EXAMINING SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS: THE RELATIONSHIP OF INTERACTIONS, MENTORING, AND COMMUNITY ON NOVICE TEACHERS’ SATISFACTION AND CAREER RESILIENCY

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DISSERTATION
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction in the Graduate College of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

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Abstract

In this research I investigate the social support networks of four novice elementary teachers. I obtained data through one-on-one interviews, egocentric social network map creation, observations, and document review. Though the four teachers had varying levels of satisfaction, at the completion of their second year teaching, all four expressed intent to remain in their positions and the profession. Examination of the four teachers’ social support networks suggests that these novice teachers need and value the following supports: emotional, contextual, relational, academic, and social. The types of supports each of the four teachers accessed were functions of the type and locations of the relationships they formed, but also reveal the priority the teachers placed on the various supports.

In this study, there appeared to be a relationship between particular contextual features and the teachers’ overall levels of satisfaction. These include the teachers’ access to the following: strong, reciprocal relationships; meaningful collaboration; social capital; and validation and relational supports. Access to these features was mediated by the type of professional culture reflected in the school and the trust the novices had in their colleagues. Access to these features also seemed to relate to the teachers’ overall sense of community. When these supports were limited or not available, it was reflected in a low level of satisfaction, but did not seem to affect the teacher’s commitment to the profession. Findings suggest that these teachers’ commitment to the profession is influenced by individual attributes such as motivation. These findings have implications for anyone who works with or has a vested interest in supporting novice teachers, including teacher education.
programs, induction program coordinators, mentors, administrators, and school districts.
For Mom
Acknowledgments

This journey could not have been possible without the incredible support of the many people around me. I deeply appreciate the mentoring and assistance from my committee members, particularly Dr. Margery Osborne, my research advisor. Thank you for your kindness and helping me tap into my resiliency despite some major adversity. Dr. Adrienne Lo, your guidance over the years has been instrumental and I cannot thank you enough for being a trusted mentor throughout this process. Dr. Marilyn Johnston-Parsons, thank you for your thoughtful feedback and willingness to help. Dr. Joseph Robinson-Cimpian, I truly appreciate your ability to impart your immense knowledge in ways that are accessible and have helped guide this study. Insights shared from each of you will continue to influence my research throughout my career.

To my family—Dad, Kelly, (my favorite BIL) John, Tiffany, Kyle, Dylan, Amy, and Magoo—thank you for all of the support you have given me throughout this process, for always believing in me, and carrying me when I needed it. Dad, I would not be where I am today without you. Thank you for everything, great and small. KJ and DB Mulroney, don’t ever forget that the sky is the limit for you and anything is possible. To my wonderful friends, particularly Wax, Jason, and Beth, thank you for all of your help and for keeping me sane. Joey, you have helped me in ways you will never fully understand, and words can never express how grateful I am to have you in my life. Sharon, Adam, Lauren, and Laura F., you have all believed in me as much as any family member and have been there when I’ve needed someone the most. I could not have done this without you. Michael, thank you for the laughs and the
pancakes; I am grateful we were able to go through this experience together. Stephanie, thank you for your endless encouragement, positive outlook, and being an incredible friend. Ryan, thank you for knowing what I needed even when I didn’t. Your kindness and generosity will never be forgotten and I will always be thankful that we met. Myranda, thank you for your endless patience, always looking out for me, and always having a life vest just as my head was going under water.

This study would not have been possible without the four amazing women who opened themselves-and their classrooms-up to me. Thank you for trusting me and sharing your time, perspectives, joys, and fears. You made this process even more meaningful to me, and I genuinely loved every second I spent with each of you.

And most importantly, to my mom, who has been with me throughout this process in a way none of us anticipated. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for all the late nights at the gym, for all the track meets in the freezing rain, and for everything I never got to thank you for. You have always believed in and encouraged me with such ferocity, and that is something that I will continue to carry with me always.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The problem isn’t that there’s no interest in teaching; I constantly meet young people who’ve...signed up...for two-year stints in some of the country’s toughest public schools. They find the work extraordinarily rewarding...but by the end of two years, most have either changed careers or moved to suburban schools – a consequence of low pay, a lack of support from the educational bureaucracy, and a pervasive feeling of isolation. (Obama, 2006, p. 162)

Teachers are leaving the profession at alarming rates, and rates are especially high for novice teachers—teachers in their first four years in the profession (Curran & Glodrick, 2002; Herbert & Ramsay, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2012; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; NCTAF, 1997). What is occurring in these first years, and how can we best support novice teachers? This dissertation explores the experiences of four novice teachers within their first two years teaching with the intent to better understand what types of supports are most beneficial to novice teachers and how those supports help them navigate the contexts of their work. The findings of this study can help inform the work of those who support and work with new teachers, including teacher education programs, induction program coordinators, mentors, and administrators.

Teacher Turnover

The current teaching force is dominated by beginning teachers. Approximately 200,000 new teachers enter the field annually and the most common teacher now has 0-1 years of experience, a significant difference from 1988, when the most common teacher had 15 years under her belt (Ingersoll, 2012). This shift is not due to hiring demands from increased student enrollment or teacher
retirements; it is primarily due to preretirement turnover (Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010).

Turnover is inherent to any profession, and a low-level of turnover is important because it aids in the efficacy of an organization by weeding out ineffective employees (Dalton, Krackhardt, & Porter, 1981). It also prevents stagnation by introducing new individuals to the organization, which can lead to innovation (Abelson & Baysinger, 1984). However, from an organizational standpoint, high turnover is a problem because it can negatively impact commitment and cohesion among staff (Likert, 1967; Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). Since such cohesion is seen as one of the most important indicators of a successful school (Hargreaves, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989), high turnover within schools is particularly problematic.

Whereas the overall attrition rate of teachers has been relatively stable (~15%) for several years (Ingersoll, 2002 2003), this rate is not consistent across school type or teaching subsets. Low-income schools, for example, have approximately a 50% higher turnover rate than more affluent schools (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; NCTAF, 2007; Presley, White, & Gong, 2005; Ingersoll, 2001). Urban and lower-performing schools have a higher rate of turnover than their counterparts (Boyd et al., 2005; Presley, White, & Gong, 2005) and have a harder time retaining new teachers (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). Special education teachers leave the profession at a higher rate than their general education counterparts (Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011) and teachers with stronger academic qualifications (as
measured by data like SAT scores) are more likely to leave the profession early in their career (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wykoff, 2005; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Lankford, Loeb, & Wykoff, 2002; Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2007; Podgursky, Monroe, & Watson, 2004).

The rate of attrition for new teachers is the highest, with between approximately a third and a half of teachers either leaving ("leavers") the profession or their school ("movers") within the first five years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2003; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Herbert & Ramsay, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2012; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; NCTAF, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In Illinois, this movement is particularly high. In an analysis of new teacher movements within and out of teaching in the Illinois Public Schools between 1971 and 2006, DeAngelis and Presley (2011) found that Illinois Public Schools lost, on average, two out of every three new teachers within six years of hiring. Although some of these teachers eventually return to the profession (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Stinebrickner, 2002), the impact on the individual schools remains the same; the schools usually need to replace the staff, and such replacement can be costly. In Illinois, The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) estimates that teacher movements cost the Chicago Public Schools over $86 million per year, with the average leaver costing the district $17,872. The Department of Labor estimates that attrition costs an employer approximately 30% of the leaving employee’s salary (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). This results in school districts paying out, on average, upwards of $12,000 per loss (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005;
Economic costs, though substantial, are not the only ones incurred when teachers leave. Intangible costs, particularly those impacting a school’s ability to function as an organization, can be incredibly detrimental as well (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Guin, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). High turnover can impede the staff of a school from forming the collegial bonds necessary for collaboration and team building (Berry, 2010; Brown & Schainker, 2008; Guin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2003; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004) both of which lead to school success (Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Rosenholtz, 1989; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Turnover makes it difficult to form learning communities in the school, thereby reducing organizational capacity and the ability to sustain reform (Brown & Schainker, 2008; DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Guin, 2004; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

Teacher turnover can have a direct impact on student learning and achievement (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Guin, 2004; NCTAF, 2007; Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2012; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). In a study on the estimates of teacher turnover on over 850,000 fourth and fifth grade students in New York, Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff (2013) found teacher turnover to have a significant negative impact on student achievement in mathematics and English language arts, particularly in schools with more low-performing and Black students.
New teachers are generally less effective than their more experienced colleagues (Hanushek, Kaine, & O’Brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Their effectiveness improves over time (Kane, Rockoff, & Staiger, 2008), so keeping teachers in the profession is critical to student achievement (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012).

Although there have been numerous studies linking personal characteristics to attrition (e.g. Bobek, 2002; Chan, Lau, Nie, Lim, & Hogan, 2008; Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005; Shen, 1997; Tait, 2008; Waddel, 2007), many teachers are leaving because of job dissatisfaction and recent focus has turned to organizational factors related to attrition (Guin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2012; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Many studies identify factors related to the school itself (rather than the district or profession) as being the main contributors to attrition rates (Borman & Dowling, 2008; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Guin, 2004; Herbert & Ramsay, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2012; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). These factors include student characteristics (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Loeb, Darling-Hammond, & Luczak, 2005) including discipline (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Gonzales, Brown, & Slate, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003; Ingersoll & May, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2002) and achievement (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). There seems to be a link between high attrition and less advantaged students, however, that link is most likely due to the working conditions and lack of resources available to those schools (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Loeb, et al., 2005). These schools often have lower salary schedules for their teachers as well, and salary has been found to be a key contributor to attrition
(Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gonzales, et al., 2008; Hanushek et al., 2004; Kang & Berliner, 2012; Loeb, et al., 2005). On average, teachers earn 15-30% less than their college-educated peers, even after adjusting for the shorter work year (Darling-Hammond, 2010). However, even more important than salary is the amount of administrative and collegial support received by teachers (Humphrey, Koppich, & Hough, 2005; Koppich, Humphrey, & Hough, 2007). Johnson and Birkeland (2002) found that low pay was only exacerbated by perceived lack of support, and a recent poll indicated that nearly 80% of teachers would choose to teach in a school where they felt supported by their administrators, whereas only 20% would choose to teach at one with a significantly higher salary schedule (Rochkind, Ott, Immerwahr, Doble, & Johnson, 2007). Horng’s (2009) study of 531 teachers’ preferences for working conditions in a California elementary school district found that teachers rated administrative support twice as important as student characteristics in influencing decisions about where to teach. Administrative support is imperative (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Boyd, et al., 2011; Ingersoll, 2001, 2002, 2003; Gonzalez, et al., 2008; Johnson & Birkeland, 2002; Ladd, 2010; Wadell, 2010), particularly with new teachers (Ingersoll & May, 2012; Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank, & Belman 2012). It is inherent within the entire school as an organization and a key facet to a school’s organizational climate (Pogodzinski et al., 2012).

Ultimately, although the decision to stay in the profession is personal and varies by individual based on his/her needs and circumstances, according to the literature, focus should be on what can be done at the organizational level to help
Looking at the reasons for departure, retention could be aided by raising salaries and improving organizational culture, particularly those related to new teachers’ feelings of support (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). One way to improve those feelings of support (and thus retention) is through induction programs. In a critical review of 15 empirical studies on the effects of induction on beginning teachers, Ingersoll and Strong (2011) found that most of the studies supported the claim that induction has a positive impact on teacher commitment and retention. This is consistent with Smith and Ingersoll’s (2004) work that showed the predicted probability of turnover in their first year was 40% for inexperienced teachers who did not participate in induction programs. They found the most salient induction components to be: having a mentor in the same field, having common planning time with other teachers, and being a part of an external network of teachers. The last two facets contribute to teacher collaboration, development of professional learning communities, and an overall sense of belonging, all of which can aid in retention (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Wadell, 2010). Ideally, new teachers should participate in a comprehensive induction program that has all of these components. However, due to budget cuts, many programs are only able to offer a fraction of the components they once did. Mentoring is a component many retain despite program cuts (Illinois New Teacher Collaborative, 2012) and one that has shown to boost new teacher retention (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Parker, Ndoye, & Imig, 2009; US Department of Education, 2011; Wadell, 2010).
The Teacher Followup Survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics asked teachers who had moved from or left their teaching jobs to suggest possible steps schools might take to encourage teachers to remain in teaching. In an analysis of this national survey, Ingersoll (2003) found the top three responses to be: better salary, better student discipline, and smaller class sizes. Though these align well with the reasons teachers give for leaving (or moving), it is not consistent with the literature showing induction to have a major role in retention. In fact, only 10% of respondents suggested mentoring as a step, which accounted for the second-lowest response in total. So if mentoring helps retention, why is it not identified by the teachers themselves as a possible solution for retention problems? What role is mentoring playing in teachers’ retention that they themselves may be unaware of?

Improving the working conditions of new teachers and their experiences of organizational culture are pivotal to keeping them in the profession (Andrews & Quinn, 2005; DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Pogodzinski et al., 2012). In this dissertation I aim to better understand the experiences of novice teachers and what may influence their overall satisfaction and intent to remain in the profession.

**This Study**

The research questions I explored include:

- What type of formal/informal interactions do novice teachers seek out/engage in and why? What is the content and direction of those interactions?
• How do novice teachers use their mentors?
• What do novice teachers’ support networks look like?
• What are the individual factors and attributes that help novice teachers?
• How do these interactions and supports relate to how novice teachers feel about their work and jobs?
• How can we better support novice teachers?

The purpose of this study is to investigate the interactions novice teachers have with colleagues and out of school supports. These interactions can provide insight into the supports novice teachers need and value. Additionally, they reveal the supports available to the novices in this study and the novices’ reaction to those supports.

**Organization of Chapters**

To situate this study in the literature, I review the following relevant topics to novice teachers’ interactions and support in Chapter Two: a) organizational culture; b) social capital; c) social networks, and d) induction and mentoring.

In Chapter Three describes the qualitative methods used in this study to address the research questions. Through a combination of written correspondences, semi-structured interviews, network mapping, and observations, I was able to understand my participants’ experiences as well as the context in which those experiences took place. This chapter introduces the participants and outlines the steps taken in collecting and analyzing my data.

In Chapter Four, I present the case study reports of each of my four participants. This chapter highlights the unique experiences of the four teachers,
the content of their social support networks, and the supports and hurdles they encountered in their contexts.

In Chapter Five, I present a cross-case analysis and how my findings connect to the literature. It emphasizes the contexts of the four participants and the individual factors that seem to relate to their overall feelings of satisfaction and career resiliency.

In Chapter Six, I conclude by suggesting the implications of the study and directions for future research.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this study I explore the socialization experiences of four novice teachers. I examine their formal and informal interactions with their colleagues and out of school supports. I describe, in this chapter, what the literature reveals about novice teacher supports, and the features that may contribute to their satisfaction and retention. The literature on organizational culture, social capital, social networks, and novice teacher induction can help us understand the experiences of my four participants.

This literature review serves four main purposes:

- To review the features of organizational, school, and professional culture. This literature helped me understand the contexts of my participants’ experiences and what role they played in their socialization.

- To review social capital. This literature helped illuminate the larger social processes that occur in schools and lends insights into why certain interactions may have occurred.

- To review social network theory. This literature focuses on how social network theory helps to analyze teachers’ relationships and the nature of those relationships.

- To review the features and importance of novice teacher induction and mentoring. This literature helped to understand my participants’ mentoring and induction experiences.
Together, these areas helped explicate facets of my participants’ experiences and added to my understanding of those experiences. Investigating these areas provided a foundation for my study and situated my questions in the literature.

**Culture**

Teachers exist within a particular context, one that includes other actors (students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.), social interactions governed by rules and norms, political motivations and pressures, and resources and tools. Teachers assess their work and workplace on the basis of these factors (Johnson, 1990). Many researchers cite the importance of context in the success of any educational initiative, including those related to novice teacher induction (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Goldrick et al., 2012; Hargreaves, 1995; Kardos et al., 2001; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Wechsler et al., 2010; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). The interactions within a setting and the context they occur in make up culture. In the case of new teachers, “whether the early years of teaching are a time of constructive learning or a period of coping, adjustment, and survival depends largely on the working conditions and culture of teaching that new teachers encounter” (Feiman-Nemser, 2003, p. 3).

*Culture* is at the heart of anthropology. Malinowski (1922) identified describing culture as the main goal of ethnographic anthropological fieldwork; he asserted how difficult ascertaining a true understanding of culture can be. This difficulty persists to this day as researchers in a variety of disciplines struggle to investigate, describe, and define culture. Common to these definitions, however, is the idea that culture is something that is held in common among group members,
and includes shared meanings, beliefs, assumptions, understandings, norms, values, and knowledge (Brown, 2004; Hatch, 2006; Lindahl, 2011; Willower & Smith, 1987). This definition can be applied equally well to any culture, including that of an organization.

**Organizational Culture**

At the core of organizational culture is its foundation of basic assumptions (Schein, 1985, 2010). These assumptions are invisible; they include taken for granted beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings that are shared and maintained by members of the culture (Schein, 1985, 2010). They influence what the members perceive and how they think and feel. Hatch (2006) compares cultural members’ level of awareness of their basic assumptions to what a fish thinks about water. Even though it surrounds them and is integral to their existence, its existence is taken for granted. Assumptions are woven into every aspect of cultural life, but they are beneath ordinary awareness (Hatch, 2006; Schein, 1985, 2010). In education, an example of this type of tacit assumption is that teachers are capable of making decisions for the best interest of their students.

The next level of organizational culture is cultural values (Schein, 1985, 2010). Hatch (2006) describes values as the “social principles, goals and standards that cultural members believe have intrinsic worth” (p. 186). Values include the goals and philosophies of an organization (Schein, 1985, 2010), reveal what members care about most, and are revealed by members’ priorities (Hatch, 2006). They often become visible after an outsider challenges their culture. Examples of shared values in a school would be high academic achievement, commitment to
students, and teamwork. Schein (2010) stresses that identifying the values themselves, though important, is not as important as how the cultural assumptions and values (as a whole) influence members’ perceptions, behaviors, and emotional states. This influence can take place through defining norms for behavior (Hatch, 2006).

Norms are expressions of values, and allow members to know what kind of behavior to expect in a variety of situations. These are generally left unstated, but communicated informally (i.e. showing up to a formal occasion wearing sweatpants would garner disapproving looks from others). The behaviors that norms allow can be traced to outcomes that are valued. Thus, norms reveal cultural values (Hatch, 2006; Schein, 1985, 2010). A school-based example of this would be behavior in a staff meeting. Any behavior competing with a teachers’ attention during a staff meeting (i.e. grading, talking, texting, etc.) may garner a negative reaction from another staff member (or the principal). This norm of behavior can be traced to a cultural value for courtesy or respect for the principal. Other norms in schools could include being available for students after school and walking students to and from specials. It is important to note, however, that identifying values based on behavior is not always accurate; it involves making assumptions and interpretations.

Artifacts are manifestations of the cultural core and are indicators of norms, values, and assumptions (Hatch, 2006). These are generally visible, but can be undecipherable, and can include structures, processes, clothing, the physical environment, and language (Schein, 1985). Categories can include objects, verbal
expressions, and activities, and examining many artifacts can reveal culture (Hatch, 2006).

These constituents of organizational culture are explicit and implicit and people within the culture may or may not be able to articulate its elements because of its existence at the conscious and sub-conscious levels (Brown, 2004; Connor & Lake, 1988; Rousseau, 1990; Schein, 1985). Members of an organizational culture experience it through the interpretations of the assumptions, values, norms, and artifacts, and because interpretation is personal, members of the culture experience it differently (Rousseau, 1990). This difference can often lead to sub-cultures within organizations comprised of individuals with similar interpretations, sometimes different than that of the whole (Cooper, 1988). When speaking of schools, we can talk about the organizational culture in terms of Schools (as in schooling as a whole) or as schools (as in schools as organizations). For the purpose of this study, I will be referencing the latter.

School Culture

As organizations, schools have a shared culture of norms, values, and beliefs that are socially constructed and develop as staff members interact with each other, students, and the community (Hinde, 2004, p. 2; Hubbard et al., 2006; Lunenburg, 2011; Tschannen-Moran, Uline, Hoy, & Mackley, 1999). Culture is maintained through the socialization process by which “individuals learn the values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge necessary to assume their roles in the organization” (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 1). This, combined with the fact that culture does not exist in isolation, results in the culture constantly being shaped and
changed (Finnan, 2000). Within schools, staff members have their own idiosyncratic beliefs that shape the culture of the school (Hinde, 2004; Lindahl, 2011), and likewise, those beliefs are shaped by the school’s culture. Sub-cultures can exist, emerging both out of cultural differences (Cooper, 1988) and structural elements of the school itself, like grade-level teams or teachers in the same wing. However, just as teachers do not exist in a vacuum, nor do schools. They are embedded within a number of other contexts and organizations, all with their own cultures shaped by politics, psychologies, etc., each of which has an impact on a school’s culture (Baum, 2002; Brown, 2004; Hollins, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001).

A school’s culture can be a positive influence on what goes on in a school, or it can be a hindrance on its functioning. Within the school improvement literature, there are innumerable studies citing school culture as being a major factor in whether or not reform efforts fail and the need to evaluate it (Finnan, 2000; Fullan, 2005; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Harris, 2002; Hubbard et al., 2006; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Peterson & Deal, 2009). It has been identified as key in efforts to improve a school’s performance (Bulach & Malone, 1994; Cheng, 1993; Fullan, 2005; Schein, 2009, 2010; Gordon & Patterson, 2007; Slavin, 2005) and influential on individuals’ willingness to change (Bolman & Deal, 1992; Leithwood, 1994; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). It can impact teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, satisfaction, and commitment (Johnson, 2004; Kardos, 2004; Rosenholtz, 1989) and also is a key factor in teachers’ decisions to remain in or
leave the profession (Andrews & Quinn, DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Pogodzinski et al., 2012).

A positive school culture fosters an environment conducive to learning for both teachers and students. It is generally thought to have the following features: a shared sense of vision and purpose amongst the staff, underlying norms of collegiality and ongoing improvement, a focus on student learning, a network of support for staff and students, regular recognitions of achievement, and strong school leadership (Brown, 2004; Fullan, 1992; Hargreaves, 1995; Hinde, 2004).

Induction serves as an enculturation for new teachers (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Feiman-Nemser, et al., 1999; Little, 1990; Pogodzinski, 2012b) and as such, it takes place, in part, in the interactions between novice teachers and their colleagues. Thus, the nature of a new teacher’s encounter with and experience of the school culture they are being inducted into “will depend on the group of colleagues with whom she works, how they interact, and whether they welcome novices into their professional exchanges and pay attention to their needs and concerns” (Kardos et al., 2001, p. 256). It will also depend on whether the school is new (they can take part in the shaping of its culture) or well established (they will be indoctrinated into an established culture) and whether the school has formal and informal structures in place for induction (Kardos et al., 2001).

**Professional Culture**

Although school culture encompasses a vast number of elements and interactions within the school, there are micro-cultures, like administrative culture, that can be narrowed down from the larger culture. In their study of fifty first and
second year teachers in Massachusetts, Kardos and colleagues (2001) examined the professional cultures the teachers encountered in their schools. They defined professional cultures as the “distinctive blend of norms, values, and accepted modes of professional practice, both formal and informal, that prevail among colleagues” (p. 254). They further narrowed it by focusing only on the teachers and administrators within the schools. In their analysis, they conceptualized three types of professional cultures in schools: veteran-oriented professional cultures, novice-oriented professional cultures, and integrated professional cultures.

Veteran-oriented professional cultures occurred in schools where there were “a high proportion of senior teachers whose patterns of professional practice were well established” (Kardos et al., 2010, p. 261). The interactions within these schools were determined by the concerns and habits of the veteran teachers and typically there were not meaningful structural mechanisms in place to help orient and support new teachers. Although several new teachers in these cultures reported having positive interactions with the experienced teachers, ultimately, these cultures left much in the area of needed organized support. Meetings were seldom organized around the needs of new teachers, if orientation programs existed, they were short-lived and superficial, and experienced teachers rarely sought out novices to see if they needed support.

Novice-oriented professional cultures most often occurred in new schools (like charters) or well-established schools that had recently undergone a restructuring. These cultures were characterized by a high concentration of novice teachers. The new teachers often described these cultures as being innovative, fast-
paced, and intense, with a great deal of collaboration and interaction between staff members. Because of the high proportion of new teachers within these cultures, novices did not have the benefit of the expertise of experienced teachers to guide them. New teachers in these cultures reported working extremely long hours at frenzied paces, often trying to develop curriculum while keeping up with the demands of learning the job without anyone to guide them. Though interaction between staff was frequent, such interactions were usually with other novices and informal in nature. The lack of veteran teachers made mentor assignments difficult and they rarely received professional guidance about how to teach. Novices were insufficiently supported in their development as teachers and devoid of any expert judgment and skilled practice.

Integrated cultures were often found in schools that contained a mixture of novice and veteran teachers. These cultures were characterized by a high level of sustained reciprocal interaction between teachers at all experience levels, a shared belief in collegiality and responsibility for educating all students, and recognition of and support structures for the unique needs of new teachers. Communication in these cultures occurred informally, but also occurred deliberately through common planning times, school improvement meetings, and regular and ongoing planned mentor meetings (Kardos et al., 2001). Johnson (2004) describes:

In integrated professional cultures, mentoring is organized to benefit both the novice and experienced teacher, the structures are in place to further facilitate teacher interaction and reinforce interdependence. Schools with integrated professional cultures are organizations that explicitly value teachers’ professional growth and renewal (p. 159).
The teachers in the veteran- and novice-oriented cultures reported feeling more focused on day-to-day survival, compared to the novices in the integrated cultures who could focus more on teaching and learning. The teachers in the integrated cultures reported being united with their colleagues and felt supported from both the formal structures in place and informally (Kardos et al., 2001). In a follow-up to this study, Kardos (2004) found that these cultures had a significant positive impact on novice teachers’ job satisfaction, as did having a mentor in the same grade level or subject area with whom they had frequent and sustained interactions. Having a mentor alone did not have any impact on job satisfaction. These findings suggest the importance of investigating the relational aspects of new teachers’ professional cultures, looking deeper into the types of relationships and interactions that exist and how they support novice teachers.

Also notable about these findings is that within the integrated cultures, there were formalized induction supports in place for the new teachers, but those were coupled with frequent informal interactions between colleagues. These interactions contributed to the quality of the new teachers’ socialization experiences and make a case for considering how regular unstructured interactions impact novice teachers’ experiences (Penuel et al., 2010; Pogodzinski, 2012b).

**Social Capital**

Culture is maintained through the socialization process by which individuals learn the values, expected behaviors, and social knowledge necessary to assume their roles in the organization (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 1). Formal induction programs exist, in part, to facilitate this socialization. However, novice teachers interact with
colleagues other than their mentors, and much of their socialization occurs through these informal relationships (Fullagar, Gallagher, Gordon & Clark, 1995; INTC 2012a; Kardos et al., 2001; Penuel et al., 2010; Pogodzinski, 2012b). Thus, it is important to examine the immediate social contexts of novice teachers because they may mediate the effects of socialization (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Coburn, 2004; Coburn & Russell, 2004; Granovetter, 1985; Pogodzinski, 2012a, 2012b).

The idea that social relations play a large part in facilitating learning, performance, and satisfaction is one shared across disciplines (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Granovetter, 1985; Lin, 2001; Nahapiet & Goshal, 1998; Portes, 1998). Relationships are a dominant factor in the socialization process, as members within an organization can facilitate or constrain the integration of a newcomer into the culture (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Korte, 2009; Korte & Lin, 2012; Pogodzinski, 2012b). It is through these relationships that newcomers have access to resources and support, otherwise known as social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988).

**Social Capital**

A fundamental concept in understanding socialization is the concept of social capital. The theory of social capital is discussed in many fields, and its definition varies slightly both between and within fields (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Daly, 2010). These nuances are based on both the field defining it and the aspect of social capital being foreground in the study (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Common to these definitions is that the source of social capital lies within the social structure the actor is located within (their network),
and that social capital itself is a resource that is available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of the network (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Thus, important components to social capital are relationships, resources, and positionality in the network (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010; Penuel, et al., 2009). It is through the relationships the actor builds within the network that they make use of and gain access to valuable resources that can affect change and learning (Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998). The more relationships an actor has within the network (and the more frequent their interactions), the higher their access is to resources and the higher their social capital. Consequently, social capital and an actor’s social networks are inextricably combined.

In education, social capital can take the form of any resources available to teachers, including tangible tools like curriculum materials and intangible tools like knowledge and experience. As a result, it is important to examine the interactions between teachers within a school, because such interactions provide teachers with access to resources that could affect their learning, satisfaction, engagement in and enactment of reform efforts. In schools with high levels of collaboration like the integrated cultures described by Kardos and colleagues (2010), there are high levels of flow of social capital amongst the staff because interactions are frequent and meaningful (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Kardos et al., 2010).

In the case of novice teachers, access to social capital can be pivotal to their success, as it provides them knowledge and expertise from experienced teachers regarding teaching and learning and transfers the values and beliefs of the
organizational culture of the school. A formal organizational structure such as formal mentoring provides a novice teacher access to one actor within the system, thus giving them a head start on gaining social capital. If the mentor has ties to several teachers (or networks of teachers), she has access to more resources and may be able to funnel those to her mentee. However, if the assigned mentor is relatively isolated and has a limited network (and thus limited social capital), the new teacher is forced to develop other relationships to gain more capital, or left to depend solely on the limited knowledge imparted by their formal mentor.

**Mediating factors.** Access to capital is determined by positionality within the network, but it is also mediated by several social and relational factors. These include the levels of relational trust and collective responsibility amongst staff members (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) and degree of fit (Bidwell, Frank, & Quiroz, 1997; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Chatman, 1989; Desimone et al., 2002; Kardos et al., 2001; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

Relational trust is the trust amongst staff members that everyone is benevolent, open, honest, and a feeling that it is safe to discuss feelings, challenges, and shortcomings with each other (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Youngs, Quian, & Holdgreve-Resendez, 2010; Pogodzinski, 2012a). This adds to a context more conducive for collaboration amongst staff.

Collective responsibility is the extent to which teachers in a school are committed to the goals of the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Penuel et al., 2009; Pogodzinski, 2012a). If a teacher feels that those around her are committed to a school-wide goal, she is more likely to also be committed to that same goal.
Identifying with the collective is also related to an individual’s willingness to provide resources and support to colleagues outside his or her immediate context (Frank & Zhao, 2005; Macy, 1990).

The degree of fit, or alignment between staff members can be on an abstract level (beliefs, values, philosophies) or on a practical level (grade level, education) (Pogodzinski, 2012a). The better a mentor and mentee fit on both of these levels, the more supported a novice teacher feels and the more satisfied she is with her job (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004; Kardos, 2004). In practical terms, an ideal mentor/mentee match would involve teachers at the same grade level who had similar education and subject matter backgrounds (Bidwell et al., 1997; Youngs, 2007). In abstract terms, if novice teachers align philosophically with their colleagues, they are more likely to believe they are members of a community, and therefore have more access to social capital (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Desimone et al., 2002; Kardos et al., 2001). This degree of fit can include the levels of shared goals and values, similar preferences for work climate, and similar preferences for systems and structures between novices and their mentors and other colleagues (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; Kirstof-Brown et al., 2005). Ideally, a mentor and mentee would match on both an abstract and a practical level (Achinstein et al., 2004).

These social and relational factors ultimately influence the frequency and content of interactions amongst staff, including novices and mentors (Pogodzinski, 2012a). Evaluating these factors, along with the frequency and content of interactions, gives insight to the access novice teachers have to support and
resources within their schools and can help with understanding how and why novice teachers enter into relationships with colleagues (Pogodzinski, 2012a).

**Social Networks**

Taking a network perspective focuses on the relationships between actors, keeping in mind that those relationships are embedded within a larger web of relationships. It is based on the assumption of the importance of relationships within a system, and that actors within a system impact other actors within the same system (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010). Social network analysis maps relationships within a network, providing a snapshot of the social environment that can be used to identify patterns or regularities in relationships among interacting units. It is this focus on relations and patterns of relations that make it a distinct theoretical and analytic framework and sets it apart from other quantitative and qualitative methods (Wasserman & Faust, 1998). As a lens, it can be applied to individuals, teams, and organizations making it possible to examine relationships on different levels and investigate relevant features of social relations (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010).

Some examples of ties are as follows: kinship within a tribe, trade relations within an economic system, and information sharing or friendship among a group of colleagues. The characterization of these ties defines a network. So, for example, interactions within a group of jurors could be examined to identify patterns of influence within the network. Then that same group could be used to map out non-case related interactions that took place and that would provide insight as to the informal relationships among the group. Although each network looked at the same group of actors, the interaction investigated differed and thus, each network would
provide different information about the group. These patterns of interactions give rise to a network’s structure, and thus, each of the networks in the example would visually map out differently from one another (Wasserman & Faust, 1998).

**Fundamentals of Social Network Analysis**

There are several key concepts that are fundamental to social network analysis. They are outlined in Table 1.1, below, as defined by Wasserman & Faust (1998, pp. 17-20).

Table 2.1

**Fundamental Concepts in Social Networks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Representation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>Discrete individual, corporate, or collective social units.</td>
<td>People in a group; departments within a corporation; grade level teams within a school</td>
<td>Single node: .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Tie</td>
<td>Anything that establishes a linkage between a pair of actors</td>
<td>Transfers of material resources; association or affiliation</td>
<td>Without direction: —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With directionality: →</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyad</td>
<td>A pair of actors and the (possible) tie(s) between them. Can be unit of analysis.</td>
<td>A new teacher and her mentor, who talk and share materials with one another.</td>
<td>Without direction: .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>With direction: .—.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triad</td>
<td>A subset of three actors and the (possible) tie(s) between them.</td>
<td>Three people who work on a grade level team and share curriculum materials.</td>
<td>. / .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>. — .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subgroup</td>
<td>A subset of actors and all the ties among them</td>
<td>All of the new teachers within a school.</td>
<td>Varies depending on size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.1 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Consists of a finite set of actors who for conceptual, theoretical, or empirical reasons are treated as a finite set of individuals on which network measurements are made. Can also be referred to as the actor set.</th>
<th>All of the staff members in a school.</th>
<th>The nodes within a social network.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relation</td>
<td>Collection of ties of a specific kind among members. It refers to the collection of ties of a given kind measured on pairs of actors from a specified actor set. The ties themselves can only exist between specific pairs of actors.</td>
<td>Set of friendships among pairs of children in a classroom; set of formal diplomatic ties maintained by pairs of nations in the world.</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network</td>
<td>Consists of a finite set or sets of actors and the relation or relations defined on them.</td>
<td>A school; a classroom; a group of friends</td>
<td>A series of multiple nodes connected by ties; can be small or large.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visually, the ties between actors are represented by either lines or arrows.

In a directed network, directionality of flow is highlighted, so arrows would be used.

So, for example, one person might provide resources to another person but never receive resources in return. Thus, directionality would provide additional information about the flow of resources between those two people. Arrows can be one-way, indicating an asymmetrical relationship, or can flow in both directions, indicating symmetry between the actors. For some networks, however, directionality does not matter (or is not being measured), and thus, lines are used.
Kinship would be an example of such a relationship (Daly, 2010). Ties between actors can also be classified according to strength. The strength of a tie can be weak or strong, and is a function of both the frequency of interaction between actors and the social/emotional closeness between them (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Hansen, 1999; Kadushin, 2012; Wasserman & Faust, 1998). Strong ties have been found to positively impact the transfer of sensitive or complex knowledge within organizations (Hansen, 1999; Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Uzzi, 1997) and schools (Daly & Finnigan, 2010) and are critical to building an organization’s capacity for change (Kogut & Zander, 1996). And since tie strength is directly related to closeness and frequency of interaction, individuals with a few weak ties will have less access to information and can often feel isolated (Kadushin, 2012).

The density of a network is the number of direct (actual) connections divided by the number of possible direct connections in a network. Thus, it is characterized by frequent and meaningful interactions and facilitates transmission of ideas, knowledge and resources (Kadushin, 2012). High-density networks have been linked to increased uptake of complex knowledge, thus increasing an organization’s capacity for change (Daly & Finnigan, 2010). Density is directly related to cohesion within a network, which is the degree to which members share strong ties. Cohesiveness is important because it increases trust and collegiality among actors (Reagans & McEvily, 2003) and together with the range of expertise that actors can draw from has been found to be related to success in innovation (Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004; Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Penuel et al., 2010).
Methodology

Data collected in social network analysis can be of varying types and collected in a number of different ways, depending on the purpose, focus, and issues that the study is trying to investigate. There are generally three different types of networks that can be investigated, each unique in the questions they can address and the methodology that they require: egocentric (or personal) networks, whole group or complete (sociocentric) networks, and open-system networks (de Lima, 2010; Kadushin, 2012, Wasserman & Faust, 1998).

Within each of the domains, theorizing can take place at the level of dyad, node, or group (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1998). At the dyad level, properties of pairs of actors are examined. Network data is always at the dyadic level, but constructs such as geodesic distance between pairs, strength of ties, or structural equivalencies can be evaluated (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1998). Studies using this type of focus generally look to explain the relationship between nodes, like the formation or dissolution of ties. Explaining similarities of attitudes as a function of relationships or communication between teachers as being a function of grade level taught would be examples of these types of studies. At the node level, how and where a node is connected within the structure of the network is examined. This includes examining network size, structural holes, and centrality (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010). Examples of these types of studies include those relating to positional achievement, like how a principal’s centrality impacts teachers’ perceptions of her leadership style (e.g., Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010) or measurements of individuals’ social capital. The group...
level of analysis involves looking at the network as a whole and can focus on concepts like density and centrality of the network (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1998). These types of studies seek to explain why and how different structures form as a function of the network (i.e., why are some organizations more centralized than others) or the consequences of different network structures (i.e., how does greater cohesion amongst staff impact implementation of reform?) (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010).

Ego-centric networks are considered by Wasserman and Faust (1998) as being a “special” kind of network, because they focus on individual actors as a unit of analysis and are often used when access to the larger network are not available. It consists of “a focal actor, termed ego, a set of alters who have ties to ego, and measurements on the ties among these alters” (Wasserman & Faust, 1998, p. 42). Thus, this type of network focuses on and/or emanates from a single node. This approach has modest data requirements (de Lima, 2010) and is beneficial for those who do not have access to an entire network’s population or the means to analyze a whole-network study. Data collected in this type of network study involves asking an individual actor to identify the actors (alters) they interact with, to describe those interactions. It also requires the focal actor to identify their partners’ relations to one another (alter-alter relations), which can raise issues of reliability (deLima, 2010). Such issues can be addressed in part by seeking out alters identified by the focal actor and asking him or her to identify their alters, thus checking the accuracy of the focal actor’s responses. However, depending on the number of alters identified, this could add a significant amount of work to the
researcher’s data collection efforts. Due to the nature of the data needed for this type of network study, the data for an ego-centric network can be collected quantitatively through survey data, or entirely qualitatively, through interviews and observations. This is beneficial to those researchers who do not have the expertise or resources to do a quantitative network analysis. Regardless of methodological approach, though, the limitation of an egocentric approach is that it does not give a structural snapshot of the entire organization. Thus, it is important to consider the nature of the research question being investigated.

Coburn and Russell (2008) took an egocentric approach to studying teachers’ social networks in eight schools undergoing a scale-up in their math curriculums. Citing a lack of existing theories in the literature regarding the relationship between policy and the nature and configuration of teachers’ social networks, they sought to contribute to an emerging theory that could form the basis for future investigations. The authors utilized an exploratory case study design (Yin, 2003) involving interviews and observations to investigate how (if at all) district policy affects teachers’ social networks and the features of the policy that influenced the dimensions of their social networks. They chose six focal teachers, representative of the full range of grades and attitudes towards the curriculum, and conducted five interviews and six classroom observations with each of them. They asked questions designed to find out whom the teachers talked with about math instruction, the frequency and content of their interactions, as well as their rationale for talking with some people and not others. Based on the focal teachers’ responses, the authors then interviewed six additional non-focal teachers at each school who were
identified as part of the focal teachers’ networks. The non-focal teachers were asked the same questions as the focal teachers, to both add to the size of network mapped and to investigate the qualities of the focal teachers’ networks in more depth. A series of interviews with each school’s math coach also took place, as well as with the schools’ principals. The unit of analysis in their study was each teacher’s social network, rather than at the level of the individuals themselves, a slight deviation from the usual use of this type of approach. And although the researchers were not able to map the social network for each entire school (and thus could not determine the degree to which the focal teachers’ network were representative of other teachers’ networks in their school), they were still able to investigate the intended questions of the study. Additionally, because of the qualitative nature of the data collection, the researchers were able to determine more than just the structure of teachers’ networks; they were also able to establish the rationale for interactions, the content and depth of the interactions, and the factors related to the design of the policy that influenced their interactions. This makes a case for the use of qualitative methods in social network research.

This type of approach can illuminate patterns that might otherwise go unnoticed (Adler & Kwon, 2008). It can lend insights to a variety of topics related to teachers’ collegial relations, including: identifying leaders in the staff and showing how leadership is distributed (Daly & Finnigan, 2010), the effects of teachers’ peer groups on changes in attitude (Cole & Weinbaum, 2010), and how to promote meaningful interactions that enhance teachers’ professional learning communities.
(Coburn & Russell, 2008), improve group cohesion (Penuel et al., 2010) and improve social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2008).

**Novice Teacher Induction**

Most professions have induction of some kind, varying from a brief on-the-job training at a retail store to the multi-year internship and residency model used to train physicians. Though teachers undergo a pre-service gradual release model that includes student teaching and in-service training that involves continuous ongoing development, *induction* specifically refers to the additional training and socialization that occurs in the first several years of employment (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Such on-site induction for new teachers is a relatively new concept. In the mid-1980s, a few programs starting appearing and by the 90’s, researchers were advocating for induction supports and programs were more abundant (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). The purpose of induction programs is to provide social and emotional support, helping beginning teachers learn the cultural values and norms expected by the schools where they are employed (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Little, 1990) while also supporting new teacher learning by teaching effective teaching strategies and techniques (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Sweeney & DeBolt, 2000; Wong & Wong, 2012). It can be broadly defined as a comprehensive process of sustained support, guidance, orientation, and training for new teachers (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2005).

In the early 1980’s, mentoring began as part of a broad movement aimed at reforming and improving the teaching profession (Feiman-Nemser, 1996).
According to Little (1990), induction (and more specifically, the idea of mentoring) emerged as part of a mission to “reward and retain capable teachers while obligating those teachers, implicitly or explicitly, to contribute to the improvement of schools and the quality of the teacher workforce” (p. 1). Little identifies three related policy problems mentor roles satisfy. It responds to problems in the occupational induction of teachers, creates incentives for teacher retention and commitment by providing accomplished teachers with public recognition (i.e. mentor status), and it shifts the strategy of local professional development to that of the pursuit of broad school or district priorities (1990). This need arose, in part, as a result of a report put out by the Holmes Group, a consortium of deans and chief academic officers from various research institutions from all 50 states entitled, *Tomorrow's Teachers* (Holmes Group, 1986). The group and subsequent report were created to improve the quality of teacher education programs and reform the teaching profession. They cited the need to bring the nature and organization of teachers’ work up to date, which includes creating opportunities for teachers to lead their field in improvement: “This means jobs in which fine teachers can use their pedagogical expertise to improve other teachers’ work, as well as to help children” (p. 117).

In response to these calls to improve the professionalization of teaching, there has been a drastic increase in the amount of new teachers participating in induction programs since the early 1990s. During the 1990-91 school year, 51% of beginning teachers participated in induction programs, and by the 2007-08 school year, that amount rose to 91% (Ingersoll, 2012). But despite this statistic,
participation in and requirements of induction programs vary greatly based on location. In a study of induction policies in all 50 states during the 2010-2011 school year, Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn (2012) found that 27 states required some sort of induction or mentoring support for new teachers, 11 of those also requiring those supports to last for two or more years. They determined that 22 states required completion of or participation in an induction program for advanced teaching certification and 17 states provided some amount of funding for induction programs. However, they found that only 3 states (CT, DE, IA) required all of these while providing state funding. Illinois, where this study takes place, was praised by the authors its robust program standards addressing nine elements including program goals and design, development of beginning teacher practice, program leadership, program evaluation, and mentor selection and assignment.

Unfortunately, this is where the praise stopped. Though Illinois state law required induction support for all new teachers, principals, and superintendents, those mandates were contingent upon funding, as was the 60 hours of annual mentoring support required for new teachers. In 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) provided $5.6 million in funding for 62 induction programs across the state, but there were many programs that operated without funding (Brady et al., 2010; INTC, 2012b; Goldrick et al., 2012). Thus, the supports implemented by those unfunded programs were not under state mandate and consequently, not evaluated. In 2011, due to budget cuts, ISBE stopped funding induction and those 62 programs had to find alternative funding and/or alter their programs, some drastically (INTC,
2012b). As a result, induction experiences within Illinois vastly differ from one another.

**Induction Components**

The content and characteristics of induction programs and intensity of support can also vary greatly. It can vary from a single new teacher orientation at the beginning of the school year to a highly structured, multi-year program with many components. Mentoring, though often erroneously used as a synonym for induction, is an example of a widely implemented component of induction. Other components can include: workshops specifically designed for new teachers, collaboration time, extra classroom assistance, time to meet with administrators, opportunities to network with other beginning teachers, lesson observations, and release time to work with mentors (Brady et al., 2011; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Goldrick et al., 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; INTC, 2012a, 2012b; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Weiss & Weiss, 1999, Wong, 2005).

Though several studies identify individual components of effective induction programs (e.g., Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Public Education Network, 2004), there are three basic building blocks that they all have in common:

1. They are comprehensive, involving many individuals and activities
2. They are coherent, with the activities and people logically connected to each other
3. They are sustained, lasting for more than one year (Wong, 2005, p. 47).

Johnson (2004) wrote, “Successful induction programs are not add-ons but are integrated into the professional practice of the school. They are conducted by a
cadre of experienced classroom teachers...and they depend on additional resources, both money and time” (p. 242).

The more components an induction program has and the more intense it is, the more beneficial (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wechsler, Caspary, Humphrey, & Matsko, 2010; Wong, 2005). Beginning teachers need to learn about the students they teach, design and implement a responsive curriculum, and develop a professional identity, which is best achieved through a comprehensive induction program (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2003). However, such comprehensive programs rarely exist. It is estimated that between 1-5% of teachers receive the comprehensive formal induction recommended by researchers (Ingersoll, 2012; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). With this in mind, a review of the research identifies that the aspects of induction most helpful to new teachers include ongoing inquiry into practice, and collaboration and networking, both of which can be fostered in part through an intensive mentoring program (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2003; Kelley, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; INTC, 2012a; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008; Wong, 2005).

**Mentoring**

Though only an individual component of induction, formal mentoring is viewed as the core component of induction programs in the country (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). This is due, in part, to mentoring being an easy and
inexpensive fix; mentors are often full-time teachers within the district, so no additional hiring is necessary, which also reduces the cost (INTC, 2012b). Formal mentoring links a novice teacher with a veteran teacher for support. Many studies on induction focus solely on mentoring (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 1998; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Villar & Strong, 2007), and for good reason: mentoring is the most offered induction support, both offered alone or as part of a bundle (Curran & Goldrick, 2002; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; INTC, 2012a, 2012b; Wechsler, et al., 2010). Ingersoll (2012) found that the most common induction supports offered nationally was a package containing only two components: working with a mentor and having regular, supportive communication with a school administrator. In a study of Illinois state-funded induction programs, Wechsler et al. (2010) found that despite Illinois School Code rules requiring multiple components, supports other than mentoring were rarely being implemented. This trend could be a result of convenience; without state funding, programs in Illinois are forced to make difficult cuts and often choose to keep mentoring since mentors are most often teachers within the districts and are a low-cost support (INTC, 2012b). However, focusing solely on mentors can still help programs improve their induction support (Wechsler et al.) and new teachers overwhelmingly identify mentors as being a pivotal support (INTC, 2012a; Luft & Cox, 2001; Want et al., 2008; Wong, 2005).

Like induction programs, mentoring supports vary in both intensity and comprehensiveness. Some programs utilize a one-on-one “buddy system” of mentoring, while others use a more collaborative approach. Some are more
informal while others use a highly structured system to support both the mentors and mentees. Some utilize classroom teachers as mentors while others offer full-time mentors (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; INTC, 2012b; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wechsler et al., 2010; Youngs, 2007). This variation stems from local policies (or lack thereof) (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Youngs, 2007), the context in which the program takes place (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1998; Goldrick et al., 2012; Johnson, 2004; Wang et al., 2008; Youngs, 2007), and access to funding (Goldrick et al., 2012; INTC, 2012b; Wechsler et al., 2010).

Although a multi-year, structured mentoring program utilizing full-release mentors is the ideal (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Kelley, 2004) because such programs improve job satisfaction, efficacy, and retention (Ingersoll, 2012; Kelley, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), most programs do not (or cannot) offer such a comprehensive program (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). There are certain features, however, every mentoring program should include to produce the maximum benefits (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Ideally, mentors should teach in the same content area and grade level as their mentees (Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Luft & Cox, 2001; Pogodzinski, 2012b; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Mentees should have common plan time with their mentors or regularly scheduled meeting times (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Ingersoll, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004; Wong, 2005). New teachers and their mentors should participate in lesson observations and lesson-based discussions on a regular basis (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009;
Mentors are responsible for a myriad of things, most of which fall into one of two categories: socializing the new teacher and providing professional supports (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992). Although these often intersect and overlap, there is a distinction between the social supports offered to put newcomers at ease and the professional support that furthers knowledge or practice (Little, 1990), and the mentors’ understanding of their role in these processes impacts the types of support they provide (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Youngs, 2007). In their study of mentors in two U.S. programs, Feiman-Nemser & Parker (1992) identified three main perspectives of mentors:

1. Local guides. These mentors smooth entry into teaching by providing a basic orientation to school procedures, policies, practices, and expectations.

2. Educational companions. These mentors help novices cope with immediate problems, but also keep their eye on long-term professional goals.
3. Change agents. These mentors foster norms of collaboration and shared inquiry by building networks between colleagues and facilitating conversations about teaching.

The ideal of these is a mentor who acts as a change agent, fostering collaboration between the mentee and colleagues. Such collaboration results in a shared responsibility of the new teacher by all staff members and reflects the adage of “taking a village” (Johnson, 2004; Kelley, 2004; Wong, 2005; Youngs, 2007). Also key in the change agent perspective are the types of conversations that emerge between the novice and mentor(s). Ideally, conversations should foster ongoing inquiry into practice and focus on instruction (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Kelley, 2004; Wechsler et al., 2010; Wang, et al., 2008; Wong, 2005). Unfortunately, such a collaborative culture is time and again hindered by the social organization of schools and the culture of teaching, in which teachers are often independent and have little experience observing and talking to other teachers about teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001; Johnson et al., 2001; Little, 1990). This is compounded when the mentor teacher is a full-time classroom teacher who has to make time to accommodate the mentee: “Mentors need authentic opportunities to work with their beginning teachers around the real and urgent issues of classroom teaching and learning. This means easy access to beginning teachers and regular times to observe, coach, and co-plan with them” (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009, p. 315-316). Additionally, such an approach relies on mentors understanding their role and recognizing that they are school-based teacher educators (Feiman-Nemser,
1998, 2001; Youngs, 2007). This recognition also needs to come from the district or program coordinators. A “good teacher” doesn’t necessarily make a good mentor/teacher educator (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001, 2003). Mentors should be carefully selected based on stringent criteria, including their disposition, understanding of the role and their ability to engage in the meaningful activities and conversations required of them. And once selected, mentors should be provided with ongoing training focusing on the tools of mentoring, including: observation, co-planning, co-teaching, joint inquiry, and fostering critical conversations and reflection (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 1998, 2001, 2003; Wang et al., 2008; Wechsler et al., 2010; Youngs, 2007).

**Context.** Mentoring and induction occur within a nested set of contexts, including the state, district, and school, each exerting its own influence on the nature and quality of the support (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Weiss & Weiss, 1999; Youngs, 2007). State policies regarding induction and mentoring, including state-funded supports and philosophies on the purpose of induction, impact what is done at the programmatic (often the district) level (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Goldrick et al., 2012; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). District interpretation of state policies, access to funding, and philosophies of mentoring influence mentor selection requirements, the mentor job description, training and ongoing support (of both mentors and mentees), and often the principals’ and mentors’ beliefs about the purpose of induction (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1992; Goldrick et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2008; Weiss & Weiss, 1999; Youngs, 2007).
At the school level, the quality of influence of the program on beginning teachers’ teaching and learning is dependent on the social, cultural, and organizational contexts of the school (Wang et al., 2008; Williams, Prestage, & Bedward, 2001). These include principal leadership (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Goldrick et al., 2012; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Smylie & Hart, 1999), teachers’ professional communities and collegiality (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Goldrick et al., 2012; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Wang et al., 2008; Wechsler et al., 2010), student demographics (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993), the curriculum (Kauffman et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2008), and teachers’ beliefs about induction (and their role in it) and teaching (Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999; Wang et al., 2008; Youngs, 2007). According to Wechsler and colleagues (2010), it is the school context that exerts the greatest influence on beginning teachers’ success; the more supportive the school context, the greater the efficacy of its teachers. Any attempts at improving induction and mentoring must address school context. According to Goldrick and colleagues (2012),

Inducting new teachers into a weak professional community will limit the impact of high quality induction. Weak professional environments rob new teachers of the opportunity to achieve their full potential, or push good new teachers to schools with a stronger professional community or out of the teaching profession entirely (p. v).

**Informal mentors.** Teachers interact regularly across experience levels, both formally and informally (Feiman-Nemser, 2001, 2003; Johnson, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001). With or without a formal mentoring system in place, new teachers seek out mentors. These “informal mentors” can serve the same purposes as formally assigned mentors, and often they are sought out as a result of a particular need not
being met (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Pogodzinski, 2012b). Such informal relationships are key in the context of induction and in this study.

**Benefits of Induction**

Induction of any kind is valuable to teachers. In a review of the literature, Whisnant, Elliott, and Pynchon (2005) identified five areas of potential impact of induction programs: 1) reduction in teacher attrition from the profession, 2) reduction in the costs of attrition, 3) increased teacher satisfaction, 4) enhanced professional growth, 5) development of a tiered professional career model (p. 12). The benefit cited most in the literature is increased teacher retention (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004; Ingersoll & Kralik, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kelley, 2004; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004), but it also has been shown to improve teacher effectiveness, competence, self-efficacy, satisfaction and commitment to the profession (Alliance of Excellent Education, 2004; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Kelley, 2004; Villar & Strong, 2007; Wechsler et al., 2012).

**Conclusion**

A review of the literature indicates that although there is a body of literature related to mentoring and induction that indicate that programs are helpful, there needs to be more done examining not just what works, but why it works (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).
Chapter Three

Methods

My dissertation study provides an in-depth understanding of the interactions between my participants (novice teachers) and others during their initial two-year induction period into the profession. More specifically, it illustrates the supports received and valued by novices in various contexts, and how those supports may relate to their overall feelings of satisfaction and intent to remain in the profession. Formal mentoring, though the main focus of a large body of research, is not the only socialization support that new teachers experience. They also have numerous informal interactions with their colleagues and peers. There is a call for more research in this area, specifically looking at the content and rationale for those informal interactions.

Methodology

Grounded in the constructivist paradigm that knowledge is constructed by the people who are active in the research process (Mertens, 2010), I chose to use qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Stake, 1995, 2010) to better understand the experiences of my participants. According to Stake (1995), qualitative research methods are useful in studying and providing a holistic view of complex personal and interpersonal phenomena. They aid in understanding how individuals understand their world, how their perceptions and intentions in situations determine their behavior, and help to perceive phenomena from the subject’s own frame of reference (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992; Krathwohl, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2010). It can inform us about our subjects’ behavior, but also about
organizational functioning, social movements, or interactional relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17) and is best suited for questions of why or how (Stake, 2010; Yin, 2003).

To understand particular social actions, what an action means can be grasped only in terms of the system of meanings to which it belongs (Fay, 1996; Schwandt, 2000). As such, I used case study methodology to study the complexity of my participants’ support experiences within context (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Collectively, the cases of my individual participants help me better understand their support needs and how they were influenced by their contexts.

Stake (1995) delineates case studies into two types: intrinsic and instrumental. Intrinsic cases are those we choose because the case is important on a local or personal level. Instrumental cases are those that stem from a question or need for general understanding, with the hope that insight can be garnered from studying a particular case. I consider these cases to be both. As a former teacher and current teacher educator, I have a personal and professional interest in discovering ways we can improve the new teacher experience and retain new teachers. Additionally, because I know my participants well, I have a vested personal interest in understanding their experiences. I hope that by understanding each of their unique experiences, I can add to a better understanding of how to better support new teachers during their important first years in the profession.

**Research Questions**

As the research progressed, I modified my research questions accordingly (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992; Bresler, 1997). The overarching purpose, which guides
these questions, concerns adding to the research on how to best support new teachers in their first years in the profession. My initial research questions were:

- What types of interactions do new teachers have with their colleagues?
- How do new teachers use their mentors? What types of interactions do new teachers have with their formally assigned mentors and why? What is the content and frequency of those interactions?
- What type of informal interactions do new teachers have with their colleagues? Why do those interactions take place? What is the content of those interactions? What is the frequency and directionality of those interactions?
- What do new teachers’ support networks look like?
- How do these interactions and supports impact how new teachers feel about their work and jobs?

Upon the conclusion of my data collection, I knew these questions would need to be modified. My original questions focused on the interactions between new teachers and their colleagues. Though this was the main focus of my collection and remained a focus of my data, as I examined my data, my focus broadened and other questions emerged. Incorporating and modifying some of the original questions, the following became my new focus questions:

- What type of informal/formal interactions do novice teachers seek out/engage in and why? What is the content and direction of those interactions?
- How do novice teachers use their mentors?
• What do novice teachers’ support networks look like?
• What are the individual factors and attributes that help novice teachers?
• How do these interactions and supports relate to how novice teachers feel about their work and jobs?
• How can we better support novice teachers?

Participants

To recruit participants, I initially sent email in May 2013 to 20 former elementary education students who were in the process of completing their first year teaching. These emails provided potential participants with information about the study and asked if they would be willing to participate in an hour-long interview. Once they consented, an additional email was sent with three short interview questions to provide information about their positions (See Appendix A). Of the 14 teachers who consented, 11 were eventually interviewed. These interviews were done to determine whether they would be chosen as participants for this study based on their positions, location, and overall level of satisfaction.

The participants for my study were four elementary (K-6) teachers: Jackie, Lisa, Sarah, and Jillian. I chose these four teachers for several reasons. Each of them began teaching full-time during the 2012-2013 school year and remained in their schools during their second year teaching. This allowed me to observe in the same context they were in during year one. My initial communication with them regarding this study occurred in the summer immediately following the completion of their first year teaching. I observed in their schools in the first days or month of the beginning of their second year. The four teachers were members of the same
cohort in their teacher preparation program, where I was their instructor for a one-
semester elementary science education course during the fall semester of their
senior year in 2011. I hoped that my existing relationships with them would be an
asset in my data collection and lead to rich conversations that were thoughtful,
uninhibited, and honest. Furthermore, I thought that our existing relationships
would allow me to observe their school contexts and conduct interviews without
intimidating them or drastically altering their behavior. I also chose these teachers
because they represented varying levels of satisfaction. The participants in this
study are the four elementary teachers who were the two who appeared most
satisfied and the two who appeared least satisfied in their job/position upon the
completion of their first year teaching from the larger group of eleven interviewees.

All four participants are white females and come from similar middle-class
socioeconomic backgrounds. Jackie and Jillian obtained jobs in the communities
they grew up and reside in. Sarah and Lisa obtained positions in communities near
their hometowns, however, their districts are very different from the ones they
attended. Both teach in schools with high Hispanic and low-income populations.
Sarah and Lisa both teach in dual language/bilingual programs, but this is a
coincidence and was not a result of the initial selection criteria.

Situating Myself

As a former elementary teacher and former instructor of my participants, I
find it appropriate to discuss my position in this study (Denzen, 1989). As an
elementary teacher, I was personally impacted by the interactions I had with my
colleagues and the culture of my schools (and the profession). I was exposed to
induction and mentoring as a mentee and as a mentor, with my experiences in both roles occurred both formally and informally.

The four participants of this study had me as an instructor during their senior year in the fall of 2011. Because of the nature of the pre-service education program, I also taught Jackie and Jillian as juniors during the spring of 2011. After the semester had completed, most of the students kept in regular contact with me. Our interactions varied from informal emails to keep in touch to more formal requests for feedback or support. After graduation, this contact has continued, particularly with Jackie and Jillian, who often reached out to provide updates or for support.

During my data collection, I remained as impartial of an observer as possible. I did my best to stay unobtrusive, sitting in the back of the classroom during instruction and off to the side during meetings. Throughout the duration of the collection, Jillian is the only participant that formally reached out to me for support. During my visit, she asked for help planning an upcoming science unit and I helped her populate a list of resources on the topic. Several months after the completion of my collection, she called me to vent about a series of events that occurred at her school that were making her question her longevity in her position. The intent of her call was to inform me of the situation for the purposes of this study, but she also sought emotional support as well. These two instances were the only times that I provided any type of support to the participants during the study. However, my presence and their knowledge that I was observing their interactions did indirectly impact my participants. All of them commented at least once how they had never
thought so deeply about their interactions and that our conversations highlighted things that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

**Data Collection**

I collected data in the following ways:

- Email
- Initial interviews
- One-on-one in-depth interviews
- Ego-centric network maps
- Observations
- Informal interviews and follow-ups
- Document review

The data collection and analysis adhered to the informed consent process as approved by the Institutional Review Board. The participants' risks were minimized by using pseudonyms, eliminating any identifying information, and safely securing data. The details of my data collection are outlined in Table 3.1 and 3.2, below.

Table 3.1 shows the timeline for data collection. Table 3.2 outlines how each data source helped answer each research question.

**Table 3.1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May-June 2013</td>
<td>Emails</td>
<td>Coding began immediately upon receiving emails</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Phase 1)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1. (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June-July 2013 (Phase 1)</td>
<td>Initial one-on-one interviews, Ego-centric map creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcribing and coding began after each interview. Analysis of egocentric maps helped drive interview questions and helped inform observations. Maps were analyzed for characteristics and content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August-September 2013</td>
<td>Follow-up interviews (novices and colleagues/administrators)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcribing and coding began after each interview. Analysis of egocentric data used to verify content of novices’ maps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September-October 2013</td>
<td>Observations (3-5 days each), Ego-centric map verification (colleagues), Interviews (observation-based; participants, colleagues/administrators), Document review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observation data used to support interview data and create follow-up interview questions. Coding began immediately upon completion of collection. Document analysis began immediately upon collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-December 2013 (Phase 2)</td>
<td>Follow-up interviews, as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcribing and coding began after each interview. Interview notes were also being taken.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2.

Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Network Map</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What types of formal/informal interactions do novice teachers seek out/engage in and why?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2. (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do new teachers use their mentors?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do novice teachers’ support networks look like?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the individual factors and attributes that help novice teachers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do these interactions and relate to how novice teachers feel about their work and jobs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How can we better support novice teachers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emails.** To initially explore my participants’ perceptions of their first year teaching, I asked them to answer the following questions via email:

- Please describe your current teaching position.
- How would you describe your first year teaching?
- Does your school have a formal induction and mentoring program?

**Interviews.** As a means to understand my participants’ experiences and nature of interactions with colleagues, a main source of my data collection was in-depth interviews (Mishler, 1986). Interviewing gives us access to the observations of others and their interior experiences (Weiss, 1994).

Initial one-on-one interviews lasted approximately one hour, with some lasting slightly longer. To allow my participants to express themselves freely, I asked semi-structured interview questions that were developed in response to their initial email responses (see Appendix B). The questions aimed to inform my
research questions through questions related to interactions, formalized and informal support systems, social/cultural capital, and job/school satisfaction.

Initial interviews occurred in June for Lisa, Jackie, and Jillian. These were conducted face-to-face and were audio recorded and transcribed. Due to her summer travel schedule, Sarah’s initial interview did not take place until August. I began an initial interview with her through Skype, and due to technical difficulties, we completed it over the phone. Because her responses indicated a strong dissatisfaction in her position, I scheduled a face-to-face meeting with her a few days later to re-interview her and have the ability to audio record her responses and complete an egocentric network map.

**Egocentric Network Maps.** To better understand my participants’ colleague networks, I asked each individual to draw out an egocentric social network map (Wasserman & Faust, 1998). For this task, I asked them to visually illustrate their relationships with colleagues, and as they did this, I dialogued with them about tie strength, frequency, and content. This activity produced a visual representation of the map, but also made my participants consider their relationships on a deeper level through dialogue and comparison. In addition, since an egocentric map also asks the individual actor (the ego) to identify the relationships between the ties (in this case, colleagues) identified, it also lent some insight into the connectedness of the teachers’ immediate colleagues.

**Observations.** To better understand the experiences of my participants and the context of their workplace, I conducted on-site observations of each of them (Stake, 2010) for 3-5 days in September and October 2013. During these
observations, I shadowed the first-year teachers, paying particular attention to the interactions between the novices and their colleagues. During the visits, informal interviews were conducted with the novices asking them to reflect on observed interactions and to provide their interpretations of the interactions (e.g., Why did you talk to that person? What was going on?). These reflections were meant to help the novices dig deeper into the specific interactions. At the end of each teacher’s observation period, a culminating interview was conducted covering major interactions observed during the week, and for each of the four, follow-up questions were asked over the course of several months following the end of the observation period.

Prior to the site visits, I reviewed points of interest raised during initial interviews. This helped guide my observations in a purposeful manner (Strauss, 1987), without limiting them. I took detailed field notes, trying to remain flexible and responsive (Bresler, 1997). These observations also focused on the contextual characteristics of their schools, situating their experiences and providing context for the interview data. Following each observation, I reviewed my field notes and wrote up a memo outlining significant items and occurrences (Strauss, 1987). These were reviewed with participants daily to get feedback and member check my data (Stake, 2010).

**Interviews.** Along with the interviews conducted with the novices during the observation period, interviews were attempted with any school-based individuals identified by the novices as significant supports. I had hoped to interview the novices’ formal mentors, colleagues, and building administrators.
However, gaining participation was more difficult than I had anticipated. Jillian was the only participant with a mentor still employed by the district. Thus, her mentors were the only ones interviewed. Jackie and Jillian’s colleagues made themselves available to me and were enthusiastic about their participation, but the opposite was true for Sarah and Lisa’s colleagues. Often, significant supports were out of the building and thus, individuals I did not have easy access to.

**Colleagues.** During these conversations, I asked about the content, frequency, and directionality of the colleagues’ interactions with the novices and why those interactions took place. Additional questions were formed based on interviews with novices and my own observations. These colleagues were also asked to identify people they interact with to verify information provided in the novices’ egocentric network maps and provide information related to the social/cultural capital available to the novices.

**Administrators.** With the exception of Jillian’s, each building principal consented to participate in an email-based interview to provide background on the contextual supports available to their novice teachers. This information identified the formal supports already in place for the novices and the administrators’ beliefs about the purposes of the supports. Principals were also asked about their non-evaluative interactions with the novices to provide information related to administrative support.

**Follow-up interviews.** Follow-up interviews took place and the number and content varied based on initial interview data (Bogdon & Biklen, 1992; Bresler, 1997). For these interviews, I crafted questions that both highlighted themes that
were emerging from the data, but also that addressed any gaps evident through the initial analysis. Follow-up interviews took place at the end of the on-site observations and interviews, and continued for several months afterwards.

Though I usually initiated the follow-ups, Jackie, Jillian, and Lisa would frequently update me on things going on in their schools. I often received texts or emails from them with items they thought I would find interesting or believed would contribute to my study. Jillian initiated an hour long phone call to me in December to inform me about some events that had recently transpired that were causing her a great deal of stress.

Artifacts. Reviewing documents and artifacts lent insight not possible during other modes of data collection (Stake, 2010). This includes providing information about the culture of the school (Schein, 2010). I reviewed any documents relevant to my participants’ experience, and the decision regarding which documents to analyze was based on previously collected data. For example, Jackie, Sarah, and Jillian all spoke about mentoring binders that they completed as part of their induction programs. Thus, the contents of that binder were relevant to the study and analyzed. District and school websites were investigated to get a sense of the values and beliefs of the district administration and the demographics of the district and community. Other relevant artifacts included curriculum binders and meeting agendas/notes.

Data Analysis

Drawing on grounded theory and by using an inductive conceptual approach, data collection and analysis was simultaneous and continuous (Charmaz, 2004;
Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Srauss, 1967; Stake, 2010). The analysis process began immediately after collecting data and was iterative as I interacted with the multiple data sources. This ongoing and simultaneous interpretation of the data guided and reshaped my study as it proceeded (Stake, 2010).

All data was coded; that is, sorted according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study (Stake, 2010). This process provided lenses through which data was viewed in a relational structure and involved making decisions about what things mean (Krathwohl, 1998). I began coding by going through my individual data sources (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, emails, etc.), identifying statements related to my research questions and assigning them codes (categories) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This process continued with additional coding and recoding occurring as more data accrued. After all data collected is coded, I looked for recurring patterns and linkages across the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). These patterns were put into larger analytic categories, and categories and themes were adjusted based on comparisons across sources (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interpretation of these larger themes and patterns helped determine the assertions of my study (Stake, 2010).

Throughout the interpretation process, I created documents for each of my participants, organized by codes. These documents helped shape the case studies found in Chapter Four.

**Interviews and Observations**

Following each interview and observation, I constructed contact summaries. These reviewed questions like “What were the main issues or themes?” “What, in
summary, was the information obtained or still needed on the target questions?”
“What else was salient, interesting, illuminating, or important?” “What are the next
or remaining questions for this contact?” This helped summarize the encounter and
record initial impressions but also helped organize next steps (Krathwohl, 1998;
Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2010). Following the first listen of the audio
recording of each interview, a narrative summary was created highlighting
emphasized topics, unveiling emergent themes, and capturing prominent responses
(Kardos et al., 2001). Both of these were analyzed holistically in an effort to
understand the broader themes emerging from the teachers’ descriptions of their
experiences.

**Egocentric Maps**

The egocentric maps provide a visual snapshot of each participant’s
immediate social network and lend insight to the interactions the novice teacher
engaged in. These maps were analyzed according to directionality and strength of
ties, frequency of interaction, and overall density. They were also analyzed
according to location of ties and content of interaction. Once individual maps were
analyzed, they were compared across the four participants to look for patterns and
themes.

**General Analysis Note**

Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, I member checked,
verifying the reliability of my interpretations with my participants. Daily during
observations, I discussed a summary of the data and initial analysis and asked them
to critically comment upon the adequacy of the findings. Throughout the analysis, I
checked in with the participants to ensure my interpretations were accurate, looking for possible alternative explanations for my interpretations. The study was designed to acquire data from multiple sources, a key component of triangulation (Denzen, 1984).

At the conclusion of my collection, I looked at the categories and themes that emerged from and across my different data sources and developed assertions about the support needs of novice teachers.

**Reflexivity**

According to Stake (2010), “Qualitative research draws heavily on interpreting by researchers—and also on interpreting by the people they study and by the readers of the research reports” (p. 37). This interpretation is ongoing throughout the process of collection and analysis. Denzen and Lincoln (2000) note that meaning itself is “negotiated mutually in the act of interpretation; it is not simply discovered.” And since the “tool” of interpretation is the researcher herself, it is important to note my role in the process. I came to the process with background experiences related to my research questions and topic, and I was aware of my possible biases going into and throughout the research process. Methodological coding, including discussing analysis with colleagues, helped to minimize biases. Memo writing, including documenting my thoughts about the process and data itself, also aided in this issue.
Chapter Four

Case Study Reports

This chapter focuses on the case study data of the experiences of the four novice teachers in this study: Jackie, Lisa, Sarah, and Jillian. In this chapter, individual case study reports are presented for each of the four teachers, and in chapter five, I present a cross-case comparison and analysis.

Each of the teachers in this study is committed to their position and the profession, however, their satisfaction varied. Jackie had the highest level of satisfaction of the four, and her happiness with her position never waivered. Lisa and Sarah reported low levels of satisfaction with their positions, each feeling isolated in their schools and lacking support. Jillian’s satisfaction varied. At times, she was extremely satisfied in her position, with motivation and commitment mirroring Jackie’s. Other times, she was discouraged and dissatisfied, contemplating the longevity of her position.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 give an overview of the school contexts in which my participants taught during their first two years. Table 4.1 compares the school contexts and Table 4.2 gives a district-level comparison. Note that the information in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 were obtained from 2012 school report card data.
Table 4.1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Jackie 2nd</th>
<th>Lisa Bilingual 4th/K</th>
<th>Sarah Bilingual 3rd</th>
<th>Jillian 6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Arquilla</td>
<td>White 81%</td>
<td>Bilingual 4th/K 20.7%</td>
<td>Bilingual 3rd 18.8%</td>
<td>6th 49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black 6.9%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic 1.6%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian 6.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Indian 0.0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi racial 4.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low income 18.3%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LEP 1.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IEP 10.9%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobility Rate 11.1%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total enrollment 567</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>839</td>
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Table 4.2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Jackie K-12</th>
<th>Lisa K-8</th>
<th>Sarah K-12</th>
<th>Jillian K-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>4,129</td>
<td>40,687</td>
<td>12,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per pupil</td>
<td>$5,153</td>
<td>$7,524</td>
<td>$5,455</td>
<td>$7,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>$9,310</td>
<td>$11,272</td>
<td>$9,411</td>
<td>$12,008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Salary (ave.)</td>
<td>$49,912</td>
<td>$75,683</td>
<td>$72,404</td>
<td>$77,834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher experience (ave.)</td>
<td>11.6 years</td>
<td>15.5 years</td>
<td>14.3 years</td>
<td>13.6 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jackie's Case

Jackie is a second grade teacher at Arquilla Elementary, a K-4 school in Milman, a suburb of a large, Midwestern urban community. She is an extrovert and the oldest of three sisters, loves hunting and being outdoors. Her parents are well educated and stressed the importance of education at home; her father is an engineer and her mother works for a financial planner. Jackie said she chose teaching as a profession because she “stupidly thought it would be a good profession to be able to have a family.”

Jackie grew up in Milman, but attended the private school in the community. She always expressed interest in moving elsewhere, particularly to a warmer southern state, but during her interview she explained, “If I could pick up all of them [her staff] and move them with me, I’d be like, ‘Sure, let’s get the heck out of Dodge!’

---

Table 4.2 (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Lisa</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Jillian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dist. AYP</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School AYP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>No; 4 yrs in SIP</td>
<td>No; 2 yrs in SIP</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Elementary Schools</td>
<td>3 + 1 Intermediate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Junior Highs (JH)/Middle Schools (MS)</td>
<td>1 (MS)</td>
<td>1 (MS)</td>
<td>8 (MS)</td>
<td>4 (JH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of High Schools</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
but this [her staff] would be what keeps me in town. Because I have the greatest job.” She said she understands that this is not how it is for all first year teachers, but she is grateful that she feels like she “works in a strange Utopia.”

**Reflecting on Year One**

Jackie’s district is K-12, serves 4,525 students, and is the second smallest district in this study. It has the lowest low-income student population at 15.9%. Arquilla is one of six schools in the district and one of three elementary schools. The district has a reputation of being mostly white, and the local misconception is that there are no behavioral problems in the schools in the district. Jackie says that as a result, many families struggling with school-related behavioral problems move into the district in hopes that the environment will help improve their children’s behavior.

Arquilla serves 567 students, and is comparable in size to two other schools in this study. The building opened in 2011 and is currently under construction to add additional classrooms onto each wing. There are 5-6 sections per grade level with an average of 20-24 students per classroom. The students at Arquilla are mostly white (81%) with 18.3% low income (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). Jackie describes her students as mostly middle to upper-middle class families, with more and more section 8 housing going in, adding to the low-income population.

Jackie was hired three weeks into the school year and took over for a teacher who was leaving the district. Because of the lateness of her hire, she went into it expecting a difficult year, knowing that she had a “harder transition than normal” on top of it being her first year in the profession. She found that she could handle a lot
more than she realized, though she did have some major student behavioral problems.

She describes her first year’s class as “extremely challenging” and dealing with behaviors consumed a huge portion of her time. One of her students was suspended multiple times throughout the year and was eventually moved out of her classroom. Though this came as a relief, it was also difficult for her because she felt that she had invested so much time in him that she wanted to finish out the year with him as her student. DCFS had to be called for several of her students, and she had multiple move ins/outs throughout the year. According to Jackie, the general consensus among the specials teachers, support staff, and administration was that hers was the most challenging class in the school. However, she felt very supported by her colleagues and administrators throughout everything and views her struggles as learning experiences. She learned how to think quickly on her feet, make behavioral adaptations, and that she can handle a lot more than she realized.

**Culture of Support**

Jackie had multiple formal and informal supports in her first year, and these existed within and added to a supportive school culture.

**Mentoring.** Jackie was assigned a formal mentor upon hire. Her mentor was the school’s literacy coach who, though trained as a classroom teacher, never worked as anything other than a reading interventionist or literacy coach. As a result, Jackie’s interactions with her mainly focused on her literacy block and she relied on her grade level teammates heavily for anything else.
Jackie and her mentor met weekly during her Wednesday morning plan time. This tapered off as the year went on and Jackie felt more confident in her literacy planning and instruction, but they never stopped meeting. Jackie’s mentor started the year by giving her one-on-one training on the literacy program, modeling different literacy lessons with her students weekly, and setting up guided reading groups. She helped Jackie plan her literacy block each week, which included giving her resources and books related to the month’s reading strategy. As the year progressed, the mentor continued to help Jackie plan for her literacy block, model lessons each time the reading strategy changed, and observe her during literacy instruction. Jackie found these activities incredibly helpful.

Jackie’s mentor would generally come into their Wednesday meetings with something that she wanted to show and/or give her, but also asked Jackie about anything she wanted to cover. Although she sometimes brainstormed behavioral issues with her, Jackie generally saved her mentor meetings to address any literacy related questions she had. For both of her formal evaluations, her mentor helped her plan her lesson and for the first, helped her to fill out her paperwork.

Jackie’s mentoring program utilized a binder, but not heavily. She and her mentor had particular activities to complete every few weeks, but they were not overly time-consuming or stressful. She did not find these activities, which included items like describing the rationale for her classroom layout, particularly helpful and compared them to the portfolio activities she completed in her pre-service.

*This statement, and any similar statements that follow, are participants’ interpretations, not my own.
coursework. Jackie also had district-wide new teacher meetings every month during her first year.

**Informal Mentors.** Jackie repeatedly told me how lucky she was to work in a building “full of so many informal mentors willing to help.” Though she relied on her formal mentor for help with literacy instruction, she leaned heavily on the other second grade teachers when it came to “the day to day events of 2nd grade.”

**Team.** Like the school’s staff, Jackie’s team represented a range of ages and experience levels. She was on a team of five, and was the youngest, both in experience and age. Table 4.3 outlines the features of Jackie’s team.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Years in 2nd grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Under 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Mid 50s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Early 20s</td>
<td>Under 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jackie went to her team for anything that was happening within her classroom and benefited from everyone’s varying backgrounds. Molly and Louise brought years of second grade experience to the team and provided leadership. Amy previously taught middle school language arts, but was relatively new to second grade and closer in age to Jackie than the rest of the team. Theresa taught early childhood for many years, and the year prior to Jackie’s first year, made the move to Kindergarten. Due to low numbers, she was moved to second grade, so Jackie’s first year was her
first year in second grade. This was particularly helpful for Jackie because although Theresa was an experienced veteran, in many ways, they were both going through their first year since Theresa had never taught above Kindergarten.

In our initial conversations, Jackie repeatedly expressed how she felt like she “was always back and forth between their rooms. All of the time.” She felt like “it was constant collaboration” amongst her team.

*Formal Collaboration.* The district mandated a two-hour weekly collaboration time for each grade level. As a result, Jackie’s team would meet during lunch and after school on Thursdays. Each team has a designated team leader, appointed by the principal. Team leaders attend district and building level meetings weekly where they receive information to be passed along to/covered with team members during their weekly collaboration time. During Jackie’s first year, many of these meetings covered items related to the Common Core Standards implementation. Once a month, Jackie’s mentor would come in and meet with the group to refresh their memories on that month’s reading strategy and give them related materials.

*Informal Collaboration/Co-planning.* In addition to their weekly required collaboration, Jackie’s team would often meet weekly on their own accord, collaborating and co-planning for the week. The meetings were initially attended by three staff members but mid-year, who attended changed due to maternity leave. These meetings organically grew from Theresa and Jackie checking in with each other regularly and others offering to help. They helped Theresa and Jackie with the daily workload by distributing the planning amongst the team. It also helped relieve
any anxiety the new teachers had about their own pacing and instruction. These involved “just talking about what we were doing for certain lessons, or what books we were using, we were passing. I feel like we all, like our stuff really blended together a lot. Because I feel like I always know what’s going on in their rooms. I felt like it was constant collaboration,” Jackie said. This collaborative environment continued into Jackie’s second year at Arquilla.

Supports. In dealing with her behavior issues during year one, Jackie felt very supported by everyone in the building. The PE teacher would tell her regularly that she was “praying for her,” and the other specials teachers regularly extended sympathy for having such a difficult class. These interactions helped her feel like her students’ behaviors were not a reflection of her abilities as a teacher, nor was its magnitude something she was imagining.

When dealing with individual student concerns, Jackie felt comfortable approaching her administration, and she felt that her administrators supported her decisions. Her principal would frequently intervene to deal with difficult parents and Jackie always felt that the administrators “had her back.” Her principal took care of all DCFS matters, not wanting Jackie to be overburdened during her first year. Jackie also worked closely with the school’s counselor to address student concerns. Together, they brainstormed different approaches to classroom management and created interventions when necessary. This relationship also helped maintain Jackie’s confidence, as the counselor gave her reassurance that her struggles were not because she was incompetent but because she had an incredibly difficult group of students.
Jackie felt that she could go to anyone in the building, regardless of grade level, at any time for assistance. Though she mainly depended on her grade level team, she frequently interacted with teachers at other grade levels as well. She developed a strong relationship with another first year teacher who taught in first grade, one of the kindergarten teachers, and the school’s other reading interventionist. These relationships developed, in part, from their participation in social events. The staff made a point to socialize outside of school, frequently planning Friday night happy hour events they dubbed “Adult Recess.” These were attended by a variety of staff members, including the school administrators, and extended throughout the summer months.

**Administration.** There are two female administrators on staff at Arquilla: a principal and an assistant principal. Both are relatively new to their positions; the principal started mid-year during the school’s inaugural year and the assistant principal started the year after. Both are former teachers who taught in the district; the principal taught middle school language arts and third grade and the assistant principal was a reading specialist. Jackie reports a positive relationship with her administrators, and feels that, in general, the staff likes and respects both of them.

Jackie described her administrators as “wonderful and very approachable.” She credits this, in part, to their efforts to relate to the teachers. She feels that their regular attendance at Adult Recess illustrates how they see themselves as equals, rather than above the teachers. They also have made an effort to get to know and relate to Jackie on a personal level. During the first week of school, the principal called Jackie into her office on school spirit day. She asked her if she could ask her
something personal. Jackie hesitantly said yes and the principal asked, "How did it feel to put that shirt on today?" She was mocking her, because growing up in the community, Jackie attended the private school that was considered Arquilla’s rival. In the spring when construction began on the new additions, both administrators approached Jackie in an attempt to set her up with one of the construction workers.

Jackie also described her administrators as “very helpful with everything.” Not only did they help her with student and parent related concerns, but she also found the evaluation process to be helpful. Jackie had two formal observations during her first year and several informal observations. After each of these, she would receive an email from whoever observed her detailing what they liked about the lesson and one thing that could be improved on. Overall, these improved her confidence and helped her focus on practical ways to improve her practice.

**Social Network**

Jackie’s social network during her first year was mainly comprised of her colleagues and is characterized by frequent reciprocal interactions between individuals. During the initial interview, I asked Jackie to identify her first year support system, keeping in mind frequency and directionality of the interactions. Her egocentric (Wasserman & Faust, 1998) diagram can be seen in Figure 4.1 below:
Directionality. Directionality, represented by arrows, provides information about the flow of resources between people in a network. In the case of asymmetrical relationships, arrows are one-way, and in symmetrical, reciprocal relationships, arrows flow in both directions (Daly, 2010). As displayed by the arrows in the diagram, Jackie identified all of her interactional relationships as reciprocal; there is no arrow that is unidirectional. As we were discussing the individuals Jackie identified in her network, I asked her to think deeper about the directionality of the relationships, and whether she felt that they were balanced. The sizes of the arrowheads in her diagram reflect this; in cases where the arrowheads are the same size, she felt that she went to that individual with the same
frequency that they approached her. In cases where she felt that she went to an individual more than they came to her, the arrowhead pointing away from Jackie is larger, and vice versa. For example, she felt that she went to her mentor more frequently than her mentor approached her. Conversely, she felt that Molly approached her more frequently than she sought Molly out. However, even though there were people she approached more regularly than they approached her, she still felt that those individuals came to her, either to seek out something or to provide something. Additionally, she felt that the imbalances she identified in relationships with her grade level teammates were smaller than those with other colleagues. So although she felt she went to Amy more than she came to her, she only felt that was a slight imbalance compared to the directionality of the interactions with her the principal.

**Tie Strength.** The strength of a tie is a function of both the frequency of interaction between actors and the social/emotional closeness between them (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Hansen, 1999; Kadushin, 2012; Wasserman & Faust, 1998). After she had completed her diagram, I asked Jackie to rank her relationships in terms of support, with ‘1’ being the individual she felt most supported by. She ranked Amy as her top support quickly, but then started to struggle ranking the others. This was the most difficult portion of this exercise for Jackie, because she felt equally supported by her entire team and felt that she interacted with them with the same frequency, which was “constantly.” Thus, even though Jackie has nine individuals in her map, she ranked several individuals with the same number because she felt they were “tied” in terms of support. Physically,
individuals’ locations on her map also correlate with the tie strength. She placed the strongest relationships closer to her own circle, with the weaker ties further out. Given the number of strong ties Jackie identified, it is clear she has good access to information and feels part of a group (Kadushin, 2012).

**Content.** As she was ranking, we discussed the rationale behind the rankings. She ranked Amy first (but “not by much”) in part because “we have a similar method of teaching or the way we handle things, like we do things very similarly,” but also because they had a strong social relationship. The rest of the team tied as second because she felt they were interacting “constantly.” She reported her teammates coming to her, both with information and seeking information, just as much as she was going to them, frequently throughout the day. These interactions included academic concerns like lesson planning and unit sequencing, organization, problem solving student concerns, classroom management, lesson ideas, but also included social/emotional support.

Jackie ranked both the reading interventionist and other first year teacher as third. Both of these individuals primarily served as social/emotional support. She and the other first year teacher would check in with each other throughout the year and Jackie felt this was helpful because she had someone nearby who could relate 100% to what she was experiencing. Jackie would regularly converse with the reading interventionist regarding her students, and their frequent professional conversations led to a strong personal relationship. Jackie reported interacting with these two individuals nearly every day.
Unlike the other relationships Jackie identified, the interactions with her mentor, school counselor, and principal were idiosyncratic and purposeful. She did not go to these individuals for social/emotional support, rather, she approached them with specific needs. For example, though her principal checked in with her frequently, she felt she went to her more because of a specific issue she was having with a student.

**Density.** To get a sense of her greater support community, I asked Jackie to identify other individuals she thought each person in her network interacted with, though it is not included on the map shown. She identified high density and cohesion amongst her team (Daly & Finnigan, 2010); she felt everyone interacted with each other with the same frequency and directional reciprocity, and that the ties between team members were stronger than ties they might have with other colleagues. Such density and cohesion amongst her team can increase their trust with one another and influence Jackie’s feeling of collegiality and belonging (Reagans & McEvily, 2003).

Generally, there was an inverse relationship between the Jackie’s tie strength with individuals and their out-of-network connections. For example, the principal, school counselor, and her mentor, people she identified as her weakest ties, had the most ties with people outside Jackie’s identified network. Conversely, her team, who she identified as her strongest ties, mostly interacted with each other and other individuals in Jackie’s network, though most, like Jackie, had a few individuals they interacted with outside the network. The exception to this pattern was Molly, who
Jackie felt had numerous ties outside of her network, both within the school and in the larger context of the district.

**Social Capital.** Source of social capital lies within the social structure the actor is located within (their network) and is a resource available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of the network (Adler & Kwon, 2002). The more relationships and interactions an individual has within a network, the higher their access is to resources and the higher their social capital (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Lin, 2001; Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009; Portes, 1998). For Jackie, her access to social capital is mediated by the nine relationships that she identified, the strength of those relationships, and the relationships those individuals have with others outside the network.

Molly, the Team Leader, holds a particularly high level of social capital for Jackie and her entire team. “She came to us with lots of information about her Team Leader meetings, she was on committees for planning our Common Core units, so we all got lots of information from her.” In addition to having access to information, Molly also has strong relationships with the principal, assistant principal, and other individuals throughout the district. Since Arquilla is new, many of the teachers came from other schools in the district. Molly is one such teacher, and in her former position, taught with both the principal and assistant principal while they were still teachers. She is also married to a district administrator, so has additional insight as to what is happening at the administrative level.

Molly explained to me that when she was a first year teacher, she didn’t have the type of supportive environment that Jackie has. She said they were all veteran
teachers, the types to shut their doors and keep to themselves. She said she had to do everything on her own and she struggled. As a result, she tries to go out of her way to help not only the new teachers on her team, but also everyone on the team. This is evident by her arrow; though Jackie would go to Molly often, she came to her far more frequently. These interactions were not to get advice or assistance from Jackie, but rather to check in and offer her own assistance through time, experiential advice, and material/information sharing. For example, during a coplanning session between Jackie and Molly, Jackie mentioned that she had a student with handwriting that she couldn't read. Molly wrote down the name of the occupational therapist, told her to email her and she would come down and help her and give her resources.

Positionality in the network is key, but social capital is also mediated by social and relational factors, including relational trust and collective responsibility amongst staff members (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and degree of fit (Bidwell, Frank, & Quiroz, 1997; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Chatman, 1989; Desimone et al., 2002; Kardos et al., 2001; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). These ultimately influence the types of interactions amongst staff, as well as the frequency of those interactions (Pogodzinski, 2012a). During my visits to Arquilla, it was evident that there was a high level of relational trust and collective responsibility amongst the staff, and that Jackie had a high degree of fit for the position.

**Visiting Arquilla**

Milman is a mostly residential area; residents need to drive 15 minutes to the nearby town to go shopping. Driving to Arquilla, I passed several religious-themed
sleepover campsites and advertisements for local sports organizations. The school itself is located immediately adjacent to the town’s high school, with only Arquilla’s parking lot separating them.

Arquilla is newly constructed; it has only been occupied for three years, still smells like new construction, and is incredibly clean. In the entrance foyer of the building, visitors are greeted by a huge wall mural—a picture of Arquilla students reading with the district’s seal underneath. Throughout the building in the main hallways, there are posters for PBIS expectations (Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe). Each poster has a photo of students at Arquilla displaying the particular expectation along with an explanation. For example, there is a Be Responsible poster outside the library that has a photo of a student returning a book to the school’s librarian in the school’s library.

There are three grade level wings (Kindergarten, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th) that are each separated from the main hallways by a set of colored double doors. Each wing is assigned a color and all the décor, from the wall colors to the color of the students’ chairs, is consistent across the wing. Every wing has its own set of student and separate staff restrooms, various support staff offices, a panic room, and a teacher workroom (with a copy machine). Though there are no bulletin boards in the hallways, teachers use the space outside their rooms to display student work.

Student work is on display throughout the building, and in the office, visitors are greeted by self-portraits of each classroom’s Student of the Week. Each classroom participates in Student of the Week, and many of them use the same form
and posters. In the younger grades, parents often come in and have lunch with their child when they are Student of the Week.

Parents were very visible in the building during my visits. Every day, there were several parents eating lunch in the cafeteria with their child and volunteering in classrooms. Jackie describes the parents in the district as involved, and that some might suggest too involved. She explained that the school has a reputation for giving in to parents, and that she wouldn’t necessarily disagree with that. But, on the flip side of that, she has parent volunteers when she needs them and most of her students go home to at least one parent, rather than an empty house.

**Jackie’s Classroom.** Jackie’s room is practically interchangeable with Theresa’s in terms of layout and placement of materials on the walls. The only difference between their rooms is the themes they have chosen. The other second grade classrooms aren’t quite as similar, but each has a similar flavor. It is evident by looking at them that they are a unified team; they have similar posters hanging on the walls, similar student work hanging in the hallways, etc. Each classroom is equipped with a Smart Board.

**Daily Life.** Jackie’s daily schedule can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:20</td>
<td>Students arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40</td>
<td>Bell and we get ready for specials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40-9:40</td>
<td>Specials (Monday and Tuesday is only until 9:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40-9:50</td>
<td>Bathroom Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:50-10:40</td>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40-11:00</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30</td>
<td>WIN (What I Need)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:20</td>
<td>Unit time (focus on a reading skill with a specific content focused resource)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20-12:40</td>
<td>Extra time for roll over or extra phonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40-1:25</td>
<td>Recess/Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:25-1:40</td>
<td>Bathroom break and read aloud</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jackie gets to school every morning around 7:45, and although she is contractually able to leave at 4, she usually stays until 6:30 and is one of the last ones to leave. And even though she stays late, she still takes things home to grade every night.

Every day begins with the principal doing announcements, which start with a “moment of reflection” and the Pledge of Allegiance. Following announcements, Jackie’s students go to specials. The entire second grade has their specials between 8:40-9:40, so every day, she has a common plan time with at least one (often more) of her grade level teammates. In addition to this time, the second grade has recess for 20 minutes every morning, providing additional schedule overlap for the teachers. Her team also chooses to eat lunch together every day, and the master schedule is designed so that each grade level has their own lunchtime.

**Students.** Jackie’s students reflect the demographic of the district; they are mostly white and middle class (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). Though demographically and ethnically similar, her students are academically diverse. Each classroom has “WIN” (What I Need) time built into their schedules, a half-hour aimed at targeting instruction for individual students. Jackie also has a half hour of conferring time in her schedule every afternoon, used for one-on-one conferencing with her students.

Students are referred to as “friends” by staff members and are generally well behaved in the hallways. Teachers encourage students to remain quiet while in the hallways, but are not militant about keeping them silent. When students start to
become particularly chatty, many teachers play “the silent game” while waiting outside the bathrooms.

**Team.** The only change to Jackie’s team from her first year is the addition of an additional member, Myranda. Like Theresa, Myranda is a veteran teacher, but she is new to second grade. She taught middle school language arts for over ten years, and was moved to Arquilla to teach second grade. Table 4.4. displays Jackie’s year two team.

Table 4.4

*Jackie’s Year Two 2nd Grade Team*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Years in 2nd grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Under 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>Mid 50s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theresa</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Early 20s</td>
<td>Under 10 years</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myranda</td>
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<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Everyone I encountered during my visit to Arquilla was warm and welcoming. I was consistently treated as if I belonged at the school throughout my visit. On my first day of observations, she walked me around to each of her colleagues’ classrooms and introduced me. They all knew who I was and why I was there without my having to explain, and several commented that they were excited that I was there. For the duration of my visit, her team spoke to me directly, and I felt like I was part of their conversations.

**Relational Trust**
Relational trust is the trust amongst staff members that everyone is benevolent, open, honest, and a feeling that it is safe to discuss feelings, challenges, and shortcomings with each other (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Youngs, Quian, & Holdgreve-Resendez, 2010; Pogodzinski, 2012a).

Throughout my visit, it was clear that there was a high level of relational trust amongst Jackie’s team.

Jackie’s team has their own lunchtime and most of them eat together. At the beginning of the school year, Louise bought everyone matching lunch boxes, which they all continue to use. During my observations, there were at least three of them eating together each day. And although they used this time to talk socially, there was also inevitably some sort of overlap in which they talked about instruction in a meaningful, collaborative way. For example, during lunch one afternoon, the conversation organically turned into sharing what they each had done for that day’s reading lesson. Everyone’s lesson ideas were welcomed and acknowledged, with positive feedback given after each person’s contribution. After Jackie shared, two of the more experienced teachers told her they would try her approach the next day. During this time they also discussed which books seemed to work best for the lesson, who had which book, and who would be using the books the next day. I observed this type of meaningful interaction consistently throughout my visit, occurring spontaneously throughout the day.

**Depths of Relationships.** When I spoke to Jackie about her team at the end of my observations, she stressed how much she felt that the depth of their relationships added to their success as a cohesive, collaborative team. She said she
feels like she could go to any one of them with any issue, personal or professional, at any time. Likewise, she feels this way about her administration and other teachers in the building as well.

One afternoon after school, Amy was frustrated and stressed about balancing family, work, and her Master’s program. Jackie, Myranda, and Theresa brainstormed with her to try and figure out ways to lighten her load and help her feel less guilty and more successful. Myranda spoke about how when she brings her kids to gymnastics, she works through their whole practice and what doesn’t get finished during that time just doesn’t get finished. She told Amy she needs to learn to cut it off and not be spending time thinking about work. Jackie suggested she set aside specific times that are for specific things; like Tuesday and Thursday nights are just family nights once she gets home, Monday and Wednesday are work days. Amy thought this was a good idea and shared some ideas she had, and added that she feels badly burdening others with her problems. They reiterated that they are there to help her however they can, and this calmed her down a bit. That night, they all texted Amy to check in on her and she came in the next day feeling much better. Jackie references this anecdote often as an example of how they operate as a family, with each of them genuinely caring about the others’ well being.

**Feedback.** Although Jackie, Theresa, and Myranda were new to the team, they were consistently treated as valuable contributors to the team. Jackie never felt like she didn’t belong or that her opinions and ideas were less valued because she was a new teacher. Jackie receives frequent positive reinforcement from various sources throughout her day. This reinforcement is so ingrained in the
culture of the school and team that Jackie wasn’t even aware of it until I brought it to her attention late in the week. During conversations, any time anyone would share an idea, Theresa would quickly respond with a comment like, “What a wonderful suggestion.” Molly, the team leader, is complimentary of her colleagues, both by praising and thanking them for contributions to meetings and conversations. For example, during a team collaboration meeting, Jackie suggested an idea, and Molly’s response was, “Thank you. That is such a great idea!” During a weekly professional development meeting, she kept praising the district curriculum coordinator on what an amazing job she had done on the curriculum rewrites.

Molly, the team leader, frequently downplayed herself in front of her teammates, saying things like, “Gosh, I don’t know what I’m doing either,” and “I’m not good at guided reading at all.” Doing so helped her de-emphasize her role as leader, relate to the newer team members and made Jackie feel like she didn’t need to know everything so early in her career. It also helped Jackie feel like everyone was “figuring everything out together” and added to her feeling confident and part of a collaborative community.

This positive feedback also came from the principal. During the afternoon team meeting, the principal quietly sat in on the meeting. She only interacted when she was asked a question, and otherwise took notes on the meeting. At one point, after one of the teachers had shared some materials with the group, she sent that teacher an email complimenting her on her collaboration. During a conversation about the math unit, one of the veterans commented that she was glad that they didn’t have to do elapsed time anymore because it was so hard for the students, and
the principal chimed in and said she remembers hating that as a third grade teacher. Another teacher added that she did her evaluation lesson on elapsed time last year and it was horrible, and she and the principal both laughed.

**Collective Responsibility**

When I spoke with Molly, the team leader, she told me that she makes a concerted effort to check in with everyone, especially Jackie and the newer teachers. Jackie feels that this attitude extends across the team and contributed to her success in her first year: “I think I had such a good first year because I was never forgotten.” As a team, they check in with each other and not only share materials, but also responsibility.

**Materials and Ideas.** Among Jackie’s team, there was frequent material sharing. Although this was occasionally just concrete material sharing, like offering math manipulatives and supplies or using a common lesson plan template, frequently, the sharing came with meaningful discussion.

Conversations centering on exchanging ideas happened frequently during my observations. These occurred informally in the hallway, at lunch, during meetings; basically any time the team got together. During an afternoon team meeting, they were discussing the math curriculum. Each person talked about how they did number of the day, how they did certain lessons listed in the guide, and shared materials related to those lessons with each other. And often, that sharing led to additional involvement of team members. During the same meeting, one teacher shared conferring strips she had made earlier and a sequencing activity, and made copies for each of them. Another teacher volunteered to have a parent laminate the
strips the next day so everyone could have one. Another teacher volunteered to take the document, turn it into a pdf, and save it on the online drive for everyone.

Often, this culture of sharing led to true collaborative creations from team members. Jackie was interested in doing progress monitoring with her students. She discussed this with Amy one morning, and Amy shared the progress monitoring sheets she had created for her own use. She explained to Jackie how she used them, and also shared some struggles she was having with them. Jackie took her plan time that day to tweak Amy’s document to make it less time intensive, did a practice run that afternoon with her students, made a few changes, and shared it with Amy. This led to them collaboratively tweaking the document to best meet their needs.

**Student Behavior.** On the first day of my observation, while the students were walking outside for recess, a student from Molly’s turned around and started walking back towards the classrooms. Jackie asked where he was going and he didn’t respond. She asked again and he mumbled something and then started walking away, eventually taking off running down the hallway, so Jackie went after him. Theresa was nearby with her class, and when she realized what was going on, she, too, tried to stop him. While they were addressing this, Amy continued to supervise their kids as they filed outside for recess. Molly, who was in the cafeteria, walked up and Amy explained that one of her kids took off down the hall. Jackie and Theresa were walking back with him as she walked up and she took him and escorted him to the office. The student had supervised lunch in the office for two days.
**Copying and Delivery.** The teachers helped each other in their day-to-day duties as well. When making copies of an activity, each teacher frequently would make 6 copies so everyone had a copy of what they were doing. After school one day, a teacher made copies for everyone of an upcoming common assessment. When several teachers had to fill out a form for the reading interventionist, the last one to complete it made copies for each of the teachers involved. They also frequently would pick up each other’s mail from the office. Each of these gestures helped the teachers gain a few minutes in their day and feel less burdened overall.

**Leadership.** Although Molly is the designated Team Leader, during grade level and collaboration meetings, she asks individuals to take the reigns on appropriate topics. During a collaboration meeting, for example, she asked two teachers to share specific lessons they do with the group. During these meetings, Jackie and Amy both were responsible for disseminating information to the team. They both serve on the school’s Universal PBIS committee, and during collaboration, they shared information discussed at the last committee meeting.

**Collaboration**

In her initial interview, Jackie described her interactions with her team as “constant collaboration.” She said, “I just felt like I was always back and forth between their rooms. All the time.” She reported feeling like her teammates came to her just as much as she went to them, both to check in on her and get ideas. This was evident in my observations. Jackie and her teammates are frequently in and out of each other’s rooms, before and after school and during plan times. Though some of these conversations were strictly social in nature most of them were purposeful
and instructionally related. Theresa, for example, asked Jackie to come into her room on two separate occasions to explain where she was in math and to help her ensure she stays on schedule.

Regarding staff collaboration, the principal said that, “Arquilla and the entire district encourage and expect collaboration.” She describes the second grade team as “one of the most collaborative in the building.” She explained that the two elementary schools blended to form GES and “some teams have just taken longer to form the relationships you are observing in second grade.” She and the assistant principal encourage teachers to collaborate through newsletter, informal feedback, emails and their weekly professional development. This weekly professional development (WPD) takes place on Wednesday mornings and afternoons after school. The type of meeting varies from week to week.

District mandated weekly collaboration takes place during lunch on Thursdays and for 45 minutes after school. During this time, Molly has agenda items to be covered that she receives from going to her district level team leader meetings. Jackie finds the collaboration and WPD meetings helpful because they cover practical information like how to pace the new curriculum.

Jackie’s team has decided to extend these Thursday afternoon collaboration meetings a little longer to coplan with each other for the week. During this time, they sketch out a weekly outline of what they will cover, and then each go in and fill out the individual days themselves. As a result, their lessons overlapped with one another and they each knew what was going on in the others’ classrooms. Since Molly is unable to attend these after school coplanning meetings, Jackie has decided
to meet with her during their common plan time Thursday mornings to coplan with her and the special education teacher. Jackie is struggling with how to structure her Unit Time block, and decided to work with Molly since she was part of the team to design the block. During the hour that I observed, they brainstormed different things they could do for the upcoming new unit during Unit Time. The unit focused on science with the essential question being, “What kind of adaptations do animals have and how are they useful?” During the brainstorming, Molly led the charge, but really, it was a collaborative effort as they bounced ideas off of each other, came up with what to do and how to do it, and assigned each other tasks. At one point, the special education teacher commented that she is learning so much this year from their weekly coplanning sessions and how impressed she is with the team’s level of collaboration. When Jackie meets with the larger group in the afternoon for coplanning, she shares what she and Molly discussed about Unit Time. During my observation, after she shared their ideas, the team continued to brainstorm additional ideas that could be added to the new unit.

**Degree of Fit**

Degree of fit between staff members describes how well they align in regards to shared goals, common preferences for work climate, and similar preferences for work structure and systems (Chatman, 1989; Pogodzinski, 2012a; Youngs, 2014). When there is a high degree of fit, individuals are more likely to report high levels of satisfaction, effort, and retention (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). As an extrovert, Jackie fits well with her highly
collaborative and interactive team. She enjoys coplanning, the constant work-related conversations, and sharing materials.

**School ownership.** Jackie serves on two committees: one is a larger committee and involves multiple grade level members, and the other is small, with one representative per grade level. During my visit, the smaller committee held a meeting in which Jackie contributed ideas, took on responsibilities, and served as a leader during the meeting. Serving on these committees, and thus contributing to the work of the school in a meaningful way, could contribute to Jackie’s discernment that she fits well into the landscape of the school (Pogodzinski, 2012a; Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2012, 2013; Youngs, 2014).

*Evaluations.* The principal describes her interactions with first year teachers as more informal. She and the assistant principal try to touch base with them regularly but do not have specific times or contact points. They complete informal observations with all teachers on staff, but provide more feedback to their first year and non-tenured teachers, averaging four before a formal observation and again in the spring.

During the week, the principal came in for an unannounced informal observation of Jackie. She came in and sat in on a lesson for 15 minutes and then left. Jackie is used to these pop-ins now and added, “They’re mostly complimentary. They’ll put three or four things that they liked and then one thing you should work on.” By the end of the day the principal had already emailed her with feedback. Her constructive feedback dealt with an individual moment with a student, and highlighted three things she felt she did well.
Relationships. During my visit, the administrators were visible in the building. They dropped in during grade level meetings, collaboration meetings, walked around during lunch, and helped with bus duty. During an assembly, both the principal and assistant principal attended and helped with dismissal back to classrooms. Physically, their doors are the first encountered when entering the office, thus easily accessible to anyone visiting.

My interactions with the principal were friendly and well received. When I initially introduced myself to her, she welcomed me to the building and apologized for not introducing herself sooner. Every interaction I observed between the administrators and the staff was consistent with my own experience. They spoke to the teachers as equals, and often conversed with them socially. During the first day, the principal stopped a teacher in the office one morning to talk to her about facial moisturizers. On another occasion, she spoke to Jackie about the current status of the construction worker she was hoping to set her up with. Every teacher I spoke to held the administrators in high regard, aided by the fact that some of them had worked with them when they were teachers in the district.

For new teachers, an important aspect of fit is that they both matter to their colleagues and their colleagues matter to them (Pogodzinski, Youngs, & Frank, 2012, 2013; Youngs, 2007, 2014). For Jackie, this is key to her job satisfaction. Repeatedly, she said how much she loves her colleagues, both as coworkers and as friends. She feels that at any time, she can call any of them for any reason, personal or professional. She believes that this is what separates her experience from what her (less happy) second-year teacher friends are experiencing at their own schools.
Lisa’s Case

Lisa is a bilingual teacher at William Elementary, a K-5 school in a large suburb of Chicago. She is the youngest of two, and grew up in a neighboring suburb about 10 miles from her current district. She attended K-12 school there, where she was representative of the demographic: white and middle class. Her father is an accountant, her mother is a nurse, and her brother is an engineer working towards a Master’s in Business. In college, she followed in her mother’s footsteps and joined a service fraternity, which solidified her love of volunteering and desire to make a difference. Lisa said that she has known since Kindergarten that she wanted to be a teacher. “It’s totally my parents’ work ethic and the fact that I’ve always wanted to be a teacher that keeps me chugging along.”

In college, Lisa decided to get a Spanish minor because it was a natural strength for her; she didn’t realize until she was in her education coursework that bilingual education existed. During her coursework, she had an observation in a bilingual classroom and thought, “it was the coolest thing ever.” Following that experience, she took a Spanish class focused on how to advocate for the Spanish-speaking community. This solidified her desire to become a bilingual educator.

Lisa is outgoing, confident, and jovial. She is friendly, candid, and honest, and uses humor to diffuse difficult or uncomfortable situations. She credits her personality for helping her get through her first year, saying, “I feel like if I wasn’t as extroverted as I try to be, it would have been a lot harder.” When I asked her if she was satisfied with teaching, she replied, “I think it’d be more accurate to say that I’m
willing to rise to the challenge.” In regards to her first year, she said, “It’s been a very reflective experience, to say the least.”

**Reflecting on Year One**

Lisa’s district is K-8, serves 4,129 students, and is the smallest district in this study. It has the highest low-income population at 75.9%. William Elementary is one of six elementary schools in the district, which also has one middle school (Table 4.2). In 2012, the district did not make Annual Yearly Progress, and William had not met for its fourth consecutive year (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). The district offers a bilingual, ELL, and a dual language program in addition to traditional all-English classrooms. William is one of the schools that houses the bilingual program.

William Elementary serves 430 students and is comparable in size to two other schools in this study. Most of the students are either Hispanic (69.5%) or White (20.7%), and 47.7% are categorized as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP) (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). Each grade level has a bilingual strand and an all-English strand. William has a “transitional bilingual” program; students are placed in the bilingual strand based on a series of tests, with the intention being that they eventually transition out of the bilingual program and into an all-English classroom.

Lisa describes the program at William as a “transitional bilingual” program, meaning that instead of focusing on the students mastering Spanish before they move on to English, it is more focused on moving the students into an all English classroom as soon as possible. Though parents can opt their children out of the
bilingual program, Lisa said she has never heard of a parent requesting that their child stay in the program upon testing out. This speaks to the overall view of the bilingual program at William: it is juxtaposed against the district dual language program that celebrates bilingualism and encourages students to learn from each other.

Lisa was hired in July as the third grade bilingual teacher. She was happy to be hired at William because she wanted to be anywhere there was a high Spanish-speaking population, and William had the added benefit of being close to her parents’ home, where she resides. Even though she was pleased with the position, she said “third grade was never my ideal…I always pictured myself in a kindergarten classroom.” This worked out, because after her first year, Lisa transferred into a bilingual Kindergarten position that opened the building.

Lisa describes her first year as an “emotional battle” and “a roller coaster ride” with ups and downs that sometimes came on quickly. She said, “I spent many days crying on the way home from work, crying on the way to work, and crying myself to sleep. It happened less as the year went on, but I even cried on the way home…in May.” She found her first year “overwhelming,” adding, “There are so many different responsibilities that I was not aware of before I started teaching like how to be a social worker and a parent to the children in my classroom who need those things more than they need a teacher.”

Supports

During Lisa’s first year, due to some district-level political issues, the district was not implementing a comprehensive induction program. She was not assigned a
mentor and did not have activities to complete, but the district was hosting monthly New Teacher Network meetings. These meetings were run by the district human resource director and covered topics like, “How to deal with parents.” She found these meetings “kind of helpful,” because they covered somewhat relevant topics, but also found it annoying to have to go to additional meetings. Despite this annoyance, she said the meetings were worth it for the first few minutes of every meeting. She said that the facilitator would start by asking everyone how they were feeling. Lisa said that without fail, following this question, “The whole room would just be silent. And I’d be like, ‘Ah, they’re thinking what I’m thinking.’ Ok, I feel a little bit better.” She said that being around other new teachers and knowing she wasn’t the only one feeling overwhelmed was incredibly helpful. For her, those first few minutes were “a social-emotional, almost psychiatry kind of thing,” and she wished that the entire meeting could be spent sharing their experiences. Lisa said that although the meetings were helpful, the program “did not give the full benefit of having someone to go to in order to vent, cry, or share successes.”

Since there was no formalized mentor assigned by the district, Lisa sought out individuals who she could vent, cry, or share successes with. Most of these people were outside of her school, like a college classmate and a former high school teacher. In school, she found an informal mentor in her grade level colleague. She said she felt that her teammate took her under her wing and constantly gave her help with everything she needed.

Lisa described her principal as supportive, and said that during her evaluation meetings, she felt comfortable being honest with him about what she was
Struggling with and what she felt was going well. She felt that he was reliable, would follow through on behavioral issues, and was well liked by the staff. When I asked the principal about his interactions with first-year teachers outside the formal evaluation process, he said that it is “based on need, from just checking on how they are doing to observation and many walk-by or walk-through observations. At minimum, I would say at least once a week and most likely 2-3 times a week.” This is somewhat consistent with what Lisa described, in that she said they never met outside her formal evaluation meetings.

**Struggles**

**Program.** The district offers three programs: ELL, dual language, and bilingual. The ELL program follows a traditional model, with ELL support provided by an in-school ELL specialist to students in English classrooms who need additional support. The dual language program serves both non-native and native English speakers. Instruction occurs in both Spanish and English, with the intent that all program graduates exit bilingual, fluent in both languages. The bilingual program, housed at William elementary, serves students who are non-native English speakers, with the goal of helping students become fluent enough in English to move into a traditional, all-English classroom. Like the dual language program, instruction is in both Spanish and English.

Lisa said that one of the most difficult aspects of her first year was the lack of specific language allocation provided to her. She had no guidelines, only that math was to be taught in English. She said she felt like she was given a classroom, asked to decorate it, teach, but without any sort of direction. She said, “I didn't have much
of an idea of...how much Spanish, how much English, like should I be teaching grammar in English? There are certain things they should probably know in Spanish that I can tell that they don’t know, so should I teach them this? So it was really hard.” She was told during her first year that during the following year they would be rolling out a specific language allocation, but she describes it as vague, with the day broken down into percentages (e.g., 90% Spanish, 10% English). And because Lisa was the only bilingual classroom in her grade, she did not have a third grade colleague to turn to regarding help with language allocation.

Students. Because of the transitional nature of the bilingual program, the number of students enrolled in the program in grades 3-5 is lower than in grades K-2. As a result, there are fewer bilingual classrooms in the upper grades (see table 4.4). And historically, the largest shift has occurred between second and third grade, with the number of bilingual classrooms decreasing from 2 in second grade to 1 in third grade. As a result, Lisa said, third grade bilingual has always had very high student numbers because they will not split it unless they reach 36 students.

Table 4.5

<table>
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Lisa started her year with 30 students, but this fluctuated as the year progressed. William has the highest student mobility rate in this study (24.1%), and this is something Lisa experienced firsthand. Briefly, her number dipped to 28
students, which she said “felt like a dream after having 30 in the beginning,” but then by mid-spring, she was up to 31 again. Not only was this taxing on instruction, but also classroom management, which she was already struggling with. She said, “It’s bad enough it’s my first year. I’m already working on behavior management, now I have 31 to work on behavior management with.”

Classroom management is a common struggle with first year teachers, and Lisa credited her difficulty in part due to her own background and to her student teaching experience. She said that when she was a student, if a teacher called home, the issue would be quickly resolved. Yet with her students’ parents, she was frequently frustrated, attempting to explain to them why their child having zero points at school warranted an at-home consequence. Her first year was also the first time she had to problem solve a classroom management plan, because she student taught in what she describes as a “rich white” district, where all she had to do was say something like, “Shame on you!” and the students would feel badly and adjust their behavior. She found that with her own students, she had to find approaches that really motivated them. When she did, and finally “got through” to some of her difficult students, she found it to be one of the most positive and rewarding aspects to her job.

Self-Confidence. Though Lisa felt that her Spanish skills were adequate for instructing her students, she was insecure when it came to parent communication. Though she knew at the beginning of the year that this was something she needed to “learn to get over,” she still asked for assistance from a colleague early on when she was struggling with a particular student. She said she was scared to call home,
because she would have to say, “I don’t speak Spanish very well and I’m calling you on the phone and I can’t understand what you’re saying. Please speak slowly!” She asked the second grade teacher, who had her students the previous year, to help. During the call, the parent asked why the student’s actual teacher wasn’t calling, and the teacher had to explain, “she is still learning Spanish.” Lisa gained confidence as the year progressed, but in an effort to improve her Spanish conversational skills, she went to Mexico for several weeks over the summer.

Lisa’s insecurity extended to her general performance, as well. She partially blames this on her lack of professional guidance, saying, “I think part of it was just because everything was so vague that I was like, ‘Am I successful? Am I not successful?’”

Lisa also believes her positive student teaching experience, which was incongruent with her first year experience, added to her anxiety. She said,

I never left student teaching and was like, ‘Oh my God, today was a huge failure.’ Or ‘Oh my God, I didn’t teach the kids anything today.’ Or anything like that. And so when I got here and I kept having those moments...repeatedly when I would come home and just feel like I got nothing done, or that it was a complete failure, I started thinking, ‘Oh my God, I shouldn’t be a teacher.’

She wasn’t expecting to feel this way, because during student teaching, she got swept up in the excitement of it and the cuteness of the kids. It never occurred to her that she would ever feel unsuccessful, based on her pre-service experiences. And because Lisa was the only new teacher in a building filled with veterans, she did not have anyone in school to reassure her that what she was feeling and experiencing was completely normal.
Unrealistic view of the profession. Lisa said that when she graduated, she was excited because she loved student teaching so much and she always wanted to be a teacher, so she was happy that her dream was coming true. Having this rosy outlook prevented her from realizing that it was more than just cute kids and successful lesson implementation. She said, “The hardest thing for me to realize and the biggest thing I’ve learned teaching is that it is a job. And that you’re not going to love every single second of it.”

Lisa said she expected the first year to be difficult, particularly the amount of work that needed to go into curricular preparation. But, she said, “I never thought, ‘No, you’ll be crying all the time.’” She was also surprised by the constant feeling of being overwhelmed, feeling constantly exhausted to the point of avoiding social activities that she otherwise would have enjoyed. She said, “Sometimes just thinking of taking a shower was so draining to me...and it was like that for months.”

When I asked how her vision matched up with her reality, she said, “It’s mostly not what I expected.” Despite this, she said that she doesn’t ever see herself leaving the profession. She realizes that every school is different, every district is different, and so teaching in her current context is different than teaching in other districts. And she would rather be struggling in a profession she wants to be in than one she doesn’t feel passionate about, because there are bound to be issues anywhere.

Social Network

Lisa’s social network during her first year was comprised of both school-based colleagues and out of school supports. During the initial interview, I asked
Lisa to identify her first year support system. Her egocentric (Wasserman & Faust, 1998) diagram can be seen in Figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2

**Directionality.** As seen in the arrows in Lisa’s diagram, Lisa identified most of her interactional relationships as unidirectional and unbalanced. That is, she felt that she initiated interactions more frequently than not, and if many cases, felt that she was the only individual initiating interactions in the relationship. The only relationship she identified as truly reciprocal (they sought her out for support as much as she sought them out) was a friend she went to college with who was a teacher in a different district. She did feel that the third grade teacher, the bilingual kindergarten teacher, and her high school teacher sometimes would check in with her to see if everything was ok, but not enough to warrant an arrow in her diagram.
This unbalance was more often felt by her school-based relationships, where she felt that she strategically sought out people to not only gain information, but also in an attempt to form relationships.

_Strategic extroversion._ Most of the individuals in Lisa’s diagram are present because she made a calculated effort to form relationships with her colleagues. The first grade teacher told her that for the first two or three years in the building, no one approached him or helped him out. She said she wasn’t surprised and added, “I mean, look at all of these arrows pointing out [referring to her map]. You kind of just have to ask everyone.”

Lisa is quick to point out that this outward directionality is not because her colleagues are rude or uncaring. She describes her colleagues as very friendly, but lacking follow-through. She said that nearly everyone came into her room while she was setting up her classroom the previous summer, introduced themselves, and told her that if she had any questions to ask. Although this made her feel welcomed, she was so overwhelmed that she couldn’t remember anyone’s name or who had come in to introduce themselves. And because no one came back to offer help or talk to her, she quickly lost track and became frustrated.

Lisa said she thinks that everyone probably wanted to help her feel comfortable and welcomed, but didn’t want to overwhelm here. Therefore, instead of coming to her with advice, they encouraged her to come to them. This was frustrating, she said, because the reality was that she had no idea what her questions were, and would have liked people to just offer up advice and assistance. For example, Lisa spent an entire afternoon papering the numerous (and large)
bulletin boards in her room. Each bulletin board took two layers to cover, and not
knowing any better, she had papered the top half of each board first and then
finished by layering paper over the bottom. Shortly after she had finished, a teacher
came in and said, “Ooh. You’re going to have to redo all of these.” Lisa said she
almost started crying because it had taken her so long to put it up. She frantically
their fingers down the wall and rip the paper, but they usually don’t run them up the
wall to rip it.” Lisa said that once the teacher left, she tore down all the bulletin
boards, stopped herself from crying, and spent hours redoing all of them. She said,
“It’s like, could someone have just told me that? Why would I even ask about that?
That wouldn’t even occur to me.” This experience made Lisa feel like in order to
benefit from her colleagues years’ of experience, she had to unlock the right
questions. She told me, “If I didn’t ask the right questions, I’d be screwed.”

This was reiterated later in the year, when she spoke to the first grade
bilingual teacher about what to expect with ISAT as a bilingual teacher. He
responded with, “I’ve been waiting for months for you to come to me and ask me
that.” She said in her head, she was wondering why, if he felt that way, he didn’t
approach her with the information proactively. Instead of asking that, she said she
apologized to him and said she should have come to him sooner, because she didn’t
know how else to respond.

As time went on, no one was proactively approaching her with assistance.
Lisa realized that in order to form relationships, she had to initiate them, and chose
to do this by approaching people with questions. She said she would try to
remember who came in during that first week, who seemed nice, and what they were good at/proud of. She then approached them with a question specifically designed to make them feel complimented, hopefully leading to a positive relationship. For example, Lisa approached the fourth grade teacher and asked her about classroom management, because she remembered her being particularly proud of it when they first met. She asked the sixth grade teacher, who she was paired up with for student reading buddies, about desk organization, since while in his classroom, she noticed how clean his students’ desks were. In some cases, this approach to forming relationships worked, and in others, it did not.

There were times when she had legitimate questions (e.g., How do I do guided reading?). When these questions arose, she would consider who she felt would be the best person to answer it, but also whom she hadn’t already approached. This resulted in meaningful experiences, like observing other teachers in their classrooms or teachers modeling lessons in her classroom. However, despite her efforts, she was unable to form particularly strong in-school supportive relationships that were reciprocal in nature.

**Tie Strength.** Upon completion of her diagram, I asked Lisa to rank her relationships in terms of support. She ranked her personal, out-of-school relationships as her top three very quickly and without hesitation, and then began struggling with the in-school supports. She ranked the other third grade teacher fourth and the kindergarten teacher fifth, but then paused. Walking me through her thinking, she told me that while ranking, she was considering the amount that she talked to each person and how much they seemed to give to her when she went to
them. Since she and the other third grade teacher would talk every day and she felt safe enough with her to go to her for emotional and academic assistance, she ranked the highest among her colleagues. She felt the same way about the kindergarten teacher; she said that for her it was important that “she was always so nice and it felt like no matter how many questions I had, it was ok.” Those individuals that she felt she could go to for classroom help but also felt safe with ranked higher than those she only went to for classroom support (e.g., the 2nd grade teacher) or socially (e.g., the 4th grade teacher). Overall, Lisa felt that she had five fairly strong ties, with only two of them being colleagues.

**Content.** Lisa’s top three supports: her college friend, mom, and former high school teacher, were all out-of-school supports and each provided Lisa with much-needed emotional support. She explained that for her, having people who could validate her feelings and experiences was important to her well-being. Thus, even though her mom is not a teacher, she leaned on her for support and encouragement, often bouncing ideas off of her mom and asking for her input. These individuals were different than her in-school colleagues because she felt safe sharing her struggles with them, particularly at the start of the school year when she didn’t know whom in the building she could trust and rely on.

Lisa ranked her college friend, who was a first year teacher in a different district, as her top support because they communicated daily and the relationship was reciprocal. For her, this relationship was useful because it allowed her to see the humor in situations: “to be able to turn the bad day into like, going from ‘Oh my God, my life is so bad’ to ‘Hahaha, that situation is actually kind of funny. It’s over
now.” It allowed her to see that she wasn’t alone in her struggles: “Hearing her situation and being like, ‘Woah! That’s way worse!’ Or sometimes my situation would be much worse than hers, and somehow that gave me pride like, ‘I survived through it!’ kind of thing. So either way, it was good.” She said she doesn’t think she could have gotten through her year without texting her and making jokes out of their bad days together.

Like Lisa’s college friend, her former high school teacher was key to Lisa’s emotional well-being. Like Lisa’s college friend, her former teacher grounded her and reassured her that what she was experiencing was normal and was not occurring because she wasn’t good enough. Lisa would reach out to her former teacher whenever she was having “a breakdown” or needed reassurance that she should, in fact, be a teacher. At the beginning of the year, this was about once a week, but became less consistent as the year went on. Lisa said, “She made me realize that no, I don’t hate teaching, it’s just really hard.”

Lisa’s highest ranked in-school support was the other third grade teacher. Since she was not a bilingual teacher, she could not go to her for curricular support, but did use her for other supports. She said she would go to this teacher “all the time” to ask her what they were supposed to be doing curricular-wise and what was going on in the school. Though this teacher would come to her for technology support, Lisa said she mostly went to her and would have to seek her out to answer questions; she would not proactively address items like upcoming assessments with Lisa. As the year progressed, Lisa felt more comfortable relying on her for emotional support and asking for help with her students. They would plan together
weekly, but Lisa describes this as “veteran teacher stuff like here’s the [plan book] boxes, let’s write in squares,” rather than the more in-depth, meaningful planning she would have liked. As a result, she said, “I kind of felt like I was flying by the seat of my pants every day and kind of like thinking on the spot, which probably didn’t help behavior management.”

Lisa sought out the bilingual kindergarten teacher for advice regarding classroom management and help with language allocation. She helped Lisa brainstorm a reward system for her students, and because her schedule allowed it, would often leave and pick up lunch for Lisa’s students. As the year progressed, this relationship strengthened and they became friends. She continues to be a top support for Lisa during her second year.

The rest of Lisa’s support system was made up of individuals that she sought out purposefully, and the content of their interactions was idiosyncratic. For example, when Lisa was preparing for her first observation, the principal gave her a copy of what he considered to be an exemplary lesson plan. Lisa figured out that it was the fifth grade teacher’s lesson plan, so she went to her and asked for help writing up her evaluation lesson. She also chose to observe this teacher during guided reading because it was something she was struggling with and knew that it was one of the teacher’s strengths.

**Density.** To get a sense of the larger support community, I asked Lisa to identify other individuals she thought each person in her network interacted with, though it is not included on map shown. She identified a high density amongst the native Spanish-speakers in the building, but a low density overall. The fourth grade
teacher, other third grade teacher, and kindergarten teacher all are friends outside of school, but otherwise, there were only isolated individuals that people interacted with, and most interactions she described were social. Despite this low density, and lack of academic collaboration, she feels that everyone is friendly, talks to each other, and has everyone else’s best interests in mind.

**Social Capital.** Since there was minimal density, reciprocity, and tie strength in Lisa’s in-school network, she had very limited access to social capital overall (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Lin, 2001; Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009; Portes, 1998). She had to seek out most of her supports, and with the exception of the native Spanish speaking bilingual teachers, her supports interacted infrequently with individuals outside the network, and when they did, those interactions were social.

With the exception of Lisa and the kindergarten teacher, all of the bilingual teachers during Lisa’s first year were native Spanish speakers. Lisa describes these teachers as a natural clique that keeps to themselves and don’t venture off. She found them welcoming when she would approach them, but never felt part of their group. This was compounded by her lack of confidence in her conversational Spanish. Because she felt like an outsider, this led to an academic isolation for Lisa and limited her access to social capital related to the bilingual curriculum.

**Relational Trust**

Throughout our conversation, it became clear that although Lisa felt that everyone at school was friendly and had everyone’s best interests in mind, there was not a high level of relational trust amongst the staff (Bryk & Schneider, 2002;
Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000; Youngs, Quian, & Holdgreve-Resendez, 2010; Pogodzinski, 2012a). She did not feel comfortable openly sharing her feelings and struggles with her colleagues, and during our conversation, Lisa frequently referenced her fear of being judged. She understood that as a first year teacher, she would not be expected to necessarily know everything. Yet she was very concerned with what her more experienced colleagues thought of her, particularly related to her competence. The people she chose to interact with regularly, like the kindergarten teacher, were people she felt “safe” with, and whom she felt wouldn’t think less of her for asking questions. She would avoid approaching others, like the principal, because she “didn’t want to come across as totally incompetent.”

Lisa was also concerned about her overall image. She said that she felt she could trust the third grade teacher (and to an extent, the kindergarten teacher), but “The rest of them, for the most part, I would just put a smile on like everything’s great.” She did this because even though she was overwhelmed, she was still “getting by,” free of any major catastrophes. She was worried that sharing how she felt would make others label her as negative. She said that although she would go to people for help, she didn’t want to go to them for emotional help. She said, “I didn’t want to come off like, ‘Oh my God, she’s unstable’ because that’s how I felt most of the time.”

Lisa was also concerned about her colleagues gossiping about her. She said she went to the fourth grade teacher selectively and would be somewhat guarded with her at lunch because Lisa viewed her as “a talker,” and didn’t want her telling their colleagues that Lisa didn’t know what she was doing. The other third grade
teacher would constantly say things to her like, “You know, if you tell me anything, I’m not going to tell other people. It’s none of their business. You can trust me.” As a result, she felt safe talking to her, but statements like this may have contributed to Lisa’s feeling that other teachers were gossipers.

It was partially because of this gossip-related paranoia that Lisa reached out to out of school supports. She said that she was constantly worrying about saying the wrong thing to the wrong person. I asked if that was because of her own personality or because of the context, and she responded that, “It’s just that I would like to keep the work place positive and find sources outside that don’t know those people and it wouldn’t get back to them.”

The Only One. Lisa said, “I was always paranoid about how I looked. Because not only am I the new teacher, but I’m the only new teacher.” Not only was Lisa the only new teacher in her building, but the next newest teacher was already tenured and had been teaching for 5 years. Because of this, she felt as though there was no one who could relate to her or what she was experiencing. There was a lack of reassurance from her colleagues that her experiences and feelings were normal. She said that she thinks as a first year teacher, your happiness depends, in part, on the amount of people you have that understand your situation, or at least pretend to understand. For her, these people were her out of school supports, and she also felt comforted hearing from other first year teachers at the start of the New Teacher Network meetings, but she would have benefitted from a reassuring staff. She said, “There’s a big difference between someone who gives off the impression of ‘I can’t
believe you’re asking that question/don’t know how to do that’ versus ‘What you’re asking and experiencing is completely normal and understandable.’"

**Visiting William Elementary**

William Elementary is located in a suburb of Chicago. Of the 27,086 residents, 13,837 are Hispanic or Latino (51%), and 12,797 of those are Mexican (47.2%) (City Website, October 2013). The community has a high Spanish-speaking population, as evidenced by the amount of storefronts and signs in the community written in Spanish.

William is an older building, but very clean and well-organized. The hallways are neat, even in areas where students hand their backpacks. All of the bulletin boards are covered in bright butcher paper and student work is posted throughout the building. There is a large mural on the wall adjacent to the entrance and everything in it is written in Spanish and English. There are two large bulletin boards outside of the office, near the building entryway. One is titled “William Elementary Families” and is full of photos of parents and their children. The other displays photos of every staff member.

There are two hallways at William. The main hallway is long, and houses most rooms and offices. The first grade classrooms, computer lab, and restrooms are housed in the offshoot of this hallway, which ends in a small T-shaped hallway. The two kindergarten classrooms are located within this T.

**New position.** The bilingual kindergarten teacher that Lisa relied on during her first year was moved to a different school in the district to be a dual language kindergarten teacher. As a result, Lisa took her bilingual kindergarten position at
William. Originally, Lisa was slated to be the only kindergarten teacher, but a few weeks before school began, they added an all-English morning section. The teacher they hired for this section had previously taught in the district, having taken a few years off to live out of state. She is part-time, only teaching the one section at William. Lisa teaches two sections of bilingual kindergarten, an a.m. and a p.m.

**Lisa's classroom.** Lisa’s classroom is somewhat isolated because of its physical location in the mini T-shaped hallway. Though she is near the first grade classrooms, all other classrooms and offices are on the other end of the building. Her classroom is very large, about double the size of the other grade level classrooms, and has its own bathroom and storage closet. The room is broken into different “zones,” typical of many kindergarten classrooms.

**Daily Life.** Lisa's schedule can be found below:

Figure 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday/Wednesday</th>
<th>Tuesday/Thursday/Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:35- 8:50</td>
<td>8:35- 8:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:50- 9:10</td>
<td>8:50- 9:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Work</td>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10- 9:40</td>
<td>9:20- 9:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45- 10:15</td>
<td>9:45- 10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math/ Calendar</td>
<td>Math/ Calendar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15- 10:30</td>
<td>10:15- 10:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30- 10:50</td>
<td>10:30- 10:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Aloud/Text Talk</td>
<td>Read Aloud/Text Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15- 12:30</td>
<td>12:15-12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-12:50</td>
<td>12:30-1:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Work</td>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50-1:20</td>
<td>1:00-1:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided Reading</td>
<td>Shared Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Her schedule is separated according to the day's language focus. Before the school year started, she reached out to the bilingual teacher who switched buildings for help with language allocation. Together, they decided that on Mondays and Wednesdays, instruction would be in English only, and on other days, it would be in Spanish only. Lisa arrives at school every day around 7:30 and generally stays no later than 4pm. She said that since the grading is so much easier in kindergarten, she isn’t staying after school nearly as late as she had to when she was teaching third grade.

Every morning begins with announcements by the principal (in English only) and then students lead the Pledge of Allegiance over the intercom. The principal seems to enjoy this; during the second day of my visit, he could be heard whispering “Ready? 1, 2, 3!” before the students started and saying, “Awesome job!” and what sounded like high fives afterwards.

Lisa begins packing up her morning students for dismissal at 10:50. Once everyone is ready, she waits in the hallway for the other kindergarten teacher to dismiss her students. Lisa lines all of the bus riders up by route, walks them down to the buses and helps them board while the other teacher dismisses the walkers.

When everyone is successfully on their way home, she begins the block of her day.
that is a combination of her planning and lunchtime. Since this depends on the success of dismissal, sometimes this block is over an hour, and other times, it is closer to a half hour.

Because of the uniqueness of this block time, Lisa's lunch overlaps across several grade levels. She usually eats in the lounge, and by the time she gets there, it is the second half of the third grade lunch. Ten minutes later, the fourth grade lunch begins. As a result, she often eats with different people over the course of her meal.

Like her strategic questioning during her first year, Lisa treats lunchtime as an opportunity to form a variety of relationships. The lounge was consistently full during my visit, with teachers and aides taking advantage of the air-conditioned room. The lounge had several small tables, each seating 5-6 adults, and when Lisa enters, she seeks out the table with the least amount of people and sits there. Often, during my visit, this resulted in us sitting with people that Lisa did not know, with little conversation exchanged.

**Students.** Though most of the students in the bilingual classrooms at William are Hispanic, the students in the all-English classrooms represent a range of races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes. Across grade levels, the students were generally well behaved in common areas like the library and hallway, and teachers allowed them to talk quietly without reprimand. Historically, there have been bathroom-related issues, and as such, there is a stringent school wide bathroom policy. Students may only use the restroom when the entire classroom goes as a break, and if they need to use it during other times, they need to go to the office, sign in and out, and use the bathroom closest to the office.
Most of Lisa’s students are first or second generation Mexican. When she planned her trip to Mexico over the summer, she chose to go to the state directly north of the state most of her families are from. She learned that there are several areas in it that are incredibly dangerous (e.g., cartels), which is why most of her families moved. She is glad she took the trip, not only because it improved her Spanish, but also because it provided her with a better understanding of her students and where they come from.

All of Lisa’s students are non-native English speakers, and although she teaches in Spanish and English, she has several students who are not native Spanish speakers, either. This creates a unique struggle because these students cannot understand her 100% of the time, since they do not speak either instructional language, and also exposes a weakness of the program’s design.

**Marginalized Students**

Lisa describes the bilingual program somewhat critically, feeling that instead of focusing on the students mastering Spanish before they move on to English, it is more focused on moving the students into an all-English classroom as soon as possible. Though parents can opt their children out of the bilingual program, Lisa said she has never heard of a parent requesting that their child stay in the program upon testing out. This speaks to the overall view of the bilingual program at William and how bilingualism is viewed.

The building principal is Cuban, and although he grew up in the US, he is a native Spanish speaker. Lisa appreciates this, because he helps to ensure letters home are sent in both languages and if something comes up with a parent, he is able
to effectively communicate. However, this adds additional responsibility to his
plate, because he is often needed at meetings to translate when needed.

At the end of the day one day, a PTO parent came down to Lisa’s room and
explained that they were having a meeting and “a nice Spanish-speaking family
showed up.” She explained that they did not have any of the handouts translated
and that the principal was not there to translate. She asked Lisa if she would come
down and verbally translate the handouts for them, to which Lisa reluctantly
agreed. When she returned, she was agitated, explaining that situations like that
frustrate her. She feels that although the PTO means well, they neglect a large
portion of the school’s population consistently. When notes are sent home from the
PTO, they are only in English, and all of the PTO members are white women, which
is not representative of the students in the building. She worries that this neglect is
purposeful, and that the PTO does not want to “deal” with Spanish-speaking
families. She feels this is why information about PTO meetings is sent home in
English; if the Spanish-speaking parents can’t read it, they won’t attend the meeting.
She said that when she went into the meeting, there were tables full of white women
and then the Hispanic family was sitting off to the side by themselves. It was clear to
her that the PTO women were not even making an effort to incorporate them into
the meeting or communicate to them.

This was not the first time Lisa felt that the PTO’s actions were catering to
the English speaking population. During the kindergarten orientation the week
before, the morning and afternoon sections had different orientation times, and the
PTO was providing snacks for the parents. The mainstream morning group finished
their orientation before her morning group did, and by the time her parents went outside for the food, it was nearly gone. She explained to the PTO that she still had her afternoon kindergarten orientation left to go, but when they went outside following the orientation, the PTO had packed up the tables and left completely.

Though there are obvious efforts to incorporate the Spanish-speaking students into the school, like sending notes home in Spanish and having Spanish in wall murals, often, efforts fall short. The school’s library is very large, with 46 bookshelves. Of those, only 4 contain books written in Spanish. Announcements are only done in English, and Lisa had to translate for her students if anything important was mentioned. When she found out she needed to be out for a meeting on the fifth day of school, she worried because they do not always assign Spanish-speaking substitutes for the bilingual classes.

**Isolation**

During our initial conversations, Lisa frequently told me how everyone she works with is “so nice” and welcoming. However, frequently, her descriptions illuminated the superficiality of her collegial relationships and her desire for more assistance. This was consistent with what I experience and observed first hand during my visit.

For the duration of my visit, I was, for the most part, invisible. Although some staff members said hello to me in the hallway, there were many times when my presence was completely ignored. During lunch the second day, Lisa and I sat with five different people over the course of two lunch periods. None of them acknowledged me or seemed remotely curious of who I was. They were all aides
who Lisa did not know, and with the exception of an initial greeting, they did not interact with Lisa, either. There were also several occasions during lunch that colleagues ate with us, conversed with Lisa, but never asked who I was or what I was doing there.

Most lunch conversations were superficial; teachers discussing the weather, what they had for dinner the night before, and what their plans were for the weekend. Any school-related conversations centered on operational items like signing up to bring in birthday treats or complaints about students and/or parents. Lisa contributed to the superficial conversations, but only actively listened in cases when teachers were complaining.

Most of the interactions Lisa had took place during lunch. She would spend time before school copying or laminating in the workroom (a high traffic area for staff), but she was rarely acknowledged by colleagues in any way. This was not idiosyncratic to her; people would stand in line waiting to make copies and not speak to the people in line or greet the people walking by. She had a few need-based conversations with office staff and the principal, but consistent with what she drew in her social network map, most of Lisa’s interactions and supports occurred because she initiated them. For example, she was struggling with juggling so many students during bus dismissal after a.m. kindergarten. She decided that she needed assistance, so asked the social worker, who wouldn’t have students at that time, to help her.

Part of Lisa’s isolation stems from the fact that there are limited formal supports in place. During Lisa’s second year, the district revamped its induction
program and began implementing it. Because it was not available to her during her first year, she was allowed to participate in it during her second year. She was looking forward to this initially, but then learned that the only supports available to her as a second year teacher were new teacher meetings, not the formal mentoring like she had hoped. The principal does not engage in or encourage any specific new teacher supports, believing that the staff will take care of it. He said, “Usually grade level staff reach out to new teachers in an effort to make them feel welcomed into the environment.”

**Improvement on Year One**

Overall, Lisa feels much better this year than she did during her first year. She credits this to her improved confidence. Mentally, she feels that she is “over the hump of year one,” and thus knows what to expect from the job. She expressed that she doesn’t need the same kind of reassurance she did during her first year, but that if she does need it, she has people she can turn to. Her trip to Mexico greatly improved her conversational skills, and now has no hesitation speaking with parents.

**Sarah’s Case**

Sarah is currently a third grade dual language teacher at Liberty Elementary, a K-5 school in a suburb of Chicago. During her first year, she taught a 2nd/3rd grade split dual language class. She went to school in a neighboring suburb, where she still lives with her family. She is the youngest of three and comes from a home where education and work ethic were stressed as she was growing up. Sarah’s mom trained to be a teacher in the same teacher education program as Sarah, though she
never got certified. Her dad is an architect, and she and her brothers graduated from the same university as their parents. Sarah said she always wanted to be a teacher.

Sarah grew up and lives in a suburb near Liberty Elementary. In college, she chose to continue taking Spanish courses because she saw how her suburb, and the ones surrounding it, were changing as more and more Spanish-speaking families were moving in. Since she wanted to teach in these suburbs, she took Spanish so she could communicate with parents without the need for a translator. Through her coursework, she realized she could have a greater impact by teaching in Spanish, and decided to pursue a bilingual endorsement.

Sarah is incredibly soft-spoken and introverted. In large group settings, she is engaged but remains quiet and to herself, and during conversations, one needs to strain to hear her. In front of her classroom, she is equally soft-spoken, but it seems to work to her advantage because her students remain quiet so they can hear her. Sarah has an easy-going nature, dislikes confrontation, and tends to adopt an attitude of “everything will work out.”

Sarah had an uncomfortable student teaching experience, and it shaped how she views her current teaching position. Her cooperating teacher was well liked by the principal and implemented good lessons, but behind closed doors, was horrible to the students. Sarah said that one day, when her cooperating teacher received a bad report from a substitute, she had the three students whose names were reported sit in the middle of the classroom while the other students told each of them why they were “horrible classmates.” After Sarah finished a lesson one
afternoon, her cooperating teacher made fun of her afterwards, in front of the students. Sarah said that it is easy to just keep to herself and get her work done, because at least she isn’t “dealing with a situation like that every day.

**Reflecting on Year One**

Sarah’s district is K-12, serves 40,687 students, and is the largest district in this study. The district has 40 elementary schools, 8 middle schools, and 5 high schools. It has the second largest low-income student population in the study at 54.8% (Illinois School Report Card, 2012).

Liberty serves 568 students and is comparable in size to two other schools in this study. There are 3-4 sections per grade level with an average of 25 students per classroom. The students are mostly Hispanic (62.7%) and White (18.8%) with 70.2% low income. The mobility rate is 15.6% and 44.9% of the students are considered Limited English Proficiency (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). The school has a mainstream English strand and two dual language strands. The school is a neighborhood school, so all of the mainstream English students come from the surrounding area. The dual language students also come from the neighborhood, but because not all schools offer a dual language program, some students are bused in from farther away. Though this year, only about a third of her students are bused, last year, nearly most of her students came from an apartment complex 15 minutes away.

Sarah was hired in June, shortly after graduation. It was not her first choice of districts, but it was the only full-time position that she was offered. Despite
wanting to be in a different district, she was excited to be part of a dual language program.

Sarah described her first year as very busy, but also filled with many great learning experiences. She said it was difficult to keep up with everything that was expected of her and a little overwhelming at times, but it was also very rewarding to see the progress her students made throughout the year, both academically and in their language development. She said she didn’t realize until the summer how incredibly tired she was. She compares the experience as trying to keep her head above water and not realizing how deep the water was until she was out of it. She expressed being surprised that she didn’t cry all year, because when she is stressed, she tends to cry. But by the end of the year, her attitude shifted to “It’ll work itself out,” an attitude that she generally employs.

During her first year, Sarah thought the people were nice and liked the program overall. But she would have liked more collaboration and coplanning. She said, “I just really like the idea of actually working as a team to come up with the lesson plans, because I feel like that would really help me out. But every time I talked about doing that, it’s like, ‘Oh, you can take this, you can take that,’ but not, ‘We can revamp this and do this together’ instead.”

Program. Sarah’s school offers one-way or two-way dual language or mainstream English classrooms. During Sarah’s first year, she taught a 2nd/3rd grade split, one-way dual language class. Instead of a traditional mix of native English and Spanish speakers that is normally found in dual language classrooms, her class was all native Spanish speakers. Thus, it is labeled in her district as a one-
way class, but follows the bilingual model. The two-way strand, which she has this year, is considered true dual language since it has a mixture of native English and Spanish speakers. In both strands, certain subjects are taught in Spanish and others in English in an effort to promote bilingualism and biliteracy.

_Split classroom._ Sarah had 6 third graders 20 second graders during her first year. This proved particularly difficult, because the subject-language allocation alternates in each grade level. In second grade, for example, science is taught in Spanish, but in third grade, it is taught in English. Thus, she could not keep her students together for any subject; they had to be treated as if they were physically in two different classrooms. This often resulted in language confusion, and she said as the year went on, she had a difficult time keeping track of which students needed which subject in which language. Sarah said she also would have liked to have ability grouped her students, but she was told she could not do so cross-grade level. This created extra stress and further time commitment, because she literally was planning for two distinct groups in two different languages. Since she had so few third graders, she asked if they could go to a mainstream English classroom for math, which would lighten her load somewhat, but her request was denied.

Sarah was the only 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} grade bilingual split classroom, so she had no one to easily plan with or go to for assistance. Thus, the extra planning load was solely hers to bear. She said this split also kept her from feeling like she belonged to one grade level and from either grade level feeling like she was part of their team. Rather than both grade level teams embracing her, she felt like each grade level assumed she was part of the other grade level’s team. She attributes the struggles
relating to being a split-level teacher as instrumental in her dissatisfaction during her first year.

**Administration.** The only administrator on staff at Liberty is the principal, and Sarah likes her very much. When I asked how the rest of the staff feels about her, she said, “I think people are mixed based on whether or not they like the changes that are happening…some people are used to their ways.” She said that sometimes it is difficult for the principal to implement change without any “uproar.” This is consistent with what the principal expressed to me when I asked her to describe the staff. She told me, “Staff is mostly tenured. Change is difficult as is changing the culture of the building!” There have only been two new hires (Sarah being one of them) in the three years that the principal has been there, something she feels is partially responsible for her staff’s lack of buy-in.

Sarah feels comfortable talking to the principal, though generally doesn’t go to her because “She always seems very busy, running around.” This is consistent with what I observed during my visit; I only saw her once in passing and it took me waiting after school on the last day to finally meet her. Though the principal told me that “new teachers meet monthly with the principal; various topics are discussed and solicited in order to provide for support,” Sarah told me she only met with the principal twice outside of her formal evaluation meetings. Once was at the beginning of the year for a goal-setting meeting, and the other was at the end for her summative review.

Sarah describes the principal’s leadership style as being open and willing to work with the staff. Sarah said she feels like she often bites her tongue in response
to some of the reactions and disrespectful comments from the staff, and
accommodates some people almost to the point of being walked over. During my
observations, she was interviewing two interventionists for three open positions.
Although it was understood that the two candidates would be hired barring
incident, she still invited anyone on staff who was interested to take part in the
interviews.

**Spanish.** The principal does not speak Spanish, and does not have any
background in dual language, even though more than half of the school’s classrooms
are dual language. As a result, they have a bilingual coordinator who translates
items for her or calls home if necessary. At Meet the Parents Night, as the principal
spoke, the bilingual coordinator translated into the headset, which was directly
linked to headsets that the Spanish-speaking parents were wearing. They did not
realize until 70% of the way through the presentation that the headsets were not
working and the parents did not understand anything that was being said.

**Evaluations.** Sarah had two evaluations during her first year and they
occurred within a month of each other. The first was with her principal, and took
place the week before winter break. The second was in January with the district’s
dual language coordinator. The lesson with her principal was in English and the
lesson with the program coordinator was in Spanish. She had a preconference and
post conference with both lessons, and describes her feedback as “fine.” She found
the second lesson more stressful because she had not met the program coordinator
prior to her preconference meeting, which occurred immediately before her lesson
observation.
**Induction Program**

Sarah’s district implements a comprehensive induction program that lasts the first two years of teaching. The program follows the Danielson model and is a source of pride for the district. Each new teacher, whether new to the profession or the district, is assigned a formal mentor upon hire. All mentors apply for the position, are formally interviewed by the program administrators, and if chosen, go through a multi-day training prior to the start of the school year. The program hires part- and full-time mentors. The part-time mentors are practicing teachers who have a 1-2 mentees, generally in their building. The full-time mentors are classroom teachers who are given full release from their classrooms to perform their duties, and have multiple mentees across several buildings. Both part- and full-time mentors are compensated. Sarah has been assigned a full-time mentor each year in the program.

The cornerstone of the program is a binder, filled with information and activities for the mentor-mentee pairs. The stated purpose of the binder is “To provide the educator with a ‘user friendly’ thumbnail sketch guide to the art, craft, and science of good teaching” and to demonstrate how “intentional and conscious collegial interaction in a professional learning community can enhance professional practice.” What sets this binder apart from others in this study are the suggested mentor-mentee activities not geared for instruction. For example, included is a checklist of items for the mentor to show the mentee, broken into 9 categories: Access to Resources (e.g., AV equipment requests, use of copy machine), Building Tour/School Locations (e.g., nurse’s office), Tour of Other Important Places (e.g.,
nearby lunch spots), Student Discipline (e.g., establishing classroom behavior expectations), Procedures (e.g., substitute folder), Curriculum (e.g., introduction to specialists, teacher guides/manuals), Organizing the Classroom (e.g., options for room arrangements), Notes of Encouragement (e.g., discuss mentor/mentee availability), and Personal/Professional Topics (e.g., staff evaluation process). Sarah and her mentor did not engage in any of these activities.

Sarah describes the required activities as being similar to her portfolio assignments in her university teacher education program. For example, for one activity, she had to draw her room layout and write the rationale for the layout. Each activity had an official due date and depending on the activity, either she or her mentor had to turn it in to district program staff. Often, she received feedback from the staff, which she found helpful, particularly when the feedback was thoughtful or gave recommendations for the future.

Although she felt most of the assignments were cumbersome or futile, there were some she found particularly valuable. She felt she benefitted from the instruction-based activities, like observing her mentor model lessons in her classroom or co-teaching with him. However, these were the only mentor-based activities that she found helpful, and she does not speak highly of the program or her mentor from her first year.

Sarah's mentor during her first year was a bilingual 5th/6th split teacher in the district the year prior. He had eleven mentees, and Sarah was one of the three first-year teachers he had. The program allowed him flexibility in his design of the mentees’ experiences; he was able to decide how often they would meet and the
topics they would discuss. He required weekly one-on-one meetings with Sarah, which occurred every Friday for an hour after school. Sarah found these meetings to be “a complete waste of time,” because he didn’t talk about what she felt she wanted/needed to talk about; he talked about what he felt needed to be addressed. Times when she would bring up issues or concerns, he would redirect the conversation back to his personal agenda. She said,

I just didn’t feel like he actually listened when I actually said something. He got focused on one aspect that he wanted to do...and at times when I told him a need and he said he would get me something to help, it sometimes took weeks. And by then, I didn’t really need it anymore because I’d made something in the meantime.

As a result, she did not view him as a key support, and found her relationship with him to be strictly obligatory. She would not reach out to him throughout the week and said it would have been easier for her if she were “just able to go to someone else’s classroom.”

In addition to the binder-based mentor activities, Sarah also had to attend quarterly new teacher meetings, run by the district program staff. These meetings were attended by her mentor, his other three first-year teachers, and about 25 other mentors/new teachers from other schools in the district.

Sarah told me that she thinks, “Mentoring is a good idea, in theory.” She said that she understands it is meant to help them improve their instruction and help them fit into the school, but that’s “definitely not the case” for her.

Social Network

Sarah’s social network during her first year was composed of both in-school and out-of-school supports. During the initial interview, I asked Sarah to identify
her support system. It is important to note that whereas other participants included their main support interactions, Sarah included anyone she felt that she interacted with, even in an obligatory sense. Thus, people (like her mentor) are included that she wouldn't classify as particularly supportive. Her egocentric (Wasserman & Faust, 1998) can be seen in Figure 4.3 below:

Figure 4.4

**Directionality.** As displayed by the arrows in her diagram, Sarah identified half of her interactional relationships as reciprocal, and all of the reciprocal relationships are in-school supports. She included inward arrows if she felt the individual approached her at all, regardless of intention or obligation. And unlike other participants, she did not visually represent balance using arrowhead sizing.
Thus, just because she represented reciprocity with her arrows does not necessarily mean the relationship was balanced.

Through conversation, the only relationships Sarah identified as close to balanced were her relationship with Maria, the first grade dual language teacher, and her relationship with the third grade dual language teacher. These individuals would approach her to actively seek assistance with something, and Maria would also seek her out as an emotional support. Also, both of these relationships grew more reciprocal as the year progressed, particularly her relationship with the third grade teacher. Both arrows for her mentor are there as obligation, since he brought items to their meetings to discuss and she had to interact with him. Though Gina, one of the second grade dual language teachers, would occasionally approach Sarah for technology help or to say hello, Sarah reported seeking her out for academic support more than she came to Sarah. Thus, though she identified four interactional relationships as reciprocal, in practice,

**Tie Strength.** Upon completion of her diagram, I asked Sarah to rank her relationships in terms of support. She quickly identified her mom as her top support because she said, “She would listen and actually help me think of ideas or bounce them off. And the support of literally helping me get things done every day.” She easily identified Maria as her second, saying, “She was...someone that was easy to go back and forth and talk to.” Both of these relationships were supportive from before the school year started. Maria is the only other nontenured teacher in the building, and she and Sarah are close in age. After Sarah accepted her position, the principal put her in touch with Maria and suggested they meet before the year
began. They did, and Maria helped her acclimate to the school and position. Sarah interacted with her mom daily, and would interact with Maria a few times a week.

She ranked the third grade teacher and Gina, one of the second grade teachers as third because when she went to them to ask for things, they would often come back and give her additional items that they felt might be helpful. The other second grade teacher was ranked below them because although she was willing to help when asked, she wouldn’t go above and beyond like the others. She ranked this relationship the same as she ranked her friends, even though content-wise, they were very different. Her mentor and principal ranked as her last two.

**Content.** Sarah’s went to her mom for “everything.” Her mom would listen to her ideas for lessons, problem solve any issues in the classroom, and would help her with grading papers and other miscellaneous classroom tasks. Since her mom went through a teacher education program, Sarah trusted her judgment, and was grateful to have someone who could not only support her emotionally, but also help her with her workload.

Maria was Sarah’s closest in-school support, and since she was only a year ahead of Sarah in experience, she found her especially willing to help. She reported talking to Maria twice a week or more. She provided emotional support, but she also provided much needed school-based support, like helping her plan for events like Back to School Night. Maria would help her come up with what information she needed to have and make sure she knew what was expected at different times. Maria would also approach Sarah, asking what she was doing for certain events or activities, and just checking in with her to see how everything was going.
Sarah approached people based on need. For example, if she had a question about something in the third grade Spanish curriculum that she couldn’t find the answer to on her own, she would go to the third grade dual language teacher for assistance. The relationships that she had with the two second grade dual language teachers and the third grade dual language teachers served as academic supports. As the school year went on, she became friendlier with the third grade teacher and Gina, the second grade teacher, as they came to her for support like help with technology and assistance reading the dual language curricular maps. Entering her second year, she compared the support from the third grade dual language teacher as coming closer to the support she receives from Maria, which includes socio-emotional support.

She felt siloed by herself when it came to curricular help. Though she did go to the second grade and third grade dual language teachers when she had pressing questions, she felt that ultimately, she was on her own, partially due to her unique situation of being the only 2nd/3rd grade split teacher. Plus, since she didn’t have anyone approaching her volunteering information and assistance without her first asking, she felt the only help available to her was the specific help she sought.

Density. When I asked Sarah to identify other individuals she thought each person interacted with, she said, “I don’t feel like there’s a lot of interaction, period.” Although they had one holiday party outside of work, she feels that the only interaction people have are at meetings or if they eat lunch in the lounge. Even then, she thinks the ties between people are generally weak, and does not feel that the staff is cohesive as a whole.
She reports that most people keep to themselves and spend a lot of time in their rooms. Grade level teams sometimes talk to each other, but not always. For example, Lianna and Gina interact with each other as second grade teammates, but do not get along with the mainstream second grade teacher, so they do not talk to him. And Lianna tends to keep to herself, so even interactions with Gina are limited. She feels that outside of the principal, the only person in her diagram that has any additional ties is Maria. She feels that Maria interacts with the principal quite a bit, her grade level team, and Gina and Lianna because their rooms are close to hers. Maria’s parents and sister all work as dual language teachers in the district at different schools, so she has supports outside of Liberty. Sarah said she is the only colleague that she knows of that talks to anyone outside the building. This low cohesion and density could be contributing to Sarah’s belief that there is a lack of collegiality amongst her staff (Reagans & McEvily, 2003).

**Social Capital.** Because Sara’s network is characterized by few strong ties and a low-density, her access to social capital is limited (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Lin, 2001; Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009; Portes, 1998). For Sarah, Maria holds the most social capital, since she has out of network ties and seems to have a strong tie to the principal, who holds a lot of social capital as an administrator. It if fortunate, given Maria’s potential access to social capital, that she is a particularly strong tie for Sarah, particularly since there does not seem to be a high level of relational trust or collective responsibility amongst staff members at Liberty (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).
Visiting Liberty

Liberty is nestled in a well-established neighborhood, not visible by any main roads or highways. From the outside, the building looks like a junior high, with two stories rather than sprawling like most elementary schools in the area. The building is over thirty years old, and its layout reflects this; when visitors are buzzed into the building, they enter through stairwells where they have access to the entire building before needing to enter the office. The office occupies the center of the first floor, with K-2nd grade classrooms, support staff offices, and the teachers’ lounge forming a U-shape around it. Upstairs, the library dominates the center of the building, with the 3rd-5th grade classrooms lined up around it. The layout of the building creates a natural segregation between classrooms and grade levels.

The walls in the hallways are covered, either by large painted murals, bulletin boards, or class projects. Every classroom has student work posted outside, and many teachers have covered their doors in decorations as well. Although more than half the school’s classrooms are dual language, it is rare that anything posted in the hallways are in Spanish. Most bulletin boards, student work, and hallway expectations are written in English only.

The school utilizes the Positive Behavior Intervention System, or PBIS. There are PBIS reminders all over the school, including rubrics for hallway behavior expectations and line formation. During the course of my visit, Sarah handed out numerous PBIS reward tickets.

The students abide by a dress code. For specials, they have to wear a white t-shirt over their clothes, and the t-shirts are kept in a bin in the classroom. Sarah is
not sure why they need to do this, but she does it without asking questions. Her main complaint is that by the end of the year, the bin and shirts smell atrocious because they haven’t been washed all year.

Liberty takes part in “No Excuses University,” a program designed to facilitate dialogue with students about college at an early age. Each classroom is assigned a college or university, which is their identity for the duration of the year. Outside most classrooms are college-themed displays with the students’ year of matriculation. The mainstream third grade teacher has a display titled, “Class of 2027” with pictures of each student in a cap and gown.

Outside of the mainstream second grade classroom, a teacher created two drawings that he hung on his class’s hallway display. One was a drawing of a smiling person in a graduation cap with the caption, “Class of 2028.” The other was of a man dressed in raggedy clothing frowning while holding up a sign that said, “No College.” Sarah said originally, the sign had read, “Teaching Degree,” but the teacher changed it. She said she feels like he has it up as a statement to everyone, including the principal, and it is his way of saying, “You can’t do anything to me, I can do what I want to.”
**Daily Life.** Sarah’s daily schedule can be found below:

Figure 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday/ Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30 Morning Message</td>
<td>8:00-8:30 (30')</td>
<td>8:00-8:30 (30')</td>
<td>8:00-8:30 (30')</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Community</td>
<td>LANGUAGE BLOCK</td>
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<td>Building Community</td>
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<td>Building Community</td>
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<td>Morning Message</td>
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<td>Morning Message</td>
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<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
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<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
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<td>Word Work- ESL Spanish</td>
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<td>Spanish Shared Read Aloud</td>
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<td>8:35-8:55 (25')</td>
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<tr>
<td>*language rotates every 4</td>
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<td>weeks</td>
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<td>*Language rotates every 4</td>
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<td>weeks for 3rd Grade</td>
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<td>Guided Reading (1 Group)</td>
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<td>Morning Message</td>
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<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
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<td>Phonemic Awareness</td>
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<td>Spanish Shared Read Aloud</td>
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<td>Mini Lesson</td>
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<td>weeks for 3rd Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-8:55 (25')</td>
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<td>*language rotates every 4</td>
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<td>weeks for 3rd Grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-8:55 (25')</td>
<td>Russian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 9:00-9:35 (35')             | 8:55-9:40 (45')    | 8:55-9:35 (40')           | 9:00-9:30                  |
| **Math**                    | **Math**           | **Writer's Workshop**     | **Library**                |
| Review/Word Problems        | Interventions      | Independent Writing       |                            |
| Math Games                  | ST Math- Computer  | Guided Writing            |                            |
|                             | Lab                |                            |                            |
|                            |                    |                            |                            |
| BATHROOM/S NACK             | SNACK              | BATHROOM/S NACK           |                             |
|                            |                    |                            | 9:30-9:40                  |

| 9:45-10:15                  | 9:45-10:15         | 9:45-10:15                | 9:45-10:15 (30')           |
| **Reading Interventions**   | **Reading**        | **Reading Interventions** | **Writer's Workshop**      |
|                            | Interventions      |                           | Guided Writing             |
|                            |                   |                           |                            |
|                            |                   |                           |                            |
| **ESL Word Work**           |                    |                           |                            |
### Figure 4.5 (cont.)

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<th>Math</th>
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<td>12:00-12:15</td>
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<td>Math Interventions</td>
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<td>SPECIALS (Integrated with Gen. Ed)</td>
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Sarah gets to school every morning around 7:30 and she and Maria are usually the last ones to leave around 5 or 5:30. She said most of the staff leaves early, with some even walking out with the students at the end of the day. Sarah uses her time before and after school to make copies because they aren’t allowed to use the copy.
machine during the day. She also responds to emails, does any necessary planning and grading, but still takes work home every night.

Every day begins with student-run morning announcements that start with a 15 second moment of silence. Following that, they say the Pledge of Allegiance and the school’s pledge. The school’s pledge incorporates the use of being respectful, responsible, and safe, consistent with the school’s PBIS program.

Sarah eats lunch in the lounge every day, and generally eats with a mixture of first and second grade teachers who come to the lunchroom. Sometimes Maria will join them, but she typically uses the time to work in her classroom. The lounge only has one large table, so everyone is somewhat forced to eat together. Though Sarah was engaged in the conversations that occurred during my visit, she contributed very little and remained more of a quiet observer. She told me she forces herself to eat lunch in the lounge very day because if she doesn’t, she won’t interact with anyone the entire day.

Collaboration

Sarah and her third grade team have all of their specials on Mondays. She has a few 15-30 minute blocks of instructional time peppered throughout the day, but her students are generally in specials for the duration of the day. As a result, all of her plan time is on Mondays and she has no breaks outside of lunch during the rest of the week. Sarah hates this setup, particularly because they fall on Monday. She hypothesizes that she would not dislike it as much if she had it on a Wednesday or Thursday, when both she and her students would be in need of a break.
Part of the rationale behind having all of the grade level specials on the same day is so that the teams can meet for their one-hour, mandated weekly collaboration time. They do not have guidelines for these meetings, and the principal explained that it is the only thing done to promote collaboration amongst the staff. Despite being a district requirement, Sarah explained that last year, they barely met as a team, and this year is no different. She blames it on the third grade mainstream teacher, who constantly cancels the meetings for one reason or another. Prior to her meeting during my visit, she bitterly told me she would be surprised if they were meeting, but was going to go check to see if the mainstream teacher was “even in there” or “on her phone.” To her surprise, she was ready to meet.

With the exception of the language each subject is taught in, dual language and mainstream curricula are the same, making coplanning across a grade level possible. Despite this, Sarah’s mainstream teammate exclaimed multiple times during the meeting (and my visit) that she does not “know anything about the dual language curriculum.” This seemed to be either an excuse or a barrier for her to coplan with Sarah and the other dual language teacher. Sarah sees her attitude as not wanting to understand the program, and blames it for her team’s lack of collaboration. Sarah told me that the reason the three of them don’t coplan is not because they can’t, it’s because the mainstream teacher “has it in her head that the programs are different and won’t listen” when she and the other teacher assure her they are the same.

Perhaps as a result of this belief, the grade level meeting I observed served more to ensure everyone was at the same point in each subject. They shared some
materials with each other, but there was no coplanning or collaboration aside from questions like, “Where lesson are you on in reading?” and “When are you giving the unit practice test in math?” After school that day, Sarah told me, “I wish I had a team that actually liked to collaborate and could sit down in that hour and have the week’s worth of plans done.” She told me she would be willing to take all of her plan time on Monday to do that if that is what needed to happen to ensure it. She added that she wishes she had someone to share the responsibility with and to bounce ideas off of; even though she and the other third grade dual language teacher get together to coplan a bit, she feels that it is more organizational support and copy exchange than it is “actual planning.” The desire for more coplanning and collaboration was something Sarah mentioned frequently during all of our conversations.

Distrust of Staff

At the conclusion of her grade level meeting, I asked Sarah if she ever considers some of the lesson suggestions that the mainstream teacher offers. Sarah said no, that she and the other third grade dual language teacher feel she tries to force her opinion on them and shoots everything they suggest down. Sarah said she does not feel like the mainstream teacher has anyone else’s interests in mind, and describes her as a “condescending know-it-all.” This lack of trust extends beyond her own grade level and to the rest of the staff.

Sarah describes disliking one of the second grade teachers she eats with daily very much because she finds her incredibly negative. This is consistent with what I observed during the week, as most of the teacher’s contributions to conversations
were complaints. Sarah said that she tries to steer clear of her, but feels like she has to eat lunch with her because she doesn't want her to gossip about her, which is what the teacher does when people don't eat lunch with them.

Sarah admitting being afraid of the male second grade teacher. She said that while he was hanging the “No College” drawing outside of his classroom, he asked if she liked it, to which she hesitantly said yes because she was scared what he would say if she dissented. Sarah’s fear of him started early in her first year. During one of the first staff meetings she attended, he was so angry at something being discussed that he yelled at the principal. When no one backed him up, he was furious and literally would not acknowledge anyone for over a week. Sarah said she said hello to him in the hallway and he just looked past her, completely ignoring her. She feels that the comments that he makes in staff meetings are harsh and “just plain mean,” and she believes there have been several times her principal has been near tears because of some of the things he has said. Sarah told me that no one is as “vocal and rude” as he is, but describes her staff as “generally pretty negative.”

Sarah feels this negativity is also directed at the students. Sarah frequently praises her students’ behavior, both verbally and by passing out positive behavior tickets. Her students are incredibly well-behaved, both in class and in the hallway. During a bathroom break one morning, another teacher came over and passed out tickets to Sarah’s students as a means of correcting her own students’ behavior. Later that afternoon, Sarah asked if I noticed the teacher “fake complimenting” Sarah’s students “just to make her own class feel badly, even though they were acting just fine.”
Inequities. Sarah’s distrust of the staff is reinforced by several inequities that exist in the building. Some of these are more minor than others, and are compounded by Sarah’s status as a new teacher. For example, when I asked if the staff wears jeans on Fridays, Sarah responded that unofficially, yes. She added that the longer a teacher has been in the building, the more there is a chance that they will wear jeans during the week. Sarah will occasionally wear jeans on Fridays, but never during the week.

Other inequities are more substantial because they exploit Sarah’s position as a new teacher. One afternoon, a fourth grade teacher asked Sarah to take some of her students during their recess time, which is Sarah’s reading time. Sarah agreed, reluctantly, and told me that she “can’t exactly say no,” even though it is less than ideal to have several fourth graders in her classroom during reading. When I asked why the teacher requested they sit in her room, she said, “I think she just doesn’t want to be put out [and have to miss out on her lunch] because her kids misbehaved.” Sarah added it is not something that she would personally do in a million years, as she would stay in with her students rather than sending them into someone else’s room who is instructing during her lunchtime.

One disparity is particularly significant because it is in direct violation of what she experienced and voiced needing during her first year. The 3rd/4th grade split teacher has 10 third graders this year. Because she was complaining about how hard it is to teach math to two different groups, she sends 5 of her third graders to Sarah’s class for math, and 5 to the mainstream third grade teacher’s class. Sarah pointed out that she had a horrible time last year with this exact same issue, which
she vocalized to everyone, including the principal and other teachers, and even suggested how much easier it would be if she could send her third graders to a third grade class for math. Her requests fell on deaf ears. She said, "And I only had six 3rd grade students last year! She has 10!" When I asked why she thought the teacher was able to do it this year, she said she didn't know, but added that the teacher is both older and more vocal than she is. When the teacher told the mainstream third grade teacher she was putting her students in her room, she did not oppose, so when she told Sarah the same thing, she felt like she had no choice but to agree.

Isolation

Though Sarah enjoyed some of her colleagues during her first year, she felt incredibly isolated. Though this can be attributed to a number of factors, her personality is a contributor. As a facet of her introversion, Sarah is more likely to take on a task on her own and just trust that it'll work itself out than she is to ask for help. She said that about 90% of the time, this is her approach. This is true for her experience as a student and now, as a professional. Often, even when Sarah does ask for help, she is not overt about what she wants or needs. For example, when struggling with lesson planning during her first year, she would approach different colleagues to help her, asking them what they were doing. She complained that no one offered to coplan with her or help her in a more meaningful way beyond, "Here's a copy of what I am doing," but she never came out and asked anyone for help.

Sarah said that although she has met everyone in her school, there are people she doesn't know anything about, other than what they teach, because she doesn't
ever see them. In the same vein, during my visit, Sarah commented several times that she believes most of the teachers in the school don’t know her name because everyone keeps to themselves. I responded that because she is so introverted, she really seems to need coworkers who are willing to go out of their way to introduce themselves and say hello. She agreed, and added that that is definitely not the case in her building.

This was confirmed during my visit in a number of ways. When dropping students off or picking them up from specials, there usually was no interaction—not even a greeting—between Sarah and the specials teacher. The same was true in the hallways and during dismissal at the end of the day. Despite eating lunch with her frequently, Sarah did not know the music teacher’s name. When addressing the students, the librarian kept referring to Sarah as “your teacher.” Finding this odd, I asked if the librarian knew her name and she wasn’t sure. In fact, to many questions I asked during the week, Sarah responded that she didn’t know. Personally, for all but the last day of my visit, I was treated as though I was invisible by the teachers in the lounge, with items being passed across my body and people leaning in front of me to talk past me. This occurred despite sitting at the same table with the same people for 45 minutes every day. When I commented to Sarah one morning that the secretaries did not acknowledge me when I went to the office, she replied, “That’s this school for you!”

Sarah is physically isolated from most of the school. Because of the layout of the building and position of the library and her classroom, she is essentially located at a dead-end. Her classroom is next to an emergency-only exit of the library and a
stairwell that only the third grade students use, so people don’t organically pass by her room for any reason.

**Improvement in Year Two**

Sarah said she feels her second year is better for her, “basically because I only have third grade this year and have an idea of what I am doing.” Since she is no longer split between two grade levels, Sarah’s network has shrunk somewhat in year two. Although she sometimes sees them at the start of her lunch hour, Sarah no longer interacts much with the two second grade dual language teachers. And although she is talking to the third grade dual language teacher more because they are in the same grade level now, she reports not having any more interactions this year than during year one.

This year, Sarah is on two school-wide committees. One is one of the school’s PBIS committees, on which she helps decide monthly PBIS celebrations. The other is the school’s School Improvement Plan (SIP) team. This team attends school and district-level meetings related to the School Improvement Plan and this year, their focus is on integrating the Common Core Standards into the curriculum. She was assigned to the PBIS team by her principal, and her participation on the SIP team was out of necessity; the staff was told there would need to be one representative per grade level, and the other two third grade teachers said they couldn’t do it.

**Jillian’s Case**

Jillian is a sixth grade teacher at Turtle Pond Elementary, a large suburb of Chicago. As a sixth grade teacher, she teaches reading, math, and writing to students who are grouped homogeneously by district test scores and RIT bands. She also
teaches science and social studies to a heterogeneous group of students. She admits that this was a challenge for her initially, saying, “Being in the elementary school setting and switching for me was kind of crazy for me to wrap my head around...but it’s easier for the teacher...and it’s better for the student.”

Jillian is bubbly and vivacious; she is very talkative and interested in others. Her parents are divorced and at the time of this study, she was living at home with her mom. She is the oldest of three; her sister is a fashion designer on the east coast and her brother is studying to become a dentist, like their dad. Initially, when Jillian began college, she intended on following in her father’s footsteps. However, though she loved science, she found the coursework overwhelming and eventually decided to follow her mother’s lead and become a teacher instead. Her mom is a teacher in the same district as Jillian and has worked there for 27 years.

Jillian grew up in the area, describes it as “a great community” and appreciates it for its diversity. She always expressed interest in partaking in a personal adventure of “getting up and moving somewhere like Boston” on a whim, but during her interview, she explained, “I feel like this is my dream job and I don’t want to leave it. Like this is it.” She reiterated this several times throughout our interactions, explaining that, “This is where I want to be in thirty years. It just so happens that I got it now and I’ll stay, hopefully, if I do well.”

**Reflecting on Year One**

Jillian’s district is K-8, serves 12,657 students and is the second largest district in this study. It has the second lowest low-income student population at
34.9%. There are 19 schools in the district, and Turtle Pond is one of the 15 elementary schools. The district serves three surrounding suburbs.

Turtle Pond serves 839 students, and is the largest school in the study. There are 5 classrooms per grade level, with an average of 25 students in each. Nearly half (49.6%) the students at Turtle Pond are white, 32.4% are Hispanic, and 12.1% are Asian. The school has the lowest mobility rate in the study at 7.4%, and 34.8% of the students are low income (Illinois School Report Card, 2012). Jillian describes her students “very different and varied with very different backgrounds,” though this description is more applicable to some of her classes than others. Her homeroom students are mostly White; of her 23 students, 5 are Hispanic (2 of them are ELL), and 1 is African-American. This is very different from her “low” reading class, however. Of the 19 students, 13 are Hispanic, 2 are African-American, and 4 are White.

Though the school has the second lowest LEP population in the study at 22.2%, this population is growing annually. This is reflected in the school’s ELL and bilingual supports. In 2012, the school had self-contained bilingual classrooms for grades K-2 (Illinois School Report Card, 2012); in 2013, this was extended to K-3. However, the district has no plans to extend this to grade 4 in 2014. All classrooms in grades 4-6 are mainstream English with students pulled out for ELL support. Jillian explained that this can be particularly hard on fourth grade teachers because they have students who have never been in a regular English classroom before. This year, Jillian has several ELL students, and some of them know very little to no
English. These students are usually pulled out during these subjects, but on days when the ELL teacher is absent, they use the computer to work on Rosetta Stone.

Jillian was hired in the spring of her senior year, prior to graduation. The summer before, thanks to her mom’s district ties, she worked for the district’s summer program. Through this experience, she formed a relationship with Turtle Pond’s principal, who was the program’s administrator, and who also happened to be her mom’s old principal. During her senior year, her mom pushed her resume to the principal, and she was eventually hired.

Jillian said, “I really enjoyed my first year of teaching. There were definitely many highs and lows throughout the year, but overall I feel as if it was a successful year with a lot of new learning experiences.” She was excited to embark on her second year, particularly because she really enjoyed working with her staff. She described her colleagues as, “friendly and easy to get along with,” relatively young, with “no one who seems stuck in their ways.” During her first year, she was one of three first-year teachers in the building, with the rest of the staff ranging in experience. One of Jillian’s colleagues explained that they had a round of retirements a few years ago, which is why there are so many young teachers on staff.

During her first year, Jillian was on a team of four, which included a male, non-tenured teacher and two female teachers, Zelda and Allison. Zelda and Allison were both in their fourth year and up for tenure. Jillian, said:

I don’t think I could have picked a better team to be on and feel supported. I feel like some of the other teams aren’t as supportive of their new teachers. I feel like [the new fourth grade teacher] Stacy’s team was supportive of her, but they’re not so collaborative at times.
Jillian reported feeling comfortable around them and said, “I really, really like working with them and I think they’re super approachable.” Jillian describes her relationship with Zelda and Allison as strong, in part, she said, because “all three of our philosophies align really well.” For example, they all take a proactive approach to problem solving rather than dwelling on issues.

Zelda and Allison served as co-mentors for Jillian during her first year. When I asked why she had two, she said that Zelda and Allison had a lot going on and had served as mentors to several people over the years, so they did not want to keep mentoring. They compromised and agreed to do Jillian’s mentoring together to help spread the load between them.

**Induction and Mentoring.** Turtle Pond has a formal induction and mentoring program. The program is two years long and participation is based on experience. All first-year teachers new to the profession must participate in year one, and based on their end of year evaluation, their building principal decides whether participation in year two of the program is optional or mandatory. During the year one segment of the program, teachers are assigned a formal mentor, complete binder-based activities, and attend district-wide new teacher meetings. During year two, participants do not have a mentor, but attend district-wide meetings and do binder-based activities to promote standards-based lesson reflection. Experienced teachers new to the district participate in the year two segment of the program. District-wide meetings occur roughly once a month, usually for several hours after school.
In her first year, Jillian went through several days of district orientation at the beginning of the year with her mentors and together, they attended a welcome lunch. At that time, her mentors helped her construct four goals for the year based on the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards. Throughout the year, when Jillian met a goal, she would fill out the accompanying worksheet, discuss it with her mentors, and then send it to district staff in charge of the program for their review. In addition to these, one of Jillian's mentors came in to observe her teach a lesson for approximately 10 minutes, though she was not given any feedback. The administration informed all of the mentees that if they wanted to observe in other classrooms, they would cover their class for them, but Jillian never took advantage of this opportunity. Because she was hired so early in the spring, she was able to observe in multiple classrooms throughout the building for the weeks following her student teaching.

Jillian found the district level new teachers helpful because it gave her an opportunity to network with other novice teachers and hear about their experiences. She told me there was one meeting in November that she remembers being particularly helpful because she felt the message of the meeting was, “This is how you’re feeling, and it’s normal.”

Although it was not a formal mentoring activity outlined by the induction program, Zelda and Allison would meet with Jillian weekly to plan together for the following week. They would meet during lunch every Thursday, but because they hold students in for lunch if they need extra help, this fizzled out by winter break. These meetings correlated with Jillian's feelings of support. She said:
I think if we continued those meetings, I would have felt a little more supported during the year, and there was one point where I was talking to my mom about how I could approach them on starting those meetings again, and we never really did start them up again. I think that if we did that, I would’ve felt way more supported.

These meetings, and the subsequent support she felt like she was receiving from Zelda and Allison, also linked directly to her happiness. She said:

I feel like once those meetings stopped, every week that we had just, it was just the two of them and I, that’s when I kind of, I felt there was some point during the year that I was just so overwhelmed.

It was evident that she felt badly admitting this, both by her vocal hesitance while saying it and with her immediate follow up of, “But they did help me with my first observation a lot.”

The idea that Jillian was not receiving the support she wanted/needed from her mentors was also reflected in the advice she gave her mother, who had a mentee during Jillian’s first year. Her mom would come to Jillian for advice and Jillian said she would always tell her, “You should help her! Anything you can give her, you should give her!” Though Jillian felt that Zelda and Allison were incredibly approachable and willing to help, she said, “Sometimes I felt like things were hidden.” When I asked her for an example, she said that Zelda and Allison are really into packets. One day, she noticed that they had put together an entire packet on figurative language and shared it with each other, but not with her. Jillian felt like the two of them would work together with one another and exclude her, leading to her feeling that they were hiding things from her. She added, “Sometimes I felt like there was giving, but sometimes there wasn’t.”
**Collaboration.** When I asked Jillian if she considers the school’s staff to be collaborative, she skirted the question somewhat, responding, “Um, I think that everybody is *really* welcoming here.” She went on to say that the level of collaboration that takes place depends on which grade level a teacher is on. She said, “Some grade levels...are super collaborative. Some teams do the same thing at the same time...and then other teams kind of do their own thing. So it’s whatever you make of it.” Though when directly asked she described her team as “pretty collaborative,” she implied that they were not as collaborative as she was hoping to convey. She kept reiterating, “Everyone’s really giving” but would follow such declarations up with statements that would indicate her feelings to the contrary. For example, she said, “They’re all really helpful. Um, there were some points during the year that I felt like I was like, ‘I don’t know what I’m doing! I’m freaking out! I’m just going to wing it!’” After expressing frustration that her weekly planning meetings with Zelda and Allison tapered off, causing her to have to plan alone, she quickly followed up with, “I feel like that’s true about any team. But we’re pretty collaborative, like we’ll do the same things, but not like, to the T.”

When I followed up with Jillian regarding these disparities, she admitted that the collaboration was not as prevalent as she would have liked. She said, “The only problem I had last year was that I didn’t always feel like I had as much, like, collaborative, ‘Let’s sit down, let’s plan,’ or a willingness sometimes. It would go through phases.” She said that throughout the year, the amount of time she would approach Zelda and Allison stayed constant, but the amount of time they “sat down and really looked at things together” decreased.
**Parents.** Jillian describes Turtle Pond’s parents as “ok.” She said she receives a lot of emails, but nothing much beyond slight irritations. Sometimes, the content of those emails frustrate her because they are unimportant items like, “Jimmy has a cross country meet after school. Sometime after pictures today, can he change clothes for the meet?” She said sometimes the parents can be a bit overbearing at times, as well. One morning, she posted math grades online from a test she handed back to her students that day in class. By lunchtime, one of the parents emailed her asking why her son had such a poor grade. She had to respond to the email, explaining the issue, even though she had already wrote a note on the actual test that was going to be sent home after school. In a case where she had a more serious issue with a parent in her first year, she felt “completely supported” by her administration.

**Administrators.** Turtle Pond has a principal and an assistant principal. The principal was brought in the year before Jillian, though she was a transfer from another school in the district. The assistant principal had been at the school for 2 years prior to the principal. Jillian reported really liking both of her administrators and thought the feeling was mutual. She said, “I feel like they were really supportive of what I needed and really receptive to what I was doing.” She said, I just got awesome feedback” from the principal. And though she felt supported during a particularly stressful parental conflict, Jillian said that she does wish that the principal could be more supportive with behavior-related issues.

Jillian said that some teachers find the principal intimidating, but during her first year, Jillian did not find her intimidating at all. She said that during
conversations before her first observation, people encouraged her to “put on a dog and pony show,” which led her to this conclusion. Jillian also felt as though Zelda and Allison always spoke of the principal as if she needed to be handled with kid gloves. However, Allison told me that she likes the principal because she is well organized and “has her stuff together.” Another teacher referred to the principal as “one of the good ones.” However, some issues arose between the sixth grade team and the principal during Jillian’s second year that altered her perceptions of support.

**Social Network**

Jillian’s social network is characterized by many ties, with both in-school and out-of-school supports. Jillian generated names quickly and easily as she was constructing her diagram, and chose to identify anyone she felt supported by in her first year, even her personal trainer. She indicated that most of her in-school supports had several in-school ties as well, adding to the density of the network and her access to social capital. Her egocentric network (Wasserman & Faust, 1998) can be seen in Figure 4.6 below:
Directionality. As displayed by the arrows in the diagram, Jillian identified most of her interactional relationships as reciprocal, and the only asymmetrical interactions were with her out-of-school supports (Daly, 2010). Jillian was quick to draw inward pointing arrows in the diagram; if she felt like an individual offered support without asking or asked her for help of any kind, she drew an inward arrow. She did not distinguish balance by arrowhead size. However, through conversation, she implied that she only felt two relationships were slightly imbalanced; the relationship with her administrators and the relationship with Zelda and Allison. In both cases, she indicated approaching them more than they approached her.
**Tie Strength.** After she had completed her diagram, I asked Jillian to rank her relationships in terms of support. She ranked these quickly, her criteria being who she went to most often and who she felt most supported by. She said, “My mom’s number one for sure. And then, I guess who would give me help when I needed it. Who would have the answers for me.” She said that reciprocity of the relationship was important, but it is clear from her rankings that perhaps more important was frequency of interaction and the emotional support that she received. Though Zelda and Allison rank second on her list, the individuals she ranked 3-5 (her boyfriend, dad, and Stacy) were individuals she interacted with daily and served primarily as emotional supports. Her eighth-ranked support were the new teachers that she met with at the district new teacher meetings. She interacted with them the least of anyone on her map, but they provided her with much-needed understanding of her experience as a first-year teacher and assurance that she was not alone and what she was experiencing was normal.

Of the thirteen ties included on her map, Jillian only ranked eight of them. These eight were the strongest ties in her opinion, and the unranked relationships were individuals that were less pivotal supports. Half of the strong ties she identified were in-school supports, though most of them ranked in the bottom four.

**Content.** As Jillian was ranking her supports, we discussed the rationale behind the rankings. She ranked her as her most important support because “I went to her for everything.” Her mom’s position as a teacher in the district helped immensely, because not only did she go to her mom for lesson plan support, but they also talked to each other about what was going on in the district. Plus, Jillian’s
principal used to be her mom’s principal, so her mom was able to give her unique input and advice on any administrative-related issues. During her first year, Jillian said she felt like her life was “constant school:”

If I was upset about a student, I’m one of those people who can’t leave it at the door. I can leave my personal life at the door when I come into school, but I can’t leave my school life at the door for my personal life. That leaks over for me. So at home, that’s what I would talk about. So that’s why I feel like a lot of my year was constant school.”

Whereas this frustrated her boyfriend and friends, she felt that her mom was always willing to listen because she understood what she was going through and “could relate when no one else could.” Later in our conversation, she suggested that if it weren’t for her mother, she would have been far unhappier because of the lack of support from her teammates. She felt this relationship was reciprocal, not only because her mom would ask her how everything was going, but also because she would ask Jillian for advice on how to handle her mentee.

Jillian ranked Zelda and Allison second because she felt like she went to them every day, both to talk (socially and academically) and exchange materials. She said she went to them for “everything,” from lesson help to how to fill out a referral. Jillian identifies herself as someone who needs to talk things through when she is making decisions or thinking things through, so last year, they served that purpose for her. Though their academic support dwindled as the year progressed, Jillian felt that their social-emotional support never wavered. She also said that although they wouldn’t meet to coplan, they would still share the materials they created and she felt that they would help her out with anything she “definitely needed,” even though she would need to reach out to them for it. Jillian said that
part of the reason she likes working with them is because she likes them personally. Allison is “very mom-like” towards her, and she feels that she and Zelda are very similar and the type of person she would have been friends with had they met in high school. Her relationship with them this year is the same; they openly share materials with each other often, but have very few interactions outside of meetings or hallway pleasantries.

Jillian also listed her dad, brother, sister, boyfriend, friends, and personal trainer as supports. Her boyfriend and dad ranked as third and fourth, respectively, based on the frequency of their interactions. For all of these individuals she would mostly vent to them, but would occasionally ask her brother for creative lesson ideas. She feels like she lost a lot of her friends last year because she was so focused on work and it is all she talked about.

Stacy teaches fourth grade at Turtle Pond and she and Jillian were both first-year teachers last year. Stacy identified Jillian as someone she went to regularly during her first year, mostly for emotional support. Jillian identified Stacy as her fifth closest tie, saying that she found comfort in her because they were both in the same situation. About Stacy, she said, “It was nice to have somebody to kind of touch base with and to vent to.” They reported talking to each other several times a week, and during my visit, they spoke nearly every day. They would talk to each other about what was going on with their students or in the school, but Jillian said she would not talk to Stacy about her team because she “didn’t want to talk badly about anybody” because she “felt stupid.”
Jillian said she would talk to her administrators from time to time, usually going to them for major things, rather than little ones. She said that she felt supported by them all year but didn’t go to them for much “because I feel like we learn to not get the principals involved unless you need them involved.” It was also important to Jillian that she came across as competent to them. She said she felt like, “If I got them involved too much, it’d be like, I couldn’t handle my classroom. Even though I had a rowdy bunch, I wanted them to know that I was in control and able to handle it.” She had one meeting with her principal at the beginning of the year, but the rest of her meetings were all centered on her evaluations.

Jillian ranked the male sixth grade teacher as her seventh closest support, because, “We would vent, but it would not be one-on-one. It would be more in a group, like with Zelda and Allison.” In addition to socializing, she would also share materials with him, but felt that he didn’t really offer many materials to anyone else.

**Density.** To get a sense of her greater support community, I asked Jillian to identify other individuals she thought each person in her network interacted with, though it is not included on the map shown. She identified high density and cohesion amongst her team (Daly & Finnigan, 2010); she felt that everyone interacted with each other with the same frequency and directional reciprocity, and that the ties between team members were strong. She felt her entire team had relationships with the fifth grade team and administrators, though each person had different individual relationships on the staff. And although her mom is an out-of-school support, she has ties to the principal and several district-level staff members.
Jillian’s interpretation of the staff network as high-density was shared by Stacy, the other first-year teacher on staff. Both of them felt that their staff was very encouraging and welcoming, and that everyone had each other’s best interests in mind. They both reported feeling that they could go to anyone for help at any time. The high density and cohesion amongst their grade level teams and school staff could influence their feelings of collegiality and belonging (Reagans & McEvily, 2003).

**Social Capital.** The more relationships and interactions an individual has within a network, the higher their access is to resources and the higher their social capital (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Lin, 2001; Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009; Portes, 1998). Jillian’s access to social capital is mediated by the in-school relationships that she identified, the strength of those relationships, and the relationships those individuals have with others outside the network.

Zelda and Allison hold a high level of social capital for Jillian. They have multiple out of network relationships, including teachers, support staff, and the building principal. They have been teaching for several years and serve on larger school-level committees like the School Improvement Team. As a result, they are responsible for communicating information related to the school, district, and curriculum. They also take on the responsibility of speaking for the team (and sometimes staff) whenever issues arise. This year, for example, they approached the principal when some of the support staff were not fulfilling their responsibilities in different classrooms.
Jillian’s mom also holds a good deal of social capital for her. Because of her longevity in the district, she has several ties throughout the district, with both teachers and administrators. Many of these ties are strong, due in part to the length of time she has known people. Jillian said her mom would often give her “insider information” about what was going on at the district level, which helped shape her behavior and decisions while at school. For example, Jillian started incorporating biweekly common assessments of the Common Core Standards with her students because she knew it would be something the district would be focusing on the following year. Her mom’s relationship and experiences with Jillian’s principal helped inform how Jillian felt about the principal and how she interpreted many of her behaviors and actions.

**Visiting Turtle Pond**

Turtle Pond resides in a large suburb with a large amount of both residential and commercial areas. The school is just off a main road and nestled between high-rise condominiums.

The building is sprawling, and the main entry hallway is very large and wide. There are four hallways stemming from it; two hallways have specials classrooms, one houses grades K-2, and another houses grades 4-6. There are bulletin boards throughout the building, and in the main entry hallway, there is a large PBIS-themed board and another displaying every student in the building who has a birthday in the current month. In every hallway, there is an abundance of student work. Outside of classrooms, every spare inch of space seems to be covered in decorations and projects. Jillian’s school takes part in No Excuses University, so in addition to
student-themed displays, every classroom also has a flag or related item displayed reflecting that classroom’s assigned college/university.

**Daily Life.** Jillian’s daily schedule can be found below:

- **7:55 – 8:05:** Lunch count/attendance/announcements
- **8:05 – 9:15:** Math
- **9:15 – 10:30:** Language Arts
- **10:30 – 11:00:** Content
- **11:00 – 11:30:** Specials (M, T, R, F)
- **11:00 – 12:00:** Specials (W)
- **11:30-12:00:** Content (M, T, R, F)
- **12:00 -1:00:** Lunch
- **1:00 – 1:40:** Writing
- **1:40 – 2:15:** Power Hour/Read/Book club
- **2:25:** Dismissal

Jillian gets to school every morning around 6:30 or 7, and although she is contractually able to leave at 3, she usually stays until 4 or 5, when she leaves to go to the gym. She still takes things home to grade every night, though this year she is trying to do less work at home than she did during year one, when she felt “it got out of hand.” This year, she generally plans alone, and has chosen Thursdays to be her “late night,” when she stays after school longer to write her plans and make most of her copies for the following week. She feels that this year, she is much better prepared than she was last year and so planning takes much less time.
Every day begins with Jillian playing a video of the day’s student-led announcements. The video begins with students introducing the announcements, followed by “2 minute trivia.” This consists of a few questions that are read by the students in the video, and then the students are given 10 seconds to respond. The questions vary across subjects and range from telling time to history questions. Each video ends with the Pledge of Allegiance. The videos are produced and distributed by the librarian and include different sixth grade students each week. Following the video, Jillian does a quick activity with her students that aligns with the day’s theme. For example, on “Move it Monday,” she pulls two popsicle sticks from a bag, each with a different action written on it. For “Marching Band,” the students pretend to silently play their favorite marching band instrument. Other days include “Yoga Thursdays” and “Viral Video Fridays.” This is a routine she developed, and she sends out videos every Thursday so that the other sixth grade teachers can all partake in “Viral Video Fridays.”

The sixth grade team switches for all subjects, and for reading, math, and writing, students are grouped by ability level. Jillian has low reading, writing and average math. For social studies and science, the students switch as entire classrooms and Jillian teaches one social studies and one science unit. For the first eight weeks, she had her homeroom for science and social studies, and it would be the only time she will instruct them the entire year. This leveling creates a barrier to coplanning and collaboration amongst the team, because each person is responsible for different social studies/science content and different levels in math and literacy.
Jillian has common plan time each day with at least one or more of her grade level teammates. Despite this, they rarely meet unless necessary, and Jillian spends this time making copies. Though they occasionally go out to lunch together, they rarely eat as a team. Jillian chooses to eat lunch in her room, like the rest of her team, so she can work with students or just have quiet time to herself. Sometimes, she will go into Zelda’s room and socialize for the hour, but she said that does not happen often. As a result, she has very little interaction with colleagues throughout the day outside passing each other in the hallway, unless it is mandated in a meeting.

They have team meetings every Friday before school, and they spend the time composing a weekly email blast to parents and talk about housekeeping items as a team. During the meeting I observed, in addition to composing the newsletter together, there was a mixture of information and material sharing, with each teacher contributing to the conversation. They problem-solved issues together that arose, and when Zelda indicated that she was not sure how to implement Words Their Way, everyone jumped in, sharing materials, and explaining how they have used it. At one point, a bilingual teacher came into the room, explained the program to Zelda, and then asked one of the fifth grade teachers to come in and share their approach with the team.

Everyone I encountered during my visit to Turtle Pond was friendly and inquisitive. I was consistently greeted in the hallway by everyone I passed, and several teachers stopped to ask who I was. Jillian introduced me to her team during her specials on the first day of my visit. They all knew who I was, why I was there,
and several commented that they were excited to meet me and be part of my study. For the duration of my visit and follow-up visits, her team was warm, welcoming, spoke to me directly, and offered any assistance I needed.

**Team.** Jillian’s team changed during year two, with the removal of her male colleague and the addition of two new teachers. She was upset that her male colleague was not returning because she enjoyed working with him, but was excited about the addition of the two new team members. Part of this excitement stems from her feeling that Zelda and Allison were “super cliquey sometimes.” She thinks that this may be because they have been teaching together for so long or because “three is always a bad number in women.” Regardless, she began the year excited for the new additions so she could “show them the ropes” and feel like she was part of a group instead of an outlier.

**“Middle Child”**

Jillian is in a confusing place this year, because she is trying to figure out what it means to be a second year teacher. She feels that as a second year teacher, she isn’t afforded the same benefits that she had as a first year teacher. She described feeling like she is the “middle child” on her team, not part of the veteran twosome but not quite part of the novice twosome, either. Being in this position makes her feel more isolated and pressured than she did during her first year. She said, “As a second year teacher, I feel like I don’t get to go to Zelda and Allison for certain things anymore,” like asking for help deciding which subject the principal should come in for her observation. She feels this way about approaching the principal, as well, because she believes that the expectation during her second year
is that she can handle things on her own. She feels additional pressure from the principal’s proclamations last year that she was advanced for a first-year teacher because she feels like she has to live up to that, and to her, part of that is not asking anyone questions. As a result, for the duration of my visit, she frequently came to me to troubleshoot and for advice, ranging from student concerns to when to set up her principal’s observation to help with science lesson and unit pacing.

Although Jillian does not believe she should be asking for help from her colleagues, she does feel that she is responsible for answering others’ questions and being a source of help for the two new teachers. She said, “I feel like I am in a weird position because even though I’m not, I feel like I’m the new teachers’ mentor.” She feels a responsibility to provide the support to them that she would have liked to have during her first year. Jillian said these interactions remind her not only that she is not a first year teacher anymore, but also illuminate how far she has come.

**Coplanning.** Jillian began coplanning with one of the new sixth grade teachers a few weeks into the school year. They met once a week after school to plan language arts. Jillian does not remember who initiated these meetings, but ultimately, she believed their purpose was to help the new teacher. In the meeting I observed, Jillian had already planned out the following week before they met, so she shared what she was doing each day and gave her a copy of activities that she ran off. As she shared, the new teacher would respond with something like, “Yeah, that sounds good,” and type it into her plans. The new teacher did not offer any suggestions, and also asked about non-instructional items like when to hand out PBIS reward sheets. Jillian indicated that this was a typical example of their
planning meetings and she worries that she comes across as “obnoxious” because she feels like she spends the entire meeting telling her what to do. Jillian said she feels like these meetings are for the new teacher, so she wants to share, but doesn’t want to come across like she is forcing her ideas or lessons on her.

I asked Jillian if she felt that these coplanning meetings would last and she said, “Yeah, I think so.” She then referenced something the new teacher reported saying to the principal during her post-conference and said, “That was literally what I said earlier in a meeting. I mean, I’m fine with it, but I find it interesting that she literally took the words out of my mouth.” I asked Jillian if it rubbed her the wrong way and she said no, that she thinks it shows that the new teacher values what she says, and because of that, she believes the meetings will last.

The meetings did not last. Jillian stopped the meetings approximately a month later, in the beginning of November. She felt like she was writing the new teacher’s plans for her and that she was not appreciative of everything Jillian was doing for her. During a staff meeting around Halloween, they were talking about reading and Allison brought up reading notebooks (which Jillian said were her own creation that she “worked hard on for weeks over the summer”), turned to the new teacher and said, “I think you brought those to our team, right?” Rather than giving the credit to Jillian, the new teacher smiled, nodded, and received praise and recognition from the principal. This was the breaking point for Jillian, and now whenever she gives anything to anyone, she writes, “Copyright Jillian, 2013, All Rights Reserved” on the bottom.
Leadership. Jillian serves on one committee this year, and it is responsible for scheduling all the fire drills, etc., for the school. As a result, during the grade level meeting that I observed, she shared quite a bit of information with the team regarding upcoming fall parties and activities going on in the school and essentially ran the meeting. Though this is the only committee she serves on, she runs the environmental club, organizing student volunteers picking up recycling in each classroom during lunch. She also runs the school’s Girls on the Run program in the spring, and because of her involvement, she knows many of the female students in the building, even those in younger grades.

Aside from her formal leadership rolls, Jillian has undertaken several initiatives this year. Jillian describes the rationale behind the decision to split up science and social studies amongst the team as a group decision, saying that it was to “give ourselves a break in planning, allow each teacher to become an expert in a particular unit, get to know every student in the grade, and to allow the students to know each teacher and their teaching style.” She added that they were also hoping that this setup would help them with unit pacing, because last year, since they are on trimesters, they spent 8 weeks on a unit and would be burned out. However, despite her description, this was ultimately a structure setup by Jillian to address some of the stress and pressure she felt during her first year.

Personality

Jillian describes herself as simultaneously laid back and intense and easily distracted. She also feels that she is an over-thinker and over-worrier, which makes her over-analyze everything that happens. Sometimes, this over-analyzing seems to
lead to paranoia. For example, she told me she was nervous about next year because they will be downsizing from 5 teachers to 4 teachers in sixth grade due to low numbers. She said she is worried it will be here because there are some days that rather than let her students stay in for lunch and work, she goes out for lunch or just takes the hour to be alone. She said, “Since other teachers don’t take days like that, I’m sure they’ll have higher test scores,” thus putting her job in jeopardy.

Jillian said she does not consider herself a people-pleaser, but said if she likes someone, she definitely wants them to like her back. This, coupled with her over-analyzing, creates anxiety at work, because she is very concerned with her image and what others think of her as a teacher, particularly her principal.

Jillian feels that this year, the principal is not as warm and receptive to her as she was during her first year, and Jillian finds her hard to read. When she saw the principal in passing one morning and said hello, the principal gave a gruff hello in response, and Jillian continued to worry about it for an hour afterwards. She kept talking about it, hypothesizing why the principal may have responded that way. She worried that maybe it was because she had not yet responded to an email that the principal sent out the night before asking for possible observation times.

She feels that her “good relationship” with the administration is contingent upon her being an ideal employee. After sharing that her first-year evaluation feedback was extremely positive, she said, “Which, I don’t know if that was because she [the principal] hired me so she wanted me to succeed, or if she really felt that way.” Later in her second year, a conflict arose between the sixth grade team and the support staff. As the only tenured teachers on the team, Zelda and Allison spoke
on behalf of the team during several “uncomfortable” meetings with the principal. Jillian said that even though she believed whole-heartedly in what they were saying, she did not speak up because she is afraid of being fired. Because of the situation, Jillian told me, “Now I feel extra pressure to have an amazing observation lesson next week because I feel like the entire sixth grade team is under a microscope right now.” She felt that throughout the entire debacle, the principal was short with her, and she is worried that the principal is now holding a grudge against her and her team.

Jillian also feels pressured to “keep up with Stacy,” since she is the only other second year teacher. Stacy is involved in many activities, and Jillian said that sometimes this makes her feel badly (indirectly) because she feels pressured to do things because Stacy is so involved. Jillian and Stacy both had the option of not participating in the mentoring program this year. Jillian said had no interest in doing the program, but felt like she had to, saying, “Stacy forced me by volunteering herself!”

Jillian considers herself a perfectionist and “the type of person that will get done whatever needs to get done.” Left to her own devices to struggle, she believes she will do fine because she will eventually figure it out. This resiliency was displayed when, despite the lack of curricular help from her teammates, she was determined to make it work. She said some days, she would “just have to wing it,” rather than stress herself out too much. But for the most part, she said, “I just felt like, I can do this. I’ll figure it out. What goes on in my classroom goes on in my classroom.” In moments when she was struggling with self-confidence, she would
remind herself of the positive lesson feedback she received from her cooperating teachers in student teaching and principal evaluations. She said:

My principal seems receptive to what I’m doing, and those were my own lessons, you know? So I felt like I was just like, ‘I’ll figure it out.’ Whatever I was doing in my observation lessons, she really liked, and that’s what I usually do in my class no matter what day it is and it’s fine.

She said she felt like both her principal and assistant principal “were really receptive to what I was doing,” which helped her feel “like I had validation, and from my principal.”

Jillian consistently expressed not wanting to be a burden to anyone. Even when she felt overwhelmed, this won out over her need for assistance. Jillian said, “I didn’t want to ask them too much, I guess. I wanted them to feel like I wasn’t taking too much from their time.” Her hesitance in approaching Zelda and Allison for additional help during her first year weighed heavily on her:

I know I shouldn’t have felt bad, but I did. I felt bad because I felt like I was asking too much. My mom was always like, ‘You’re not asking too much. I’m sure you’re not even asking, you just feel like you’re asking too much.’ Because I feel like I’m the type of person to be overbearing. I just felt like, maybe they were getting annoyed. But maybe they weren’t, and I just thought that.

When her collaboration meetings with Zelda and Allison stopped, she thought it might be her fault, saying, “I thought maybe they thought I was talking too much and not giving.” So rather than continue to ask for help, she took it upon herself to come up with ideas and activities and share them with them, in hopes that they would respond in kind. This approach ultimately backfired for her. When I spoke to Allison, she said that when they first started meeting, Jillian asked a lot of questions, but as time went on, she started offering things up and seemed to get into stride. She said that because of this, and because Jillian is the type of person who
picks up things quickly and is confident in what she is doing, they met a little less frequently and a little more informally, with a lot of those conversations taking place over email or in passing in the hallway.

When I asked her at the end of our initial interview if there was anything she wanted to add, she said:

I guess I just don’t want you to think that I did not like my school. I definitely did. And I definitely really liked Zelda and Allison. I just, sometimes I felt like it was too much for me. But I don’t even know if it was. But I do like the staff; I like where I work.

At the end of our final conversation, however, which took place after the sixth grade/support staff conflict, she expressed that this is no longer the case. She told me that everything feels awful and uncomfortable and said, “I feel like during my first year, I hated my kids, hated my job, but loved my team. This year, I love my kids, but the school is completely crazy.”
Chapter Five

Analysis of Data

New teachers enter the profession with varying degrees of motivation, but all four of these teachers were eager to begin their lives as professionals and excited about their futures. Though their satisfaction varied, their motivation and commitment to the profession remained relatively constant. This chapter examines the contextual and individual factors that may be contributors to that consistency, and addresses the following research questions:

- What type of formal/informal interactions do novice teachers seek out/engage in and why? What is the content and direction of those interactions?
- How do novice teachers use their mentors?
- What do novice teachers’ support networks look like?
- What are the individual factors and attributes that help novice teachers?
- How do these interactions and supports relate to how novice teachers feel about their work and jobs?
- How can we better support novice teachers?

This chapter begins with an examination of the individuals’ contexts, beginning with the teachers’ egocentric social/support networks, access to social capital, and the sense of community encountered. Then I examine the individual attributes and factors that the teachers relied on when faced with challenges in their contexts. Chapter six addresses the last research question of how we can better support new teachers.
Part One: Contexts

Comparison of Participants’ Social (Support) Networks

Social networks highlight the interdependence of individuals by focusing both on the individual actors and the relationships, or ties, linking them (Wasserman & Faust, 1996). These relationships serve as conduits for the flow and exchange of various resources, including information, knowledge, and materials (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Carolan, Daly, & Moolenaar, 2013; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Coleman, 1988) and can serve as opportunities or constraints for the actors (Carolan, Daly, & Moolenaar, 2013; Degenne & Forsé, 1999). Social networks are characterized by the content of these exchanges and therefore vary in type, including friendship, advice, and collaboration networks (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Moolenaar, 2010; Scott, 2000). In this study, teachers were asked to identify sources of support during their first year, resulting in visual representations of their support networks (See Chapter 4 or Appendix D).

In this section, I provide a cross-case analysis of all four teachers’ support networks, paying particular attention to the characteristics of the networks, especially in relation to the network ties, the formation of the ties, and transactions between the actors in each network (Carolan, Daly, & Moolenaar, 2013). Examining the ties provides information regarding the social formations that shape/explain the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants. This includes considering the number of ties within the networks, where they are located (in or out of school), and the strength of those ties. Teachers are often embedded in multiple subgroups, both in and out of school (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999; Coburn, 2001; Resnick & Scherrer,
2012), and examining the ties in the networks illuminates these subgroups from the bottom up (Frank & Zhao, 2005). Tie strength is a function of frequency of interaction and social/emotional closeness between actors (Burt, 1992; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Granovetter, 1973; Hansen, 1999) and determines the types of resources provided through the network (Granovetter, 1973; Jack, 2005; Jenssen & Koenig, 2002). Though strong ties can be seen as less beneficial than weak because they can provide redundant information (Burt, 1992), strong ties are important because they shape motivation (Jenssen & Koenig, 2002) and can lead to trust among actors in the network (Jack, 2005). Trust is an important network attribute because it can lead to sharing of information and resources between actors and increases the chances that individuals will help one another (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Uzzi, 1997). When the tie structure enables teachers to connect to information and resources, teachers are better able to address local problems of practice (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999), take risks intended to improve practice (Bryk & Schneider, 2002), and develop a shared commitment to organizational goals (Kruse, 2001).

**Characteristics of Participants’ Support Networks.** Tables 5.1 – 5.5 provide details about and compare the different characteristics of the participants’ social networks. Tables 5.1 – 5.3 provide information regarding the participants’ ties.
Table 5.1

*Characteristics of Social Networks: Ties, Strength, and Reciprocity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Ties</th>
<th>Ranked</th>
<th>Strong*</th>
<th>Weak**</th>
<th>Reciprocal</th>
<th>Reciprocity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Granovetter (1973)

**Interaction less than twice per week

Table 5.2

*Characteristics of Social Networks: Location of Ties and Rankings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School-based</th>
<th>Out of school, district-based</th>
<th>Out of school, non-district</th>
<th>Principal rank^</th>
<th>New Teacher (NT) rank^</th>
<th>Top Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>Colleague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1/8</td>
<td>Friend/NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6/6</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>5/8 &amp; 8/8</td>
<td>Mom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^ranking total may differ due to ties in ranking
Table 5.3

Ranked Supports: Location and Strong Ties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Lisa</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Jillian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher^</td>
<td>3. HS Teacher*</td>
<td>3. Teacher^</td>
<td>Mentor^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher^</td>
<td>4. Teacher^</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>3. Boyfriend**^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Principal</td>
<td>6. Principal</td>
<td>7. Teacher^</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. New Teachers**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*out of school support
**out of school, in district
^strong tie (Granovetter, 1973)

Table 5.1 outlines the total number of ties identified by each of the four participants during their first year. These ties represent individuals who met two criteria: (a) individuals the teacher interacted with regularly (determined by participants’ own definition of regularly) and (b) individuals whom the new teachers felt supported by in their first year. Therefore, the networks (and subsequent tie counts) do not represent all interactional ties. For example, Christina is a teacher Sarah eats lunch with daily, but she does not feel that her interactions with Christina provide her with any type of support. Therefore, although Christina is someone she interacts with regularly, she was not someone she represented with a tie. Because these criteria were determined by the participants, for Lisa and Jillian, sometimes individuals were identified initially as a tie, but through the ranking process, were eliminated. For instance, when Jillian was identifying individuals, she listed her personal trainer as a support, because she
would often vent to him at the end of the day. When she was asked to rank her supports, however, he was not included because she ultimately felt that the amount of support she received from him was not comparable to the others that she had ranked. Therefore, the numbers of ranked ties are listed in Table 5.1 to show this slight differential.

Though individuals were asked to rank in terms of support, for Sarah, Jillian, and Lisa, trust was an important facet in the ranking process. They considered how much individuals shared when they approached them, how willing and supportive they seemed to be when asked for help, and how safe they felt that the person would not talk about them negatively to others.

Each teacher was asked to rank the individuals identified in their networks according to support. Each teacher's highest ranked support is listed in Table 5.2, and their highest three supports can be seen in Table 5.4. Generally, the teachers ranked individuals because they felt they were a strong tie; that is, they felt they received support on a regular basis. However, in all four cases, there were some rankings that did not reflect this. Borrowing from Granovetter's (1973) definition of tie strength, I examined data from interviews and observations and determined the number of strong and weak ties identified by each individual. The ties representing interactions that occurred at least twice a week were identified as strong, and those that occurred less were identified as weak. With the exception of Lisa's list, these strong ties aligned with the teachers' personal ranking of the ties. That is, Sarah's identified top three supports (see Table 5.4) also are individuals that she interacted with at least twice a week (e.g., her 3 strong ties in Table 5.1). Lisa ranked her
former high school teacher as third, but her interactions with her varied throughout the year, only occurring twice a week on rare occasions. Lisa interacted with her third grade colleague daily, which classifies her as a strong tie by definition, but Lisa ranked her fourth. Determining tie strength by frequency also resulted in sorting by emotional/social closeness, another of Granovetter’s (1973) criteria. Generally, the individuals with whom the teachers interacted with most frequently were also the individuals they felt closest to.

Reciprocity is the extent to which relationships in a network are mutual/reciprocal. It is important because these relationships have the potential to instill trust and value and can support the exchange of complex resources, but they can also constrain the exchange of novel resources (Burt, 1992; Granovetter, 1973). Though this can often be used to reflect the symmetry of relationships, in this study, it is used to identify the mutual directionality of ties. Thus, even though some relationships may be unbalanced in an individual’s network, they are counted as reciprocal if they indicated them as bidirectional. For example, Jackie felt that her colleague Molly sought her out to provide her with support more often than Jackie sought her out. Although this relationship is asymmetrical since they are not approaching each other equally, it is still bidirectional, and for the purposes of this study, counted as reciprocal. The number in the “Reciprocal” column in table 5.1 indicates the number of bidirectional ties identified by each participant. The “Reciprocity” column displays the percentage of total ties identified as reciprocal. Jillian identified 7 of her 12 total ties as reciprocal, representing 58% reciprocity.
Though all four teachers have a similar number of total identified and ranked ties, the ties differentiate according to strength and reciprocity. The number of strong ties and reciprocity percentage also aligns with each participant’s overall satisfaction and happiness. Jackie, who is the most satisfied of all four teachers, has both the highest number of strong ties and the smallest number of weak ties. And of her nine ranked supports, every one of them is bidirectional. This means of the nine people she feels supported by, she interacts with eight of them two times a week or more, and every support relationship is reciprocal. Her one weak tie is her principal, and although Jackie reported in her initial interview that she interacted with her about once a week during her first year, I observed four interactions during my visit, which Jackie indicated as “typical.” This anomaly could be due to changes in principal involvement this academic year, but more likely reflect Jackie’s determination of what qualifies as a supportive interaction. Of the four interactions observed, one was a social exchange, one was lesson feedback, and two served to relay information. It is possible that during the first year, the frequency of their interaction was the same, but Jackie did not perceive significance in the more social and informational exchanges she engaged in with the principal. Thus, for her, support from her principal is related to problem solving and instructional feedback. Jillian’s ties reflect the variability in her satisfaction with her position and the support she received. She has the second highest number of strong ties and reciprocity, but she also has the same amount of weak ties as Lisa and Sarah, who also expressed a desire for more support. Both Sarah and Lisa felt isolated in their positions, which is reflected in their tie strength and reciprocity percentages. Both
have more weak ties than strong, and their reciprocity percentages are the lowest of the four.

Relevant to the strength and reciprocity of the four teachers’ ties are the location of the ties (see Tables 5.2 & 5.3). As displayed in Table 5.2, all of Jackie’s identified supports (including her eight strong ties) were in-school supports, and she ranked one of her grade level colleagues as her number one support. Each of the other teachers had a combination of school-based and out of school supports. Sarah and Lisa had a similar amount of school-based and out of school supports, and both of their top ranked supports were people outside of their school and district. Jillian was the only participant with more out of school than school-based supports with seven. However, although they were not in-school supports, two of those seven were located in the district. Her mom, who she listed as her top support, is a teacher in the district and thus qualifies as a district-based support.

Table 5.3 displays the participants’ ranked supports, their location, and indicates whether they are strong ties. Lisa was the only participant with more strong ties located out of school than in school. Of her three strong ties, two were with individuals located outside of her school. Sarah and Jillian had strong ties both in and out of school; two of Sarah’s three strong ties and four of Jillian’s seven strong ties were school-based supports. However, of Jillian’s three strong ties located outside of school, one had district affiliation.

As expected, all four teachers identified at least one grade level colleague as a source of support, and in each case, the colleague was a strong support. With the exception of Lisa, each teacher also identified her administrator(s) as a primary and
ranked support. No principal qualified as a strong tie, and usually they were ranked as one of the lowest identified supports (see Table 5.2).

Interestingly, all four teachers also identified another new teacher (NT) as a primary source of support, and in each case, the new teacher was also a strong tie. This is reflected in the participants’ rankings of their new teacher colleagues. Jackie, Lisa, and Sarah ranked a new teacher in their top three supports. Jillian ranked multiple new teachers; a fourth grade colleague ranked fourth and new teachers she met in the district were clustered and ranked eighth (see Table 5.2). For the participants, these new teacher supports were not convenience based; each new teacher support was located in a different grade level or school, giving insight to the value each participant placed on having someone who could relate to her experience.

**Tie Formation.** Networks emerge in organizations as individuals form ties (Krackhardt, 1994). Individuals reach out to others to form ties for multiple reasons. Homophily, or the tendency for people to reach out to people who are similar to themselves, plays a role (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). This includes personal similarities like gender, age, and race, but also structural similarities like position/status in the workplace (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999; Burt, 2000; Coburn, Choi, & Mata, 2010; Frank, Zhao, & Borman, 2004; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). For teachers, this means they are more likely to reach out to other teachers to form ties than they are to administrators, or to other grade level colleagues than support staff. Individuals are more likely to form ties with people who are physically close to them (Coburn, Choi, & Mata, 2010; Krackhardt, 1994;
Monge et al., 1985) or relationally close, meaning they are friends of friends (or a tie of a tie within a network (Granovetter, 1973). They are also more likely to reach out to others when they perceive that those individuals have a particular expertise (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Coburn, Choi, & Mata, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009) or if they are a trusted individual with whom they already share sentiments or behavior (Friedman & Polodny, 1992).

*Homophily.* All four teachers sought out other classroom teachers as supports. They each tried to form links with their grade level colleagues, and Lisa and Sarah also tried to form links with other bilingual teachers. However, aside from the three teachers’ ties with their principals, Jackie was the only teacher who sought out or received support from staff members in the building who were not classroom teachers. She formed a tie with the school counselor and two reading interventionists (one of whom was her mentor). It is possible that this was an effect of her strong grade level and teacher network. Having those supports already in place (and consequently, many of her needs met) allowed her to venture out to form more heterogeneous ties.

Position type was not the only type of homogeneity in the teachers’ ties. All of them sought out others who were like themselves. They all had a significant relationship with someone their own age, someone in a similar career stage, and with the exception of Jillian, all were with other females. Jackie explained that part of the reason she felt closest with Amy was because of all of her teammates, Amy was closest to her in age and personality. Jillian felt the same way about Zelda; she felt slightly closer to her than Allison because Allison was older and had children,
while she and Zelda were at a similar stage in their lives. However, because of the makeup of their staff, Jillian and Jackie had more access to analogous individuals than Lisa and Sarah. At Lisa and Sarah’s schools, the staff was mainly comprised of veteran teachers who, although mostly female, were also decidedly older in both age and years of experience. Thus, they had limited options in finding others who were similar.

Proximity. Though each teacher sought out relationships with people physically near them, those people also tended to be their grade level colleagues, who they may have formed relationships with independent of location. Therefore, in some cases, it is impossible to distinguish between a relationship being a result of proximity or of homophily. However, it is evident in Jackie and Jillian’s cases that proximity played a role both in the formation of their ties and with the intensity of their ties.

When ranking her supports, Jackie distinguished Amy above her other grade level colleagues. She credited Amy’s location next door as the reason why their relationship is slightly stronger than the others. She said, “Because she’s so close, I would go to her for quick questions because it was convenient.” Amy also relied on her in such situations, and they would often ask each other to watch the other’s class for quick bathroom breaks. Though short in duration, these interactions built up a trust between them as a result of their reliance on one another. During Jackie’s second year, another one of her colleagues moved from across the hall to an entirely different wing. Jackie still eats lunch with this colleague every day, sees her every Wednesday for collaboration, and every Thursday for coplanning, but does not have
the same type of quick hallway interactions. Although Jackie feels that she still has a strong relationship with this teacher, she definitely feels that their relationship has suffered somewhat as a result of her move. Though Jackie has the most ties with individuals outside of her grade level team of the four teachers, several of those ties are with individuals located in the same wing. She said she would often pop in and say hello to her new teacher colleague as she was walking by on her way to her classroom, often lending a hand if she saw her hanging bulletin boards or student work. She often ran into the reading interventionist in the wing’s teacher workroom. The proximity of these individuals naturally allowed for more informal, quick interactions that may not have occurred if she had to go out of her way to find them.

Jillian’s classroom location also played a part in the connections she made. Her classroom is physically located between Zelda and Allison’s rooms, allowing her to quickly go into one of their rooms if she had a question or pressing concern. She reported being more likely to go to them than her other grade level colleagues because it was slightly more convenient. And like Jackie, all of Jillian’s school-based teacher supports are individuals located in her hallway. Because she passes their classrooms multiple times a day, she has several opportunities to interact with them and form relationships.

This is not the case for Sarah or Lisa. Because of Sarah’s classroom’s location near an unused staircase, no one passes her classroom by coincidence. Her use of this staircase also limits her need to pass others’ classrooms. Lisa’s classroom is also in a location that no one would approach naturally throughout the day, so she is
someone others would need to seek out. And although she passes two first grade classrooms on the way to and from hers, most teachers are located in the opposite wing of the building.

Expertise. Perhaps as a result of their lack of strong grade level supports, Sarah and Lisa both sought others as a result of their perceived expertise. This was most prevalent in Lisa’s case, in which most of her school-based supports were initiated on this basis. Lisa strategically reached out to individuals under the guise of expertise. To some extent, she would consider a particular need she had and seek assistance from an individual she thought could best help her. For example, when the state testing period was approaching, she reached out to the teacher who had previously been in her position to ask him about what to expect, modifications that she needed to make, and how to prepare. This was a topic her grade level colleague, who taught in English, could not assist her with. Most of the time, however, she sought out individuals based on a fabricated need she devised in an effort to form a relationship. She would think of a skill a teacher felt they were good at and approach that teacher to ask for help in that area, even if it was in an area she did not need help with. For example, when in another teacher’s classroom for reading buddies, she noticed that his students’ desks were exceptionally clean. Later, she approached him asking what he did with his students to ensure their desks were so organized. This is not something she needed help with or felt was a pressing matter; rather, she felt that her seeking help from him would compliment him and make him feel favorably about her, thus strengthening their relationship. Most of Lisa’s school-based relationships were formed in this manner.
Trust. Trust was a theme throughout the teachers’ conversations regarding their interactions. Trust was raised when the teachers determined their rankings of individuals, but it also extended to why they would form ties with people. This was particularly true of Lisa, who was constantly worried about what her colleagues thought of her. She said, “I didn’t want to come across as totally incompetent.” Therefore, she only approached people who she felt confident would not talk negatively behind her back or think less of her for asking questions. Part of the trust she had in her third grade colleague came from her colleague’s reassurances. “[The third grade teacher] would be like, ‘You know, if you tell me anything, I’m not going to tell other people.’” Such statements helped Lisa trust her over time, however, it also reinforced Lisa’s concern that others might be untrustworthy. She explained that most of her support came from outside of the building because, “I don’t want to say the wrong thing.” She added, “It’s just that I would like to keep the work place positive and find sources outside that don’t know those people and it wouldn’t get back to them.”

Size. The size of each teacher’s school staff impacted the availability of ties and resources. Jackie and Jillian, who worked on teams of 4-6 teachers, had more opportunities for interaction and tie formation than Sarah and Lisa, who worked on teams of 2-3 teachers. However, when examining the number of identified school-based vs. out of school ties, school size does not seem to be a main determinant for tie formation.

Types of supports. When examining the supports each of the four teachers sought out, five types emerged: emotional, contextual, academic, social, and
relational support. Emotional support involved having a trusted person to vent to at the end of the day. Contextual support included anything that was idiosyncratic to their schools, including help with Back to School Night, filling out forms, or interpersonal information like individuals to avoid. Academic support included anything related to instruction or the curriculum. Social support encompassed any non-school related interactions, like going out to dinner or other social events outside of school, but also in school interactions like checking in to see how each other’s day went. Relational support involved seeking someone out who could relate to what they were feeling and experiencing. Table 5.4 indicates the varying degrees the participants sought out each type of support.

Table 5.4

Tie Formation: Sought-out Supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Contextual</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Relational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some teachers prioritized certain supports while others did not. For example, Jackie and Lisa regularly sought out relational support through conversations with other new teachers, but Sarah did not. Jillian did somewhat, meaning she would sometimes seek it out, but it was not a main priority or rationale for interacting with her new teacher colleague. Just because a teacher did not seek out a particular type of support does not mean they weren’t receiving it. Table 5.5 outlines each teacher’s top three ranked supports and the type of support they received from each
relationship. Sarah, who did not actively seek out relational support, did receive it as a byproduct of a relationship she formed with another new teacher in her building. This table shows the network multiplicity of each teacher’s top supports, or the extent to which a link serves more than a single purpose (Moolenaar, 2010).

Table 5.5

*Top 3 Identified Supports and Support Provided*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Top 3 Ranked Supports</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Contextual</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Relational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>1. Grade level colleague</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade level colleagues (multiple)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. New teacher</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>1. Friend/New teacher</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Mom</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Former HS teacher</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>1. Mom</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. New Teacher</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Grade level colleagues (multiple)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>1. Mom (in-district)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Grade level colleagues (2/3)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Boyfriend</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four teachers actively sought out and received emotional support regularly, but it did not always come from sources inside their schools. Jackie’s emotional support came from various teacher colleagues, particularly her grade level team. Because of these supports, she did not feel it necessary to reach out outside of her building if she was feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Though she acknowledged that she would sometimes come home and vent to her family, ultimately, by the time she arrived home at night, the situation had been diffused through conversations with her colleagues. Emotional support was essential for
Jillian. She describes herself as someone who needs to “talk things out to process them,” and this is evident in her network. Jillian would occasionally vent to her colleagues at school, but she was afraid of what her colleagues would think about her if she complained too much. As a result, she felt safer seeking solace from personal connections that were outside of the situation, including from each of her family members, her friends, her boyfriend, and even her personal trainer.

Emotional support was a daily need for Jillian, and for Lisa as well. Like Jillian, Lisa was very concerned with how she was perceived by her colleagues so did not rely much on them for emotional support. She said, “I’d go to these people for help, but I didn’t want to go to them for emotional help because I didn’t want to come off like, ‘Oh my God, she’s unstable,’ because that’s how I felt most of the time.” As a result, she relied heavily on her trusted personal connections for emotional support, which included a new teacher friend and her mom. Sarah relied almost exclusively on her mom for emotional support. Though she felt she could go to her new teacher colleague if needed, she rarely relied on her for that purpose, and definitely did not feel as though she had anyone else in her school she could approach. Though Sarah was concerned about her image, it was to a much lesser extent than Jillian and Lisa. Ultimately, she felt comfortable talking to her mom, who she has always been close to, and unlike Jillian, she is not someone who naturally needs to talk through her feelings.

All four teachers also actively sought out contextual support. Since this is a site-specific support, each teacher sought out help from other colleagues in their building. Like all of her supports, Jackie relied heavily on her grade level colleagues
for this. Jillian and Lisa relied on their grade level colleagues as well, but also reached out to other teachers in the building. Jillian would also approach her mom for information regarding her principal or the district, since she had experience with both. Sarah depended on Maria, her new teacher colleague, almost exclusively for this type of support. Not surprisingly, this type of support was more naturally offered in Jackie and Jillian’s schools, where communication channels were more open and available. For example, during a grade level meeting, Jillian’s team discussed the logistics of Back to School Night, ensuring consistency across the team. In contrast, Sarah had to seek out Maria for information about Back to School Night; how it worked, what to expect, and what her responsibilities were. So although they all sought out this type of support, it was more readily available for Jackie and Jillian than it was for Lisa and Sarah (see Table 5.5).

Social and academic supports were the least prioritized of the teachers’ needs. For Jackie and Jillian, who are very extroverted, social connections were important to them and something they sought out with their colleagues. Although Lisa is also extroverted, her needs for other supports outweighed her need for social support. She made an effort to eat lunch every day in the lounge to have some amount of social interactions during her day, but her hope was also that some of these connections would lead to other supports. Like Lisa, Sarah also made an effort to each lunch in the lounge every day, but her choice was partially motivated by fear that others would talk about her if she did not eat with them. She did seek out Maria for casual conversation on occasion, but like Lisa, this was not a top priority. All four teachers sought out academic support at the beginning of the year. They
looked for help with pacing and translating the curriculum, planning, and lesson plan support. Jillian received this help at the start of the year, but it tapered off by mid-year. Despite this, she still actively made efforts to obtain assistance as the year progressed. Ultimately, her confidence in her own abilities, coupled with the positive lesson feedback she received, resulted in her becoming self-reliant in this area. Sarah and Lisa did not have the same level of academic support that Jackie and Jillian had. Though they both approached grade level teammates for help (and Sarah received assistance from her mom), they did not receive the level of assistance they needed, so quickly adapted to rely on themselves. Like social support, the need for academic support was trumped by other more pressing needs for Sarah and Lisa. Despite the fact that Lisa, Sarah, and Jillian all effectively dealt with their lack of academic support, they all expressed on ongoing desire for more collaboration and coplanning with their colleagues, even well into their second year teaching. They each felt overwhelmed at some point, and believed that the opportunity to share the load with others would help with their overall stress level. They also believed it would help their confidence, as collaborating with a peer would provide them with reinforcement for their contributions and ideas, something that Sarah and Lisa were seriously lacking.

   Relational support was important to all four teachers. Each of them recognized value in having someone who could relate to what they were going through. Though this was not sought out directly by Sarah, like the others, this was a type of support that naturally occurred as a result of her interaction with her new teacher colleague. Jillian naturally had it with her colleague, but it was also
something she looked forward to in her district level new teacher meetings. For Lisa, this was one of her most sought after supports. She communicated with her new teacher friend daily, swapping horror stories that provided them both with reassurance. She reached out to her former high school teacher, not only for emotional support, but also because her teacher reassured her that some of her struggles were things she herself still struggled with as a veteran teacher.

The types of supports each of the four teachers received were functions of the type and locations of the relationships, but they also show the priority placed on different supports. For Lisa, emotional and relational supports were more important than any other support she could have been receiving. These were supports that she sought out and were also supports she received on an ongoing, regular basis with her three main supports (see Table 5.5).

Organizational influences. In addition to personal attributes of the actors, the organization itself can foster ties between actors with formal structures and opportunities for interaction (Bidwell & Yasumoto 1999; Coburn, Choi, & Mata, 2010; Penuel et al., 2009). Each teacher had formal and informal structures in place that helped or hindered the formation of their networks.

Mentoring and induction. There is a marked difference in the mentoring and induction experiences of the four teachers. Table 5.6 shows the supports provided to each teacher, whether they were required to participate during year one (Y1), and whether participation was available during year two. Though there are some similarities, the intensity and comprehensiveness of each program’s supports
differed greatly. Lisa did not have a program during year one, Jackie and Jillian’s programs were similar, and Sarah’s was quite comprehensive.

Table 5.6

*Mentoring and Induction Supports.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y1</th>
<th>Year Two</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Binder</th>
<th>Lesson Modeling</th>
<th>NT Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, limited</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, required</td>
<td>Yes, FT</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes, optional</td>
<td>Yes (2)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* sought out this support on her own

As a result of in-district disagreements during her first year, Lisa’s district did not offer any induction supports to its new teachers other than new teacher meetings. She was invited to participate during her second year, but had limited supports compared to offerings for first-year teachers in the district. She was not required to attend any new teacher meetings during her second year and was not allowed a formal mentor. As a workaround, she voluntarily assigned herself an “informal mentor” during her second year because she wanted someone that was officially designated in some capacity as being responsible for her support. This teacher was the kindergarten teacher who left the building, and although she was not being paid, she was happy to help. The rest of the teachers all participated in a program during their first year, and each was assigned a mentor. Sarah’s mentor was a full-time mentor who had ten other mentees, Jackie’s mentor was one of the school’s reading interventionists, and two grade level colleagues served as Jillian’s co-mentors. These differences were relevant to the teachers’ use of their mentors and the formation of their networks. Jillian relied heavily on Zelda and Allison for
several types of support because of their dual roles as mentors and grade level colleagues. This possibly strengthened her ties with them and expanded her trust and reliance on them as supports. Sarah relied less on her mentor because of his position as an out of school support. She said she wished she was assigned a school-based mentor so when she had questions, her mentor was easily accessible. Having a school-based mentor could have also provided Sarah with a stable in school relationship with someone who felt responsible for her, possibly preventing her from feeling isolated. As a reading interventionist, Jackie's mentor provided her with unique and idiosyncratic support. She helped Jackie with planning and implementing the literacy curriculum and provided her with lesson modeling. Because Jackie felt so supported by her grade level team, these are essentially the only supports she relied on her mentor for. She admits that had she not been on such a supportive team, her mentor’s position in the building would have posed a problem for her in that she was not able to provide her with the same insight and support related to students, curriculum, and context that her teammates were.

During their first year, all four teachers attended new teacher meetings. Each teacher regarded these as somewhat helpful. They each felt that the content of the meetings was irrelevant, because ultimately, what helped them was the relational support that resulted from being in a room with other new teachers. They found it particularly helpful to hear that other new teachers were struggling with the same things they were, and that they were not alone in feeling overwhelmed. This was acutely important for Lisa, whose next least experienced peer in her building had been teaching for five years.
Those who had mentors also had binders of activities to engage in with their mentors. Each of them described these activities as similar to the activities they completed for their professional portfolios during their pre-service education program. The activities were all instructionally based and usually aligned with the Danielson Framework, including items like lesson reflections and goal setting. Sarah found some aspects of the activity completion, like the rationale reflections, helpful. However, overall, the teachers viewed these activities as nuisances, busywork that took time away from their more pressing day-to-day needs. This could be, in part, because the activities did not fulfill any of the teachers’ identified needs (see Table 5.4), particularly those they felt were most imperative: emotional and contextual. But because they were so similar to the activities they had completed as students, they sometimes found them insulting, as if they needed to prove to the district that they were qualified to do their job. At the start of Sarah’s second year, she had to complete a form that she found particularly bothersome, especially since it seemed like something more appropriate to complete at the start of year one. It asked her to identify specialists in her building (i.e., the school psychologist, special education staff, etc.) and their names, information about the district (e.g., How many elementary schools are in the district?), and demographics about her students. She felt portions of the form, like the district information, served no purpose or benefit, while others, like providing student demographics, implied that she was not doing her job effectively (i.e. she didn’t know her students). This added to her frustration with the program, spilling over to her feelings about
the ineffectiveness of her mentor, who served as a physical embodiment of the program.

Sarah’s binder activities were the most intensive of the group; she had activities that needed to be completed, on average, every two to three weeks. These included reflections on and identifying student demographics, providing rationale for room arrangement, and writing a teaching philosophy statement. Her binder was the only one to include non-instructionally based mentor-mentee activities. These included having the mentor introduce the mentee to key individuals in the building (e.g., counselor, nurse, secretaries, etc.), take them on a building tour, and showing them how to complete common forms (e.g., field trip requests, referrals, etc.). But because these activities were suggested, rather than required, they are not activities she and her mentor ever engaged in.

Though Jillian and Sarah’s programs were the only ones that required lesson observation and/or modeling, this is an activity all the teachers engaged in. Jackie’s mentor volunteered to model literacy lessons for her monthly, an activity she found incredibly helpful. Throughout the year, Lisa voluntarily gave up several planning periods to observe other teachers teach. This is something she pursued on her own, not because it was mandated. Sarah’s program required her mentor to both model a lesson and to observe her teaching a lesson. She found the modeling helpful, but did not find the observation beneficial. Jillian had a segment of a lesson observed by one of her mentors, but did not find it helpful because she did not receive feedback. Like the others, Jillian said she found observing her experienced peers teach helpful, though this was not mandated by her program. Because Jillian was hired prior to
graduation, she voluntarily went in and observed her future colleagues for several weeks in the spring.

All of the induction supports (or lack thereof) impacted the ties each of the teachers formed and the supports they sought out. However, none of the teachers found their induction program to be particularly impactful on their first year or relied on it heavily as a system of support. Most saw it as “something else to do,” and though several thought it could be helpful “in theory,” they generally found it to be a nuisance. Interestingly, the intensity of Sarah’s program may have had the opposite of its intended impact, making her feel more negatively about her job and workload. And because her mentor was full time and not based out of her building, it did not provide her with a much-needed school-based support or prevent her feelings of isolation. Nonetheless, these supports may be providing these teachers with a subconscious, mental support that was absent for Lisa. She wished for a mentor during her first year so she had someone she could automatically trust and who was responsible for her. Although the other teachers did not find their mentoring activities to be particularly helpful, they all did have someone responsible for them, something that they all may have taken for granted.

Collaboration. Jackie and Sarah both had formal collaboration structures in place at their schools. However, the execution of these district mandates was very different. In Sarah’s school, teachers were required to meet weekly, but were not given any guidance as to what was to be discussed. As a result, these meetings (when they occurred) generally became conversations in which each teacher discussed what they were doing for each subject. Sarah’s grade level colleague often
canceled the meetings (or didn’t show up), resulting in only a few meetings occurring throughout the year. Though Sarah found this annoying, she felt the meetings were not helpful because they were not what she called “true collaboration.” She said she wishes the collaboration meetings were used to foster conversations around the curriculum so the teachers could coplan and learn from each other. This is what occurs at Jackie’s school. Formally, Jackie’s team meets two days a week, as mandated by the district. On Thursdays, Jackie’s team has formal collaboration time at lunch and after school and before school on Wednesdays, they have grade level and professional development meetings. Though the topics of these meetings are decided by the district, one member of each grade level is part of the district level team that decides the agendas. The focus of most of the meetings during Jackie’s first two years has been curriculum. The team leader passes along any necessary information to the team, and then guide’s the day’s discussion based on the focus. Since the district recently aligned its curriculum to the Common Core Standards, this year, the teachers have been working on tweaking existing units and lesson plans to implement in their classroom. Thus, the existence of these meetings not only created and solidified ties for Jackie, but they also have provided her with academic and contextual support.

*Principal leadership.* Administrators influence novice teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about their position, induction experiences, and the ties they form through both direct interaction with the novice as well as the novice’s observation of interactions with the staff as a whole (Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank, & Belman, 2012; Spillane, 2003; Youngs, 2007). The principals’ leadership styles varied greatly
between the four teachers, and set the tone for their schools. This impacted the ties the teachers formed with their principals as well as those formed (or not) with their colleagues.

Jackie's principal is warm and down-to-earth. She attends social events with her staff, implements random “reward days” for teachers in which she brings in themed treats, and has frequent personal conversations with many teachers. She puts a premium on collegial interaction and strives to have her entire school have the same camaraderie found on Jackie’s team. She is visible in the school, attending assemblies, helping with lunch and bus duty, sitting in on meetings, and doing informal classroom walkthroughs daily. She provides teachers with formal and informal feedback, making an effort to be both constructive and positive. As a result, Jackie has always felt comfortable approaching her with any issues that arise and feels she is a strong support.

Lisa’s has the only male principal in the study. He is direct and somewhat coarse, lacking the warm-and-fuzziness of Jackie’s principal. He is visible in the building, helping with dismissal and lunch duty, but does not perform walkthroughs very often. Lisa finds his evaluation feedback of limited help, lacking constructiveness that could be of use. Though Jackie did not identify him as a main support, it was not because she did not find him approachable; she did not seek support from him because of her concern about being judged by her boss. Her principal is analogous to the rest of Lisa’s staff, though. Like him, many of them are approachable and visible, but do not offer any deep insights or constructive assistance.
Sarah’s principal is not visible in the building, and does not assist with daily duties. Although she said she meets with new teachers as part of the induction program, the only meetings Sarah had with her were evaluative. She conducts quick informal walkthroughs every other week, but does not provide any feedback to the teachers. Her principal does not hold much influence or control over her staff. She makes efforts to gain their approval (e.g., inviting them to participate in interviews), but Sarah feels that overwhelmingly, they do not respect her. During staff meetings, they often blatantly ignore her by doing work and several of them are outspoken and rude towards her. Seeing such behavior has helped Sarah feel as though she has her principal’s approval. As an amenable new teacher, she is the exact opposite of the outspoken, stubborn veterans her principal is dealing with. Therefore, in Sarah’s mind, that automatically puts in her better favor. Viewing this behavior has also solidified Sarah’s belief that her colleagues are unapproachable and unkind, resulting in her hesitance to reach out for assistance and form more school-based ties.

Like Sarah’s principal, Jillian’s principal is not visible in the building, nor does she assist with daily duties. She is similar in demeanor to Lisa’s principal, in that she lacks the warm-and-fuzzy approach of many elementary school personnel. She has considerable influence over Jillian’s opinion about her job; when Jillian feels as though she has her approval, she is happy, but if Jillian fears she has disappointed her in any way, she considers whether she should look for a new job. Jillian identified her as a main support, though she feels that this year, she approaches her principal far less for support. However, because of Jillian’s emphasis on her
principal’s approval, Jillian relies more heavily on her principal for support than she may realize. Her interactions with her principal change her sentiments, which in turn change her patterns of interaction with others (Frank & Fahrbach, 1999). When her colleagues stopped providing academic assistance, she rationalized that since her principal gave her positive evaluations and was generally encouraging, she must be doing well instructionally and therefore could effectively plan her own lessons. When she felt her principal was beginning to view her negatively, she reached out to colleagues for help in planning evaluation lessons, for fear that her principal’s previous approval of her performance was insincere and based on how much she liked Jillian personally. Therefore, the emotional support the principal indirectly provided (or did not provide) Jillian with directly influenced her need for additional emotional and academic supports.

Committees. Every teacher but Lisa participated in a school-wide committee during their first (and second) year. Participation in these committees provided opportunities for the teachers to form relationships with others in the building who they might normally not interact with. Despite this, none of the teachers identified ties were as a result of participation on committees. However, such activities do provide opportunities for interaction and a feeling of shared ownership in the school, items that Lisa is lacking. Experiences on these committees also shape how the teachers view the school’s staff as a whole. For Sarah, participation on her committee may be a contributor to her distrust in her staff. She finds contributions by other teachers on the committee to be negative and overly critical, which further confirms her belief that much of the staff is unapproachable.
Professional culture. Novices look towards their colleagues to learn the norms, values, philosophies, and expectations of the school. New teachers who are employed in a professional culture that encourages professional interaction are more likely to feel supported and successful in their work (Johnson & Kardos, 2004). In this study, there was a stark difference between the professional cultures in Jillian and Jackie’s schools compared to Lisa and Sarah’s schools.

Jillian and Jackie teach in schools where there is a mixture of experience levels amongst the staff. They were not the only first-year teachers in their buildings, nor were they the only novices (i.e., teachers in their first five years of teaching). Their colleagues are a mix of novices, mid-career teachers, and veterans. This mixture provides them access to relational support, since they have other novices supporting them, but it also provides them to a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from their more experienced peers. Both schools exhibit the three main qualities of an integrated professional culture: (a) a belief that teacher interaction is important, resulting in an ongoing professional exchange between novices and veterans regarding instruction and curriculum, (b) a belief that expertise is developed over time, resulting to attention paid to the particular needs and talents of novices, and (c) shared responsibility for students and each other (Kardos et al., 2001; Kardos, 2005; Kardos & Johnson, 2007; Johnson & Kardos, 2004). Jackie and Jillian, who have both reported being happy in their positions, have benefited from these qualities, though to varying extents. Jackie has consistently experienced and benefitted from these qualities throughout her two years. She has frequent interactions with her colleagues regarding instruction and curriculum, she is both
celebrated and looked after as a new teacher, and there is a high level of collective responsibility amongst her team. Jillian’s satisfaction with her position was at its peak at the start of her first year, where she felt these qualities were present and prevalent. Once her colleagues began seeing her as an equal and stopped paying attention to her unique needs as a novice, their weekly collaboration meetings stopped and Jillian felt more solely responsible for her students and work. Her satisfaction dropped at this point, though she never felt she was as unhappy as Lisa and Sarah reported feeling.

Sarah and Lisa, who both were dissatisfied during their first year and report feeling isolated, teach in schools dominated by veteran teachers. Both were the only first-year teachers in their building and until this year, Lisa was also the only novice. Currently, they both are one of two novices within their buildings, with the rest of their colleagues having significantly more experience and tenure in their districts. Both of their schools have veteran-oriented professional cultures, in which the workplace norms were determined by veteran faculty who, although socially friendly, protected individual autonomy at the expense of professional interaction (Johnson & Kardos, 2004; Kardos et al., 2001; Kardos & Johnson, 2007). Because the norms in their schools did not prioritize interaction, Sarah and Lisa did not benefit from the experience and guidance of their peers. Both of them were on their own in finding relational and contextual supports while trying to deal with the daily academic and emotional needs of being a classroom teacher. In both cases, their isolation was not a result of their peers deliberately trying to marginalize them; rather, it was a result of a lack of structures, norms, and expectations in place that
deliberately set out to assist them in their daily work. Sarah feared that this was exacerbated by her district’s award-winning induction program. Because the program was so revered and everyone knew she had a mentor, she feels that her colleagues adopted the view that she was “not their problem” because she was accounted for by the program.

**Social Capital**

Social capital, or the resources and expertise actors can access through their social ties with other actors (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998; Putnam, 1993), is the function of the quantity and quality of the resources that an actor can access and make use of through their positionality in a social network (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2000). Social capital can be attributed to an individual or to the collective (Adler & Kwon, 2002). In schools, for example, it can refer to an individual teacher’s access to materials and resources regarding a curricular reform. It can also refer to a grade level group’s access to time to collaborate with colleagues and access to experts inside and outside the school to assist with implementation (Penuel et al., 2009).

Since social capital lies in the ties between actors, it is the relations between actors that serve as conduits for information exchange (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1992; Coleman, 1988). Thus, it is shaped by one’s social network, and is influenced by tie formation, trust, and access to expertise (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Penuel et al., 2009). The source of social capital is located in the structure of the network, including the quality and configuration of ties, strength of ties, and tie span, as well
as the content of the interactions that take place (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coburn & Russell, 2008).

Access to social capital is determined by an actor’s network ties. Thus, the factors that influence tie formation (e.g., proximity, homophily, expertise, etc.) also influence an actor’s access to social capital (Coburn & Russell, 2008). Social capital is not restricted to direct relations only; the value of a tie is not only in the capital she holds, but the information she can access through her network as well (Degenne & Forsé, 1999). However, just because an actor has access to an abundance of ties does not necessarily mean she has access to an abundance of resources and expertise. Since it is dependent on the competencies of the people an individual interacts with, some networks afford greater access to expertise than others (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coburn & Russell, 2008). For example, a special education teacher may have a sizable network of teachers she interacts with daily, but she may be the only special education teacher. Thus, her access to knowledge and expertise related to the specificities of her position is limited. This is can be seen in Lisa’s and Sarah’s networks, where they had limited access to social capital in the form of academic resources and expertise. Though they each had more school-based ties than Jillian (see Table 5.2), their status as bilingual teachers in a building of bilingual and English-only strands, limited the capital available in these ties. Because knowledge is tacit, individuals often have difficulty making it explicit in a way that is useful to others (Flyvbjerg, 2001). In Lisa’s school, she repeatedly had teachers tell her to approach them with any questions she had. But as she pointed out, she did not know the questions to ask, and would have liked her colleagues to volunteer
information. In her case, her colleagues’ inability to recognize their possible contributions limited her access to their wisdom.

Social capital is found in the combination of both the external and internal network ties. External relations serve as “bridging” forms of social capital, tying actors (or groups of actors) together (Burt, 1992; Adler & Kwon, 2002). Internal relations provide “bonding” capital, improving the collectivity and cohesiveness of a group (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988). Both of these have benefits, and their value depends on the individual circumstance. External ties tend to be weak (Granovetter, 1973) and provide access to information, influence, and power (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Burt, 1992). In organizations where autonomy and individual contributions are emphasized, individuals with access to these external types of ties and capital tend to be more successful (Gabbay & Zuckerman, 1998).

In Jackie’s network, her colleague Molly provides bridging forms of social capital to her team. As her grade level’s team leader, she attends district meetings where she contributes to the decisions made at the district level, and then brings that information back to her team in their weekly collaboration meetings. For Molly, this gives her considerable influence and power both in the school (since she is helping determine courses of action) and over her team (because she is the source of information that they need). However, she also is able to provide her team with this type of capital by asking for their input on projects and directives, which she communicates during the district level meetings. Thus, she both holds and has access to a large amount of bridging social capital for Jackie and her team.
Jillian has access to this type of social capital through her ties with her mom and her mentors. As a veteran teacher in the district, her mom provides her with information related to district initiatives and interpersonal information about her principal. As leaders in the school who serve on multiple committees, her mentors provide her with information on school and district matters, while also listening to her concerns and ideas and bringing those to their meetings.

Despite having out of school ties, Lisa and Sarah both have limited access to bridging social capital. Sarah has more than Lisa, since she serves on two school-wide committees that give her access to information and some influence over decisions. However, both of them are limited by their lack of ties with individuals like Molly, who have external ties that provide useful knowledge and information. Maria, Sarah’s novice teacher colleague, has ties to other teachers in the district, and is the only teacher in her network with a moderate amount of accessible bridging social capital.

Internal ties provide access to information, influence, and power, but they also provide solidarity between actors and within subgroups (Adler & Kwon, 2002). These ties, characterized by frequent interactions, tend to be strong, and it is through these that social norms and beliefs are exchanged (Adler & Kwon, 2002). These exchanges encourage compliance, resulting in fewer grievances, faster dispute resolution, and greater trust and solidarity between actors (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988; Krackhardt & Hansen, 1993; Nelson, 1989). This type of capital is highly valued in organizations where cooperation and group contribution
are important (Gabbay & Zuckerman, 1998) and helpful in tasks that require trust and cooperation (Uzzi, 1997).

Though teaching can be viewed as an individual endeavor, all four of the teachers in this study valued cooperation and group contribution. Those who had it, like Jackie and, to a limited extent, Jillian, were grateful for it and cited it as an important support. Lisa and Sarah, who did not have it, coveted it. In their schools, each had access to bonding forms of social capital, since they all had at least one strong school-based tie. However, access to this was more limited for Lisa and Sarah, who had fewer strong school-based ties than Jackie and Jillian. And since this form of capital increases trust amongst colleagues, their limited access could be a contributor to their overall distrust of their colleagues.

Examining the types of supports the teachers sought out and received (see tables 5.4-5.5) highlights the differences in the availability and value of the different forms of social capital available to each of them. To some extent, academic and contextual supports are both informational in nature, and thus, access to bridging capital could assist with these. For instance, Sarah received lesson support from her mom, who was not a teacher. Jillian received contextual support from her mom, who provided her access to information about her principal. However, nearly all five types of support sought out by these teachers are cooperative in nature and dependent on trust. Thus, access to bonding forms of social capital seems to be more important to these teachers.

The content of interactions also serves as a source of social capital for individuals (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Coburn & Russell, 2008). According to Coburn
and Russell (2008), the depth of interactions is key to providing opportunities for teachers to learn in social exchanges. Deep, meaningful collaborations about instruction and curriculum provide greater access to social capital than more superficial interactions like material exchange (Coburn & Russell, 2008). Such conversations can illuminate individuals’ expertise, overcoming the aforementioned difficulty with tacit knowledge transfer and improve teachers’ perceptions that they have adequate access to valuable resources and expertise (Penuel et al., 2009). They also provide teachers with the opportunity to learn what others are doing in their classrooms (Penuel et al., 2009), which for the teachers in this study, could contribute to their perceptions of having academic and relational support and sense of community (Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989). Thus, not all social networks—even those with similar structure or access to expertise-have the same potential for support (Coburn & Russell, 2008).

There is a stark contrast between the depth of interactions amongst Jackie and her colleagues and the rest of the teachers’ interactions in this study. Though Sarah and Jillian both had opportunities for collaboration during their first year, the meetings were more focused on exchanging materials than deep conversations about instruction. Jackie’s team engaged in material exchange as well, but many of her interactions were characterized by a depth lacking in the others’ schools. When exchanging books for reading lessons, she and her colleagues would discuss what they used it for, why, and what they would have changed about its use. Weekly collaboration meetings centered on curriculum-focused conversations, but her team also discussed instruction in informal interactions during lunchtime or in the
hallway. Jackie is keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of her colleagues (and thus where particular expertise lies in her network) as a result of these deep interactions.

There are risks to the type of solidarity resulting from Jackie’s access to social capital, however. Having repeated interactions with the same individuals can reduce the flow of new ideas to the group and impede innovation, thus slowing the accumulation of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Granovetter, 1973; Hansen, 1999). On a group level, dominance of one group’s use of its social capital can exclude subordinate categories from the information, influence, and solidarity benefits it has already accumulated and lead to fragmentation of the whole (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Looking at the difference in professional cultures of the four schools highlights how this can occur and be detrimental to new teachers. Jackie and Jillian both work in integrated professional cultures (Kardos et al., 2001). Since there is a mixture of novice, mid-career, and veteran teachers, there is no dominant prevailing experience group. Thus, no one group has more control or use of social capital than any other. Lisa and Sarah both work in schools with veteran-oriented professional cultures (Kardos et al., 2001). In these schools, veterans who value independence over group collaboration are the dominant group. These veteran teachers have already accrued an abundance of information and influence and formed solidarity through working together over time. Their ownership of this capital, combined with the value they place on independence, creates a naturally formed microcosm that is difficult for a newcomer to break into.
Each of the teachers’ access to social capital is reflected in their perceptions of support. Jackie, who had access to social capital in the form of emotional, contextual, academic, social, and relational from her school-based ties, felt the most supported of all four teachers and felt happiest about her position. The principal and teachers at her school encouraged broad sharing and communication, which was reflected in her interactions. Her school had routines in place, like structured weekly collaboration meetings, to foster access to capital. Her team created their own routines of interaction, and she had ample opportunities to learn what her colleagues were doing in their classrooms. Jillian, who although at times felt alienated, was generally happy and had a moderate amount of support. This was reflected in the amount of capital available to her. She had access to some capital through participation on school committees and her ties outside of school. Her mentors and grade level colleagues, Zelda and Allison, acted as brokers for a great deal of social capital. Not only did they communicate contextual information garnered from their experience and committee work, but they also were Jillian’s sole source of knowledge and expertise about the curriculum. When their interactions and coplanning waivered, she lost access to that capital, which resulted in her feeling overwhelmed, a decrease in her perceived support, and a decrease in her overall feeling of satisfaction. The ability of Sarah and Lisa to access relevant expertise of colleagues through the school’s social network was more limited than at Jackie or Jillian’s school. Sarah and Lisa both felt isolated and felt the least amount of support. Their school-based ties, reflective of their veteran cultures, provided them limited access to capital, particularly related to information and resources.
related to instruction and curriculum. Most of their colleagues kept to themselves or interacted with their own subgroups or cliques. Unlike at Jackie and (to a lesser extent) Jillian’s schools, their schools had little to no collective responsibility and low levels of relational trust between staff. Thus, they were solely responsible for most of their work and did not feel confident that their colleagues had their best interests in mind.

**Community**

As formal organizations, schools are also social and psychological settings affecting teachers’ construction of their sense of practice, professional efficacy, and professional community (McLaughlin, 1993). Communities can be geographic, based on locale, or they can be psychological, or based on relations. Relational communities are “networks of individuals who interact within formal organizations and institutions and as members of informal groups” (Heller, 1989, p. 3). The new teachers in this study belong to several communities to varying extents, created by both structural conditions and access to social and human resources (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1995). They belong to their grade level communities, their school communities, the new teacher community, and the larger educator community, among others. For most of the teachers, their in-school and out-of-school communities were pivotal to their psychological sense of community and belonging.

Sarason (1974) defines a psychological sense of community as:

The perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of the larger dependable and stable structure. (p. 157)
For teachers, a psychological sense of community can counteract the isolation that results from the structural fragmentation (e.g., grade level groups, subject area teachers, specialty areas, etc.) found in schools (Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989). It can help teachers feel less overburdened by providing them with greater access to task-related and social support (Royal & Rossi, 1996). Thus, for new teachers that value cooperation and want to be welcomed into the fabric of their schools, having a psychological sense of community can be quite important.

Sense of community as defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986) and built upon by Royal and Rossi (1996) has four major components, each with critical attributes: (a) membership, (b) influence, (c) integration and fulfillment of needs, and (d) shared emotional connection. It is developed over time through multiple types of transactions between an individual and the group. It is affected by member’s own interactions with the group as well as their observations of interactions involving other group members.

**Membership.** Membership involves feeling as if one belongs in and is accepted by the group, and by nature is both inclusionary and exclusionary. Groups create norms of behavior, categorized by shared language, routines, and rituals. In schools, norms exist as a component of the overall school culture, but they also vary for different subgroups of teachers (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Penuel et al., 2009; Yasumoto, Uekawa, & Bidwell, 2001). These serve as boundaries, allowing some individuals membership while excluding others. These boundaries play a role in mediating access to valuable resources and expertise (Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2007). On Jackie’s second grade team, they have a weekly
coplanning and collaboration schedule they abide by. They eat lunch together daily, often using matching lunch bags purchased by one of the teachers. Since participation in these activities is limited to Jackie and her grade level team, they are naturally exclusive to outsiders. Lisa is a casualty of similar unintentional exclusion. As a bilingual teacher, Lisa organically belongs to two subgroups: a grade level group and the school’s bilingual teachers’ group. However, as the only bilingual teacher on a team of two, she did not feel fully invested and welcomed initially as part of the grade level duo, and her position as “the only one” only wholly included her in a group of one. This was compounded by the fact that she was the only bilingual teacher in her school that was a non-Native Spanish speaker. The Native Spanish speaking teachers in the building formed a natural group, excluding any individuals who did not converse constantly in Spanish. Since Lisa lacked the confidence needed to converse socially in Spanish, she did not feel as though she was a part of the group. Thus, her status as a bilingual teacher excluded her from her grade level duo and her status as a Native English speaker excluded her from the bilingual group, resulting in her alienation.

A similar exclusion occurred at Sarah’s school, where her specialization played a role in her alienation. Being the only 2nd/3rd grade split teacher in her school, like Lisa, Sarah did not have a colleague with whom she shared identical responsibilities. As a split-level teacher, she belonged to two grade levels while simultaneously belonging to neither. This duality was the crux of the problem, as she felt that each grade level team assumed she was a member of the other’s group. As a result, she felt like a burden that neither group wanted to be responsible for. Rather
than feeling welcomed into both groups, she felt rejected by both, therefore not identifying as a member of either. Her interpretation of the groups’ attitudes is reflective of her experience of the larger school culture, in which teachers keep to themselves and did not reach out to help her during her first year.

This overall culture of autonomy was found in both Sarah’s and Lisa’s schools. Part of this was a result of the veteran-dominated culture, in which the more experienced teachers valued independence over cooperation (Kardos et al., 2001). However, the organization of both schools aided in fostering this culture as well. Both schools contain an English-only strand of classrooms and a bilingual strand. This duality creates a natural segregation between both groups, even though the curriculum between groups is the same or similar. And because there is often only one English strand per grade level, these teachers are often the marginalized group. As a result, these teachers often work and plan alone, adding to the overall culture of individuality in the school.

Those individuals with a high investment in an organization are “predisposed to report more favorable perceptions of their organizational experiences” (Royal & Rossi, 1996. p. 397). As a lifelong resident of the residential community surrounding her school, Jillian had a particular connection to her district. It was her first choice of districts and where she had imagined herself working in 30 years. It was not a district she thought was feasible for her to acquire a job in as an inexperienced novice, so she was particularly grateful for her position. There were multiple discrepancies between Jillian’s actual job situation and experiences and the perception she wished to convey. Although she described her teammates as ideal
and “so supportive” in her initial interview, she later told me that she felt abandoned by them when they stopped their weekly meetings in December. And despite explicitly stating she wished for more collaboration and coplanning meetings, she maintained that she enjoyed working by herself because it allowed her freedom to do as she pleased. Frequently, when she would say something critical about her school or colleagues, she would follow up by complimenting her district, repeatedly describing it as her “dream district.” Jillian’s preconceived notions of the district, school, and principal may have skewed her perceptions of happiness during her first year.

Important to membership are the dimensions of trust and caring (Royal & Rossi, 1996). On Jackie’s team, there continues to be a high level of trust between colleagues. They look out for one another, professionally and personally. When one of Jackie’s friends from her college cohort told her about a situation in which she was reprimanded by her principal for forgetting to attend an assembly, Jackie explained that that could never happen on her team because “we wouldn’t allow it to happen.” During my visit, this proved to be true. One of Jackie’s colleagues had not noticed in the weekly newsletter that the students had an assembly one morning. However, during their conversation in the hallway while waiting for the students to enter, one of the teachers reminded everyone about the assembly that morning. Jackie’s colleague was grateful for the reminder, since she had not known. Jackie’s team also trusts each other's opinions. They feel comfortable sharing observation and evaluation experiences with one another, asking questions regarding instruction and pacing, and frequently consult each other regarding issues
related to their personal lives. On multiple occasions, Jackie explained, “Everyone just genuinely cares about one another.”

**Influence.** Influence is bidirectional; it refers to the individual’s ability to influence the group and the simultaneous influence the group has on the individual’s behavior (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). For an individual to have influence over the group, they must have opportunities to work with others, play a part in the decision-making process, and express their ideas (Royal & Rossi, 1996). By encouraging commitment to a shared set of norms and beliefs, group cohesion develops as the group has influence over the individual.

Members are more attracted to a community in which they feel that they are influential. Every teacher in this study participates in a school-level committee during year two, with the exception of Lisa, whose informal participation in the district’s new mentoring program counts as her committee. As such, she is the only participant who does not have direct influence on decisions made in her school committee. Sarah represents her grade level on her school’s School Improvement Plan team, though she does not report back to them often with information. This committee is arguably the most influential committee at her school, since they work to write and amend the School Improvement Plan. This work trickles down to the entire staff, because each teacher must implement changes agreed upon by the committee. However, the committee consists of mostly veteran teachers, who are often resistant to change (Principal Interview, October, 2013). Sarah said she is shocked when, during these meetings, the principal suggests an activity (like reading a book) and the veteran members of the committee immediately refuse to
participate. The principal usually relents, resulting in the committee’s influence being mediated by the outspoken veterans on the team. Jackie and Jillian both serve on committees that, although less influential than Sarah’s committee, still impact what is happening in their schools. Their positions on these committees provide them with a degree of leadership on their teams, because they require them to communicate information back to their teams. Thus, in both cases, they are influencing the larger school community by participating in their respective committees, but also influencing their smaller grade level communities by serving as leaders.

Jillian has a constant internal struggle regarding conformity with her team. As someone concerned with the image she projects at work, she wants to feel as though she is respected as a member of her team. However, as a strong, confident teacher, she also wants to have a sense of individuality. This is evident by her approach to the lessons she prepared for her evaluations. She said that her team suggested she “put on a dog and pony show” for her principal. This contradicted her desire to present a “typical” lesson for her evaluation that was representative of her instruction. She struggled with this decision, caught between her desire to remain authentic and her desire to follow her team’s advice. Apprehensive that her colleagues knew her principal’s desires better than she did, she implemented a lesson that was “more showy” than a typical lesson. This year, she did not approach her team for advice, in part because she did not want to be swayed by their opinions. Jillian’s struggle with group conformity is also evident in her response to conflicts that have arisen. On several occasions, Zelda and Allison have arranged
meetings with the principal to air their grievances regarding events or decisions made in the school. In every instance, the decision of whether to participate in these meetings has weighed heavily on Jillian. Ultimately, she has always attended, but while there, has felt incredibly anxious and remained as quiet as possible. On one hand, she wants Zelda and Allison to know that she supports them and to feel like they are a unified team. On the other, she does not want the principal to view her negatively as a result of her affiliation with them, particularly in instances when she has not agreed with their message or been part of the conflict being addressed.

On Jackie’s team, their constant collaboration, teamwork, and communication provides plentiful opportunities for each member to have influence within the group. This has resulted in high cohesion within the group, marked by the level of shared responsibility, purpose and values between the members. They communicate regularly on issues related to student achievement and problem-solve how to better implement curricula and meet student needs. They share responsibility for students, lesson planning, and mundane duties like making copies and picking up mail. They even have nearly identical room layouts.

According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), people’s influence within a group is determined by their interpersonal relatedness. Those who acknowledge the feelings, opinions, and values of others are the most influential group members, while those who try to dominate, ignore the wishes and opinions of others, and push their opinions, are the least powerful. This is evident by the interactions on Jackie’s team. Molly, who is the most influential person in the group, is continuously validating the feelings and contributions of her teammates. Lois often tries to
dominate the conversation, either by redirecting it back to her or by asking sidetracking questions. Jackie and some of her colleagues commented that they find these tendencies annoying, and as a result, only half-listen to what Lois is saying a lot of the time. In addition, during meetings, Lois has been asked to write down questions or comments on a notepad so they can be addressed at the end if needed. Though Jackie and her colleagues enjoy working with Lois and do respect her opinions and contributions, she is the least influential member of the group.

A component of influence is the idea of consensual validation. This suggests that people need feedback and reassurance that they are normal; that what they see, feel, and understand are experienced in the same way by others (Backman & Secord, 1959; Byrne & Wond, 1962). All four teachers involved in this study expressed this need as it related to their experiences as a new teacher and either sought it out or had it as a result of a relationship (see tables 5.4 and 5.5). As members of the new teacher community, they all needed and found consensual validation within that community. On the individual school level, Jackie and Jillian were the only two with access to this. In Jackie’s case, her colleague Molly was keenly aware that as a new teacher, Jackie had a particular need for this type of reassurance. She consciously went out of her way to make Jackie feel understood, respected, and that her feelings and experiences were normal. Molly also provided this for the entire grade level team. She consistently downplayed her own knowledge and expertise, saying things like, “I don’t know how to do guided reading, either,” or “I feel so overwhelmed with all of the Common Core stuff!” Jackie felt she had a challenging class her first year, and worried it was due to a lack of classroom management skills. However, the
teachers who had the students for specials (i.e., art, PE, music) experienced difficulty with them as well and assured her that hers was one of the most difficult classes in the school. Though disheartening to hear, Jackie said this made her think, “Well, at least it’s not me!” Jillian experienced this as well, but to a lesser extent. When she was struggling with a particularly challenging student during her first year, her grade level colleagues assured her his behavior (and the subsequent parent behavior) was not idiosyncratic to her. Her principal echoed this sentiment, explaining that other teachers had had issues with the student (and parent) in the past and that Jillian’s interpretation and handling of the situation was accurate. During Jillian’s second year, her experiences of consensual validation waned. When a large conflict arose in the fall, resulting in an uncomfortable emergency staff meeting, she said that she felt like everyone around her had gone crazy. She did not understand why people were reacting the way they were, and questioned whether they had heard the same information she did at the meeting. Because she felt disjointed from her team at the time this occurred, she did not feel safe turning to them for reassurance. Instead, she relied on personal connections not present in the meeting to validate her feelings about what occurred.

**Integration and fulfillment of needs.** This component refers to the reinforcement received by an individual. McMillan and Chavis (1986) assert that, “For any group to maintain a positive sense of togetherness, the individual-group association must be rewarding for its members” (p. 12). Since individuals are different, this successfully manifests itself in different ways. For Jillian, reinforcement was limited, and eventually worked to her detriment. During her
first year, it came primarily from the principal, who praised her competence during her evaluation meetings. It did not come directly from her team, though their trust in her to create quality unit and lesson plans was intended to be complimentary. Entering her second year, when she felt she was no longer receiving the reinforcement from her principal, she became increasingly anxious and worried about her job. During a staff meeting, a colleague was praised publicly by the principal for an activity that Jillian created. Rather than correct the principal and direct the praise to Jillian, she took credit for the activity. This shattered Jillian’s trust in the colleague as well as other members of her team who did not speak up on her behalf. Immediately following this incident, she reported feeling more alienated and alone than she ever had. On Jackie’s team, constant positive reinforcement is the norm between members. Teachers not only thank one another for their contributions to the group, but also frequently say things like, “That’s a great idea” when items are shared. This type of reinforcement is continuous, happening frequently throughout the day.

**Shared emotional connection.** The interactions between individuals facilitate or inhibit the strength of the community. The more frequently high-quality, positive interactions occur, the stronger the shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). From a network perspective, this suggests that an individual, like Jackie, who has several strong, supportive ties within a group, will feel a stronger shared emotional connection with that group. The content of the interaction between the ties is also important, though. If interaction is ambiguous,
leaving tasks unresolved or involve humiliation, it will have a negative effect (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

The amount of emotional risk one takes by opening up to other members will affect one’s general sense of community (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Peterson & Martens, 1972). Lisa and Sarah have taken little to no risk with the members of their community. They rely heavily on outside supports to attend to their emotional needs, fearful of what their colleagues will think about them. Jillian shares this concern about judgment as well. She also relies on outside members for emotional support, but she also feels somewhat comfortable talking to Zelda and Allison, her grade level colleagues. Jackie’s team’s high level of trust allows them to be emotionally vulnerable with one another. During my visit, Jackie’s teammate Amy had a very emotional exchange with her colleagues, tearfully opening up to them about how overwhelmed she felt trying to balance work, school, and home. They listened intently and each offered possible solutions to lightening her load. Later that night, through a series of group text messages, they checked up on her and provided her with words of encouragement.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) assert that shared emotional connection seems to be the “definitive element for true community” (p. 14). Jackie would agree. A few months after my observations in Jackie’s school, she approached me and said that as time goes on, she realizes how important the depths of the relationships with her colleagues are. In her opinion, the reason why “things work so well” at her school and why she feels so happy is because she and her colleagues genuinely care about
one another. She feels that she has real friendships with each of them that extend outside the boundaries of the school walls.

**Approval.** Individuals may feel a greater sense of community if what is unique about them is accepted and valued by the group (Royal & Rossi, 1996). For the four participants, their novice status set them apart from their grade level and school groups. For Jackie and Jillian, this was particularly relevant. Jillian felt that her grade level teammates appreciated her contributions, both academic and administrative, which is supported by their interactions with and comments about her competency. She never felt that they looked down upon her as a new teacher. Rather, she believed her novice status worked to her benefit, because she came to the team with a plethora of ideas and new approaches to instruction. Whereas she described her team as “packet focused,” she utilizes problem and project-based approaches to instruction, which she was able to share with her teammates.

Jackie’s team celebrated her status as a new teacher, acknowledging that she came to them full of new ideas and approaches to lesson planning. She felt accepted and part of the team from the start. Unlike the other three participants, Jackie’s team remained keenly aware of her status as a novice and went out of their way to make her feel accepted and valued. Because of her own experience as an isolated first-year teacher, Jackie’s colleague Molly ensured that throughout the year, she was checking in with Jackie and making sure she felt welcomed and that her ideas and contributions were valid.

**Administrative role.** Administrators play a role in teachers’ sense of community, both directly and indirectly. As actors within the school community,
they can directly impact the dimensions of sense of community discussed above. For example, Jackie feels comfortable taking emotional risks with her principal. Jackie has opened up to her about her personal life, and has trusted her principal enough to set her up on dates. These interactions directly impact Jackie's overall sense of community. Newmann, Rutter, and Smith (1989) found that administrative responsiveness to teachers is particularly influential to their sense of community. Interactions that afford teachers help, support, and recognition from their administration develop a greater sense of unity and cooperation. Jackie's principal prioritizes such responsiveness. Like Jackie's teammates, her principal is encouraging and supportive. After informal observations, she provides teachers with immediate feedback via email, always highlighting positive elements of the lesson. During a grade level meeting she attended, she offered help and advice when appropriate, but did not insert herself into the conversation unnecessarily. After a teacher shared a project idea, she immediately emailed the teacher to compliment her on her contribution. This type of support shows commitment and respect for teachers and sets the standard for norms and behaviors within the school community.

**Part Two: Individuals**

Taking a network perspective in examining the novice teachers' interactions provides insight to the supports valued by and available to the novices. Using a lens of sense of community, it is evident that their contextual supports varied greatly, resulting in the inclusion of some and the alienation of others. In the absence of an
environment that provided them with the supports they wanted and/or needed, individual attributes surfaced that seemed to help them adapt and survive.

All teachers face challenges throughout their careers, from difficult parents to heavy workloads. Furthermore, the emotional nature of teaching can be particularly taxing on a teacher’s psyche (Demetriou, Wilson, & Winterbottom, 2009; Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009). For new teachers, who are experiencing these pressures for the first time while simultaneously learning the job, supports are particularly important in helping them navigate such challenges. These supports can be found in the context of the school itself, through helpful routines, programs, and colleagues. In Jackie’s case, she has strong environmental support, evidenced through her interactions with her colleagues, formal and informal routines of collaboration, administrative support, and sense of community. For the others, however, they are lacking this type of contextual support, to varying degrees. It is through their responses to this lack of support that their resiliency is demonstrated.

**Resiliency**

Resilience is exhibited by an individual’s response to the interplay between challenging situations and risk factors within the environment (Bobek, 2002; Gu & Day, 2007; Mansfield, Beltman, Price, & McConnely, 2012) and is considered an individual’s capacity to continue to “bounce back” from adversity (Gu & Day, 2007; Sumsion, 2004). Teachers display it through their ability to adjust to the varied situations involved in the work and increase their competence in the face of challenges (Bobek, 2002; Gordon & Coscarelli, 1996; Masten, Best, & Garmezy,
1990). Though there are varied definitions of resilience throughout the literature, the following definition from Mansfield et al. (2012) incorporates the consistent themes:

Resilience involves the dynamic processes that are the result of interaction over time between a person and the environment and is evidenced by how individuals respond to challenging or adverse situations. Secondly, there is evidence that protective and risk factors (both individual and contextual) play a critical role in the resilience process. Finally...resilient individuals possess personal strengths, including particular characteristics, attributes, assets or competencies. (p. 358)

Thus, rather than an inherent quality within teachers, resilience can be developed and changed over time and is manifested differently as a result of the teachers’ environments (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; Bobek, 2002; Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010; Day, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Sumsion, 2004).

Risk and protective factors exist on both the individual and contextual levels and can be related to their personal (outside of school), situated (in school), or professional lives (Gu & Day, 2007). Risk factors are challenges that contribute to an individual’s psychological distress (Tait, 2008) and can threaten the development of resilience (Mansfield et al., 2012). At the individual level, these can include poor self-confidence (Day, 2008; Kitching, Morgan, & O’Leary, 2009), difficulty asking for help (Castro et al., 2010; Flores, 2006; Jenkins, Smith, & Maxwell, 2009), or a personal struggle like an illness (Gu & Day, 2007). Contextual risk factors exist in both personal and professional lives, and at the professional level, include stressors at the individual school or classroom level (e.g., disruptive and/or challenging students, lack of resources, difficult parents, etc.) and at the broader professional
work level (e.g., heavy workload, work/life balance, unsupportive colleagues, lack of mentor, etc.) (Beltman et al., 2011).

At the individual level, Sarah’s introverted personality operates as a risk factor. As someone less inclined to reach out to others, she is more unlikely to ask for help or have numerous strong collegial relationships. As a self-proclaimed “over analyzer,” Jillian often created her own anxiety and distress through her negative assessments of situations. For example, when she was not included in an email from the principal that went to two of her colleagues, she worried that it was because she had somehow upset her principal, rather than consider it may have been applicable to only them or an oversight on the principal’s part.

Contextually, all four teachers had risk factors. Each of them struggled with the adjustment to being a full-time teacher, including classroom management and/or particularly difficult students, and balancing a heavy workload. All but Jackie had additional contextual challenges to these. Sarah and Lisa both struggled with unsupportive colleagues, a lack of bilingual resources, and an overall lack of collaboration. Lisa lacked a mentor, and like Jillian, struggled finding a work/life balance during her first year. Jillian struggled with a difficult parent and what she perceived to be fluctuating mentor and administrative support. All three were concerned about scrutiny from their peers and administrators.

Protective factors and processes mediate the effects of adversity and either promote or constrain the development and demonstration of resilience (Bobek, 2002; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Mansfield et al., 2012; Sumsion, 2004; Tait, 2008; Werner, 1995). Contextually, these include having access to resources, time, and
professional development activities (Benard, 2003), being a part of effective support systems with strong collegiality (Sumsion, 2004) and strong leadership (Day, 2008; Howard & Johnson, 2004), being recognized for success (Bobek, 2002), having significant adult relationships with colleagues, family, and friends (Bobek, 2002; Sumsion, 2004), and mentoring (Beltman et al., 2011; Castro et al., 2009; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Individual protective factors include personal strengths and skills like social competence and interpersonal skills (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Tait, 2008), problem-solving skills (Bobek, 2002; Tait, 2008), having a sense of humor and sense of personal responsibility (Bobek, 2002), and maintaining an optimistic outlook (Mansfield et al., 2012; Tait, 2008). Individual protective factors also include personal attributes like perseverance and grit (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009; Sumsion, 2004), motivation (Gu & Day, 2007; Mansfield et al., 2012; Sumsion, 2004) and self-efficacy (Beltman et al., 2011; Brunetti, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007; Tait, 2008).

As a social construct, capacity for resilience is created and manifested through the interaction between these risks and protective factors, and thus is both dynamic and idiosyncratic (Beltman et al., 2011; Gu & Day, 2007). This idiosyncrasy, coupled with the fact that it may only be visible in the face of adverse conditions, makes resiliency difficult to measure or observe (Beltman et al., 2011). As a result, in this study, it was exhibited in different degrees across the four teachers, rather than existing as a discrete phenomena (Sumsion, 2004).

Challenging or adverse situations. Since resiliency may only be evidenced in times of stress and contexts where challenging circumstances are present
(Mansfield et al., 2012; Tait, 2008), the four teachers in this study displayed resiliency to varying degrees. Jackie, for example, who did not have significant contextual challenges, did not have as many opportunities to display her resilience as Jillian, whose responses to her changing context highlighted her resiliency. However, all of the four teachers in this study encountered challenging situations during their first year consistent with challenges most new teachers face, like struggles with classroom management and adjusting to a heavy workload (Jenkins, Smith, & Maxwell, 2009). Despite these challenges, each of the teachers persevered and maintained their motivation and commitment to their positions. To illustrate the variation in the protective and risk factors, the following highlights the teachers’ responses to two challenges faced by all four teachers: classroom management and a heavy workload.

Jackie. Jackie’s main struggle during her first year was classroom management. She felt she had a particularly challenging second grade class, and had one student in particular that was a prominent source of stress. Initially, the student was disruptive and difficult, but as the year progressed, his behavior became more alarming and disturbing, going so far as to threaten her with violence. Eventually, the student was removed from her classroom and placed in another location. Though Jackie was relieved upon his removal, she also felt badly, wishing she could have done more to help him.

Jackie relied heavily on her colleagues for assistance throughout the process. She conversed with her mentor and grade level colleagues constantly about different approaches to classroom management and strategies she could use. When
the behavior started to escalate, she approached her administrator and the school counselor. Both women responded supportively to her request for help. They listened to her concerns, validated her experience and applauded her approaches, supported her with parents, and provided her with direct assistance with the behaviors.

Jackie’s resiliency was enhanced due to individual protective factors, like her strong interpersonal skills and self-confidence, which helped her foster productive relationships. However, for Jackie, her contextual factors were more consequential in her success. Her collegial support system was strong, including strong leadership and collegiality. Others acknowledged her position as a new teacher and commended her professionalism and abilities in handling the situation. She had access to human resources, including her experienced peers, mentor, and school counselor. As a result, she was able to rely heavily on her professional work environment for support in handling the situation.

This environment also helped her with the heavy workload she encountered in her first year. Her school had routines like weekly collaboration meetings in place that provided natural opportunities for her to work together with her grade level peers. Her peers were highly collaborative independent of these meetings, allowing ample opportunities for her to receive and seek help from them. As a result, her workload was the lightest of the four teachers, with the responsibilities for planning being shared amongst her team.

Lisa. Lisa characterized her first year’s third grade bilingual class as challenging, but did not have the same level of student behavior issues as Jackie.
Lisa described her students as incredibly loud, noting that she had not realized prior to having her own classroom the necessity of teaching conversational skills (like regulating volume) to students. Though dealing with a high noise level and constant interruption may seem minor when compared to a violence-threatening student, for Lisa, it was a constant source of stress that often resulted in her crying all the way home. She felt that instruction was constantly being derailed by her need to address and reteach behavior. Additionally, her students did not seem to understand the meaning of a consequence. She had a handful of students who were repeatedly receiving punishments throughout the year, not connecting action with reaction. When she put one student on a behavior chart, she had to explain to him and his mother that receiving zero points at the end of the day was not good and unacceptable.

Throughout the year, Lisa tried different approaches to classroom management. She reached out to her grade level colleague for ideas, and when those were unsuccessful, she sought assistance from another teacher who she believed had a quality system in her classroom. She instituted different consequences for the students, finding out through trial and error which ones worked and which ones did not (and for which students). When appropriate, she implemented individual behavior charts and involved parents in the process. These ideas came from her own research, but also from suggestions from a former teacher and a friend from her college cohort. These latter two individuals also helped her emotionally with her struggle, allowing her to vent, providing reassurance, and finding the humor in the situation.
Lisa also struggled adjusting to the heavy workload of a new teacher. She lacked access to resources, both human and curricular, to help her with instruction and planning. She felt emotionally and physically exhausted every day and felt that all of her time was spent on school-related issues. She recounted instances when she was dreading a social event-something she would normally look forward to-because she was so exhausted, and ended up feigning illness because she could not muster the energy needed to go out.

Lisa’s professional context rarely served as a protective factor for her. In fact, her lack of access to resources, a strong school-based support system, and significant school-based relationships added to her difficulties. Though she received some help from colleagues related to classroom management, it was assistance that occurred as a result of her social competence and problem-solving skills. She strategically sought out individuals who she felt could help her with behaviors and approached them in a complimentary manner. Instead of asking for help directly, she would say things like, “I really like that chart you’re using. How does it work?”

Lisa also displayed grit in her continued attempts to utilize different classroom management strategies within her classroom. Despite being unsuccessful in several approaches, she continued to generate and try new ideas until something worked. Sometimes, this meant sticking with a method that required patience to achieve success with.

Lisa primarily relied on her personal contexts to enhance her resilience. She relied on a former teacher, new teacher friend, and her mom to both problem-solve different situations and for emotional support. This provided her with the
necessary reassurance to help her maintain her self-confidence when difficulties arose. Her sense of humor was also an asset to her survival. Due in part to her daily conversations with her new teacher friend, she was able to laugh about some of the situations she was dealing with and remain optimistic.

Sarah. Unlike the others, Sarah did not have any behavioral issues her first year, but as a split-grade bilingual teacher, she did have difficulty with overall classroom management. Due to the structure of the program, different subjects were taught in Spanish or English depending on the grade level. The only subject her second and third grade students had in the same language was math. As a result, she had to strategically plan her lessons to consider logistics and ensure all of her students were engaged in learning, regardless of whether they had her attention. For her, this was the most difficult aspect of her job during her first year.

Sarah was one of only a handful of split grade bilingual teachers. As such, she had limited individuals she could approach for help with her classroom setup. She sought some help from colleagues at the beginning of the year, including her mentor, but ultimately she took it upon herself to figure it out. As the weeks progressed, the logistics became more difficult, and she struggled to problem solve how to ensure all of her students were receiving the same amount of instructional time. She expressed her concern to the principal, suggesting it would be helpful if her six third grade students were able to attend a third grade classroom during math, so she could dedicate the entire block to just second grade. However, she was told that it was not possible to do, so she continued to split her instructional time between the two groups. As the year went on, the duality of her classroom became a
large stressor, and she often lost track of which groups were instructed in which language in which subjects. Eventually, she made an executive decision to occasionally combine the groups for a subject matter lesson to lessen her workload.

Having two grade levels, Sarah was responsible for twice the amount of planning and instructing as a single grade teacher, with the same amount of time. She also had the added layer of instructing in two languages. Thus, she had to familiarize herself with both the second grade and third grade curricula in addition to the dual language curricula for both grades. In the summer prior to her first year, her district revised the curricular map for the dual language program, and she found it difficult to read and confusing. Her colleagues did as well, and often her third grade colleague would come to her for assistance interpreting it, hoping that as a new graduate, Sarah would be better at interpreting new curricular maps. And like most new teachers, Sarah spent a large amount of time on schoolwork. She arrived at school early and often was one of the last to leave at night. She took papers home to grade, and often received help from her mom. Her mom also helped her generate lesson plan ideas, since at school, she did not coplan with any of her colleagues.

For Sarah, like Lisa, context was a contributor to the hurdles she was facing. She did not have a strong school-based support system that she could rely on for help in structuring her classroom, and when she sought out assistance from her principal, she often did not receive it. Her mentor was also of little assistance, as she did not feel like he validated her struggle or helped her problem solve. The most significant relationship she had in her school was with a teacher who taught kindergarten, so she could not help her, either. This isolation also meant that in her
process of trial and error with classroom setup, she relied solely on her own interpretation of what was working or not working, as she was not receiving any feedback from others or recognition for her efforts.

Sarah also lacked resources to assist in her planning, instruction, and heavy workload. District resources for her curricula were scant and difficult to interpret. Again, she did not have colleagues to rely on for assistance, because they, too, were struggling with the new map. She also was not welcomed into a grade level team, since she was split between two, so she did not have a designated group of people to rely on. However, even if she had, neither grade level group was collaborative, so she still would not have access to the group coplanning that she desired.

Despite these setbacks, Sarah remained optimistic about her position, relying heavily on her individual protective factors to help her persevere. Though her introversion did act as a hurdle, preventing her from reaching out to colleagues and developing deep relationships with them, this is a factor of her personality that she has adapted to over the years. She has honed her self-reliance to the point of always believing that when faced with a problem, she will always find a way to figure it out and overcome it. This has helped her not get particularly upset about her isolation at work, because although she would prefer to have collaborative peers, she knows that she does not need others to thrive and survive.

Sarah’s motivation for becoming a dual language teacher also enhances her resiliency. Her desire to become a teacher began at a young age and never waivered. She wanted to help others, but specifically, she wanted to help the bilingual community. She noticed a boom in the Spanish-speaking population
growth in her community, and her desire to better serve them motivated her to seek out a bilingual endorsement. This sense of vocation, coupled with her high sense of personal responsibility, drives her to not only be a high quality teacher in her district, but the knowledge that she is achieving this goal sustains her in light of less than ideal working conditions. She is willing to teach in a school where she is isolated, because tapping into her self-reliance is a small price to pay for the knowledge that she is doing the very thing that she set out to do and helping the bilingual community in her area.

Jillian. Jillian also struggled with behavior management during her first year, and like Jackie, she had one student in particular who was a challenge. Even more so, the student’s parent was difficult, often sending scathing emails to her and the principal. Jillian would approach her grade level colleagues (who were also her mentors) for assistance in dealing with the student and parent, and was also proactive with her principal. Because she felt safe with the principal, she was open with her regarding what was happening with the student and parent, how she was handling it, and what types of support she needed. The principal responded in kind, validating her struggle, explaining teachers’ history with the parent being difficult, applauding the efforts and approaches Jillian made and her open and honest communication with her about it, and providing her with support.

Like the others, Jillian also struggled with a heavy workload. As someone who has a difficult time not “leaving it at the door,” Jillian would often take her emotional frustration home with her to her mom and boyfriend. Though as a teacher, her mom understood, her boyfriend frequently became frustrated with her
lack of separation between home and school. Jillian also brought a lot of work home after school, despite arriving an hour before school started and leaving several hours after dismissal. This worsened as the year progressed because the coplanning with her teammates tapered off. Between the emotional stress and the actual work she brought home with her, she felt that her first year was “constant school,” and one of her goals going into her second year was to have a better work/home balance.

To achieve this goal, Jillian implemented rules and routines for herself. She limited the amount of time she allowed herself to stay after school during the week, allocating Thursdays as her “long night.” On Thursdays, she allowed herself flexibility on when to leave, and used the afternoon and evening to plan everything for the entire next week. She made any necessary copies for earlier in the upcoming week and planned out which days she would make the remainders. She used her mornings for grading, entering grades, and communicating with parents.

Jillian also suggested to her colleagues at the end of her first year that they alter the structure of their grade level to split science and social studies instruction so that individually, they had less work to do. They agreed, and this significantly cut down the amount of planning and instruction she had during her second year. Instead of planning out several science and social studies units over the course of the year, she only had to plan out one social studies and one science unit, which she would reteach to a different class every eight weeks.

Like Jackie, Jillian had contextual factors that enhanced her resiliency. Her colleagues and administration provided her with strong support and resources
when dealing with a difficult student and parent. She was recognized for her efforts at remediating the situation and reassured that the issue was not occurring as a result of her incompetence with behavior management. She had numerous significant relationships, in school and out of school, which assisted her in maintaining her self-confidence pertaining to her management capacity. Her colleagues also were amenable to her suggestions for change, providing her with additional confidence and support.

Jillian’s individual protective factors were equally key in her resilience. Possessing a high social competence and strong interpersonal skills, she was able to reach out and form numerous supportive relationships that were pivotal to her success. This, coupled with her self-confidence, helped her drastically reduce her workload by convincing her colleagues to restructure their system. To address her issues with a lack of work/home balance during her first year, she devised a system of rules for herself to abide by, displaying strong problem solving skills and self-regulation. This is partially a result of Jillian’s overall outlook on life, which includes the attitude that she will do whatever she needs to do to reach an intended outcome.

One of the keys to Jillian’s resilience was the high degree of self-efficacy she displayed. When she was no longer receiving planning assistance from her colleagues, instead of viewing it as a setback, she viewed it as a challenge and an opportunity to prove (to herself and others) that she could plan effective lessons on her own. She framed it as a competition with her grade level colleagues, with each trying to craft better lessons. Mentally, she bolstered her self-confidence when facing this challenge by reminding herself of all the positive feedback she had
received from her cooperating teachers and supervisors in her pre-service program and the positive evaluation she had received from her principal. Her students’ growth and success augmented this and provided her with a sense of personal satisfaction in a job well done.

Pivotal to Jillian’s resilience was the source of her motivation. Unlike the others, Jillian’s decision to become an educator was one made later in her life, during first years in college. Initially intending on becoming a dentist, she changed to teaching after deciding she was not cut out for the work of a dentist. She did not particularly like the coursework, and she did not want the pressure of having someone’s life in her hands. Instead, she decided to follow in her mother’s footsteps and become a teacher. In stark contrast to Lisa and Sarah, who were intrinsically and morally motivated to teach, Jillian was more externally motivated than any of the others. A lot of her confidence and efficacy was embedded in the positive feedback she received from others. Once that declined somewhat, or if she felt it might be threatened, she panicked and her belief in her abilities dropped considerably. Thus, for Jillian, her efficacy was significantly impacted by the presence or absence of consistent validation and positive recognition.

Although all four teachers varied in their overall satisfaction with their positions, each of them remained intent on remaining in the profession and their positions indefinitely. To deal with the different stressors encountered in their daily lives, they tapped into tools in their personal and professional environments that helped support them. Jackie had access to resources, time, mentoring, an effective support system, and strong leadership that recognized her for her successes and
acknowledged her position as a novice teacher. Jillian had access to these contextual features, but they varied throughout the year. Lisa and Sarah had extremely limited access to these contextual supports. In the presence or absence of these supports, each teacher tapped into individual factors that helped them overcome challenges and remain committed. Jackie, Jillian, and Lisa benefited from their high levels of social competence and interpersonal skills, which helped them form and maintain useful relationships. Jillian, Lisa, and Sarah all used their problem-solving skills to help when faced with adversity, and each maintained an optimistic outlook. Lisa’s sense of humor helped in decreasing tension and helping her relate to other new teachers. Sarah’s strong self-reliance lessened the impact of her isolation. Jillian’s high self-efficacy and perseverance was important to her resiliency, as was her high level of self-confidence. Motivation, for the three teachers lacking Jackie’s strong contextual supports, was a key facet to their resilience. When Jillian, who was more extrinsically motivated than the others, felt she was losing her principal’s approval, she began to consider the possibility of looking for another job. Sarah and Lisa, who both had a strong sense of purpose and intrinsic motivation for teaching in their schools, were willing to overcome isolation and dissatisfaction for the payoff of teaching to a population they felt needed and benefited from their expertise.
Chapter Six

Discussion and Future Research

Examining the support networks of these four novice teachers and the formal and informal interactions that constitute them has provided rich, useful information regarding the support needs of new teachers. It also highlighted the difference between the contextual supports in place for each of the four teachers and how they each responded to their contexts. Though the results from this study are not generalizable, they can inform the larger body of research related to novice teacher needs and what may contribute to their overall satisfaction and retention. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings, implications, and suggested directions for future research.

Limitations

As with any research study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this work. This study focuses on a small sample of novice teachers, and therefore, although the findings of this study can inform future research related to novice teacher support, they are not generalizable. Topics addressed in the findings, like satisfaction and resiliency were not directly measured, so although a relationship can be inferred, no claims to causality or correlation can be made. And finally, the observation period for these teachers was short and took place at the beginning of their second year. Although communication with the teachers continued throughout the year, the observations can only account for a small piece of their second year experiences. All statements and conclusions are made with these in mind.
Supports

In this study, I looked at the following facets of novice teachers’ support interactions: whom they approached for support and how often, why they approached different people, and the content and directionality of those interactions. Though my initial questions focused on school-based supports, I found that many of these teachers relied heavily on out of school supports as well. Applying these questions to both in and out of school supports revealed information related to the support needs of the novices in this study and how their context influenced the importance of those needs.

The supports these four teachers needed and valued were mostly informal in nature. Emotional support was the most prioritized, with all four teachers actively seeking it out regularly. For Jillian, Sarah, and Lisa, who encountered more challenges (particularly, contextually) than Jackie, this was a type of support they sought out daily. Contextual support was also actively sought out by all four teachers. They all valued having school-based help with idiosyncratic issues they encountered on a regular basis, and Lisa and Sarah, who did not have access to as much contextual support as Jackie and Jillian, expressed a desire for more. They believed that more contextual support would have made them happier in their positions, in part by making their daily lives easier. Though all four teachers did not actively seek out relational support, it was something they all highly valued and received. Speaking to and hearing from other new teachers about their experiences helped each of the four teachers feel like what they were experiencing was normal, rather than a reflection of their abilities as a teacher. This was particularly
important for Lisa, who lacked constructive feedback related to her teaching and whose only significant school-based support was a veteran teacher. Hearing from other new teachers that they, too, were overwhelmed and struggling with classroom management helped her maintain confidence in her abilities and avoid being overly self-critical.

The teachers’ desire for academic and social supports varied, and the value they placed on them seems to relate to their overall supports. All four teachers expressed and maintained a strong desire for coplanning and collaboration with their colleagues. Each encountered aspects of their curricula they found challenging, an issue that could be helped by an experienced colleague. However, the availability of these types of academic supports differed for each individual, and their reaction to that availability illuminated how they prioritized it. Lisa and Sarah completely lacked school-based academic support, and its availability to Jillian dropped midway through her first year. Whereas with emotional and contextual supports, the teachers continued to seek them out regardless of their availability to them, with academic supports, they subsisted without them if they were unavailable. These three teachers all expressed feeling that their pre-service training gave them the necessary tools to create and implement quality lessons and decipher curriculum maps. Thus, this was an area they could ultimately rely on themselves for, if necessary. Social support also varied between individuals. For Jackie, whose context provided her emotional, contextual, relational, and academic supports consistently and to a higher degree than the others, social support was more of a priority than for the others. She participated in and initiated after-school
social events with her colleagues regularly, branched out to form friendships with colleagues outside of her immediate network, and valued these types of interactions. Jillian, who like Jackie, is highly social, also sought out social interactions with her colleagues. She would often initiate lunch outings or go to their rooms during breaks for the sole purpose of socializing. However, like Jackie (but to a lesser extent), all of Jillian’s other needs were being met through the context of her school. Lisa and Sarah both made efforts to eat in the lounge regularly so they could interact with their colleagues, but not only was this not a main priority, it was also the only type of social interaction they had. Overall, this was the least valued type of support, particularly when other support needs were not being met.

Looking at priority placed on supports and the overall interactions between the four, highlights different features of these teachers’ contexts that influenced what kind of priority they placed on supports and how satisfied they were in their positions.

**Satisfaction**

This study was designed to include two teachers who were highly satisfied in their positions and two teachers who were unsatisfied in their positions. This provided contrast between the four teachers, and allowed me to look for patterns related to their overall feelings of satisfaction. The nature and size of this study does not allow for claims regarding the causality of the teachers’ satisfaction, but an examination of the data suggests that for these four teachers, there seemed to be a relationship between their satisfaction and their overall feelings of isolation.
Several features of their networks and larger contexts seemed to influence their satisfaction and either contribute to or prevent feelings of isolation:

**Ties.** Examining the ties of the four teachers, two features seem to influence their satisfaction: strength and reciprocity. Jackie and Jillian, the two satisfied teachers in this study, both had multiple strong ties, whereas Lisa and Sarah, who were dissatisfied, lacked many strong ties. The location of those ties does not seem to relate to their satisfaction, but reciprocity does. For these teachers, higher reciprocity of their ties corresponded to higher levels of satisfaction.

**Meaningful collaboration.** All four teachers in this study were overburdened during their first year. Regardless of whether they had it or not, they all wanted to collaborate and coplan with their colleagues. Even Sarah, who enjoys being self-reliant, expressed a strong desire for collaboration. Sarah and Jackie both had weekly formal collaboration time built into their schedules. However, Sarah’s collaboration time lacked guidelines or a formal structure. As a result, her collaboration time was rarely spent on true collaboration and often was canceled or skipped. When it did occur, the time was spent with each teacher running down a list of what they were doing in every subject, rather than exchanging or sharing ideas. In contrast, the formal structure of Jackie’s weekly collaboration time provided opportunities to share information, ideas, and strengthen relationships. Their dialogue in these meetings would often spill over into informal times like lunch and after school, increasing the interactions between her colleagues and setting a precedent for the rich conversations that ensued. She cites this attitude of
collaboration as well as the depths of the relationships she has formed with her colleagues as being the main sources of her satisfaction.

**Access to social capital.** The four teachers in this study had varying levels of access to social capital. Jackie and Jillian, the two more satisfied teachers in this study, had higher access to both bridging and bonding forms of social capital (Adler & Kwon, 2002) than Sarah or Lisa, who had very little of both. This capital (or lack thereof) may have contributed to the teachers’ overall sense of community and trust in their colleagues.

**Relational support and validation.** All four teachers in this study benefitted from the relational support they received from other novice teachers. For everyone but Lisa, this support was a school-based support. This provided each of them with mental reassurance that what they were experiencing was normal. Jackie and Jillian received additional validation in addition to this. Through conversations with their administrators, both of them received reassurance that they were handling situations appropriately, doing a good job overall, and that the challenges they faced were not due to their novice status. For Jackie, this validation also came from her grade level teammates, who also provided her with constant positive reinforcement. When this validation faded for Jillian, she became anxious and her satisfaction waivered. Sarah and Lisa both lacked this type of validation.

**Professional culture.** Jackie and Jillian, the more satisfied teachers in this study, taught in integrated professional cultures characterized by a mixture of teacher experience levels. Sarah and Lisa taught in veteran-oriented professional cultures, where veterans prevailed and independence was the norm (Kardos et al.,
The norms of each of these professional cultures either enhanced or inhibited the novices’ access to collaboration and expertise.

**Trust.** Trust seemed to be a strong determiner in the ties the four teachers formed and whether or not they sought out a particular support. Jackie had a high level of trust in her colleagues, whole-heartedly believing that everyone had everyone else’s best interests in mind. This resulted her in developing strong ties with her colleagues and relying on them for every type of support. Jillian’s trust in her colleagues varied, and its variance seemed to be related to her satisfaction. When her trust in her colleagues wavered, it corresponded to her satisfaction waverering as well. Lisa and Sarah had low levels of trust in their colleagues. As a result, they were hesitant about forming ties and seeking out supports, adding to their feelings of isolation.

**Sense of community.** Although the teachers’ senses of community were not measured directly, analysis of the data suggests that Jackie had a high sense of community, Jillian had a moderate sense of community, and Sarah and Lisa had a very low sense of community. The data suggests that Jackie had a high sense of belonging in her school, felt she had influence in school and grade level decisions, had a strong shared emotional connection with her colleagues, and that she was accepted and valued by the group. Jillian’s shared these features, but to a lesser extent. Sarah and Lisa’s experiences with these components were very different. They were either non-existent or exclusionary in nature. For example, for each of them, their status as a bilingual teacher excluded them from membership in the English-only group of teachers. Sarah’s participation on the School Improvement
Team provided her with some influence in her school, a component Lisa lacked. Across the four teachers, it seems that there is a relationship between sense of community and satisfaction; the higher the sense of community, the higher the overall satisfaction.

**Career Resiliency**

Applying the concept of resiliency to retention, Sumsion (2004) defines career resilience as “the ability to continue to find deep and sustaining personal and professional satisfaction in one’s chosen field despite the multiple adverse factors and circumstances that have led many to leave the sector” (p. 276). Though this study did not measure career resilience directly, all four teachers expressed intent to remain in their positions and their careers indefinitely, and for three of them, that was despite experiencing adversity. For Jackie, this sustained commitment could be a result of her extremely high level of satisfaction, stemming from the large amount of contextual supports available to her. But for the other three, it seems that their career resiliency is influenced by factors other than just satisfaction. They are adapting to their positions, despite facing challenges and constraints that they wish were different. When faced with adversity, Jillian’s intent to remain in her position wavered. Though she never earnestly contemplated leaving, when her school context became less supportive, she did consider the possibility of moving elsewhere. Her intent to stay appeared to be linked to her overall feeling of satisfaction. However, even when she toyed with the idea of moving schools, she was never particularly serious about it. During those times, she relied on her self-efficacy to help herself remain committed and moving forward.
Though contextual supports seem to factor heavily into their satisfaction and thus most likely impact their decision to stay, for these three teachers, it seems that their motivation weighs heavily on their decision to stay. For Jillian, the motivation that seems to matter is not her motivation to teach, but her motivation to teach in her particular district, which she has long idealized in her head. In times of difficulty, she would repeatedly express how it was her “dream district,” and where she wanted to be in 30 years. For Sarah and Lisa, who were dissatisfied in their positions, their motivation to teach seemed to help them survive. Each of them said that even though they are unhappy, they are teaching in the community with the population they dreamed of serving. For them, their intrinsic motivation to teach and strong moral purpose was robust enough that they were willing to overlook their displeasure with their contexts and persevere.

**Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

The case studies of these four novice teachers provide a rich context for future research related to novice teacher support. In this section, I discuss possible implications and recommend the following as directions for future research.

**Novice teacher resiliency.** Resiliency seems to be an important facet to the commitment of the three teachers facing difficulties in their positions. As a complicated construct that is idiosyncratic in nature, it is difficult to measure, particularly since it may only manifest itself in times of adversity (Beltman et al., 2011). However, examining resilience provides an alternative way of looking at the problem of teacher retention. Although many teachers are indeed leaving the profession, many also stay. What is it that helps these teachers adapt and survive?
Instead of focusing on the stressors that lead to burnout and attrition, it focuses on the strengths and adaptations teachers tap into to remain motivated and committed (Beltman et al., 2011; Gu & Day, 2007).

In this study, I did not measure the teachers’ resiliency directly, and it was something that manifested differently across the four teachers as they interacted with their very differing contexts. Though all four of the teachers in this study displayed resiliency in some way, it was least evident in Jackie, who had very strong contextual supports that she could rely on when faced with challenges. The other three more heavily relied on their own individual attributes, like confidence, efficacy, problem solving skills, and interpersonal skills to help sustain them. Consistent with the literature on teacher resilience, the teachers’ self-efficacy and motivation seemed to be a key to their commitment (Gu & Day, 2007; Tait, 2008). They each—particularly Jillian—relied on their sense of efficacy to help them with their instructional-related tasks. Lisa and Sarah both cite their motivation as a vital influence on their decisions to remain in their positions. Despite being unsatisfied, they both feel that being able to teach to the population they sought out to help outweighs any unhappiness or personal desires they have.

These results suggest that when examining why teachers leave or remain in the profession, it is important to consider the contextual features offered in their positions, but also to study the individual responses to the presence or absence of those features. Looking at the strengths, attitudes, and behaviors of teachers who remain in the profession despite adversity may provide insight into effective interventions that those who work with teachers and pre-service teachers can
implement (Mansfield et al., 2012; Sumsion, 2003). For example, teacher education and induction programs may consider presenting scenarios and opportunities for critical reflection, helping pre-service and practicing novices tap into and develop their own resiliency.

As I said, this was a very small sample of novice teachers, and resiliency was not measured directly. It seems worthwhile to study this concept on a larger scale, possibly as a quantitative study involving directly measuring resilience, and perhaps including a measure of efficacy and motivation. However, further qualitative research may also prove beneficial, providing a more in-depth understanding of the nature of resiliency that this study was not able to address. The following are questions for further research:

- What is the relationship between novice teachers’ resiliency and their intent to remain in the profession? Are there particular contextual and individual attributes that play more of a role than others? How do self-efficacy and motivation relate to a novice teachers’ resiliency?
- What role can teacher education programs play in developing pre-service teachers’ resiliency?
- How can induction and mentoring programs and other school-based providers assist in developing and tapping into novice teachers’ resiliency?
- How does resiliency differ across populations?
- How does a teacher’s resiliency change over time? Is it a construct that improves with experience level or changes in importance?
Novice teachers in special populations. The two bilingual teachers involved in this study faced difficulties the other two novices did not. The organization of their schools created a natural segregation between the bilingual and the regular education teachers that they each struggled to overcome. In addition to the same responsibilities as any other novice teacher, they also had the additional layer of instructing in a foreign language, which often tested their confidence in a way that their English-instructing peers were not faced with. These two teachers were also motivated by a moral purpose that seems stronger than found in the other two teachers in this study. Their desire to help a specific community and student population seemed to sustain them in the face of the isolation and dissatisfaction that they faced in their positions. Due to the small sample size, these findings may be coincidental, but the larger issues raised regarding additional pressures and obstacles these teachers may face are worth further examination. The following are research questions to consider related to teachers in special populations:

- How do the pressures and obstacles faced by novice teachers in special populations compare to their regular education peers?
- How can teacher education programs better prepare these teachers for the challenges they will face in their future positions?
- How can administrators, teacher colleagues, and induction programs better meet the needs of novices in these types of positions?
- How can schools that house several strands of students form more cohesive, inclusive communities for their teachers?
**Novice teacher social networks.** This study used egocentric maps as the basis for studying the teachers’ interactions and support networks. Examining these networks provided rich, useful information related to the teachers’ contexts and support needs and desires. It also offered a much more precise understanding of the structure and content of the teachers’ relationships than observation alone would have provided (Moolenaar, 2012). I believe a greater understanding could be gained by taking the network-based research in this study a step further.

The social networks this study focused on were the teachers’ general support networks. This provided insight to what types of support the teachers sought out, what types of support were most helpful, and whom they relied on for each type of support. It would be interesting to focus on specific support networks to gain an even better understanding of why different individuals were relied on for particular supports. For example, asking a teacher to create a map concentrated on emotional support only may focus their attention to further nuances related to this support, like the subsets of emotional support valued, patterns of interaction, and why some individuals are more trusted than others. It may address questions like: Why do you find yourself approaching a colleague more than a personal contact (or vice versa)? What types of reactions lead to your formation of trust? What types of reactions do you need from people when approaching them for this type of support? Such questions could provide greater insight into novice teachers’ support needs.

Examining these social networks also enhanced observational data related to the teachers’ access to social capital and their overall sense of community. School leaders may find value in knowing how collegial interactions are structured so they
can promote a broad distribution of access to resources and expertise (Penuel, Frank, & Krause, 2010). The findings from this study suggest that novices may need different types of resources and expertise than their more-experienced colleagues. For example, all four of the teachers in this study found high value in having a novice colleague who could relate to their experiences. Additionally, access to bridging capital, such as information regarding district initiatives may relate to teachers’ overall sense of satisfaction and belonging. School leaders can add to this by involving novices in school-wide committees and activities. Sarah, for example, would have had very little access to this type of capital if it were not for her participation on her school’s School Improvement Team. More important to these teachers, however, was bonding capital, which resulted from strong internal ties (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Sarah and Lisa, who lacked these types of ties, also seemed to have a low sense of community and high level of distrust of their colleagues. Jackie was highly satisfied with her position and also seemed to have a high sense of community. Further research on the role between social capital, sense of community, and trust may be beneficial in determining what plays a part in novice teachers’ overall satisfaction.

In cases where I was able to have sustained conversations with the novices’ identified supports, I was able to gain a complimentary perspective on the teachers’ interactions that would have been missed otherwise. For example, when Zelda and Allison stopped their weekly collaboration meetings with Jillian, Jillian believed it was because she had done something wrong. She worried they thought she was taking advantage of them and not offering them enough lesson plan support in
response. As a result, she began populating resources and lesson plans to share with them, in hopes that they would not see her as a freeloader. When I spoke to Zelda and Allison, they revealed that they stopped collaborating with Jillian because she seemed so confident and self-assured that she no longer needed their help. This highlights the benefit of this type of approach, because it raises an important point that was consistent across the four cases. All four of the teachers in this study felt they needed to prove their competence as teachers and none of them wanted to feel like a burden to others. They all desperately wanted help from their colleagues, as well. This was problematic in every case but Jackie’s, where her colleagues offered up assistance without her needing to ask and acknowledged her status as a novice in an encouraging way. For the other three, their need to portray an image of competence outweighed their desire for assistance, resulting in feeling isolated and often overburdened. This is important for mentors, administrators, and colleagues of novice teachers to be aware of, because it suggests that supports should be offered and remain in place for the duration of the school year, independent of how competent a novice teacher may seem. From a methodological standpoint, this highlights the importance of talking to multiple actors within a network to gain deeper insight into the relationships and interactions.

Relatedly, this study focused solely on the egocentric networks of the four participants. Though they were asked to describe the interactions between their colleagues, their colleagues themselves were not asked to create their own network maps. Doing so would have provided additional information regarding the novices’
access to social capital and overall sense of community. The following are research questions for further work on novice teachers’ social networks:

- How do novice teachers’ different support networks emerge and change over time?
- How do the networks of novice teachers’ interactional peers relate to their sense of community and access to social capital?
- What do the school-level social networks look like for novices who experience a high level of satisfaction look like? What do the school-level networks look like for novices who feel dissatisfied look like?

Mentoring. All four teachers had varying mentoring and induction experiences. They all believed that in theory, mentoring is a positive convention. However, in reality, the three with a formal program each found little value in their induction experiences and identified many of the activity requirements as busywork.

Examining each of their opinions and beliefs about mentoring revealed that these teachers believed that the benefit and purpose of an induction and mentoring program should be having a trusted, school-based colleague who can be relied on for any type of support, without judgment. Additionally, the mentor should be someone with experience who is aware of the needs of new teachers. This would allow them to tap into the information and wisdom they hold that the new teachers may not realize they need. Lisa, for example, struggled with knowing the “right answers” to ask for, because she felt that as a novice, she did not know yet what she needed help with or the knowledge she lacked. And more often than not, the
support each of these teachers desired from their mentors were non-academic supports like help dealing with parents, problem-solving student behaviors, what to do for Curriculum and Back to School Nights, and validation that they were doing a good job. This is in contrast to what the three teachers with mentors experienced in their induction programs; each program was grounded in mentor/mentee interactions and activities intended to improve their instructional capacity. This suggests that novices may benefit from mentoring and induction programs that also prioritize informal, contextual supports in addition to the supports designed to improve instruction.

Although each of the four teachers believe that every first-year teacher should have a mentor that they can rely on and trust, the findings of this study also suggest that having one trusted individual in the school to rely on may not be enough. They each had multiple needs, and usually, they needed more than one person to meet those needs. As noted in Chapter 2, it takes a village to raise a novice teacher (Johnson, 2004; Kelley, 2004; Wong, 2005; Youngs, 2007). In a private conversation with Sharon Feiman –Nemser (April, 2013), she stressed the impact of the “culture of teaching” on current induction and mentoring trends and the need to change this culture from one in which teachers are independent entities to one that encourages collaboration, peer observation, and active reflection with peers. This would ensure induction and mentoring are utilized for the purposes of teaching and learning, not just “getting through” the first years. Likewise, such a culture would create an inherent understanding that although teaching is full of dilemmas and teachers need to deal with those dilemmas, more importantly, the job of a teacher is
teaching, and this should extend beyond students and into novices and peers. Until such a culture exists, the variance of mentoring experiences and induction programs will continue because they attempt to implement an activity that doesn’t fit naturally with the context it exists in. More research should be done on how mentoring can become ingrained in a school’s culture and be a shared responsibility amongst the staff. This type of shared ownership could prevent situations like Sarah’s, where her isolation was compounded because she felt like everyone assumed someone else was taking care of her needs. It could also add to a novice teacher’s sense of community and access to social capital, which may have a positive effect on their satisfaction and intent to remain. It has the potential to overcome issues related to veteran-oriented cultures, as seen in Sarah and Lisa’s schools. In these cultures, where teachers have naturally evolved to keep to themselves, having a school-wide initiative that reminds them of the needs of their novice peers could help to improve collaboration and lessen isolation for the new teachers.

The needs of the four teachers in this study, and how they used their mentors, also evolved over time, both within and across years. During their first year, when the teachers’ knowledge of the profession and job were lowest, they were also adjusting to the demands of the job. As a result, their needs were at their highest, particularly related to relational, emotional, and contextual support. Entering their second year, they each felt confident in their ability to navigate the school and plan effective lessons, but expressed a desire for more fine-tuning of their craft. During year one, co-planning and collaboration were seen as a means for helping with survival, whereas in year two, it was more a desired activity for helping
to become more efficient and better meet the needs of their students. This suggests that a closer examination of the exact needs of novices over the course of their first years in the classroom may be helpful in determining how mentoring and induction programs can aid in the transition. Such information would be valuable in determining how programs can be structured to optimize support. For example, novices may be more receptive to activities designed to improve instructional effectiveness during their second year, rather than during their first year when they are more overwhelmed with other, more pressing needs.

The findings from this study also suggest that novice teachers benefit from having other new teachers to commiserate and share their experiences with. This indicates that induction programs should continue to incorporate activities intended to connect novices to other new teachers, like district-level new teacher meetings. It may also be beneficial for novice teachers to be formally linked to another novice in the school or district, each acting as a sort of novice mentor for the other. This would provide the novices with a trusted individual they could depend on without the need for seeking someone out.

The findings from this study raise the following questions regarding induction and mentoring:

- How can we ensure teachers’ emotional and cultural needs are being met? How do novice teachers’ needs change over time, both within and across years?
• How can mentoring and induction become more ingrained into the culture of the school? How would such a program impact the overall culture of the school?

**Broaden the scope of support.** Much of the research on novice teachers’ support needs focuses on formal systems of support, like induction and mentoring. However, this study suggests that a bulk of novice teachers’ support may lie in the informal supports available to them. These supports are not only their non-mentor colleagues, but also individuals outside of their schools. More research should be done on out of school supports: how and why they are used, how they may factor into teachers’ satisfaction, and how they relate to teachers’ school-based supports.

**Teacher education programs.** This study raises potential questions for teacher educators and teacher education programs, as well:

• How can teacher education programs better prepare students for the challenges they may face in their first years in the profession? How can they provide realistic representations of the contextual hurdles they may face?

• How can teacher education programs promote collaboration and connections between teacher education candidates that may help them during their first years?

• How does a novice teachers’ teacher education program impact their support needs during their first years in the profession?

• What can teacher education programs do to contribute to the induction experiences of their teachers once they are employed?
**General questions.** A main limitation of this study is the sample size of four teachers. It would be interesting to examine the topics and issues raised in this study with a larger sample of teachers located in varying contexts.

The participants in this study will continue to evolve as they progress through the profession. Their needs will change, as will their perspectives. Some or all may change their minds and decide to leave their positions or the profession entirely. It would be interesting to follow-up with these teachers, considering the following questions:

- What happens as they teachers change?
- What happens when their contexts change?
- How do the teachers’ networks evolve over time?
- What are the support needs of an experienced teacher changing schools?

**Conclusion**

The findings of this study indicate the value in examining the support networks of novice teachers and the interactions they have with others. Doing so sheds light on the supports that are needed and valued by novice teachers. For the four teachers in this study, their support needs fell into five major categories: emotional, contextual, relational, academic, and social. Their prioritization of those needs seemed dependent on the contextual features and supports available to them, but all of them found high value in informal supports.

In this study, there appeared to be a relationship between particular contextual features and the teachers’ overall levels of satisfaction. These include the
teachers’ access to: strong, reciprocal relationships; meaningful collaboration; social capital; and validation and relational supports. Access to these features was mediated by the type of professional culture reflected in the school and the trust the novices had in their colleagues. Access to these features also seemed to relate to the teachers’ overall sense of community.

When supportive contextual features were not present or eliminated for the teachers in this study, they relied on individual attributes to help them through. Their self-confidence, efficacy, and motivation helped them persist in spite of the difficulties encountered in their environments. This suggests that although contextual supports seem to factor heavily into satisfaction, these four teachers’ intent to remain in their positions may be more heavily influenced by the individual skills and attributes that help determine their response to their contexts. Thus, when studying novice teacher satisfaction and career resiliency, it is important to not only consider the contextual features available to them, but also their response to those features.

These four novice teachers all anticipate remaining in their positions indefinitely with no intention on leaving the profession. However, their plans are not necessarily representative of all novice teachers. More research is needed to determine how we can best support new teachers and improve career resiliency. This includes further investigating novice teacher resiliency, the support needs of teachers in special populations, novice teachers’ social networks, and how mentoring and induction programs can evolve and help.
The findings of this study have implications for anyone who works with or has a vested interest in supporting novice teachers, including teacher education programs, induction program coordinators, mentors, administrators, and school districts. The four cases demonstrate the variability in the support novice teachers receive and their satisfaction, but also suggest that there may be individual attributes and skills that can be strengthened and taught to assist in novices’ career resiliency.
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Appendix A

Email Protocol

Initial Teacher Email (after consented)

Dear ___________,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about first year teachers and their mentors. Please answer the following questions, either in the body of this email or as an attached word document. Feel free to be as honest as possible, as I will be the only person who sees your email. Your responses will be transferred to a word document, but all identifying information will be deleted and you will be assigned a pseudonym. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, feel free to skip it.

Please describe your current teaching position.

How would you describe your first year teaching?

Does your school have a formal induction and mentoring program?

Thank you for your responses, and if you have any questions about this email or the project, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Lynn Sikma
Appendix B

Interview Guides

Administrator

Does your school/district have a formal induction and mentoring program? If so, please describe it.

If your school does not have a formal induction and mentoring program, please describe the supports in place in your school for first-year teachers.

Please describe any interactions you have with first-year teachers outside of the formal evaluation process. If possible, please indicate how often each interaction takes place.

Thank you for your time today.

Administrator Email Interview (if applicable)

Dear __________,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about first year teachers’ experiences. Please answer the following questions, either in the body of this email or as an attached word document. Feel free to be as honest as possible, as I will be the only person who sees your email. Your responses will be transferred to a word document, but all identifying information will be deleted and you will be assigned a pseudonym. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, feel free to skip it.

Does your school/district have a formal induction and mentoring program? If so, please describe it.

If your school does not have a formal induction and mentoring program, please describe the supports in place in your school for first-year teachers.

Please describe any interactions you have with first-year teachers outside of the formal evaluation process. If possible, please indicate how often each interaction takes place.

Thank you for your responses, and if you have any questions about this email or the project, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Lynn Sikma
Novice Teacher

Initial interview

Tell me about your position this past year.

How would you describe your experience as a first-year teacher? What were some of the positive elements? Challenges?
[rationale: background information, context, springboard into interactions]

Note: The order of the following questions may change based on the direction of the conversation, and some questions may be omitted bc content has been covered in previous responses. The intent is for these to serve as a guide for the interview.

Who do you talk to regularly? What do you talk to them about? (note: also get at if individuals come to them for information and if so, what kind and why they seek out particular individuals) How often?
[rationale: RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ4]

Which of those relationships do you find particularly helpful and why?
[rationale: RQ1, RQ4, RQ5]

Tell me about your formal mentor. (note: interactions, directionality, content, frequency, alignment, cause). 
[rationale: RQ1, RQ3, RQ4]

Do you have any other induction supports, like new teacher meetings, etc.?
[rationale: background on built-in support systems, RQ1, RQ2, RQ3, RQ5]

Tell me about your school. What’s it like to work here (note: is there a lot of collaboration, cross-grade level interactions, fraternization, discipline issues, etc.)?
[rationale: context, RQ5]

Tell me about your administration (note: structure, interactions, responsibilities, etc.).
[rationale: context, RQ1, RQ3, RQ4]

Where do you see yourself in 3 years? 5? 10?
[rationale: RQ5]
Colleague Interview

Teacher background

I am interested in learning a bit about you. Can you share with me a little about your background? (e.g., years of teaching, interest in becoming a teacher, specialty/content focus, etc.)

Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Interactions

Please describe the types of interactions you have with (TEACHER’S NAME).
   How frequently do you interact?
   What are the content of your interactions?
   Why do you seek her out?
   Why does she seek you out?
   Do you feel the two of you are a ‘good fit?’ Why or why not?

Who else would you say you interact with regularly?

Please describe your interactions with the rest of your staff.

Is what you just described typical of other teachers in this school? How would you characterize the way they work together?

How does it feel to be a member of this faculty?

Context

I would like to get a sense of your working environment. How would you describe your school – the people and programs – to someone who does not know it?
Appendix C

School and District Data Tables

School Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jackie 2nd</th>
<th>Lisa Bilingual 4th/K</th>
<th>Sarah Bilingual 3rd</th>
<th>Jillian 6th</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Arquilla</td>
<td>William</td>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>Turtle Pond</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>20.7%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
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<td>3.3%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>69.5%</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
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<td>Multi racial</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
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<td>9.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Rate</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total enrollment</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>839</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### District Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jackie</th>
<th>Lisa</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
<th>Jillian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>District</strong></td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>K-8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enrollment</strong></td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>4,129</td>
<td>40,687</td>
<td>12,657</td>
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<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
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<td>Large</td>
<td>Large</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per pupil</td>
<td>$5,153</td>
<td>$7,524</td>
<td>$5,455</td>
<td>$7,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>$9,310</td>
<td>$11,272</td>
<td>$9,411</td>
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<td><strong>Low Income</strong></td>
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<td>no</td>
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<td>No; 2 yrs in SIP</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td><strong>Number of Elementary Schools</strong></td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Junior Highs (JH)/Middle Schools (MS)</strong></td>
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<td>1 (MS)</td>
<td>8 (MS)</td>
<td>4 (JH)</td>
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<td><strong>Number of High Schools</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Participants’ Egocentric Social Network Maps

Jackie

Diagram:

1. Amy
2. Molly, Louise, Theresa (Team)
3. Reading Interventionist, New 1st grade teacher
4. School Counselor, Mentor
5. Principal
Lisa

1. College friend
2. Mom
3. HS teacher
4. 3rd grade
5. Bil. Kindergarten
6. Bil. 1st grade
7. 4th grade
8. Bil. 2nd grade

- 5th grade lesson/obs
- 2nd grade bilingual lesson/model/obs
- 6th grade

Out of School

Other 3rd grade teacher

HS teacher

Mom

College friend

Bilingual 1st grade (old 3rd)

4th grade teacher

Bilingual Kindergarten

not ranked: 6th grade
Sarah

- Mom
- Maria (1st grade)
- Gina (2nd grade), dual language
- Lianna (2nd grade)
- Mentor
- Principal
- Friends

*Out of school support