teaching and learning with students, which is what I'm there to do. I believe that my teaching career has been impacted by that PD session.

Elizabeth referred to her involvement in extra-curricular activities as one of the keys to enjoying her work. In the previous two years, while working as an LTO, she had not been involved in anything beyond the classroom. Her involvement at her new school allowed her to get to know some of the other teachers on a social level.

**Challenges.** Beyond the significant challenges in her classroom, Elizabeth cited time management as a major concern. With all the time she devoted to unit and lesson planning, she had very little time for marking and even less time to pursue a "semblance of a social life." Like Clive, she worked in three separate departments in her school, she had to attend

three separate department meetings. She also referred to paperwork, including the logging of parent contact, as an onerous but necessary task.

***Expectation vs. reality.*** Elizabeth stated that her initial teacher education program aptly prepared her for lesson and unit planning, how to manage a classroom, and how to develop routines with students. Upon her first day teaching, however, she was shocked at the lack of interest on the part of students and their parents: “What nobody really explained to me though was the ambivalence of students and parents. I think no matter how much it could have been emphasized in classes during my initial teacher ed. program, it would have still been always underestimated.”

When asked to elaborate on the ambivalence of her students, Elizabeth made a clear distinction between students at suburban and inner-city schools:

I remember, for example, showing a PowerPoint to my kids at [school name] which was the inner-city school and afterwards it was “Miss, wow, thank-you so much, that was great, can we do that again soon” and here, it’s “well that’s your job, you’re a teacher.” So here, it’s just a totally different set of expectations and I can’t fault students for having those expectations. It’s not their fault that they were raised in that fashion. It’s just there’s no appreciation from these students and ambivalence in the sense that “well if I don’t do my homework today, whatever, I’ll give it to her whenever I can.” You know, there’s just no sense of ownership and accountability. I wouldn’t say all the students but a significant chunk of them.

Elizabeth was clear in her observation that students she taught at the suburban school had less “ownership and accountability” than their counterparts she taught in the inner-city school.

She also stated that parent involvement in the two school settings was like “night and day:”

My first LTO in an inner-city school, I was dealing with a lot of students’ problems and parents who were uninvolved at best. In many cases it wasn’t because they didn’t want to be but they were working shift work and kids were going between homes and that sort of thing. Here in a suburban school particularly it’s night and day. I mean we have parents hovering over top of us and, the amount of parent involvement, parents can be your best friend but they can also be your worst enemy. It’s a delicate balance between the two here I find. It’s a real struggle to deal with many parents in our community.

Elizabeth believed that perhaps the high parent involvement in the suburban school meant that parents and their children were well-versed in the policy around curriculum and assessment whereas students in the inner-city school were less aware of these policies. Finally, Elizabeth stated that students in the suburban school were brought up with more of a sense of entitlement and had high expectations of their teachers.

***NTIP – mentoring.*** At the beginning of the school year, Elizabeth was given the freedom to select her mentor. She immediately asked one of her three department heads, who was happy to help. She was in favor of the selection process:

The flexibility of being able to choose my own was key for me, to buying into this program and being a part of it, being with someone who I trusted and was comfortable with asking questions and, break down in front of after a rotten day. That was essential to me.

To confront the many challenges she faced in her first year as a full-time contract teacher,

Elizabeth sought the guidance of her mentor. Meetings with her mentor were mostly informal. Their relationship was very flexible in the sense that they could meet for five minutes between classes or if needed they could meet at lunch or after school. Her mentor was very accessible; she always knew where he was teaching and could access him at any time. Elizabeth stressed that, although she belonged to three departments, it was sufficient to have only one mentor:

I think it's because as a school there are policies in place that from one department to the next there are certain standards that apply to everyone across the board. So when I have a question about assessment for example, it's not just assessment in one department, it actually is a consistent message that's being sent across the school. Whether I talk with [name of teacher] about what's happening in the Business department vs. something about assessment for my Media class, he'll still be able to give me the constructive feedback that I need and it would still be applicable to this department. And he always prefaces things with things he's unsure of, with maybe so and so does this differently but I would, again, to provide me with some sort of background to make my next decision.

Elizabeth stated that her mentor aided her in lesson and unit planning, as well as recording marks and compiling marks for report cards. Her mentor also reinforced with her the practice of using the most recent and most consistent marks from the students in order to compile a summative mark. To help her in her day-to-day teaching, her mentor observed her teaching on a number of occasions and offered constructive feedback. He invited her to observe his teaching at any time; she took him up on the offer and observed his teaching a number of times. When talking about her relationship with her mentor, Elizabeth stressed that trust was key:

I trust him with what I say and that is key because nothing else can transpire after that. I completely trust him when we talk about something that may have happened and I've had really really great days where I've been able to bounce that off of him and I've had some horrid days where they challenge whether or not you want to be a teacher anymore. He's there to help pick me up and that's key for me. Nothing else would work if I didn't have that trust in place with him.

When asked to comment on any weaknesses in terms of the mentoring component of NTIP, Elizabeth described the “redundant and mundane” paperwork. She stated that she filled out the necessary documents – mostly goal statements and progress reports for her and her mentor to fill out - for the first month and then ignored it.

Finally, Elizabeth believed that for the mentoring component to improve the Ministry of Education needs to be more explicit in defining a set of mentor and mentee responsibilities: “The ministry is paying a lot of money for this program so what is it that we should be doing specifically so we know what we're supposed to be getting out of it.” She believes that this was a common observation among the teachers at her school.

***NTIP – professional development.*** Elizabeth described two professional sessions that she attended through NTIP. The first was an orientation session held at the board office and the other, also at the board office, was a workshop on classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and information on how to communicate with parents.

Elizabeth was relatively brief - one may say dismissive - in her comments on professional development. When asked if she received enough professional development under NTIP she was somewhat critical: “I think it's been enough in terms of time that's been allocated but has

the time been allocated wisely? I wouldn't agree with that." For her, the main problem with the delivery of the professional development component of NTIP lay in the definition of a "new teacher."

They really have to establish their criteria for what a new teacher is. At the two sessions I attended they were really talking about the basics that only apply to a teacher who has never seen a classroom. Many of us had been in the classroom before so it just wasn't applicable to our situation.

***NTIP – overall perceptions.*** Elizabeth believed that NTIP really is for the teacher with virtually no classroom experience beyond their teaching practicum:

There should be some sort of division between brand new teachers who also happen to be new to the board, teachers within perhaps their first five years of teaching who happen to be new to the board and teachers with five plus years of experience who are new to the board because there's a *huge* distinction among those groups in terms of their capabilities, their desires with their career plan, and where they're at and what they're going to need from their board and their school in terms of support.

She believed that money would be spent a great deal more wisely if the Ministry of Education focused more on the particular needs of the various experience levels. Despite these criticisms, Elizabeth did feel that she benefited from the program:

It has helped me feel not so isolated. It's incredible the isolation. I never felt that I would feel so isolated as a teacher so it has put me in touch with the resources I need to get my job done effectively and efficiently.

Finally, Elizabeth offered some interesting comments regarding how NTIP had influenced

her view of the teaching profession. She stated that NTIP “shows that the government is invested in the province’s teachers” and that a well-designed induction program helps teachers collaborate rather than working in isolation.

### **Cross-Case Analysis**

In the following section, a cross-case analysis of the beginning new teachers (Clive, Gail and Joanne) and the experienced new teachers (John, Leslie and Elizabeth) will be presented using the following sub-headings: induction to the school, experience of being a new teacher, the induction program, mentoring, advice and avenues for improvement and expectations of teaching. These sub-headings are informed by the interview questions (see Appendix – Interview Schedule). Table 3 and 4 detail the participants comments on each of the aforementioned sub-headings.

#### **The Beginning New Teacher**

As discussed earlier, the ‘beginning new teacher’ describes recent graduates from a teacher education program. During the time of the interview they were experiencing their first year as a full-time teacher. Table 3 presents a summary of their responses and is followed by a comparison of their responses.

Table 3

#### *Cross Case Analysis – The Beginning New Teacher*

| <b>Interview Questions</b>     | <b>Clive</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>Gail</b>                                                                                                                                             | <b>Joanne</b>                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Induction to the school</b> | - feels school is “under-funded and overstressed”<br>-communication needs to improve<br>-teachers are left to work on their own | -very overwhelmed at beginning as she was given courses outside her qualifications including teaching students with MID (Mild Intellectual Development) | - was given release time with mentor to plan course; saw this as “very helpful”<br>-found collaboration with other new |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unaware of school or board-based orientation session</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-angry that with no experience she was given highly challenging course load</li> <li>-very positive about teaching and students</li> <li>-critical of board level orientation conducted by someone “not interested in answering questions”; “a lot of people were upset at that session”.</li> <li>-school level orientation led by Principal to welcome new teachers – roughly an hour</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>teachers was informative and helpful</li> <li>-board level full-day orientation for new teachers was “a HUGE waste of time”, “important people” repeating things that new teachers “had already heard a million times”</li> <li>-school based orientation – veteran teacher and VP led a meeting for new teachers – “very supportive, kind and nurturing”</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Experience of being a new teacher</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- challenging school</li> <li>- many rude students, indifferent to success or failure</li> <li>-enjoyed teaching music and art and found those students more motivated</li> </ul>                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- despite overwhelming teaching load, thoroughly enjoyed her students</li> <li>-sought out workshops and help from colleagues</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- surprised at the low level of academics at the school; felt intimidated by presence of education assistants who had “seen so much”; difficulties in covering curriculum and keeping lessons interesting</li> <li>- greatest challenge was teaching applied and essentials classes; found regular academic classes much less work</li> <li>-feels that first couple of years new teachers are “paying their dues”; veteran teachers have a “monopoly” on the coveted courses</li> </ul> |
| <b>The Induction program</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-believes an induction program cannot help a fundamentally flawed school with poor leadership</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not enough time; feels guilty for taking time out of school to attend workshops</li> <li>- lack of support/ understanding among colleagues re. workshops/pursuit of professional development outside of school</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very positive about work with mentor and sees observation of mentor’s teaching as essential</li> <li>- less positive about board level orientation but positive about school-based orientation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Mentoring</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 mentors, one from each of his departments (Performing Arts, French, English)</li> <li>- were assigned by principal</li> <li>- very critical of mentoring component; mentoring did not meet his needs</li> <li>- viewed it as “a nice idea” but teachers don’t have time</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-2 mentors, one MID teacher and one part-time experienced teacher</li> <li>- sought out and chose her own mentors</li> <li>- mentoring is mostly one-on-one planning meetings</li> <li>- has not been observed nor has observed her mentors teach</li> <li>-very positive about mentoring component</li> </ul>                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 mentor, English department head</li> <li>- sought out and chose mentor; principal approved choice</li> <li>- mentoring is through informal conversations, phone calls</li> <li>- has observed and been observed teaching by mentor; found this process</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                           | -believed that he didn't need as much help as other teachers and did not often seek assistance<br>- he did receive feedback from one mentor who observed his teaching for 40 mins. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | very helpful; feedback gave her confidence and made her feel positive about teaching<br>- sought assistance in planning, assessment, classroom management                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Advice and avenues for improvement</b> | -more time spent, through mentoring and professional development, on classroom management                                                                                          | - thinks NTIP should be 5 years, not 2 as first 2 years new teachers are "catching their breath"<br>- more thoughtful timetabling; do not assign new teachers more difficult/demanding courses<br>-"check in" on new teachers; mentors need to observe new teachers in class and provide constructive feedback | - communication needs to be better so that new teachers and mentors know what they need to do; more "accountability" (making sure the mentor/mentee relationship is official and that mentors and mentees fulfill requirement of NTIP<br>- mentors must be high quality; felt lucky that she had a great mentor but knows teachers who were paired with less effective mentors |
| <b>Expectations of Teaching</b>           | -expected teaching to be challenging but was still surprised by low staff morale at his school                                                                                     | -she was prepared for the students but not assessment and evaluation<br>-was prepared to differentiate instruction                                                                                                                                                                                             | - she is the teacher she had envisioned: "calm, somewhat organized and flexible".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

### ***Induction to the school***

When asked to comment on how they were welcomed to their board and school, the three beginning new teachers had varied experiences. Clive did not have a positive experience in his first days. He was very critical of his school. He felt the communication amongst staff and between administrations and staff was poor. He was unaware of any school or board-based orientation. Gail, was quite overwhelmed by the first days of school; she was angry with her course load and repeatedly stated, in her interview, her frustration with being saddled with a teaching load outside her qualifications. She found the board level orientation to be inadequate and actually stated that many new teachers were "quite upset" during the session because the person conducting it would cut them off and not answer their questions. Joanne echoed Gail's view of the board level orientation stating, "it was a HUGE waste of time" but did say that the

school based orientation was supportive and quite effective. In the first week, Joanne was given some release time to plan her courses with her mentor. She found this “very helpful”.

### ***Experience of being a new teacher***

The teachers were asked to comment on the successes and challenges they faced in their first months of teaching. Clive enjoyed teaching his music and art students whom he found to be particularly engaged but was disappointed in the rest of his classes where students were “indifferent to success or failure”. He emphasized, again, that the school had low standards and that the students were just adapting to a culture of low standards. Gail thoroughly enjoyed all her students and in order to better serve them, was pro-active in pursuing professional development opportunities. She often took release time to attend workshops on how to teach students with Mild Intellectual Development (one of the challenging courses she was given). Joanne was taken aback by the low level of academics at her school and, interestingly, felt intimidated by educational assistants in her classrooms who seemed to have “seen so much”. She feels that in the first couple of years, new teachers are “paying their dues” and that veteran teachers have a “monopoly” on the coveted courses.

### ***The Induction Program***

In this stage of the interviews, the teachers were asked to comment on their experiences in the induction program and to what degree they were satisfied with the program. Clive believed that an induction program is “nice by design” but cannot fix a fundamentally flawed school with poor leadership. Gail had a difficult time using the release time offered through NTIP for workshops. She felt guilty for leaving her classes and felt that her colleagues were generally not supportive of the initiative she showed. Colleagues seemed to think that she was just trying to get

out of teaching. Joanne praised the mentoring component of NTIP but was less positive about the board level orientation. Joanne suggested that the board focus more on release time for planning and observation. She stated that the mentoring component of NTIP was most helpful for her and that more teachers should have the chance to both observe and be observed by strong mentor teachers.

### ***Mentoring***

During this stage of the interview, teachers were asked about their experiences with their respective mentors. Clive was the only participant among the six who was actually assigned his mentors. His principal assigned 3 mentors, one from each of his departments. He was quite critical of the mentoring component, saying that while it was a “nice idea”, none of his mentors really had the time to devote to him. He was only observed once for 40 minutes by one of his mentors. Gail sought out her mentors, one teacher of students with MID and one part-time but experienced teacher. She often meets with them on a one-on-one basis and was very positive about her relationships with her mentors. She had not been observed or did not observe her mentors teaching. Joanne had one mentor, the English department head whom she sought out. Their work is largely informal and consists of meetings and phone conversations. She has observed and been observed by her mentor and found this process helpful. The feedback from her mentor has given her increased confidence and allowed her to improve her planning, assessment, and classroom management.

### ***Advice and Avenues for Improvement***

In this section, teachers were asked if they had any advice for their school, school board and/or Ministry in order for new teachers to experience their induction in a positive light. Clive

felt that more time needed to be devoted to classroom management; he stated that both mentoring and workshops offered through NTIP tended to shy away from classroom management. Gail believes that NTIP should be five-years in duration as for the first two years, new teachers are “catching their breath”. She also stated that more thought should be put in to new teachers’ course loads; new teachers should not be given the most demanding loads. Finally, she believes that mentors should observe new teachers teaching and provide feedback. Joanne stated that the overall communication regarding the requirements of NTIP need to be clearer for both new teachers and mentors. She also stressed that there needs to be a way to ensure mentors are high quality. She felt fortunate to have an excellent mentor but referred to new teachers she knows who were paired with less effective mentors.

### ***Expectations of teaching***

In the final section of the interviews, the new teachers were asked to describe how their expectations of teaching overall, upon graduating from their initial teacher education program, met with the realities of teaching in their first year. During his initial teacher education program, Clive expected teaching to be challenging in terms students’ behavior, classroom management and delivery of the curriculum. He stated that he didn’t have “stardust in his eyes”, meaning he wasn’t naïve to the challenges teaching would present. He was, however, taken aback by the overall culture of the school, particularly the low staff morale, and the poor leadership in the form of a principal who “was like a hermit” and in the poor communication from the administration to the staff. He was also surprised with a general lack of motivation among his students and described a school that was failing at providing a culture of expectations and excellence. Gail was prepared for her students and was quite well-versed in how to differentiate

her instruction. She described her initial teacher education program as excellent at showing teacher candidates “how to be creative” and how to use “differentiated learning”. She felt inadequate, however in “hard areas” such as “really understanding curriculum, how it works, how to implement it, how to report it”. Joanne had difficulty remembering what her expectations were but did state that she really had become the teacher she had imagined she’d become: “calm, somewhat organized and flexible”. She also stated that she didn’t feel “shocked” by anything that has occurred in her first year and that overall, her expectations were met during her first year of teaching.

### **The Experienced New Teacher**

These teachers had previous teaching experience, whether in the private system in Ontario, out-of-province, or outside Canada altogether. Table 4 presents a summary of their responses to the interview questions, followed by a comparison of their responses.

Table 4

#### *Cross Case Analysis – The Experienced New Teacher*

| <b>Interview Questions</b>     | <b>John</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Leslie</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Elizabeth</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Induction to the school</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- happy with course load and very positive about students and staff</li> <li>- found board level orientation (three speakers at Board Office in Toronto) very helpful; was happy to be introduced to members of the board; came away “more confident” in how things operated</li> <li>- no formal school orientation; prior to being hired was walked around the school</li> <li>- school orientation was “staring on day one...being thrown in the deep end” but sees this as the “best way to learn”.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- largest school she has worked at</li> <li>- very supportive, encouraging environment</li> <li>- did not feel overwhelmed with course load nor curriculum</li> <li>- felt supported from day 1</li> <li>- board orientation – various department heads and curriculum leaders presented; it was “delightful”; felt “celebrated” as a new teacher</li> <li>- there was no school-based orientation but she did meet with the principal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “overwhelmed” with the start of school; found out she was teaching different courses and students – work-place and college bound rather than university bound students- than she had planned for throughout the summer</li> <li>- was “treading water” for first few weeks</li> <li>- felt “taken advantage of”</li> <li>- teaching her students was a “distinct learning curve”</li> <li>- board orientation – helpful but information was overwhelming and</li> </ul> |

|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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|                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | there wasn't enough time to process it<br>- did not attend school-based orientation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Experience of being a new teacher</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new to Ontario but has a decade of teaching experience in England</li> <li>- very positive about first year teaching in Ontario</li> <li>- feels he has good rapport with students and they have confidence in him as a teacher</li> <li>- caring staff, very friendly, cheery atmosphere</li> <li>- surprised at low level of academic expectations compared to England</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- new to Ontario but has taught since 1997 in three provinces, new to Catholic system</li> <li>- positive about teaching and very praiseworthy of support from admin (principals and vice- principals)</li> <li>- finds demands placed on teachers excessive; impossible to get everything done</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Third year teaching but first year as a continuing full-time teacher</li> <li>- positive about first year, feels prepared, lesson plans are "meaningful" and student's quality of work is better</li> <li>- classroom management has improved "ten-fold"</li> <li>- negotiates with her classes to set classroom rules</li> <li>- difficulty balancing time for planning three separate courses in three department, marking, calling parents, paper work</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>The Induction program</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mentoring component has served his needs; believes it worked well because of supportive staff NOT because it was organized or had a formal structure</li> <li>- has helped him be a more confident teacher and overall helps new teachers "feel part of the profession"</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- she believes, despite years of experience, that she has benefited greatly from the induction program; thinks it is "a wonderful program"</li> <li>- particularly positive about her mentor</li> <li>- sees teaching as very demanding, this induction program is essential for new teachers</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has helped her "understand her role within the board, the school and role as a teacher"</li> <li>- has helped her feel not so isolated</li> <li>- has put her in touch with resources to be a better teacher</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Mentoring</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 mentor, English department head</li> <li>- sought out and chose mentor, found process very "informal"</li> <li>- mentoring is informal, mostly one-on-one</li> <li>- sees expectations as "confusing" (what is the role of mentor, nature of relationship)</li> <li>- has not formally observed mentor's teaching nor has mentor observed his teaching</li> <li>- he does receive "reaffirming" feedback from mentor on course planning and assessment</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 mentor, experienced Resource teacher</li> <li>- sought out and chose mentor at a different grade level who would have "different perspective"</li> <li>- mentoring is one-on-one meetings; mentor initiates most meetings</li> <li>- mentor was very helpful in area of IEPs, inclusion (she was used to a pullout system) and report cards.</li> <li>- had not formally observed mentor's teaching nor had mentor observed her teaching but she stresses that she does not need to be observed because of her experience</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 mentor, English department head</li> <li>- although a different mentor was suggested for her by the Principal, she sought out and chose her own mentor</li> <li>- sees flexibility of being able to choose a mentor as essential; made her feel comfortable asking questions and admitting weaknesses</li> <li>- mentoring is "very informal", they share a workroom and talk before school, at lunch and after school; they rarely schedule meetings; stresses that this meets her needs</li> <li>- has not formally observed mentor's teaching but they have watched each other teach because of proximity of their work room to the classroom</li> </ul> |
| <b>Advice and avenues for improvement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- needs to be more information on expectations for mentors and mentees</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sees the quality of the mentor as most important element; stressed that her mentor is excellent but worries that some</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- thinks NTIP needs to be more flexible to adjust to new teacher's different levels of experience</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- more structure needed; teachers need to know earlier what expectations are</li> <li>- accommodation needs to be given for those not new to teaching; teachers who are just starting their careers could be in one group, more experienced new teachers could be in another</li> </ul> | new teachers would be paired with ineffective mentors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- she is in her third year but needed NTIP in her first year of Long Term Occasional teaching</li> <li>- sees paperwork (goals setting strategy and reflections) for NTIP as “excessive”</li> <li>- thinks there needs to be a more clearly defined set of mentor and mentee responsibilities so that they “know what [they’re] supposed to be getting out of it</li> <li>- needs a “good checkup system” to follow up on how things have gone</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |
| <b>Expectations of Teaching</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- has not been surprised, sees himself as a realist but was not prepared for low level of academic expectations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-was not prepared for “paperwork, phone calls and accountability, homework not done, students who are multi-level of intelligence, behavioural problems, parents with expectations that aren’t realistic”</li> <li>- believes demands of teaching are far greater than they have ever been</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- positive about developing routines with students and establishing positive classroom climate</li> <li>- unprepared for “ambivalence of students and parents”</li> <li>- in her first year, she taught at an inner-city school – students had many problems but were grateful for her commitment but parents were uninvolved</li> <li>- she now works at a suburban school where students have “no sense of ownership and accountability” and parents are “hovering over top of us” and it is a “struggle to deal with many parents in the community”.</li> </ul> |

### ***Induction to the school***

John was very positive about his first weeks. He commented on the supportive environment both in his school and at the board office. While he did not attend an official orientation at his school, he described a highly supportive staff who were happy to help. John provided an interesting angle on his school orientation, saying that it was essentially “just starting on day 1...being thrown in the deep end”. While Clive may have seen this as a result of poor school leadership, John viewed this as “the best way to learn”. John commented on a

“general air of optimism” among the staff and students and stressed that the staff was very collegial and supportive. John viewed the board orientation, where he was introduced to members of the board, as helpful and necessary. Leslie commented that the school was the largest she had taught at and like John, was happy to be part of an encouraging, positive environment. She felt supported from the early days and did not feel overwhelmed by her course load. While, like John, she did not attend a formalized school orientation (she met with the principal) she echoed John’s sentiments around the board orientation, saying it was “delightful” and that she felt “celebrated” as a new teacher. Elizabeth had a notably different experience to John and Leslie, stating that she was “treading water” for the first few weeks and most interestingly, that she felt “taken advantage of” by the administration who had saddled her with different courses than she had planned for. Like John and Leslie, she did not attend a formal school orientation, while she found the board orientation “helpful” but “overwhelming”.

### ***Experience of being a new teacher***

John was in a unique situation in that, with his decade of teaching experience in England, was able to comment on the differences between the school system there and the system in Ontario. He repeatedly referred to the comparatively low level of academic expectations in Ontario and felt that he had to lower his standards in order to avoid failing a number of his students. He believed his past experience gave him an air of authority in his classes, his students had a clear confidence in him and that the early weeks of teaching were easier as a result. Again, John was impressed with the collegiality amongst the staff and stressed that this was very important to him as a teacher. Leslie, was new to Ontario, but had close to a decade of experience teaching in other provinces. She was notably praiseworthy of the support from the

administration in her school. She did comment that she found that demands placed on teachers in general excessive and that it was simply “impossible to get everything done”. Leslie stated that she had always been a “self-starter” and had sought out solutions on her own. In her new job in Ontario, however, she was quite happy with the induction program which made her feel “cared for”. Elizabeth, in her third year of teaching – her first two were as a long term occasional teacher - was positive about her first year as a continuing teacher. She felt prepared and found that her lesson plans were more “meaningful” and that her student’s work was improved as a result. She noted vast improvements in her classroom management. Like Leslie, Elizabeth found the demands of planning, marking, calling parents and paper work quite difficult.

### ***The Induction program***

Both John and Leslie stated that, even considering their past teaching experience, they have benefited a great deal from the induction program. They both stated that it helps new teachers feel valued and contributes to an important sense of collegiality. John stated that new teachers who are part of NTIP, despite working in a large organization, feel that their academic, professional and personal needs are being met. Leslie repeated the notion that teaching was more demanding than ever and that the induction program was essential in helping new teachers deal with the pressures and expectations place on them. Elizabeth stated that it helped her feel “not so isolated” and that it has simply made her a better teacher. Elizabeth repeatedly referred to the isolation she felt in her first two years of teaching: “having to do it on your own, and having to reinvent the wheel every single September”. She also stated that she would have liked to have been part of NTIP when she first started as a long term occasional teacher two years previously.

### ***Mentoring***

John had one mentor whom he sought out. He was generally positive about the mentoring component of NTIP but stated that it lacked a formality that was needed. He viewed the overall experience as “confusing”, saying that there needed to be explicit guidelines as to what the roles of the mentor and new teacher were. He did receive “reaffirming” feedback from his mentor on course planning and assessment but did not observe his mentor’s teaching nor was observed by his mentor. Most of their collaboration was in one-on-one meetings. Leslie was likewise not observed by her mentor and did not observe her mentor teaching. She deemed this unnecessary because of her experience. Leslie, notably, chose a mentor outside her specialty, who offered a different perspective. She praised the professionalism and skill of her mentor who helped her with IEPs, inclusion and report cards. Most of their work was in one-on-one meetings. Elizabeth, had one mentor whom she chose. She viewed the flexibility of choosing a mentor as important as the comfort level she had with her mentor allowed her to “admit weakness”. Elizabeth was adamant that a new teacher must have trust in their mentor stating that “trust is key because nothing can transpire after that”. Their work tends to be informal; they talk in their shared workroom and have brief chats at lunch, before and after school. They have been able to see each other’s teaching because of the proximity of their work room to their classrooms.

### ***Advice and avenues for improvement***

As stated previously, John believes there need to be more information on expectations for mentors and mentees. Elizabeth echoed this, saying that there needs to be a small “recipe book” (as opposed to the “redundant and mundane” paper work she was required to fill out) that outlines goals, expectations and strategies. Both John and Elizabeth were also firm in their stance that NTIP needs to adjust to new teacher’s varied levels of experience. They each found

themselves clumped in with beginning new teachers and found some of the information and paper work repetitive. Leslie viewed the quality of the mentor as essential. She was concerned for new teachers who may be assigned a poor mentor and did not see, despite her own favorable experience, any system within NTIP that ensured the pairing of an appropriate, quality mentor with a new teacher.

### ***Expectations of teaching***

John stated that he was not overly surprised by anything he had experienced but did repeat his concern over the low level of academic expectations placed on the students. Leslie was not prepared for “the multiple challenges of paperwork, phone calls, accountability, homework not done, students who are multi-level of intelligence, behavioral problems, parents with expectations that aren’t realistic”. Elizabeth, while positive about the routines she developed with students, was unprepared for the “ambivalence of students and parents”.

### **Differences between beginning new teachers and experienced new teachers**

Many differences emerged from the interviews of beginning new teachers and experienced new teachers. These differences are described under the following sub-headings:

#### **Induction to the school**

Two of the three beginning new teachers, Clive and Gail, reported feeling under-supported in their induction. All three of the beginning new teachers were very critical of the board level orientation.

Two of the three experienced new teachers, John and Leslie, described - despite some critique of the communication of expectations - a very supportive working environment in their schools and described the board orientation as helpful and inspiring.

### **Experience of being a new teacher**

Two of the beginning new teachers, Clive and Joanne, were quite concerned with the low level of academics at their school. Clive, Gail and Joanne, were all had difficult teaching loads and felt overwhelmed by their teaching load with Joanne stating that there was a culture at her school of new teachers “paying their dues”.

One of the experienced new teachers, John, shared the view that academic expectations were alarmingly low. Leslie and Elizabeth, with 13 years of teaching experience between them, still found that the demands of teaching were excessive, citing paper work, course planning, marking, calling parents among the many lists of responsibilities.

### **The Induction Program**

Two of the beginning new teachers, Clive and Gail, questioned their school’s commitment to induction. Clive was clear that his school needed new leadership to promote this type of program while Gail was more critical of the teaching staff as she sensed a strong lack of support for teachers like her who pursued professional development during school hours. Joanne was very positive about her mentor and viewed the program is important to her development.

All three of the experienced new teachers praised the induction program. John viewed it as a benefit to all teachers as it promotes collegiality and a positive, collaborative staff. He saw it as key for new teachers as it makes them feel a part of something bigger. Leslie viewed NTIP as a major boon for new teachers dealing with the multiple demands of the profession while Elizabeth, like John, sees NTIP as promoting collaboration and counteracts the trend of teachers working in isolation.

## **Mentoring**

Two of the three beginning new teachers, Gail and Joanne, sought out their own mentors and were very positive about their relationship. Only Joanne has observed her mentor and was observed teaching by her mentor. She emphasized the importance of receiving feedback from her mentor.

None of the experienced new teachers formally observed or were observed by their mentors, although Elizabeth was often in the proximity of her mentor's class and was able to watch his teaching from time to time. While John and Elizabeth were critical of the lack of expectations for the relationship, they, like Leslie, were very positive about the dynamics of the relationship. All three were very positive and praiseworthy of their mentors.

Of the six participants, only Clive was assigned a mentor. The other five participants sought out their own mentor; a common sentiment was that choice was important and that the quality of the mentor was essential in the program's effectiveness.

## **Advice and avenues for improvement**

Some common themes emerged across the beginning and experience new teachers in terms of advice for improvement. Four of the six participants believed that the requirements of the mentorship element of the program need to be explicit and clear. Two of the three experienced teachers believed that NTIP needs to take into account the level of experience of the new teachers so that they are not clumped into a homogenous group. As mentioned above, a common concern was that some new teachers may be paired with mentors who lacked commitment. Most of the participants strongly believed that there needed to be a way to ensure the quality of mentors.

## **Expectations of teaching**

When it came to describing their expectations of teaching upon leaving their initial teacher education programs and how these expectations compared to their experiences, there was not a discernible difference across both groups of teachers. Four of the six were surprised with either the low level of academics or the low level of academic expectations at their respective schools. Four of the six participants struggled in some form with the demands placed on them – from extra-curricular responsibilities to assessment, planning, calling parents, and paperwork (one participant, Elizabeth, stated that the “excessive” NTIP paperwork only added to the pile). All participants reported a level of satisfaction in their day-to-day teaching and all six of the participants were very positive about the impact they had on their students.

## **How NTIP closed the gap between expectations and reality**

As described in previous sections, each of the new teachers struggled with the demands placed on them. While NTIP has clearly provided a welcome support system for new teachers we’d be remiss to ignore comments such as this from Leslie:

The demands of teaching...I would have to say that the expectation...the fact that I have to provide varied curriculum to meet the many needs of students, the fact that there are 35 kids jammed into a class, the fact that I’m dealing with behavioural issues, the fact that very few students are involved or wanting or will do homework...

The three beginning new teachers in this study were all taken aback by their teaching load, by the demands placed on them as well as the lack of motivation among many of their students. While they expected teaching to be challenging, they were not

prepared for the intensity of these challenges. With the exception of Clive, the beginning new teachers found that NTIP allowed them to “learn new strategies” to cope with the aforementioned challenges. NTIP essentially ‘softened the blow’, allowing the beginning new teachers to address the challenges with the support of an experienced mentor or mentors. The experienced new teachers, however, present a different picture.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter first presented the findings from each participant interview then presented the cross-case analyses from the six participants. Each teacher has a unique background and a singular story to tell. However, the findings from the interviews as well as the cross-case analyses of the two groups of new teachers present a number of emerging themes that offer insight into the lived experiences of both beginning and experienced new teachers.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusions**

As more school boards move forward in implementing induction programs it is important for them to understand that induction is not just mentoring. It is not enough to just assign a new teacher with a mentor. Good induction programs have multiple components. By exploring the lived experiences of the six new teachers involved in the New Teacher Induction Program, I have been able to draw some conclusions as to what an effective induction program comprises and what the specific components of a good induction program are. It is also important for policy makers and school leaders to understand that each of these components is as important as the next. An induction program, for example, without a well-designed orientation session outlining the requirements and elements of the program is less than effective, just as the benefits of the mentoring relationship are stymied if both the new teacher and mentor are not given release time to pursue professional development opportunities. A useful induction program must also be grounded in the relevant research on the topic. In addition, the experiences of new teachers involved in induction programs must inform the design of an induction program.

Upon analyzing the interviews of the new teachers in this study and reviewing the work of a number of researchers in the area of induction (Cameron, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Glassford and Salinitri, 2007; Ontario College of Teachers, 2006; Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training, 2007; OECD, 2005; Kutsyruba et al., 2013; Ingersoll and Strong, 2011) I have come to conclude that a well-designed induction program is essential in supporting new teachers. Induction programs support the growth of new teachers, promote a culture of innovation and professional development and an institutional commitment to helping teachers, support effective methods of teaching and assessment, and ultimately support students

in their learning.

It is important then to understand what constitutes a well-designed induction program. Six elements - orientation, mentoring, professional development, teaching load, evaluation of new teachers (with sub-heading ‘mentors as evaluators’), and evaluation of the program, are essential to an induction program. No element can be forgotten or given short shrift. Following a description of these six elements below, I have described an important consideration that has emerged from this study, that of flexibility.

### **Orientation**

An orientation session at the school and board level should include a tour for new teachers of the board offices and of the school as well as an introduction to administration and support staff. New teachers should also be told about the mission and values of the board and school as well as the health and safety requirements. Any relevant induction documentation should be given to new teachers. New Teachers need to be welcomed and given encouragement by the administration. New teachers who are not new to teaching should be acknowledged and left to feel that their past experiences in teaching are valued. As much as possible, the “one-size-fits-all” approach to this orientation needs to be avoided.

### **Quality Formalized and Supportive Mentoring**

Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) stated that mentoring is the element of induction with the most positive impact on teacher retention and learning and Fullan and Hargreaves (2000) suggested that mentoring is “integral to our approach to teaching and professionalism” and “central to the task of transforming the teaching profession itself” (p. 55).

Each new teacher is paired with an experienced teacher who acts as a mentor. A rigorous

mentor selection process should be followed so that new teachers are paired with exemplary, experienced teachers. New teachers must be allowed to choose their mentor but need to be educated as to what they should be looking for in their mentor. Effective mentoring programs pair new teachers with mentors in similar grades and subjects (Cameron, 2007). However, new teachers should be given the freedom to choose a mentor outside of their subject matter (in this study, Leslie chose her mentor based the mentor's skill set as a Resource teacher).

Mentors must receive comprehensive training for their mentoring role (Australia House of Representatives, 2007; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Wood and Stanulis, 2009; Kane, Jones, Rottmann, & Pema, 2013). They must also participate in ongoing workshops for consistency of practice, sharing of practice, and review of practice.

Mentors should be given the time to observe the new teachers' teaching regularly (e.g., Leslie) and should meet with the new teacher to offer formative assessment based on their observations (Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010).

Finally, it would be prudent for school boards to explore release time for mentors. The New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz releases mentors on full-time basis to support groups of up to fifteen new teachers (Walsh, 2004). They are then fully able to commit themselves to the support of new teachers.

### **Professional Development**

Both the new teacher and mentor should have access to workshops in the area of induction and mentoring as well as in their subject area. The literature on induction consistently states that ongoing professional learning is a vital component in the continuing education of teachers

Australia House of Representatives, 2007). The OECD (2005) has stated that a teachers' development must be viewed in "lifelong terms;" their learning cannot cease at the end of their initial teacher education. Therefore, relevant, high quality professional development programs are necessary to continue a teacher's learning. Money should be allocated for cost of supply/on-call teachers so that the new teacher and mentor can pursue professional development opportunities and/or meet to collaborate.

### **Appropriate Teaching Load**

New teachers should not be given the hardest, most challenging teaching assignments, as is often the case (Darling-Hammond, 2000). If resources allow, it may be beneficial to decrease a new teachers' load by up to 20%, as is the practice in New Zealand (Cameron et al., 2007; New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010) to allow them to reflect on their practice, plan and confer with colleagues, work with their mentor, and pursue professional development opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 2006). The practice of assigning new teachers multiple subjects, wherein they must prepare for a variety of courses, as well as assigning them to classes with high percentages of students with learning disabilities, must cease.

### **Evaluation of New Teachers**

New teachers should be evaluated in a fair and transparent process. The emphasis should be placed on formative evaluation, whereby teachers are given feedback on how they can improve and grow as teachers. A satisfactory mark on the summative assessment would allow the new teacher to complete the induction program.

The literature on new teachers' induction shows that the first year of a teacher's career is the most crucial in forming their teaching (Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008). If the underlying

goal of induction programs is to improve the teaching of novice teachers, serious induction programs focus not just on supporting new teachers but on improving their teaching (Wang et al., 2008; Yusko and Feiman-Nemser, 2008). It thus makes sense to evaluate the performance of teachers in their first year.

The process by which new teachers are evaluated is highly contentious (Cameron, 2007). This may be due to what Fullan and Hargreaves (2000) terms the “culture of individualism” within schools wherein the teacher is an “autonomous professional” (p. 51). Seeking assistance may be a sign of weakness and teachers are left to manage on their own. Feiman-Nemser (2006) stated that teaching is traditionally an isolating profession whereby teachers work alone in their classrooms. She, like Fullan and Hargreaves, sees the push for mentoring as a challenge to the traditional culture of schools: “serious mentoring challenges the culture of teaching, placing both mentors and mentees in uncomfortable roles” (p. xiii).

In terms of the evaluation of new teachers, Feiman-Nemser has stated that:

teachers are unaccustomed to questioning a colleagues practice, asking for evidence, offering a different interpretation. The desire to maintain cordial relations works against serious professional discourse. Without shared standards, a common vocabulary, and analytical skills, talk among teachers tends to be anecdotal and laden with jargon. (2006, p. xiii)

It is, however, vital to offer feedback to new teachers in order to foster their continued development (Cameron, 2007). Without a form of structured feedback, new teachers are much less likely to hone in on areas in need of improvement such as subject matter knowledge and classroom management strategies (OECD, 2005).

## **Mentors as Evaluators**

The subject of the evaluation of new teachers was not covered in the interviews in this study; however, the evaluation of new teachers is an important part of a new teacher's development and it is strongly recommended here that mentors should be involved in the evaluation process. The literature suggests that schools need to be cognizant of not only how new teachers are being evaluated but also aware of who is doing the evaluating (Yusko & Feiman-Nemser, 2008).

Five of the six participants highlighted in this study were very positive about their relationship and work with their mentors. Among their comments were that mentors had an impact on their emotional well-being, were a shoulder to lean on, were a wealth of knowledge, and gave constructive feedback. As discussed earlier, new teachers must be understood not as a homogenous group but as individuals with varied backgrounds. Mentors, in their day-to-day work with new teachers, have insight into the new teachers' backgrounds and experiences and, in most cases, have formed an important emotional bond with new teachers. Mentors are thus in a position to offer meaningful and constructive feedback to new teachers.

Yusko and Feiman-Nemser (2008) acknowledge the tension that can result when mentors are asked to not only assist but also to assess new teachers. The authors suggest that the assisting and assessing of new teachers are often considered "incompatible functions" for mentor teachers. In their literature review on the important role of assessment in induction programs the authors write that the literature on induction usually recommends the separation of assistance and assessment. When mentors perform the role of assessors, new teachers may distrust mentors and will thus be wary of communicating their problems and asking for help. This inevitably makes

the induction program less than effective. The researcher's findings, gathered from an in-depth analysis of the Peer Assistance and Evaluation Program (PAEP) in Cincinnati and the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (SCNTP), however, contradict the general views found in the literature. Yusko and Feiman-Nemser argue that assistance and assessment can be performed in concert. They found that, in both programs, mentors and mentees still established trusting relationships. This was largely due to the respect new teachers had for the mentors, who were chosen for their exceptional abilities as teachers and support-givers. Mentors continually offered effective support when teachers were in need but also offered constructive feedback to the new teachers regarding their teaching abilities. The researchers thus found that mentoring is most effective when mentors both assist and assess in a way that follows set goals and structures, when the mentors have access to professional support that stresses stringent teaching standards and when they receive ongoing professional development to grow in their role.

As described in the literature on induction, the evaluation of new teachers is an important element in aiding new teachers. It is evident that this evaluation would be more meaningful if performed by the mentor than by the vice-principal or principal.

### **Evaluation of the Induction Program**

While induction programs are quickly becoming the norm in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they are still in their early stages of implementation. Despite the ubiquity of induction programs, far too few teachers actually receive comprehensive, high-quality induction and mentoring (Glazerman et al., 2010). For induction programs to improve, it is important that they be regularly reviewed and evaluated. The three programs outlined in the literature review – the SCNTP in Santa Cruz, the BTIP in New Brunswick and the Scottish Teacher Induction Scheme – have all been through

cycles of evaluation. In all three cases, improvements to the programs based on the findings of the evaluations have been made. The New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz serves as an exemplary program in this regard. The program has a monthly newsletter titled *Reflections* which, as the title suggests, allows the participants to engage in an ongoing evaluation of the program.

In Ontario, NTIP has undergone a number of external evaluations. A research team led by Professor Ruth Kane conducted a five-year evaluation from 2007-2011. As evident in the significant adjustments - including LTO teachers as new teachers and acknowledging the varied experiences of new teachers - made to the program in 2010, these regular evaluations keep the program relevant and effective.

### **Flexibility**

The participants in this study reflect the reality in today's schools: new teachers come from a variety of backgrounds. Clearly, a one-size fits all approach to induction is not appropriate in this climate. In this study, the participants communicated that an induction program has to be flexible so that it can meet the needs of all new teachers. Therefore, orientation sessions must address and validate new teachers from various backgrounds and levels of experience, professional development sessions must be differentiated, and mentors must be trained on how to work with new teachers with various levels of experience.

Of note here: the latest NTIP Induction Elements manual (2010), includes a revision that states that a beginning Long-Term Occasional teacher should be included in NTIP. A beginning LTO teacher is defined as a certified occasional teacher who is in his or her first long-term assignment of 97 or more consecutive school days as a substitute for the same teacher. The document also stresses the importance of differentiation in the areas of mentoring and

orientation:

Opportunities should be tailored to meet the needs of individual new teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers who are new to the profession; trained in Ontario but new to a publicly funded Ontario school board; trained in another Canadian province or territory and new to an Ontario school board; and trained outside of Canada and new to an Ontario school board. Mentoring opportunities should also be differentiated on the basis of teacher assignment and experience (e.g., elementary/secondary panels, itinerant positions, occasional teaching) and orientation. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19)

Just as teachers are expected to differentiate their lessons based on the needs of students with different needs and capabilities, school boards need to understand that new teachers do not benefit from a one size fits all approach to induction, particularly in the areas of mentoring and orientation.

### **Contributions and Limitations of this Study**

#### **Contributions**

As mentioned earlier, this study addresses a shortage of empirical research that privileges the voices and experiences of new teachers in the Canadian context. While many studies exist – many of which were discussed in the literature review in this paper – that detail the importance of well-designed induction programs, very few studies present their findings from the perspective of the teachers involved in the programs. In addition, the challenges new teachers face in their first few years, while documented in the literature, are rarely explored in detail. The findings of this study do mirror the findings of studies in other jurisdictions: teaching has

become more complex and difficult than ever; moreover, in this context, new teachers need support in the form of an induction program. This study also suggests that new teachers must not be overloaded with impossible course loads in their first years of teaching only to ensure that veteran teachers have an easier load. Saddling new teachers with courses they are not well prepared to teach and assigning new teachers a high percentage of students with learning disabilities, as new teachers in this study experienced, is problematic. A stressed and overwhelmed new teacher will have a difficult time taking advantage of the opportunities any induction program may offer. While the findings suggest that mentors can be transformative to a new teacher's professional learning and support, and most new teachers in this study were paired with excellent mentors, some had a less than effective match. If the mentor is not trained in how to support new teachers, not only will the new teacher not be supported in their ever-important first year, but they may learn "how not to teach." Induction programs that do not prioritize the training of mentors are leaving too much to chance. Programs in Canada need to follow the lead of such programs the New Teacher Project in Santa Cruz., California, where mentors are trained, given release time and given the resources to ensure new teachers' success.

### **Limitations**

There are only six participants in this study. The six teachers taught at schools within a 300-kilometre radius in Ontario. It is therefore difficult to transfer the findings to all new teachers in Ontario and Canada. While I have tried to present each of the six teachers as representative of groups within the larger NTIP study of new teachers with shared experiences, we must recognize that, in the end, the voices of only six participants were heard. In addition, while it was an overriding goal to hear the new teachers voice their concerns, it should be noted

that the results of this study are based on their interpretation of events rather than on observations of their teaching or interactions with their mentors and other colleagues. Finally, if time and resources allowed, to gain insight into the longer-term impacts of NTIP, it would have been beneficial to interview new teachers more than once over a series of interviews.

### **Directions for Future Research**

As I anticipated at the outset of this study, many intriguing possibilities for further research have emerged. First, it is vital that school boards throughout Canada make it a top priority to ease the teaching load for new teachers. The practice of burdening new teachers with unrealistic assignments should be a relic of the past. Research in the area of new teacher teaching assignments needs to focus on how new teachers can be supported in this area. Perhaps it is time for Ontario to look at programs like the Scottish Induction Scheme where new teachers only have a seventy percent course load in their first year of teaching (Hamilton, 2010).

Second, research in the area of differentiation of induction programs for new teachers needs to be addressed. As is clear in this study, the needs of new teachers widely vary. New teachers with experience in other districts should have a personalized program that is different than the program for the truly new teacher.

Third, this study suggests that a great deal of the mentoring that occurred was informal – during ten-minute breaks between periods, at lunch, or during classes. It seems that this is largely due to a lack of time for both the new teacher and mentor. As mentioned previously, the New Teacher Centre in Santa Cruz serves as an effective model of formalized mentoring: mentors are released on a full-time basis to devote their time to groups of new teachers.

Finally, it is vital that the ongoing evaluation of induction programs in Ontario and all of

Canada continue. Schools and school boards must continue to strive to improve on present practices through the evaluation of their own programs and the study of exemplary programs in Canada and elsewhere. It is important to understand that not all induction is effective induction. Induction programs have multiple elements – mentoring being just one of many – and each of these elements needs to be fostered and continually improved upon.

### **Concluding Comments**

It is energizing as an educator to see that, during my short career of 12 years, support for new teachers, as evident in the proliferation of induction programs, has come so far. However, cultural shifts within organizations take time and school is, in many ways, not altogether different than when I was in high school (way back in the late 80s and early 90s). New teachers today are still pressured to accept the toughest teaching loads and many new teachers are afraid to speak out or complain for fear of appearing inflexible or non-compliant. Indeed, in a time of economic downturn where teaching jobs are extremely tough to find, new teachers covet their positions and are under pressure to impress the administration and those at the board office. Every new teacher wants to be perceived as flexible and capable. Until schools and school boards establish a strong institutional commitment to support their new teachers, I fear that induction programs will only serve to aid new teachers in their mere survival rather than in their professional growth and maturation.

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## Appendix – Interview Schedule

| Interview Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Probing Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Induction into the school</b><br><br>Looking back to the beginning of the school year (or of your contract), how did your first days at the school unfold?                                                                                                                                                                                         | How were you greeted/welcome at the school?<br><br>How did your induction into the team happen?                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>2. The experience of being a new teacher</b><br><br>What successes did you manage to achieve during your induction process?<br><br>What challenges were you faced with during your induction? How did you overcome these challenges?                                                                                                                  | Did you receive any help or any support from anyone around you? (family, friends, colleagues, school administrators, etc.                                                                                                           |
| <b>3. The induction program</b><br><br>How did the induction program in your school unfold? (roll out?)<br><br>Overall, what do you think of this experience?                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Tell me about your orientation session.</b><br><br>Tell me about your professional development activities/seminars.<br><br>Tell me about the mentoring process.<br><br>To what degree are satisfied with your induction program? |
| <b>4. Mentoring</b><br><br>Can you tell me about your experience(s) with your mentor?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>How were you paired?</b><br><br>In what way(s) did you work together?<br><br>What type of relationship did you develop?<br><br>To what degree are satisfied with your mentoring experience?                                      |
| <b>Advice and avenues for improvement</b><br><br>What advice would you give a beginning teacher in order to help him or her experience the induction process in a positive light?<br><br>What advice would you give your school, your school board or the Ministry in order to help new teachers experience their induction process in a positive light? | <b>If you had to relive the experience of being a new teacher:</b><br><br>What would you like to relive in the same fashion?<br><br>What would you want to change or improve?                                                       |
| <b>Expectations of teaching</b><br><br>How have your expectations of teaching, upon graduating from your initial teacher education program, met with the realities of teaching in your first year?                                                                                                                                                       | <b>How well did your teacher education program prepare you for teaching?</b>                                                                                                                                                        |