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New Building Level Leaders' Perceptions: Experiences in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership's Induction and Mentoring Program

Raymond Daniel Burk
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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NEW BUILDING LEVEL LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS: EXPERIENCES IN THE
PENNSYLVANIA INSPIRED LEADERSHIP'S INDUCTION AND MENTORING
PROGRAM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Raymond Daniel Burk

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of Professional Studies in Education

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Raymond Daniel Burk

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Education

Dr. Joseph Marcoline
Professor of Education, Advisor

Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Professor of Education

Dr. Crystal Machado
Professor of Education

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: New Building Level Leaders' Perceptions: Experiences in the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership's Induction and Mentoring Program

Author: Raymond Daniel Burk

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Joseph Marcoline

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Dr. Crystal Machado

The purpose of this study was to feature the induction experiences of new principals and assistant principals and whether or not this experience supported the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be effective building level leaders. More specifically, it provided an exploration of the PIL induction program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Also, the perceptions of new building level leaders were explored through adult learning theory and professional learning standards.

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study to investigate the perspectives of new principals and assistant principals towards their induction experiences in school leadership. This phenomenological study explored the adult learning and mentoring experiences of acting public school principals and assistant principals. Phenomenology was used because it best described the essence of the core phenomenon, the PIL induction program and PPMN mentoring experience. Since the professional development of school principals and assistant principals is evolving, evidence regarding program components was necessary to meet the knowledge and skill needs of future building level leaders.

The findings of this study indicate that new building level leaders seek professional development experiences which support the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the principalship. Professional development for new principals and assistant principals has been neglected when compared to the teaching profession. In order to support the needs of new

building level leaders, professional development must support an understanding of the goal of the experience. Additionally, collaborative relationships, such as mentoring, generate networks for new principals to navigate the tasks and responsibilities of building leadership. Also, career-staged professional development experiences need to incorporate problem-solving experiences tied directly to the position and the ability to utilize data for school improvement. Finally, school systems must begin to commit to the professional development of its new leaders.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Sustained and well-designed leadership development is essential in school systems that desire high quality teaching and learning for all students in all classrooms.”

Dennis Sparks, *Phi Delta Kappan*, March 2009

Background

In a meta-analysis study, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) claimed that specific leadership characteristics have an influence on a school’s achievement. In order for student achievement to be impacted, building level leaders need to exhibit specific knowledge and skills (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008). In the past, it was expected that principals arrived to their schools rich with the talents to lead their schools, commonly referred to as “sink or swim” (Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O’Neill, 2007; Lashway, 2003; Spiro, Mattis, & Mitgang, 2007). As demands increase for school principals, building level leaders may not be equipped to handle all of the responsibilities of 21st century school leaders. For example, Lovely (2004) pointed out that “the bygone era of authoritarian and aloof school management has paved the way for the emergence of a more culturally conscious leader” (p. 7). In order to respond to this need, professional development becomes essential for building the necessary knowledge and skills for building level leaders to be effective.

Nationwide, leadership positions will need to be filled as a result of the retirement of many school leaders. The pool of candidates to fill these positions are not prepared for the task for which they will encounter as a new principal or assistant principal of the 21st century (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; The Education Policy and Leadership Center, 2006; Association of California School Administrators, in Lovely, 2004). This is especially true for inner city and rural school systems. In order to support the new building level leader, training needs to be put into place which promotes the development of the knowledge and skills

of an effective leader. Donlevy (2006) stated that the “professional development of school leaders is, too often, an after-thought or something marginal involving occasional conferences, workshop attendance or sporadic exposure to thought-provoking speakers” (p. 239). This dilemma has been recognized through reports and legislation (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; LaPointe & Davis, 2006; Sparks, 2009), yet the professional development needs of new school principals and assistant principals have only recently been brought to the forefront.

A Nation at Risk (1983) identified the role principals and superintendents played in creating effective learning communities. The report outlined the risks the nation faced, including: literacy rates of adults, performance compared to other industrialized nations, and student achievement. The report recommended to school boards that educational leaders need to be provided with professional development and other support systems so that they could effectively carry out their duties.

In the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (1994), a national framework was recommended to improve classroom and workplace teaching and learning throughout the nation. It was created to develop a standard-based education system with improvement in student achievement as its foundation. This report had at its core school readiness; school completion; student achievement and citizenship; teacher education and professional development; math and science; adult literacy and lifelong learning; safe, disciplined, and alcohol and drug free schools; and parental participation. States and school districts were asked, through partnerships with local universities and businesses, to create integrated strategies to attract, recruit, prepare, retain and support the continued professional development of teachers, administrators and other educators.

Furthermore, the purpose was to create a highly talented workforce of professional educators to teach challenging subject matter.

The *No Child Left Behind of 2001* (NCLB), a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, developed more accountability for schools to improve student achievement, specifically disadvantaged students. The act also had at its foundation four principles, which included accountability of results, parent choice, greater local control, and research and scientifically-based research. In order to improve academic achievement, NCLB outlined providing staff with substantial opportunities for professional development. Additionally, under Title II, Part A, NCLB recommended to “increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in the school” (U.S. Department of Education, 2001, p. 20).

Currently, the Obama Administration is leading the charge to reauthorize the *Elementary and Secondary Act* once again, countering NCLB. Under the guidance of Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, this proposal specifically outlined professional development for teachers and principals, noting that the improvement of both entities are required to impact learning for all students. This proposal, which was publicized in March 2010, in their *Great Teachers and Great Leaders* supplement, recommended providing teachers and leaders with the resources and opportunities within the school day as they collaborate with their colleagues (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Also, within the *Supporting Teachers* section of the blueprint, “more focus will be put on principal development and improving the quality of school leadership...” (p. 3). This blueprint provides a more focused view of the development of effective principals compared to other federal documents.

The development of the skills of school principals has become more centralized throughout the 21st century. It is evident that in order to move educational organizations forward and support the evolving skills of our students for the 21st century, development of school administrators can no longer be an afterthought when establishing programs which concentrate on updated educational practices. The Education Policy and Leadership Center (2006) lists effective leadership skills for the 21st century as instructional leader, communication skills, collaboration, community building inside and outside of the school, architect and salesman of a guiding vision, risk-taker, and change agent. These skills require intensive study and practical experience in order to support proficient leadership in schools.

In order to develop the necessary skills for building level leaders to support 21st century schools, states have developed support systems which all principals and assistant principals must complete as part of the permanent certification process. The support systems generally are provided in the form of induction programs, mentoring, or on-the-job experience. These programs in the field of education have only recently become available throughout the nation. In addition, principal induction programs, which support new principals and assistant principals, are relatively new across the nation. Furthermore, implementation of the induction program format has been inconsistent across the nation and within states. Districts that offer their own “grow your own program” (Lovely, 2004, p. 21) can look very different across districts. Additionally, programs across the nation function with different sets of standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). These standards may be provided by the state, an organization, or district level policy, to name a few.

Along with other states across the nation, Pennsylvania created legislation and programs which support the development of skills and knowledge of practicing school principals.

Pennsylvania enacted Act 48 of 1999, which went into effect on July 1, 2000. Act 48 required individuals with a Pennsylvania professional educator certificate, which also included school principals, to complete continuing professional education credits every five years. Activities such as faculty meetings, district opening day meetings, and curriculum development, to name a few, were applicable to all professionals' continuing education credits. Beginning in June 1, 2007, new criteria were established for providers of Act 48. The new requirements supported standards-driven, research-based experiences for all professional employees, which included school administrators. The Department of Education included clear objectives, activities based on principles of adult learning theory, and evidence of impact on student learning and school success as new guidelines for Act 48 credits (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2007). In addition to the change in Act 48 requirements, the Pennsylvania Department of Education also introduced new legislation focused on the professional development of principals.

Act 45 of 2007 was introduced as legislation which assured that a qualified and well-trained principal is placed in schools across the state. Act 45 also offers professional development experiences for principals or assistant principals which incorporate practices directly tied to the improvement of student achievement. The hours compiled under Act 45 also improve upon Act 48 credit attainment. Additionally, this legislation ties principal certification to the completion of professional development training in the form of an induction program and mentoring. Also, according to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2007-2008) "the Department of Education shall design and offer an induction program at no cost to those principals, vice principals, and assistant principals who participate and at no cost to their employer school entities..." (p. 7). Furthermore, participants in the induction program "shall not be required to attend more than thirty-six (36) hours of induction during any one school year or a

total of one hundred eight (108) hours over the course of the induction program”

(Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2007-2008). The induction program, Courses One and Four, is a two year cohort format which supports the skill development of new principals and assistant principals.

Within the framework of Act 45, all professional development activities must align with the Pennsylvania School Leadership Standards. The Work Group on School Leadership Standards (The Education Policy and Leadership Center) provided recommendations which served as the foundation for the standard-based professional development program. The standards created by the state to guide the professional development activities for school leaders are made up of nine standards. The standards, broken into three core and six corollary, were developed under the guidance of a stakeholder group, which included superintendents, principals, association leaders, and university administrators and instructors. The recommendation was to develop “a set of standards based on research to guide the preparation and continuing professional education for school leaders in Pennsylvania” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, “How were these standards,” para. 1). This group reviewed research regarding the skills and dispositions which impact student achievement. The three core standards include:

1. The leader has the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success;
2. The leader has an understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader’s job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school; and

3. The leader has the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system (Pennsylvania Department of Education, “What are the Pennsylvania,” para. 1).

Additionally, the six corollary standards include:

1. The leader knows how to create a culture of teaching and learning with an emphasis on learning;
2. The leader knows how to manage resources for effective results;
3. The leader knows how to collaborate, communicate, engage and empower others inside and outside of the organization to pursue excellence in learning;
4. The leader knows how to operate in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity;
5. The leader knows how to advocate for children and public education in the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context; and
6. The leader knows how to support professional growth of self and others through practice and inquiry (Pennsylvania Department of Education, “What are the Pennsylvania,” para. 2).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Inspired Leadership (PIL) induction program uses a curriculum that has been developed by the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL), a division of the National Center for Education and the Economy (NCEE) (Pennsylvania Department of Education, “About the Principals,” para. 1). The PIL induction program, which is organized into cohorts, is grounded in the three core leadership standards. All participants must complete two courses titled, Course One, World Class Schooling: Visions and Goals, and Course Four, Driving for Results. Each course meets eight times a year in two day

consecutive workshops, totaling eight in one school year. Course One includes the following units: Unit 1, The Educational Challenge; Unit 2, The Principal as Strategic Thinker; Unit 3, Elements of Standards-based Instructional Systems and School Design; and Unit 4, Foundations of Effective Learning. Furthermore, Course Four includes: Unit 11, The Principal as Driver of Change; Unit 12, Leading for Results; and Unit 13, Culminating Simulation.

The induction component is currently offered by six providers, ranging from Intermediate Units to private organizations, and is required for all new principals and assistant principals who are employed in a PIL position after January 1, 2008. Intermediate units in Pennsylvania “operate as regional education service agencies” to the state’s public school districts, non-public and private schools. In addition, intermediate units serve as “liaison agents between school districts and the Pennsylvania Department of Education” (Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units, “Essential Links for Learning in Pennsylvania,” para. 1). At the current time, an induction program must be completed by all principals or assistant principals within five years of being named to the position.

In addition to the completion of the induction workshop, PIL offers principals and assistant principals with three or less years of experience in their current role an opportunity for mentoring. The mentor, provided by Pennsylvania Principals Mentoring Network (PPMN), is an experienced principal located outside of the building level leader’s district. Also, the mentor works for one year with the protégé to support them in their role and is provided at no cost to the principal or assistant principal.

Principal professional development has been discussed in previous government documents such as *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and *No Child Left Behind* (2001), but Pennsylvania only recently focused specifically on the need to fill schools with effective leaders. In order to

counteract the lack of qualified pools of candidates and to support the knowledge and skills of a new building level leader, Act 45 of 2007 established a standard-based program which outlines services directed at developing effective leaders.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of the changing responsibilities of school principals, their professional development has just recently become a focus nationally. Building level leaders are required to handle a myriad of roles and responsibilities from the first day they enter their building (NSDC, 2000). Additionally, new principals and assistant principals are expected to meet these demands with only a certification, which may have included an internship, and possibly a veteran principal's, from within the district, assistance. In order to respond to the need to develop effective 21st century leaders, support programs must foster those essentials leadership skills or responsibilities. Ron Williamson, in NSDC (2000), recommended principals participating in programs that are grounded in authentic and practical experiences of school leadership. The identification of those skills continues to be inconsistent among regions of the nation. For example, Pennsylvania grounds its leadership programs in core and corollary standards. Alternatively, New Jersey and New York City have developed their own set of standards for principal leadership.

In a study regarding principal preparation programs, Levine (2005) revealed that “the majority of programs range from inadequate to appalling, even at some of the country’s leading universities” (p. 23). As a result, school principals are placed into their schools and expected to function successfully with limited experience outside of the classroom. Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, and Cohen (2007) asserted that building level leaders “...are frequently ill-prepared and inadequately supported to take on the challenging work of

instructional leadership and school improvement” (p. 4). There is a need for induction programs and other support systems which assist the new principal as he/she navigates through the daunting duties and responsibilities of school leadership. Since our preparation programs are not developing the skills necessary for success, it is more important to provide the new principal or assistant principal with a practical, supportive induction and mentoring program in those first few years.

In the past, professional development for school principals was offered in what was referred to in Sparks (2009) as “sit and get.” Dennis Sparks and National Staff Development Council (2002) affirmed that the professional development of principals does not support active engagement of participants in problem-centered activities. Furthermore, the development of school principals has been supported by programs which offered a more theoretical perspective. Additionally, “existing professional development for leaders tends to be either too academic and abstract or too focused on managerial tasks” (NSDC, 2000, p. 8). Alternatively, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al. (2007) recommended professional development activities that support the knowledge principals require to be successful school leaders are grounded in standards and practice with authentic skills.

The support systems for new building level leaders are fairly new and have not become commonplace throughout the nation. Out of the need to develop those systems of support for new principals, states across the nation have required induction components for new building principals and assistant principals. Killeavy (2006) warned that “induction for novice principals has not yet been formalized into coherent programs” (p. 174). States are either supporting principals through state level programs or leave it up to the individual districts to develop their own programs. If the decision is left to the districts, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, et al. (2007)

advised that “too many districts fail to link professional development to instructional reforms, and they continue to waste resources on one-shot workshops, rather than designing ongoing support that would help align school activities with best practices and support principal problem solving” (p. 7).

Professional development programs have the responsibility to take into consideration the needs of its consumers, the adult learning professionals. Because the professional development of principals is new, limited evidence is available regarding the impact it has on building the leadership skills required of our 21st century leaders (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Kearney, 2010; Killeavy, 2006; LaPointe & Davis, 2006; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel, 2005; Petzko, 2008). As mentioned in Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005), “there is strikingly little evidence demonstrating whether and how kinds of learning opportunities provided by program features enable principals to become more effective in their practice” (p. 7). In addition, supporting principals will need to integrate adult learning and leadership development standards to be considered valuable. As a result, thorough examinations of the workshops and activities need to take place to establish if adult learning and leadership development standards are existent.

Consistent monitoring of programs needs to occur to establish its worth regarding leadership development. More evidence is needed to help support and evaluate the effectiveness of principal professional development programs. Additionally, programs are usually evaluated by the “happiness quotient” or participants level of enjoyment (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Guskey, 2002; Hirsh & Killion, 2009; Kelleher, 2003), which evaluates it regarding satisfaction, versus impact on teaching and learning. Furthermore, “a great deal of staff development evaluation

begins and ends with the assessment of participants' immediate reactions to workshops and courses" (Christie, 2009, p. 461). Currently, the PIL induction program offers a Daily Program Evaluation Feedback form (see *Appendix A*) completed by participants at the end of the workshop. The feedback form requires participants to identify their level of agreement for twelve questions. The agreement was identified through four levels: agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, and disagree. Also, respondents are asked to explain further the statements rated as somewhat disagree or disagree. In addition, participants are asked for specific information regarding program improvement. Additional open ended questions include: what was the most important learning for you today, and what are you wondering about as a result of today's workshop? The PIL program is currently developing an end of unit feedback form to begin usage in 2011-2012 (J. Lachowicz, personal communication, April 25, 2011). Therefore, individual assessments need to be present during and after workshops or activities. Also, the impact of student achievement will need to be incorporated into the evaluation tools so that the focus of Act 45 and 48 is made evident.

Mentoring is commonly outlined as the most productive form of support for a new principal or assistant principal (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Gray et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Furthermore, mentoring for school principals is relatively new and has limited evidence regarding its impact on the professional growth of both the mentor and protégé (Gray et al., 2007; Spiro et al., 2007). Prior to Act 45, mentoring was not formalized and consisted of a veteran administrator in the district being available to the new building level leader for questions or issues. Comparatively, the mentoring program implemented through the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program has just recently been adopted. Therefore, mentors, although veteran administrators, may not have the background of

the evolving standard-based leadership targets since these veteran administrators may have limited or no experience under Act 45. Moreover, the veteran administrators serving as mentors may not have accumulated the necessary training in mentoring skills to effectively support the principals.

Most professional development experiences for principals and assistant principals have offered limited practical experience. As a result, induction programs for new building level leaders are required to support the knowledge, skills and dispositions through formalized experiences grounded in problem-solving and investigation of the “real work” of principals. These induction programs, which include mentoring, need in depth explorations regarding support for the development of knowledge and skills directly related to building leadership in the accountability era.

The induction and mentoring requirements for school principals and assistant principals have only recently become a focus for school improvement. Because the attention on induction and mentoring is in its early stages, inconsistent standards and expectations exist between program providers. Incidentally, since principal preparation programs are not providing the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to professional prepared to enter the principalship, induction and mentoring programs must develop those knowledge and skills. Additionally, evaluations of induction and mentoring programs lack evidence of leadership development (Kearney, 2010). As a result, refined and focused evaluations which support quality analysis of induction and mentoring programs are required to assure support of the expected growth of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a quality school leader.

Purpose of the Study

This phenomenological study was designed to explore the adult learning induction and mentoring experiences of acting public school principals and assistant principals. Principals and assistant principals have learning needs quite different when compared to a classroom teacher. The needs of our adult learners are not met in environments which currently focus solely on lecture with a lack of evaluation. Wilson (2005) recommended that “data is needed to predict which types of instructional behaviors are the most likely to produce positive learning outcomes would contribute greatly to the adult learning research community’s understanding of andragogy” (p. 15). Currently, the adult learning experiences of participants in induction or mentoring programs has not been featured in program information. A study which outlines the qualities of the andragogical model will support future revisions or additions to the program.

As a result of the participants’ participation in the PIL induction program, this study will highlight the skill development of school principals in relation to the characteristics of effective leaders. Although the principals and assistant principals have completed the two-year program, it is necessary to evaluate the program’s effectiveness with providing new principals or assistant principals the skills necessary to lead their schools. This study will support Villani’s (2006) recommendation for new principals to provide feedback regarding their experiences, but also offering evidence for program developers to make revisions of programs for new principals. Since the foundation of the program is grounded in the three core leadership standards, the researcher will investigate further if the appropriate skills and responsibilities are supported through the two year program.

Within the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership’s induction program, new school principals are provided with the opportunity to have a mentor. This study investigated the perceptions of

each participant's experience with a mentor. The researcher gathered information regarding the mentor's ability to meet the personal and professional needs of the new building level leader. Additionally, this study explored the level of mentoring provided through the district employing the new principal or assistant principals.

In addition, because of the limited financial support for mentoring through the PIL induction program (J. Lachowicz, personal communication, December 8, 2010), and the uncertainty of the educational budget in Pennsylvania, it was necessary to gather evidence regarding the induction and mentoring experiences of new principals and assistant principals to develop programs which are efficient, but also effective.

School districts show support for new building level leaders in a variety of ways. This study identified those methods and strategies and their association to the PIL core standards. Villani (2006) recommended that throughout the first years, "districts should plan professional development sessions for district-wide initiatives as well as for issues that will make special demands on a new principal's skill development and/or leadership" (p. 24). Each participant's responses during the interview were portrayed to assess the opportunities which exist in their school districts for principals to meet and have opportunities for support. The study sought to answer the amount of support, beyond the PIL induction program, that districts provide each of its new principals or assistant principals.

Since the professional development of school principals and assistant principals is evolving, evidence regarding program components is necessary to meet the knowledge and skill needs of future building level leaders. Also, the effective induction and mentoring qualities highlighted in this study can assist in the development of future induction and mentoring programs provided to new principals and assistant principals. Alternatively, those characteristics

of the current program that exist which do not support new building level leaders' needs must be eliminated. Overall, this study supported the development of future state and district-level induction and mentoring programming.

An inquiry into the lessons learned from participant's perspective is essential if money and time is provided for programs which support new principals and assistant principals. This qualitative study identified themes related to adult learning, leadership skill development, mentoring of new principals and assistant principals, and school district's involvement in supporting their leaders. As a result of interaction and dialogue with new principals and assistant principals who have completed the PIL induction program, evidence of the program's ability to support essential leadership skills is featured.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of new school principals and assistant principals regarding their PIL induction program experiences as it relates to adult learning?
2. How has the PIL induction program supported the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the new principal or assistant principal?
3. How are the needs of beginning school principals met during the mentorship component of the PIL induction program?
4. To what extent does the PIL induction program meet professional development standards?
5. How are school systems supporting the development of new principals or assistant principals?

Theoretical Perspectives

This qualitative study will feature the induction and mentoring experiences of public school principals and assistant principals. The perceptions of participants' induction program experiences will be explored through the adult learning theory, andragogy. Much in the same way principal professional development has been neglected, so has the adult learner. The teacher in the pedagogical model takes full responsibility about what is learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Alternatively, as individuals mature, their learning becomes more self-directed and reflective, which requires a much different learning environment and experience. Incidentally, the environment must have the following characteristics to support adult learners:

- need to know;
- learners' self-concept;
- role of the learners' experience;
- readiness to learn;
- orientation to learning; and
- motivation (Knowles et al., 2005).

The adult learning model provides the basis for the learner who arrives with a rich background of knowledge and skills. Additionally, in order to be effective, the learning environment must take into account the assumptions grounded in the adult learning. Incidentally, this is one of many components which serve as evidence of induction and mentoring experiences relevant to new principals and assistant principals.

Standards also play a role in the effectiveness of professional development programs for building level leaders. New principals should be involved in professional development programs

which are standards-based, supporting best practice and current research (Villani, 2006; Sparks, 2002). Also, in *Principal Induction*, Wilmore (2004) asserted that standards provide for an evaluation of programs, but also as a model for the development of the programs. As a result, this study will use professional development standards available as a basis for analyzing the experiences of induction participants. The National Staff Development Council, NSDC, has developed standards for professional development which organizations may use to guide the professional development programming. For this phenomenological study, NSDC's (2011) updated *Standards for Professional Learning* will be featured as the framework for standard-based professional development.

Significance of the Study

The professional education program for new principals and assistant principals offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has a direct impact on student achievement. In a 2011 study of Pennsylvania principals who had attended the NISL's Executive Development Program, schools whose principal attended this program showed gains in student achievement (Nunnery, Yen, & Ross). With that said, an investigation was needed to explore the experiences of the professionals who have participated in the induction and mentoring support offered by PDE. Also, it is necessary to portray evidence regarding the effectiveness of the program to determine funding. Furthermore, this study highlighted information regarding induction and mentoring qualities necessary to produce effective leaders. The findings of this study are useful for all levels of education personnel at the state, district, and community level.

As principals and assistant principals participate in induction programs either offered through PIL or other providers, evidence regarding their effectiveness is needed to respond to the evolving needs of these leaders. Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey (2008) advised that

professional development programs “...provide an environment that is both welcoming of individuals at their current developmental level and also encouraging of their greater psychological growth” (p. 462). Additionally, new building level leaders require support of the knowledge and skills necessary to provide for a successful school program. This study supported the gathering of perceptions concerning induction programs’ support while building these knowledge and skills.

Evaluation of any program should be performed extensively as it is being implemented. As a result of principal induction’s infancy in the state of Pennsylvania, it is imperative that a study is completed to feature the program’s curriculum and participants’ perceptions. Killeavy (2006) suggested that principal induction programs have been implemented, but have not been in existence long enough to evaluate its impact. In addition, Villani (2006) recommended more research on principal induction programs so that more information is available to the program developers. Villani continued to mention that these programs are new, vary enormously, and have just recently begun to be evaluated with regards to principal performance and retention. Thus, a study focused on Pennsylvania’s required induction program will provide meaningful information to regional coordinators and policy makers.

Induction programs in Pennsylvania are currently offered through approved PIL programs. Although building level leaders are fulfilling their continuing professional education credits through these programs, their districts do not have evidence concerning the gains or losses that the curriculum has with their people. Guskey and Yoon (2009) recommended that programs are critically assessed and evaluated regarding their effectiveness. Also, as consumers, we should demand better evidence in the form of trustworthy, verifiable, replicable, and comparative data. Guskey and Yoon also recommended greater rigor in the study of professional

development. Additionally, as districts develop their professional development programs for the year, this study provided the school system's governing board, including the superintendent, with guidance regarding the learning environment and content to be covered in their program.

Districts can then use these results to improve upon the program components and respond to the varying needs of its adult learning professionals.

As school systems across the nation tackle budgetary constraints, all stakeholders will need to assess the importance of programming which directly supports student achievement. Nunnery, Yen, and Ross (2011) summarized in their study that NISL's Executive Development Program in Pennsylvania was cost effective when taking into account the gains in student achievement. Furthermore, Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) advised that "much research is still required if we are to have confidence in our knowledge about effective leadership program characteristics" (p. 67). As a result, funding and program implementation will need to be reviewed for effectiveness, determining its worth. If the induction and mentoring of new principals and assistant principals is not fulfilling its goals, program designers will need to adjust budgetary allocations and program components to better serve the learning community.

Research Design

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study to investigate the perspectives of new principals and assistant principals towards their induction experiences in school leadership. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to study individuals in their natural setting, provide flexibility with phases of the study, and to focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the topic (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, qualitative methodology best fit

this study since the participants are professionals and have the opportunity to share their personal stories regarding induction and mentoring.

This study used an empirical phenomenological approach to describe and explain new principals' induction experiences and reflect on the essential themes of the lived experience (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007). First, as the new principals enter this daunting position, it is important to gather evidence of the programs support systems, which include induction and mentoring, for adult learners. Second, this study investigated induction participants' experiences in relation to the National Staff Development Council's standards of professional learning.

The phenomenological inquiry, as part of uncovering meaning, articulated "essences" of the professional development needs of new school principals. Using the lens of adult learning theory, andragogy, the focus is on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which support the growth of a building principal's roles and responsibilities. Methods of inquiry included phenomenological inquiry of first person accounts obtained by investigation of principals' experiences and investigation of the phenomenon on the PIL induction program. Also, the study gathered prevailing information regarding the implementation of district support systems for new principals and assistant principals.

The participants for this study included public school principals and assistant principals who have been participants of the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program located at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, PIL Region 7, Homestead, Pennsylvania, between 2008 and 2010. This criterion sample of cohorts completed the PIL induction program, Course One and Four. The PIL induction program is a two year commitment aimed at providing new school leaders with a practical application of leadership topics. Each leader was provided the option of a mentor who meets with the school leader monthly. In addition, the program is organized into a

cohort format. Because PIL induction cohort members are novice building leaders, their information provided reflective information concerning Act 45 and its preparation for their growth. The participants' perceptions concerning the PIL program is important to support revisions or additions to the curricular offerings found within Act 45. This study also served as a foundation for additional research concerning professional development of new building level leaders and the PIL program.

The site where the interview took place was dependent upon the participant's request. Accordingly, each interview was planned to take place at a location convenient to the participant which could be the place of employment or location which is private and free of noise. The total amount of time of the interview did not exceed one hour. The researcher visited each participant at their requested site located across several counties in PIL Region 7. These counties include Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. Each participant was interviewed once. A follow-up by phone conference took place with two participants, Andy and Faye.

Limitations

The criterion sample used for this study is small and represents a fraction of professionals who have participated in Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership cohorts across the state. Statewide, 286 principals or assistant principals have completed the PIL induction program. These cohorts occur in eight regions, supported by Intermediate Units across the Commonwealth. The study was completed within one region, Region 7, the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, IU 3, located in Homestead, Pennsylvania. This specific study interviewed six participants from a total of 80 individuals who have completed the induction component, Course One and Four. That

calculates to 8% of possible participants available for the study. Comparatively, if all eight regions were studied, this study would be comprised of 2% of the 286 possible participants.

Each region in the Commonwealth exhibits its own culture. For this reason, it was difficult to gather evidence regarding the PIL induction program's ability to support the skills of a principal or assistant principal in the southwestern area of the state compared to the professional in the eastern or central region. As a result, this study focused on one of eight available PIL regions in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Initiative began during the 2006-2007 school year. It was not until the 2008-2009 school year that it had become a requirement for certification maintenance for school leaders in Pennsylvania. For example, within the compliance period, a leader may attend the PIL induction program in their region, but accumulate additional credits through other offered workshops. Furthermore, many different organizations have developed approved courses for principals to complete in order to fulfill the induction credit required for certification. For example, the Western Pennsylvania Leadership Academy has registered their program through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, PDE, so that their program counts towards the Continuing Professional Education, CPE, credits. Additionally, credits from coursework at local colleges or universities taken to attain the superintendent letter of eligibility count towards CPE credits.

A third limitation is the time of the study. Act 45 of 2007 began in January of 2008. This study occurred during the fall of 2011. One of the two cohorts recommended for this study completed their program during the 2008-2009 school year. The time from the completion of the program to participation in the study will have been two years. Specific aspects of the program

may not have been retained in their long term memory when compared to the second cohort who will have completed their program during the 2009-2010 school year.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study and are based on the review of the literature:

Act 45 of 2007: New legislation in Pennsylvania that requires practicing school leaders to accumulate professional development credits connected to the core and corollary leadership standards.

Act 48 of 1999: Legislation which outlines continuing education requirement to maintain an active professional certificate in Pennsylvania.

PIL Induction Program: The induction program for new assistant principals and principals who have been recently employed in their schools. Must be completed within the first five (5) years of a principal position.

Induction: a multidimensional process that orients new principals to a school and school system while strengthening their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be an educational leader.

Mentoring: support from a more experienced colleague to help a beginner or someone new to a position or school system perform at a high level.

Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership: A program provided to school leaders in the state of Pennsylvania as a form of professional development and certification maintenance. Referred to as PIL.

Professional Development: activities and processes provided to individuals to support personal and professional growth in knowledge, skills and dispositions which improve the learning of students.

Summary

The focus of this phenomenological study is on induction experiences, but includes the overall methods and strategies which support the development of school principals and assistant principals, as adult learners. Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive review of professional development and standards and literature supporting theories and recommendations within the educational field regarding induction and mentoring.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

“Learning is not workshops and courses and strategic retreats. It is not school improvement plans or individual leadership development...Rather, learning is developing the organization, day after day, within the culture.”

Michael Fullan, *Education Week*, April 9, 2008

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to feature the induction experiences of new principals and assistant principals and whether or not this experience supports the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be effective building level leaders. More specifically, it will provide an exploration of the PIL induction program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Other studies have investigated the professional development needs of practicing principals and teachers in other states (Aycock, 2006; Bruce, 2006; Burkhart, Hough, & McDonald, 2007; Clendenin, 2008; Correll, 2010; Hudson, 2009). For this reason, confirming or disconfirming evidence concerning Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership’s induction and mentoring program will be highlighted in this study.

The review of literature will outline assumptions and aspects of adult learning theory which includes andragogical concepts of self-direction and transformative learning. Additionally, professional development in the education profession will be represented along with standards established to guide the continuing development of principals. Furthermore, the professional development of school leaders, including induction, mentoring and coaching practices, will be explored in Chapter 2. Lastly, evaluation of professional development will be featured to establish qualities of effective feedback and assessment systems.

Adult Learning Theory

Adult learning is the process of adults gaining knowledge and expertise in their profession. In comparison to pedagogy, the study of the learning of children, adults have different needs than those of children and adolescents. Merriam & Caffarella (1999) emphasized that “the configuration of learner, context, and process together makes learning in adulthood distinctly different from learning in childhood” (p. 389). The learning needs of adults are derived from their experiences and cognitive processes which differ from those of children.

There is growing body of research that suggests graduate programs do not support the adult development needs and skill development of building level leaders (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; NSDC, 2000). These programs, which provide development of leadership skills, may not contain the appropriate contexts or processes necessary to support growth of the adult learner. Pourchot and Smith (2004) stated that graduate level programs are less likely to offer learning experiences supportive of adult learning needs. In addition, Levine (2005) advised that educational leadership programs are disconnected from the actual practice of the principalship and lacks the rigor required to build the necessary skills to impact student achievement. As a result, programs are beginning to focus on supporting experiential learning and provide a purpose for the learning for school leaders at different stages in their careers. Experiential learning is based on the learner’s prior experience and preferred learning style, which is focused on problem-solving.

Beavers (2009) and Trotter (2006) confirmed that adult educators need to provide more opportunities for adult learners to take responsibility for their learning. Beavers, in *Teachers as Learners*, outlined adult learning concepts and offered suggestions to individuals who lead adult learning. Beavers summarized characteristics of adult learners which include self-directed

learning, transformative learning, and critical reflection. In order to integrate adult education practices into professional development opportunities provided to teachers, Beavers recommended that the experiences of its participants serve as a foundation. Also, the content provided to the learners should contain practical and applicable topics related to their position. The learning styles of the individuals should be supported by providing options and alternatives to learning activities. Trotter supported the notion of these options through adults creating their own “educational paths based on their interest” (p. 12).

Adult learning is a social activity. The current state of professional development of adults rarely offers dialogue and reflection concerning practical problems encountered in school systems. In order for the adult learner to build collaborative skills, both Smith (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005) and Garrison (1997) believed that learners first need to “learn how to learn”. Smith advised that adult learners learn how to learn by developing their strength of teamwork and interpersonal skills (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005). Alternatively, Garrison proposed that learning how to learn is a requirement to become more self-directed and life-long learners. Thus, opportunities for collaboration take into consideration the cognitive learning styles of adult learners. For instance, Merriam and Caffarella (1999) advised that the amount of social opportunities in an adult learning experience is listed as a reason why adults may choose to participate. Some adult learners may be more comfortable learning in a large group while others may seek an independent experience.

Reflective practice is a means to support the growth, or transformation, of the adult learners (Drago-Severson, 2009; Trotter, 2006; York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, & Montie, 2006). Drago-Severson (2009) advocated the use of reflective practice in schools because adult learners have the cognitive resources, such as metacognition, to support this practice. This realization

will ultimately lead to personal and professional growth. Additionally, Trotter recommended that adult education should incorporate reflection and inquiry to insure professional growth.

York-Barr, Sommers, Ghore, and Montie (2006), listed several implications for the design of reflective practice:

- Educators must be respected as self-directed learners;
- Reflective practice must be grounded in the educators context of practice;
- Opportunities should be provided to examine underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions; and
- When introducing new information or perspectives, the reflective learning process must allow opportunities to compare and contrast, link and integrate old and new perspectives (p. 34).

Dialogue between adult learners is a means to support a rich learning environment (Beavers, 2009; Knowles et al., 2005; Vella, 2002). In *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, Vella proposed the use of dialogue to guide learning for adults. She promoted twelve strategies that lend themselves to support effective adult educational environments. Examples of the strategies that support dialogue include safety, respect, teamwork, and accountability. Trust is also an essential ingredient in the development of an effective collaborative environment (Bakioglu, Hacifazlioglu, & Ozcan, 2010; Beavers, 2009; Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011; McAdamis, 2007; Reina & Reina, 1999). Additionally, Beavers suggested the use of dialogue in adult learning because conversations are geared towards problem-solving, a technique in adult learning classrooms. Knowles, Holton III, and Swanson (2005) included focusing adult learning on experiential techniques, such as group discussion, because the adults' experiences serve as a "rich resource" (p. 66).

Adult learning requires approaches which are quite different than those of children. A theory of adult learning, andragogy, supported these differences through specific principles that can be incorporated in the adult learning environment so that the needs of the adult learner are recognized.

Andragogy

A Yugoslavian adult educator, Dusan Savicevic, introduced the term andragogy to the American culture in 1967 (Knowles et al., 2005). It wasn't until 1968 that Malcolm Knowles used the term to identify a contrast in learning between adults and children. It was necessary to develop a theory for adult learning that recognized the skills, maturity, and experiences adults brought to the learning environment. Literature exists that challenges andragogy as a theory (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Tennant, 1997). Merriam and Caffarella suggested that andragogy "is less of a theory and more of a set of assumptions about adult learners and educators also can use to strengthen the learning transaction" (p. 286). Tennant asserted that andragogy "is more a philosophical position on the aims of adult education and the relationship between person and society..." (p. 18). Knowles et al. (2005) included an andragogical model based on the following precepts:

- Adults need to know why they need to learn something;
- Adults maintain the concept of responsibility for their own decisions;
- Adults enter the educational activity with a greater volume and more varied experiences;
- Adults have a readiness to learn those things that they need to know in order to cope effectively with real-life situations;
- Adults are life-centered in their orientation to learning;

- Adults are more responsive to internal motivators than external (p. 72).

The research base around andragogy continues to evolve as theorists and researchers discover or challenge theories concerning how adults retain and use knowledge (Pratt, 1988; Rachal, 2002). Pratt (1998) and Rachal (2002) stated that there is limited empirical evidence to support andragogical concepts. Rachal acknowledged that in order to adequately evaluate andragogy, an “operational, criteria-based definition” is needed for further investigations. He continued to assert that Knowles’s assumptions have not been supported by substantial evidence. Pratt, on the other hand, focused specifically on self-directedness of adult learners. He indicated that adults do not always choose to have control over their learning, nor are they provided that opportunity by the adult educator.

Knowles et al. (2005) provided a framework of andragogy which outlines the relationship of specific components. First, the framework begins with the goals and purposes of the learning. The development of these goals and purposes will support growth of the individual, the institution, and society. Second, the framework offers differences in the individual and situation. These should take into consideration the differences which affect the learning environment for the adult learners. Also, these differences will aid in the development of the activity by responding to both the individual and situation. Lastly, the core principles, which are based on the andragogical model’s assumptions, are integrated into the framework. These principles include the learner’s need to know; self-concept of the learner; prior experience of the learner; readiness to learn; orientation to learning; and motivation to learn. Furthermore, Knowles et al. recommended that this model serves as an assessment of a program’s ability to meet the needs of the adult learners.

Knowles et al. (2005) considered it important for the learning environment to support the adult learners' "need to know". This need to know is based off of three premises for adult learners: how the learning will be conducted, what will be learned, and the learning's value. Comparatively, several authors on adult learning support the adult's ability to control their own learning (Drago-Severson, 2009; Smith & Pourchot, 1998; Tennant, 1997). First, Drago-Severson (2009) described the adult learners' way of knowing. She asserted that adult learners are shaped by their way of knowing, eventually understanding their roles and responsibilities (Drago-Severson, 2009). Second, Tennant advised "...involving learners in mutual planning, diagnosis of needs, formulation of objectives, designing of learning plans, and mutual evaluation" (p. 18). Third, Smith and Pourchot (1998) believed that adult learners have the innate ability to communicate and monitor their own goals in the learning environment. Also, the adult learner will be able to comprehend the learning experience and its purpose towards their goal.

In Knowles et al. (2005), adults become self-directed when they become responsible for their lives. On the topic of learning, adults gain control of the learning experiences for which they choose to participate. If the experience is not meeting their expectations, they will disengage and may leave the learning event. Also, self-concept can cause adult learners to "resent and resist situations in which they feel others are imposing their wills on them" (Knowles et al., p. 65). In order to combat this issue, adult educators must be able to support the growth of the adult learner into a self-directed learner. This is commonly referred to empowerment in the field of education.

A resource of the highest value in adult education, referenced by Lindeman (as cited in Knowles, et al., 2005, p. 37), is the learner's experience. The experiences of the adult learner are

developed through continuing education and employment. Schools that understand developmental diversity are “mindful of the qualitatively different ways in which we, as adults, make sense of our life experiences” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 8). Additionally, the learning environment can tap into this experience to direct and focus instructional techniques and strategies, because adults arrive with many experiences to offer in their learning (Tight, 2002). Also, in her review of adult development, Trotter (2006) reinforced that adult learners use their “experience as a resource” (p. 12). A more supportive learning environment will exist as a result of adult educators providing learners the opportunity to utilize their experience.

The adult learner also requires different learning experiences at different times in their life (Drago-Severson, 2009; Horn & Cattell, as cited in Knowles et al., 2005). Drago-Severson (2009) referred to developmental level or stage as a “person’s meaning-making system through which all experience is filtered and understood” (p. 9). Adult educators need to be mindful of these levels to ensure that content and techniques respond to individual needs. In *The Adult Learner*, Horn and Cattell’s theory of crystallized intelligence, the function of experience and education which increases in the adult years (as cited in Knowles et al., 2005), determined the pace at which learning can progress. Whereas the fluid intelligence is dependent of memory that is impacted as adults age, crystallized intelligence does not. As a result, no adjustment is needed for learning dependent on prior experience and education.

The adult learners’ experiences also play a role in characteristics of adult learners. As a result of the experiences, adult learners arrive to a learning opportunity with certain biases or opinion. This trait can affect the learner’s willingness and ability to learn. The adult educator must provide for adult learners opportunities to reflect upon their learning. For example, students in an experiential learning environment require social activities and organized content in

order for learning to occur. Also, adult learners that experience learning without specific and effective strategies applied are at a disadvantage.

The readiness to learn must be taken into account for the adult learner. The adult learner arrives to the learning situation as a result of their “need to know” (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 194). Also, the adult learner enters the learning experience with different behaviors in different learning situations. Pratt (1988) defined these differences as direction and support. In regards to direction, the learner may need more guidance from the teacher as they encounter their subject matter. Second, he described the varying levels of support learners require. Within both of these “dimensions,” it is essential that whoever is leading the learning activity understands the readiness level of the learner.

When developing learning strategies in an adult education setting, it is important to take into consideration the “life-centered” learner. The experiences of the adult learner support a classroom based on problem-solving compared to subject-centered activities. Furthermore, Knowles et al. (2005) recommended learning experiences which support problem-solving because this is an authentic and practical skill for adult learners. Within this context, Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning, which uses content and experience to modify the learner’s assumptions, is supported (as cited in Knowles et al.). Kolb outlined a cycle of experiential learning that includes concrete experience, observations and reflection, formation of abstract concepts and generalization, and testing implications of new concepts in new situations (as cited in Knowles et al.). Adult educators should balance teaching strategies to ensure the application of experiential learning through practical and meaningful learning activities.

Motivation of the adult learner has implications for the learning of an adult. For example, the adult learner will be more motivated if the activity is meaningful and valuable

(Gom, 2009; Pourchot & Smith, 2004). MacKeracher (1996) advised that these motives are linked to “the needs the learner feels when starting a learning activity” (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, p. 397). Houde (2006) and Pink (2009) claim that motivation for adult learners is intrinsic. First, Houde asserted that motivation is intrinsic and related more to an adult’s emotional significance of the learning atmosphere. Second, Pink referred to Motivation 3.0 and the Type I individual. He shared that the Type I learner is motivated intrinsically compared to receiving an external reward. Pink continued to reveal that motivation for Type I learners is based on “freedom, challenge, and purpose of the undertaking itself” (p. 78). More importantly, the sense of satisfaction and success will aid in the adult learners’ willingness for future involvement in learning.

Compared to andragogy, transformative learning focuses specifically on the adults’ experiences and challenging assumptions to promote learning. Furthermore, transformational learning’s goal is to create an autonomous learner with the skills to reflect and challenge their existing experiences.

Transformational Learning

Transformative learning is about change. This change is dramatic and fundamental in the way the learner sees themselves and the world in which they live (Merriam & Cafferalla, 1999). In addition, adult learners take in their environment and alter or change their existing beliefs. It is how they make sense or meaning of their life experiences. The adult learner filters the information through their existing knowledge and uses the information needed for the particular concept. As a result, personal reflection becomes essential for transformative learning.

Transformative learning theorist Jack Mezirow proposed ten stages that individuals must move through in order for true transformation to take place. The stages are characterized by

varying levels of change. Moreover, this change is brought about by critical reflection (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Mezirow, 1998). Critical reflection occurs as learners look within themselves to promote change and “learn to solve problems instrumentally or when we are involved in communicative learning” (Mezirow, 1997, “Transformative Learning Theory,” para. 9). Because meta-cognition occurs within this transformation, the learner begins to think critically about the way he/she arrived to the conclusion.

In *Leading Adult Learning*, Drago-Severson (2009) recommended the use of transformational learning, relating to the development of the “cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities that enable a person to manage the complexities of work and life” (p. 11). The manner in which the learners filter their experience will impact their growth. Also, Drago-Severson claimed that in order to increase individual development capacities, the learner must actively interpret, organize, understand, and make sense of his or her experiences. As these capacities are developed, the learner begins to change his/her assumptions and/or beliefs, developing into an autonomous learner.

Adults need to interpret their life experiences and how they make meaning. Discourse, a central theme of Mezirow’s transformational learning, occurs with a one-to-one relationship, in groups, and in formal educational settings. Also, discourse occurs for the adult learner to discover new meaning by “critically examining evidence, arguments, and alternative points of view” (Mezirow, 1997, “Transformative Learning Theory,” para. 8). As a result, individuals arrive to the learning with an open mind. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) stated that transformative learning, which includes discourse and critical reflection, is supported best within a structured educational environment.

Self-directed learning is similar to transformative learning because the goal is to develop an autonomous adult learner. Also, similar themes, such as reflective practice, exist between the two theories. Whereas transformative learning is focused on the adult learner's knowledge and experiences brought to the learning activity, self-directed learning's goal is to develop specific learning skills to support the adult learners' independence.

Self-Directed Learning

Learners who take ownership of their learning are self-directed, which establishes various levels of direction and support brought to the learning environment by the individual.

Furthermore, people who are self-directed take the primary initiative for planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning. A consistent element in self-directed learning is the learner's control over their educational experience (Garrison, 1997; Grow, 1991; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). According to this theory of learning, adults become more self-directed as they mature. Also, this type of learning is viewed as self-teaching. The most important dimension of self-directed learning is the building of personal autonomy (Candy, 1991 as cited in Tennant, 1997; Knowles et al., 2005; Tennant, 1997). Instructionally, according to Hammond and Collins (1991) "the ultimate goal is to empower learners to use their learning to improve conditions under which they and those around them live and work" (as cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 305).

Several models of self-directed learning have been developed to support the theory (Garrison, 1997; Grow, 1991; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Merriam and Caffarella (1999) summarized self-directed learning as based on three models: linear, interactive, and instructional. First, the linear model of self-directed learning establishes that the learner moves through a series of steps to reach their learning goals. Second, the interactive model emphasizes two or more

factors which interact to form episodes of self-directed learning. Third, the instructional model requires the teacher facilitating the learner's movement through the stages of self-directedness. Garrison's (1997) comprehensive self-directed learning model included self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation. Self-management provides the adult learner with choices regarding the path of their learning. Next, self-monitoring addresses reflective practices and "adding to and enriching existing knowledge...or modifying or developing new knowledge" (Garrison, p. 24). Lastly, motivation for the learner is dependent upon goal-setting, which assists the learning with "entering motivation," deciding to participate, or "task motivation," the learner's effort (Garrison, p. 26). Grow's (1991) *Staged Self-Directed Model* classified the adult learner as dependent, stage 1; interested, stage 2; involved, stage 3; and finally, stage 4, self-directed. Within each level, Grow outlined the role of the adult educator while they supported the level of self-directedness.

In order for self-directed learning to be effective, the adult learner needs to reflect critically. The learner's awareness of the "historical, cultural, and biographical reasons for one's needs, wants, and interests" supports self-directed learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 291). Furthermore, the self-directed learner should have access to adequate resources to support the individual needs and direction of the learner. Without these resources, adult learners are at a disadvantage as they seek learning autonomy.

Conflicts within the learning experience for adult learners can arise if adult educators do not support the learner's self-concept (Beavers, 2009; Knowles et al., 2005). Beavers reinforced that adult learners will lose interest in their learning if it does not match their intended learning goals. In a self-directed learning environment, it is critical that adult learners have the freedom to choose their own learning strategy. Limiting learning independence for the adult learner can

create an unsupportive learning experience and take away from his/her desire to gain responsibility (Knowles et al., 2005).

To this point, the adult learning theory, including andragogy, transformative and self-directed learner, outlined the way adult learners learn and the necessary factors to support their attainment of knowledge and skills. A general view of professional development in the educational field will include components of professional development programs, characteristics of effective principals, and standards.

Professional Development

Professional development can be defined as opportunities within and outside of school systems that support the skill development of education professionals. Programs offered include team meetings, workshops, graduate coursework, book studies, and in-service programs, to name a few. Furthermore, programs can range from half-hour snapshots to several days of intensive investigation and inquiry.

Professional development programs should be career-staged, focused on the developing skills of the adult learner through phases of their professional lives. Education professionals require different support systems throughout their careers. For example, induction programs for new teachers or principals offer general information and support to assist them with survival in their first few years. Additionally, mentoring or coaching by a more experienced peer offers the new teacher or principal assistance as they navigate through the challenges or obstacles which they face while fulfilling their responsibilities. Alternatively, the professional development needs and mentoring/coaching will offer veteran teachers or administrators with a different experience and support.

Guskey and Yoon (2009) advised “effective professional development requires considerable time, and that time must be well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content or pedagogy or both” (p. 499). In order for this to occur, school systems need to provide substantial investment in the learning of professionals. Additionally, professional development activities require the establishment of goals which serve as the foundation for follow-up or ongoing study of topics relevant to the learners.

Since adult learners routinely engage in activities which involve problem-solving, it is necessary to include practice and experiences which build this skill. Trotter (2006) outlined several theories in adult learning that must be taken into consideration when developing programs for adults. First, she proposed that professional development programs be mindful of the “practical knowledge” of the individuals participating. She continued to include reflections through discussion or journaling as strategies in adult learning activities. In addition, adult learners require authentic activities to build their problem-solving skills that are directly related to their positions (Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004).

Professional development for both building level leaders and teachers has at its core improvement of student achievement. The goal is to develop a collegial, collaborative environment, referred to as professional learning communities, which supports practices to improve student learning (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Often, principals have been left to fulfill their responsibilities individually, without the assistance of an experienced peer (Drago-Severson, 2009). In order to support the development of the skills and knowledge necessary to lead schools of the 21st century, practices built upon an environment of support must become commonplace in school systems. Building a community of learners will require establishing teams of learners to solve the problems together for a common purpose.

The organization and direction of professional development has remained consistent for many years. In a policy brief provided through the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), Fine and Raack (1994) defined professional development best practices as ongoing if it is to result in significant change. Additionally, both individual and organizational development serves as a foundation of this change. They also established a goal of professional development which supports the inquiry into the study of teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is essential that professional development opportunities are school-focused and job-embedded. Comparatively, effective professional development, as outlined in Guskey's *Evaluating Professional Development* (2000), included a clear focus on learning and learners, an emphasis on individual and organizational change, small changes guided by a grand vision, and ongoing professional development that is procedurally embedded. In spite of several years between the recommendations, both support professional development activities that are based on targets or goals and support meaningful and relevant learning opportunities.

The ongoing professional development of professionals in a school system can be determined by intrinsic or extrinsic motivational factors. Many schools, as proposed in Dufour and Eaker (1998), “approach professional development from the perspective that the school will be improved if they can provide incentives to individuals to learn and grow independently” (p. 262). Additionally, the incentives should first be tied to results and then to the goals of the school system. The flaw, they mention, in this approach is that “individual learning does not ensure organizational learning or an enhanced ability to achieve a common purpose” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 262). Meaningful experiences will create learners motivated to participate in professional development.

In order to prepare professional development opportunities for principals and assistant principals, the qualities of effective building level leaders needs to be developed to serve as a basis for knowledge and skill development.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

Student achievement is a primary factor regarding a building level leaders' professional development. In the past, it was accepted that the building principal served as the manager of the building. As a result of NCLB and the changing landscape of education, the role of the building principal has transformed into leadership, but still maintaining the management aspect of the principalship (McLester, 2011). Additionally, Wilmore (2004) advised the development of "knowledge and skills necessary to support changing societal issues, norms, diversity, and the impact of poverty on student learning" (p. 10). Research has determined characteristics of building level leaders who have the knowledge and skills to make significant impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005; Stronge et al., 2008). Studies have also shown evidence that leadership has a role in student learning, second to classroom instruction (Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004). Also, standards of leadership provide direction for principals' learning (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Sparks, 2002). Furthermore, recommendations supported the use of professional leadership standards to guide programs, and development of a "continuum of learning opportunities" (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Portin, Schneider, Dearmond, & Gundlach, 2003).

Marzano et al. (2005) identified a set of effective leadership characteristics through a meta-analysis of research on school leadership. In addition, through their study of thirty-five years of research, Marzano et al. supported school leadership's "effect" on student achievement.

As a result of their work, 21 behaviors were identified as qualities, referred to as responsibilities, of effective school leaders. The meta-analysis also outlined the impact that each responsibility had on student achievement. For example, situational awareness was identified as having the largest correlation with student achievement. The authors believed that because the school leader must understand the “innermost workings of the school at the nuts-and-bolts level” (Marzano et al., p. 63), situational awareness has a major influence on student achievement. The “responsibility” receiving the lowest level of correlation to student achievement was relationships. Although it was identified as having the least correlation, its impact on student achievement can be improved if integrated with other “responsibilities.” Marzano et al. reinforced that relationships “establish a purposeful community” (p. 103) while planning for effective school leadership. As a final point, building level leaders can use the list of responsibilities to guide their own personal development or plan.

In their research-based book, *Qualities of Effective Principals*, Stronge, Richard, and Catano (2008) established eight qualities which serve as their framework for effective leadership. The qualities were identified through a collection of existing research. In comparison to Marzano et al. (2005), the qualities outlined are not ranked in regards to student achievement. They list instructional leadership, school climate, human resource administration, teacher evaluation, organizational management, communication and community relations, professionalism, and the principal’s role in student achievement as the basis for effective qualities of effective principals. Stronge et al. (2008) recommended using the information within the resource for individual or systemic professional development.

Villani (2006) provided an alternative outlook in regards to the characteristics which should be a focus for school leadership. She proposed the development of coping skills for new

building level leaders. As building level leaders enter their school, they are immediately confronted with issues such as isolation, fear of being seen as incompetent, difficulty setting priorities, constraints of confidentiality, technical and logistical problems, legal and moral responsibilities, and school culture and history. As a result, effectiveness in their school community is measured by how well the principal or assistant principal is able to balance, or cope with, these issues.

Professional development programs have resources available which outline specific characteristics of effective school leaders. These resources can serve as goals or targets when developing a framework for the program or activities provided to participants. In addition to the characteristics of school leaders, specific standards of professional development are available to support the structure of a program for education professionals.

Professional Development Standards

Standards have been developed to assist school systems and organizations coordinate professional learning opportunities for education professionals. Additionally, standards of professional development serve as a basis for evaluation methods of programs and learning opportunities. More importantly, as education reform agendas call for all schools to be filled with effective teachers and principals, standards of professional development will serve as a foundation to meet this goal. In order for this to occur, it is necessary to establish common standards regarding the professional development of teachers and principals. As a result of the many varieties of programs, guidelines or standards have been developed to assist effective programs which support the needs of education professionals.

The National Staff Development Council (2001), *Learning Forward*, developed standards of professional development in three categories: content, process, and context. These

standards served as a benchmark in professional development. DuFour & Eaker, in *Professional Learning Communities that Work* (1998), referred to the content as the “what,” process as the “how,” and context refers to the “organization, system or culture” (p. 255). In regards to NSDC’s standards, Guskey (2000) pointed out that “neglecting any one of these dimensions can significantly diminish the effectiveness of professional development and drastically reduce the likelihood of improvement in student learning” (p. 74).

The standards were reviewed and revised in 2011. One distinct change was the revision of the title, *Professional Development Standards*, to *Standards for Professional Learning*. First, the title change was a result of a new focus for professional development in the accountability era. The new title suggests a different philosophy of professional development, which is geared towards an active process for all stakeholders within the learning community. Second, the standards were restructured with the assistance of 40 professional associations and education organizations (NSDC, 2011). The revisions resulted in updated language to represent the needs of education professionals in an accountable learning community. Third, system and school leaders are recognized in the updated standards. Each standard is stated as “professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students...” (NSDC, 2011). The new standards are as follows (NSDC, 2011):

- Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;
- Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;
- Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;

- Uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning;
- Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;
- Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change; and
- Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Since professional development's role is to support student achievement, programming of professional development opportunities can benefit as a result of using these standards as a guide.

The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) developed seven leadership standards to support a framework for administrators' professional development (Wilmore, 2004). The standards were developed through the collaboration of the ELCC and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). In addition, the synthesis of the original ISLLC and ELCC into these new set of standards allowed principal development providers with a more focused view from which to form their programs. The standards address vision development, school culture and student learning, managing to promote safety and an effective leaning environment, collaboration with the school community, integrity and ethics, and the larger political, social, and legal context. Furthermore, standard seven addresses the internship of a building level leader. Standard seven outlines that the internship provide for "...substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution, and school district personnel for graduate credit" (Wilmore, 2004, p. 8).

In 2000, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed their “Propositions for Quality Professional Development of School Leaders” (as cited in NSDC, 2000, p. 6). The propositions stated that quality professional development:

- Validates teaching and learning as the central activities of the school;
- Engages all school leaders in playful, integrated, career-long learning to improve student achievement;
- Promotes collaboration to achieve organizational goals while meeting individual needs;
- Models effective learning; and
- Incorporates measures of accountability that direct attention to valued learning outcomes (p. 6).

Hughes and Haney (2002) continued to recommend that “any professional development system *must* be designed in relation to the specific missions and tasks its participants can expect to confront and the results they hope to attain” (p. 140). The professional development experiences have to be grounded in meaningful, purposeful, and relevant practices to support the needs of learners. After all, these development experiences are what drive the job-embedded skills which leaders will use to fulfill their responsibilities. Additionally, the topics and activities of the experiences for the leaders should be applicable and practical to their daily duties; thus, providing experiences that can support the goal of the school system.

Professional development in the learning profession generally encompasses similar knowledge and skills when comparing teachers and leaders. As professional development evolves to meet the needs of all entities in the education profession it is clear that school leaders

require a different set of topics and experiences to support their knowledge and skill development necessary to navigate through the duties and responsibilities of the principalship.

Leadership Professional Development

In a 2001 report, when randomly selected superintendents and principals were asked how to improve leadership in schools, 54% principals stated improving the quality of professional development opportunities for administrators (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001). Only improving pay, prestige, and ability to remove bad teachers received higher responses in effectiveness according to the sample. Also, a study of California administrators from a large, urban school district, Bruce (2006) interviewed 13 principals in Southern California to identify their professional development needs. Bruce noted through interviews and review of related documents that school leaders identified school district level professional development activities as most effective. These studies show that building level leaders have distinct needs which should play a role in their professional development opportunities.

In *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) surveyed 471 administrators and interviewed 581 teachers and administrators. Seashore et al. (2010) recommended that districts develop a professional development policy and strategy for principals and district administrators. They continue to mention that support for principals is perceived as high in the districts that they studied, but opportunities for significant professional development tend to be informal and unsystematic. While they know that adults learn best through experience, districts must provide a framework for individual and collective growth if they are to realize the full potential of their principals.

Schools have become fragile environments. Tight budgets, school safety and technologically savvy students challenge the progress of effective leadership. In order to develop the education environment prepared to meet these demands, school leaders need the tools and resources to educate and guide their faculties towards new heights. Salazer (2007) proposed:

Leadership today requires the ability to mobilize constituents to do important but difficult work under conditions of constant change, overload, and fragmentation. This requires ongoing professional development opportunities to help principals update their leadership knowledge and skills on a continuing basis. (p. 25)

In order to move districts forward and develop an environment focused on student learning, school leaders need to stay updated with best practices. Additionally, professional educators must model life-long learning. Also, the view is of a lead learner or learning leader, an individual that not only organizes learning for his/her faculty, but also of him/herself (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Schmoker, 2006; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, & Kleiner, 2000; Wagner, Kegan, Lahey, Lemons, Garnier, & Helsing, 2006). As budgets shrink and accountability increases, school leaders, especially at the building level, are in charge of supporting the development of their teachers. In order to do this, they must develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of building level leaders. Professional development is an avenue to build those knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Stronge et al. (2008) advised that professional development for the principal is not optional. Because building level leaders serve in a “highly skilled profession,” it is necessary that they commit to their own development. The role of the principal has changed dramatically

as it shifted towards accountability compared to the days of managing a school (Davis et al., 2005; Drago-Severson, 2009; Helsing, Howell, Kegan, & Lahey, 2008). In order to be prepared for these challenges of 21st century leadership, Drago-Severson (2009) supported the need to educate leaders in meeting adaptive challenges, which are “situations or problems for which neither a problem nor a solution is known or identified” (Tichey & Bennis, 2007, p. 6). In spite of Lovely’s (2004) recommendation that principal candidates do not have the skills to handle all of the roles and responsibilities of school leaders, school systems continue to fill positions with individuals who have simply met the requirements for certification, which include the completion of college or university preparation program and fulfillment of a defined amount of years of professional employment in the public school system.

Building level leaders are provided with a variety of options to continue their professional development. Individuals may attend district level activities, workshops provided by organizations, graduate level coursework, and professional reading to name a few. Programs for principal development are offered through various providers, ranging from professional organizations, such as Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), college or universities, state suppliers, intermediate units, and individual school districts. In addition to professional development suppliers, national or state conferences offer opportunities for school leaders to stay abreast of best practices and current trends in effective school leadership.

A quantitative study was completed to identify the professional development needs of secondary principals in Southwestern Pennsylvania (Bichsel, 2008). Bichsel (2008) surveyed 75 secondary principals to establish their needs regarding professional development. First, as a result of the survey, secondary principals chose analyzing data (73%) as the most important need

as a focus for professional development. The survey also found communicating effectively (64%), using research and “best practices” (61%), building team commitment (60%), and developing information and data collection strategies (59%) as the most important needs for professional development. Second, in regards to the professional delivery method, coaching was the most preferred by the respondents. Mentoring and focused workshops were their second and third preferred choice. Bichsel also recognized through the study that a large number of principals are not participating in sustained professional development opportunities available in the region. Additionally, Bichsel established that “there is room for improvement and growth in order to meet the extensive needs of the secondary school principals in the region” (p. 116).

The infusion of data is essential for the developmental needs of school principals and assistant principals. As the accountability era presents more challenges for schools to perform, building level leaders need to develop a richer understanding of data as a source of improvement (Keith, 2011). Nicholson, Harris-John, & Schimmel (2005) and Leithwood, Strauss et al. (2007) advise districts to integrate data analysis skills for their building level leaders so that professionals are more adept at facilitating the use of data with their faculties.

Building level principals and assistant principals often arrive to their positions from the classroom. Incidentally, their problem solving skills directly related to a leadership position has not been developed to respond to the challenges presented while fulfilling the responsibilities of the position. Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004) and Germain & Quinn (2005) reference expert principals problem solving skills as being more developed as a result of years of experience dealing with school leadership problems. For this reason, professional development experiences need to include practical applications with problem-solving in order to develop this skill (Petzko, 2008).

The professional development of principals needs to be job-embedded (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fine & Raack, 1994; Fullan, 2009; Guskey, 2000; Gusky & Yoon, 2009; Educational Research Service, 1999, as cited in NSDC, 2000; Peterson, 2002; Nicholson et al., 2005; Sparks & NSDC, 2002; Wie, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009), sustained (Donlevy, 2006; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Nicholson et al., 2005; Peterson, 2002; Sparks & NSDC, 2002), and supportive of reflective practice (Drago-Severson, 2009; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hirsh & Killion, 2009; Educational Research Service, 1999 as cited in NSDC, 2000). In order to meet the demands of the position, applying these principles to leadership development will ensure that schools are organized around student learning.

Building level leaders arrive to learning environments with varying levels of knowledge and experience. For this reason, the professional development should be career staged (Levine, 2005; Peterson & Kelley, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Petzko, 2004). Peterson defined career staged as “specialized training for aspiring, new, and experienced principals” (p. 21). Additionally, Petzko (2004) shared that professional development that is career staged is “crafted for every stage of professional development,” (para. 1) which Petzko included can be accomplished through induction programs, mentoring programs, and professional networks and peer support. A new principal or assistant principal will require different content and processes when compared to a veteran building level leader. Altering the environment to be responsive to the developmental differences will enable the learning to be more welcoming and supportive of the knowledge and skill development of these professionals.

Professional development of principals should provide experiences set by a vision grounded in the real work of school leaders (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Lovely, 2004; Villani, 2006). In *Staffing the Principals*, Lovely (2004) summarized her approaches to improving

the principalship. One recommendation is to provide practical training for new principals. This strategy will enable leaders to develop the knowledge and skills to improve their effectiveness. Additionally, Villani (2006) recommended that new principals learning “must be based upon best practice and current research” (p. 16). If not, new principals will develop bad habits or skills that will be difficult to change. She recommended that to ensure the development of successful habits for the future, the first year is a strong predictor of the principal’s future success. Additionally, Villani supported professional development for principals that is planned around district-wide initiatives and issues that will impact the building level leader. Also, continuous learning and validation of experiences of the principals is vital to their improvement.

Drago-Severson (2009) offered a “learning-oriented leadership” model, based on the constructive-developmental theory, for the development of school principals. She developed a four pillar model which includes: teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring. Teaming provides the adult learners with an opportunity to share their ideas and learn from others. Also, since adults grow as a result of participating in leadership responsibilities, their individual development grows. Additionally, collegial inquiry offers the opportunity to investigate further the self-analysis of an issue, which results in improvement of the school system. Lastly, mentoring supports the learner’s growth through a trusting relationship with a more experienced peer.

Robert Hughes and Richard Haney (2002) offered evidence from military experiences and established nine recommendations to include when preparing principals for our schools. In comparison to the military, school systems can incorporate several of the recommendations outlined in *The Principal Challenge* to support the development of their building level leaders. The recommendations focused on experiences which include the following:

1. Create a plan of instruction based on a master list of tasks that a principal must perform;
2. Establish a formal mentoring program at the school district and the state level, looking particularly to retired school principals to act as mentors;
3. Set up a national certification program to make the objectives and standards of professional development for principals clear and measurable in order that they may be met; and
4. Create at the district level a suggested reading list for principals, and hold professional development sessions with the superintendent on the material read. (p. 141)

Principals should not be left alone to search and identify development opportunities necessary to build their knowledge and skills. Two studies, Clendenin (2008) and Hertting (2008), investigated school principals' perceptions regarding support from central administration. In her interview with 12 principals in southwestern Virginia, Clendenin discovered that school leaders sought out the support from central office staff when it came to their professional development. This support outweighed the types of activities offered by programs. In addition, the culture of professional development comes from the system's central office. Hertting's study referenced the individual's interactions with their supervisors as very important to the new principal. A 1998 case study by Smith involved a focus group interview of six educators with a minimum of five years in the field regarding their professional development. Smith concluded that districts "must establish policies and procedures that enhance rather than impede professional development" (p. 210). As a result of district leadership's support for

professional development, the professional staff will be more motivated to participate in development opportunities.

The National Staff Development Council recommended in *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn* (2000) that school districts can do the following to implement a school-based professional development program:

- Encourage principals to distribute leadership in their schools;
- Improve the selection and continuous learning of principals;
- Create apprenticeship programs for principals;
- Establish support networks for school leaders;
- Provide coaches for principals;
- Require a focus on instruction;
- Build grow-your-own principal programs on the local level;
- Make time for professional development;
- Create career ladders that have rungs for teacher leaders; and
- Increase incentives that encourage teacher leadership. (p. 13)

A strategy that has proven to be more aligned with the needs of school leaders was a learning community built upon dialogue (Schmoker, 2006; Smith, 1998). Schmoker (2006) recommended that discussions should occur to develop practical applications compared to theoretical experiences that many educators receive in professional development activities. The conversations, in large or small groups, will enable leaders to refine their practice by way of gathering evidence of success of others or discovering their qualities or strategies are consistent with others. Smith (1998) also summarized that “collaborative activities must become the

vehicle for change and the method of choice for solving the complex problems that face educators and education” (p. 213). The collaboration will first build a strong team to tackle problems focused specifically on the goals of the district.

As the role of the principal evolved, organizations felt a need to establish programs which include components that build the knowledge and skills focused on effective school leadership. These programs are offered through a variety of providers, but all are concentrated on one goal, student achievement.

Professional Development Providers

The development opportunities for new and experienced principals can be provided within and outside of the organization. Development programs provided within the school system allows the consumers to have more control with the curriculum. Furthermore, professional development can also be developed through a partnership with a local university. Lovely (2004) encouraged school systems to develop this partnership to ensure that the goals and vision of the school system is supported. Additionally, local or national organizations offer development opportunities for professional development. When choosing a provider of professional development, the school system must take into account the program’s alignment with the goals and vision of the organization.

In *The Principal Challenge* (2002), Peterson & Kelley focused on several programs offered through universities and school systems which provide professional development for school leaders. A university program highlighted is Harvard University, a groundbreaking leadership development program provided to school leaders since 1980s. In addition, the University of California at Santa Cruz established the New Teacher Center which evolved into support for school principals. The Chicago Public Schools and New York City Leadership

Academy, which are recognized for their progressive professional development opportunities for school leaders, are included as school system examples. Furthermore, several states have developed standards and programs which provide for the professional growth of school principals within their first few years on the job. These states offer a variety of components which seek to support the new principal as he/she meets the demands of the position.

The Principals' Center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

“The Principals’ Center has dedicated itself to the support, development, and improvement of school principals” (Harvard Graduate School of Education, “The Principals’ Center,” para. 1). Started in 1981, under the guidance of Roland Barth, Harvard Principals’ Center provides professional development experiences for school leaders during the summer. Two of their programs, “The Art of Leadership” and “Leadership: An Evolving Vision,” receive the most participation from individuals around the world.

The summer program provides participants with sessions, both large and small group, on topics regarding leading successful schools. All participants are required to read professional literature, use case studies, participate in discussions, and write about leadership and effective schools. Students develop networking and partners that will serve them professionally in the future. Presenters are leading individuals in the field of the principalship and effective schools. Additionally, past participants who have exhibited the ability to facilitate valuable discussions assist with the small group component of the program.

The leadership center also offers a two week “Institute for School Leadership” for district leadership teams. The topics covered in this program include: change leadership, systems thinking, diversity and community, strategic planning and resource allocation, and ways to support personal growth and change.

New Teacher Center

The New Teacher Center in California is a national organization which provides professional development services to teachers and administrators. The organization was established in 1998 by the University of California at Santa Cruz. In July 2009, the organization became independent of the university, continuing to offer the same programs originally developed for teachers and principals. The New Teacher Center offers support through mentoring and professional development programs, online learning environments, policy advocacy, and essential research (New Teacher Center, “About the NTC,” para. 1). This organization offers principals professional development, induction, and coaching services. Additionally, their new administrator program offers coaching to first year building level leaders once every two weeks. The coaching model is also continued for the principal in their second year, but less frequent (once every three weeks) compared to first year participants. Throughout the coaching support, communication is maintained weekly through phone or e-mail. In order for an administrator to serve as a coach, he/she must have five years of experience, have recommendations supporting their candidacy, and complete a blended coaching program.

In addition to offering support to the first year principal, the New Teacher Center provides professional development to experienced building level leaders. The programs occur within workshops and practicum experiences. Furthermore, topics include: teacher observation and feedback, supervision of English language learner instruction, professional learning communities, and social and emotional well-being.

Principal Licensure in Massachusetts

In 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Education proposed a set of standards for school administrators. The proposed standards were finalized in 2010. As a result, these

standards serve as a tool for candidates to receive licensure in the state (Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, “New Policy Standards for,” para.1).

The Massachusetts Department of Education also set guidelines for the development of district induction programs for new principals within their first year of practice, but allow for additional years of an induction program. Districts have two options: either develop a program on their own or partner with an educational organization to monitor the induction programming. Each program is structured around three areas: Supervisor/Director, Special Education Administrator, School Business Administrator, Principals/Assistant Principals, and Superintendents/Assistant Superintendents.

These programs offer a mentoring component, a support team consisting of the mentor and administrator qualified to evaluate administrators, and provision for adequate time to administer the mentoring component. Also, an annual report is required to be submitted to the department of education regarding the induction program. Furthermore, resources must also be provided as defined by the standards concerning personnel selection, supervision, and evaluation.

Office of Principal Preparation and Development (OPPD)

In 2003, Chicago Public Schools created the Office of Principal Preparation and Development (OPPD). Chicago Public Schools seek to provide each school with a qualified leader. The program begins with an application process determining the ability of the individual to serve in a leadership position in Chicago’s schools. Once the candidate attains a position as a principal, the goal is to develop and support their new principals.

Through support from the United States Department of Education and the Wallace Foundation, in addition, to collaboration with outside organizations, such as Northwestern University, Chicago Public Schools are able to offer several professional development

opportunities to practicing school leaders. The leadership project, referred to as Effective Leaders Improve Schools (ELIS) program, offers coaching support based on Gary S. Bloom's *Blended Coaching*. An important component of the coaching model is self-reflection. Also offered through the program is the Leading for Change Executive Education Program. This two and one half day workshop provides development in instructional leadership. The abilities focused on during their workshop are team building, change management, decision-making, and resource management. The Principal Technology Leadership Institute (PTLI) is a third workshop focused on building data savvy leaders of Chicago schools able to make informed decisions regarding the information that they compile.

New York City Leadership Academy

The academy, started in 2003, is offered to aspiring and practicing school leaders by this independent organization. The concept of the academy was directly related to Jack Welch's "Crotonville" Leadership Development Institute for General Electric leaders. Bob Knowling was chosen as the first CEO of the academy. Irma Zardoya, the current CEO named in April 2011, was chosen because of her tenure as superintendent in the New York City Schools.

The leadership academy focuses the program on standards, transformation, active and problem-based learning, student results, and feedback. Furthermore, the program is offered in a collaborative atmosphere focused on preparing each participant for the challenges facing the principal. Moreover, the academy offers the knowledge and support systems necessary to promote success in the position.

The academy provides in-service programs to support leaders early in their career in an induction format and supports the practicing school leader through coaching and practical, job-embedded workshops. Also, the leadership academy offers a 14 month aspiring principals

program, which includes a summer program, a ten month school residency, and a summer planning workshop prior to entering a position. In addition, the coaching model teams the school leader with a retired principal or superintendent. The workshops range in topics from data, scheduling and programming, special education, and quality review for administrators.

California School Leadership Academy (CSLA)

The California Leadership Academy offers several programs to its school leaders to develop its school principals. First, the Foundation Program provides ten day modules, or institutes, which are offered over a three day period. Within these modules, principals study topics such as: building a school vision, designing accountability and assessment programs, and creating successful schools through professional development (Darling Hammond, Orphanos, LaPointe, & Weeks, 2007; Peterson & Kelley, 2002; Peterson, 2002).

Centers, titled School Leadership Centers (SLC), serve each county in the state. These centers provide the instruction and offer support for each principal to implement the newly acquired knowledge on the job. Additionally, the School Leadership Team Development Program offers leadership teams with collaboration opportunities which assist redesigning existing school structures, such as curriculum and professional development. Lastly, the Ventures Program provides school leaders with study of action research projects over a two to three year period. This program offers new information, innovative ideas, and time to analyze instructional practice.

Districts and school systems have developed specific models to ensure that schools have a qualified and informed leader in their schools. In addition to the content provided in programs, mentoring and coaching is utilized to assist and guide the new or veteran principal as he/she confronts the demands and responsibilities of the principalship.

Mentoring/Coaching

When entering a school leadership position for the first time, new principals are confronted with a challenging and sometimes confusing atmosphere. In order to support and guide the new building level leader through the fulfillment of the roles and responsibilities of the position, an experienced school administrator can be assigned to the principal. This experienced school administrator will work alongside the new building level leader as a mentor or coach. Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al. (2007) surveyed 849 principals regarding their perception of the most helpful form of professional. Darling-Hammond et al. found that mentoring or coaching by an experienced principal was ranked as the most helpful. Additionally, Grissom & Harrington (2010) found in their study using the 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey that principal effectiveness was related to a principal's participation in a formal mentoring or coaching program. The concept of providing a mentor or coach to a building level leader is relatively new in the field of school leadership. Currently, many states and school systems provide mentoring to their new principals and assistant principals, but these programs are absent of effective practices or not reaching its full potential (Daresh, 2004; Gray et al., 2007; Hall, 2008; Spiro et al., 2007).

New building level leaders begin their principalship in a stage of survival (Villani, 2006). During this stage, the new principal is attempting to make sense of the new roles and responsibilities, but also attempting to balance time, family, and other personal responsibilities. Also, the mentee may not seek out assistance since it may be perceived as inability to perform the job. As a result, it is essential that mentoring is assigned and part of the professional development program of the school system.

In order to adequately support the new building level leader, mentoring should be provided for a minimum of one or more years (Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006). More specifically, Spiro, Mattis, and Mitgang (2007) recommended that the mentoring is sustained for some time to support and “guide the novice to developmental stages” (p. 8). While guiding the individual through the stages, it is important to challenge the mentee to support their learning and growth (Drago-Severson, 2009; Hall, 2008).

Mentoring must take into account the developmental diversity of the adult learner. Much in the same way that pedagogy supports different learning modalities of children, mentors must take into consideration the adults “way of knowing” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 224). Drago-Severson (2009) outlined ways of knowing as instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, and self-transforming. Each characteristic responds to the learning styles of the adult learner. For example, mentors can support the instrument knower through structured experiences which outline specifically what skills or strategies will need to be accomplished within the mentoring. Alternatively, self-transforming adults thrive on another individual’s guidance through learning. The self-transformer also seeks out knowledge from others so that they may compare it to their own. As a result, mentoring or coaching is key to self-transforming an individual’s growth.

The mentoring relationship is supported through a collaborative structure commonly referred to as a professional learning community (Drago-Severson, 2009; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Duncan & Stock, 2010). In addition to specific aspects of adult learners, school systems are tasked to develop what Drago-Severson (2009) labeled mentoring communities. The collaborative relationship supports professional growth of both participants (Drago-Severson, 2009; Duncan & Stock, 2010). As a result, mentoring establishes partnerships between professionals to induce growth and learning of both participants. Both Yirci and Kocabas (2010)

and Duncan and Stock (2010) believe that mentoring support can be offered within an informal and formal network. With that said, any opportunity that a new building level leader has to collaborate with an expert administrator is beneficial to their professional growth.

The mentoring of a new school leader supports the concept of socialization in adult learning. Drago-Severson (2009) considered mentoring a “relational practice” (p. 223). This concept is integral in the learning of adults since it supports the context of social practice. Additionally, as mentors begin work with their mentees, it is vital that their relationship is comfortable and safe. In order to support quality reflection and dialogue, the mentee must feel a level of trust that topics discussed remain confidential between the mentor and mentee (Bakioglu et al., 2010; Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011; McAdamis, 2002; Reina & Reina, 1999). The careful matching of the mentor to the mentee is important to develop the support necessary to induce professional growth (Daresh, 2004; Hall, 2008). What is not ideal is the forming of the mentor/mentee relationship due to recently mandated state policies, or a “marriage of convenience” (Daresh, 2004, p. 503).

Third, mentors provided to the new building level leader arrive with experience as a school principal. Also, a great principal, no matter how experienced, may not be a great mentor (Lovely, 2004; Malone, 2001; Petzko, 2004; Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006). At times, this individual may be employed within the same school system as the new building level leader. If the mentor works in the same school system, Villani (2006) and Lovely (2004) recommended that the mentor does not have any evaluation responsibility of the mentee. The strength concerning a mentor from the same school system is that he/she can provide the new principals with “how we do things around here” (Villani, p. 21). Villani listed the following characteristics of a good mentor: “positively disposed to serve colleagues’ growth; culturally competent and

proficient; secure enough to value the different and evolving leadership styles of new principals; committed to promoting a new principal's reflection; generous and willing to share resources and ideas; a lifelong learner; and an effective communicator" (p. 22).

Fourth, training is essential to the quality of the mentoring experience (Daresh, 2004; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Hall, 2008; Holloway, 2004; Lovely, 2004; Petzko, 2008; Spiro et al., 2008; Villani, 2006). Training is important because although a candidate may be a great principal, he/she may not be a great mentor (Lovely, 2004; Malone, 2001; Petzko, 2004; Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006). More importantly, Hall warned that in the event that a protégé receives a mentor who has not been adequately trained, professional growth of that individual can be negatively affected. In order to support the quality of mentors, they must be trained in the principles of adult learning theory so that the experience is successful for both participants. Lovely mentioned choosing a mentor that is skilled at teaching adults and train them in effective coaching strategies. Also, Petzko (2008) referred to the training for mentors as "the art of developing the protégé" (p. 241). Similarly, Spiro et al. recommended training mentors in the skills and knowledge necessary to support new principals. For that reason, mentors must be highly skilled and trained in effective characteristics of school principals, such as the responsibilities listed in Marzano et al. (2005). Without training, mentors become more of a "buddy" (Villani, 2006, p. 19).

The quality of the mentor program, as with all educational programming, is supporting its development in standard-based format. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) offers a mentor certification. This organization has developed standards of mentorship to guide their certification program. The intent of the program is to develop the mentoring skills of retired or veteran principals to support new or experienced school principals.

The foundation of this program is its standards. The six *School Leadership Mentor Standards* provided by NAESP are:

- (1) An effective mentor sets high expectations for self-development in high quality professional growth opportunities;
- (2) An effective mentor has knowledge of and utilizes mentoring and coaching practices;
- (3) An effective mentor is active in instructional leadership;
- (4) An effective mentor respects confidentiality and a code of ethics in the mentor protégé relationship;
- (5) An effective mentor contributes to the body of knowledge as it pertains to principal and administrative mentoring; and
- (6) An effective mentor fosters a culture that promotes formal and informal mentoring relationships (NAESP, “School Leadership Mentor Standards”).

Coaching and mentoring are at times viewed as the same support system for building level leaders. Drago-Severson (2009) and Grissom & Harrington (2010) provide information which compares the two development models. First, when compared to mentoring, coaching takes place over a shorter time period (Drago-Severson, 2009; Grissom & Harrington, 2010), but according to Kearney (2010), coaching should occur for more than one year. Additionally, Drago-Severson asserts a different relationship between mentors and coaches. Mentors establish a more personal relationship compared to coaches. Second, coaching is supported more by goals and goal attainment (Drago-Severson; Grissom & Harrington). In a successful coaching program, the experienced principal assists participants in building “a strong confidence base to withstand the pressures of the principalship” (Lovely, 2004, p. 67).

Coaching adult learners pertains to the concepts of transformational and self-directed learning. Killeavy (2006) suggested that the coaching model seems to fit the needs of novice principals because learning in adulthood is individualized and occurs as needed. Furthermore, coaching provides the protégé with support as he/she establishes the objectives and plan to improve their leadership skills (Killeavy, 2006). Two views of cognitive coaching are offered by Villani (2006) and York-Barr et al. (2006). First, Villani (2006) differentiated the types of coaching as cognitive and technical. She defined cognitive coaching as “promoting another’s self-reflection by asking questions and sometimes by also collecting data the person wants to collect” (Villani, 2006, p. 22), which supports transformation. Second, York-Barr et al. viewed cognitive coaching as a “way to expand the thinking capacity of individuals so they create their own best ways to address issues” (p. 122). This is accomplished through thoughtfully constructed questions posed by the coach to elicit that person’s thinking (York-Barr et al., 2006). On the other hand, technical coaching involves an experienced school principal who provides their knowledge regarding “ways of doing things” (Villani, p. 22). When new principals need new information or skills, Villani stated that they prefer technical coaching.

Sparks (2002) recommended that a school system that supports its principals provides “frequent coaching on critical skills such as working with teachers to improve instruction, analyzing data, and critiquing student work” (p. 81). In *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn* (2000), NSDC recommended that school-based professional development provides coaches to principals to support them with managing their lives. Also, coaches serve the new leader by keeping them focused on their goals and how to deal with the physical, emotional, and personal challenges of the principalship (NSDC). Additionally, Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto (2011), who provide coaching support to school leaders, comment on the level of trust needed to

support a coaching relationship. Also, the coaching support should be presented in a non-evaluative environment and supportive of reflective practices, leading to the protégé's ability to form their own understanding of changes in leadership practices.

No matter if school systems provide mentoring or coaching to its new building level leaders, limited evidence has been gathered regarding its efficacy (Spiro et al., 2007). Furthermore, Spiro et al. (2007) continued to mention that few states have gathered data that would allow for a rigorous, credible assessment of these programs. As a result, multiple opportunities need to be provided for participants to provide feedback through surveys, questionnaires or interviews. In addition, the results of these assessments should be documented and used to make the necessary revisions or additions to the program.

Through mentoring and coaching, the principal is able to be supported as he/she endures the challenges of the position. In addition to mentoring or coaching, principal induction has become a tool to support the principal as he/she enters their new position.

Principal Induction

Building level leaders enter a profession which has evolved into a challenging and time consuming position. Also, with it comes a lot of responsibility. New building level leaders arrive to a building required to understand and operate under an established culture and climate. Additionally, this task is sometimes done alone. As building level leaders begin their work, they require support to handle isolation, constraints of confidentiality, technical and logistical problems, and legal and moral responsibilities, to name a few (Villani, 2006). The principalship is a lonely position with many challenges presented to the individual. In order to support the retention of qualified candidates and support the knowledge and skill needs of the principal, induction programs have become commonplace in order to meet this need.

The length of time new building level leaders participate in an induction program can be a factor which determines the level of support provided to the individual. Villani (2006) and Kelley and Peterson (2002) recommended that leadership supports and development should occur over an extended period of time. More specifically, Villani stated that support for principals should occur beyond one year. She continued to mention that combining sustained induction experiences with effective mentoring will provide new principals with progress towards knowledge and skills which support district goals and initiatives. Additionally, Villani recommended that the induction experiences for new principals should take in to account the stage of the principal's career. Kelley and Peterson supported the fact that professional development opportunities should be extended over time. Their recommendation included that "it must be part of a long and complex process that builds and accumulates skills and knowledge over time and in different ways" (Kelly & Peterson, 2002, p. 274).

The existence of principal induction programs and the components necessary for program effectiveness was the focus for Spencer's (2003) study. Spencer used survey research to study public school districts in North Carolina. Out of the 117 districts invited, 52 participated in the quantitative study. Spencer discovered that 96% of the districts had no formal induction program. In addition, 50% of the districts reported that mentoring was provided to new principals. As a result of the study, 22 key components of quality induction programs were developed. The strongest agreement by respondents regarding quality program components included components of planning, professional development, and evaluation. Also, the study determined that all school districts who participated in the study did not have a formal evaluation of the programs offered to their principals.

Shadeed-Samai (2005) completed a qualitative study of Broward County (Florida) Public School's internship program to identify the effectiveness of the principal induction program. Shadeed-Samai administered an open-ended written survey questionnaire to 29 principals who were participants in the two year induction program. A follow-up 45 minute interview took place with six participants. Shadeed-Samai concluded that individuals benefited from programs that were developed to meet the needs of individuals instead of a one-size-fits-all approach. Also, induction programs needed to reflect on best-practices, within professional and organization opportunities, to develop principals consistent with the organization's vision. In regards to mentors, Shadeed-Samai recommended that selection and placement criteria should be applied when assigning mentors. Also, once assigned, mentors should receive training and orientation to assure that their experiences are aligned with the philosophy and intent of the program. Shadeed-Samai recommended better use of self-assessment tools for Broward County's induction program. The self-assessment will allow for better guidance of the program and develop individual improvement to support growth and development. Also, a constructive two-way feedback system was recommended.

In the study *Beginning Principal Induction Programs: An analysis of the Needs of Beginning Principals*, Burkhart, Hough, and McDonald (2007) advocated tailoring principal induction to meet the diverse needs of specific groups of leaders. In their quantitative study of 347 principals and 77 superintendents, participants were asked to reflect upon their comfort level in 24 key areas during their first three years as a principal. The key areas were ranked for each principal's grade level and for the superintendents and included: politics involved, managing building, budget, facility management, knowledge of school law, and evaluation of teachers. The grade levels consisted of: high school, grades 7-12 or 9-12; middle school, grades 6-8; and

elementary school, grades K-8 or K-5. The responses from the survey were compared among geographic areas of Missouri, percentage of free and reduced lunch, and student populations. One recommendation is the need for continued data driven information from mentors and mentees, school districts, and professional organizations. Additionally, the team recommended that an induction program includes a mentoring component. Also, the school district should assign a coach for the beginning principal from within the district.

Marcella “Marcy” K. Aycock’s (2007) mixed-method study, *The Induction and Mentoring of Beginning Kansas Public School Principals*, included 135 K-12 principals in Kansas’ public schools who were in their second and third year of principalship between the years 2005-2006. The survey, Principal Induction and Mentoring Survey (PIMS), included 19 questions and was sent electronically to participants. Following the survey, Aycock interviewed seven principals. Aycock found that mentoring occurred through telephone (59%), e-mails (52%), and site-visits (35%). Additionally, 24% of the participants found their mentor’s advice to be helpful. In regards to other sources of support, 60% observed other principals. Induction experiences discovered during the study consisted of working with the principal of the building, cognitive coaching, and assistance of colleagues. Also, there was no report of a formal induction or mentoring program from the study participants.

A statewide principal induction program served as the basis for a 2009 mixed method study by Jerome Hudson. He studied the yearlong South Carolina Principal Induction Program (SCPIP). Hudson administered a survey to 92 participants in January 2009 at a training meeting. The participants were principals appointed by July 1, 2008. The survey consisted of 20 questions using a Likert scale and included five open-ended items. Hudson completed a follow up phone interview with ten participants. The study focused on the differences in perception of

program participants in a principal induction program in relation to demographic data. Also, the program participants contributed general comments and recommendations about four components of the program: technical support, instructional leadership skills, implementing effective schools research, and perception regarding mentors. He found that suburban principals felt that the induction program was less useful when compared to other participants. Additionally, female participants felt the instructional leadership component was more effective when compared to the feelings of the male participants. The mentoring component of the program received the lowest rating because of the lack of time available to provide this service. Overall, the SCPIP program was seen as effective. The study noted that the mentoring component needs to be improved.

In a 2010 study by Correll, the results of the 2003-2004 Schools and Staffing Survey administered by the National Center for Education Statistics were used to assess the needs of principals' induction programs. Correll developed the study into two stages: (a) presenting descriptive data on induction and more specifically mentoring, and (b) multinomial logistic regression analysis of the impact of participation in mentorship and induction activities. The study included 3,222 new public school principals leading for the first time and with fewer than five years of experience as of the 2003-2004 school year. Also, 18% of the participants had no prior principal experience, 21% studied had been in a principal position for one to three years, and 4% had four years of experience. The author identified several components of induction opportunities for principals, which include mentoring, research, school visits, university courses, network, and workshops. Additionally, it was noted that across the nation, induction programs vary by region: northwest; Midwest; south; and west. The study identified that 32% of the principals were satisfied with their jobs as a result of participation in a principal network. Also,

when assigned a mentor, 24% reported job satisfaction. He found a strong link between principals of high poverty areas satisfaction with their job if they participated in an induction program consisting of mentoring or networking with other principals. Also noted is that district factors, such as conditions of facilities, could play a key role in the satisfaction levels of principals.

In *Principal Induction*, Wilmore (2004) developed the Induction Partnership Model to be used with new building level leaders. First, this model is grounded in the seven standards developed by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). Also, the model is focused on goals established by the team comprised of individuals chosen by the building level leader. These goals are measured through short and long term results. For example, Wilmore advised that the individual lists names of people they respect and with whom they feel comfortable, including family and friends. Second, the team meets at an agreed upon time and location. For example, if the new building level leader is experiencing a difficult time, meetings may occur more frequently. It is important that the team remain flexible throughout the process.

In *Mentoring and Induction Programs that Support New Principals*, Villani (2006) outlined principal induction throughout the nation. She organized these programs into district and regional models, state models, and professional association models.

District and Regional Model

The Wake Leadership Academy in Raleigh, North Carolina, offers a Principal Induction Program for all new principals in the Wake School District. The program is a one year program that does not include a mentoring component. This program began in 1998 to replace retiring principals. Additionally, the school system believes that principals are the key to improving schools.

The mandatory one year program for new principals meets once a month from July through May. Also, all meetings are half day in the morning. The topics covered in the program are based on need. For example, if school law is a required topic, the school attorney will present at one of the morning meetings. Furthermore, evaluation of the program is conducted by the director of the academy through questionnaires. The results of the evaluations are shared with the superintendent and area superintendents.

State Model

A two year program for new principals and assistant principals is required in Ohio through the Ohio Entry-Year Program for Principals. The program began in 1997 when representatives from four universities received grants to begin entry-year programs for principals (Villani, 2006). The program is offered in three regions, each directed by a coordinator. A mentor is assigned to the new principal for two years. The mentor is a veteran principal who has completed a mentor training program. The foundation of the program is the meetings the mentor has with the mentee throughout the two year program.

Throughout the program, the new principal or assistant principal is required to develop a portfolio which is submitted in March of the second year as a performance-based assessment. The contents of the portfolio are aligned by the ISLLC School Leaders' Self Inventory. Once the inventory is completed, the assigned mentor assists the participant with the development of a personal learning plan. The portfolio is used as an evaluation of professional growth of the individual which is supported by a post assessment using the School Leaders' Self Inventory.

A review of the program occurs each spring. The review is completed by a panel of trained mentors and their feedback regarding the program. An online or paper survey is completed by the mentor and mentee. An independent consultant gathers the results of the

evaluations and presents the findings in August to the content providers, regional coordinators, and Ohio Department of Education staff.

Professional Association Model

A professional association model offered through the National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP, serves organizations willing to participate. The program, Selecting and Developing the 21st Century Principal, is a skills assessment model provided to aspiring and practicing school leaders. The first model, Selecting and Developing the 21st Century Principal is a face-to-face assessment. The Individual Professional Skills Assessment Program, which is offered online, is the second model. Both models serve as the foundation of dialogue between the mentor and participant. Additionally, both models work in conjunction with NASSP's Mentoring and Coaching Development module (Villani, 2006).

Individuals selected to serve as mentors or coaches must complete a one and one-half day training. Once the mentor completes the training, they are assigned by the school system and meet with the aspiring or new principals for a time determined by the school system. The mentor or coach uses the results of the tools to identify the direction of the meetings. Also, the mentor determines the appropriate amount of time for the coach to meet with the mentee. In addition, the evaluation of the program is determined by the school system, but is highly recommended by NASSP.

Currently, programs offer a variety of evaluation structures to determine each participants or school systems belief of the program's effectiveness. In order to strengthen induction programs for school leaders and to assure the program is meeting its goals, an effective evaluation system must be incorporated into the program.

Professional Development Evaluation

As building level leaders participate in professional development opportunities, including induction and mentoring, it is vital to collect evidence of the effectiveness of the programs. As a result of the participants that the program serves, assessment is essential to coordinate the program with the needs of the adult learner. Building level leaders should be a key figure in the evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development programming. Professional development which relies heavily on meeting the needs of legislation may deter the program's impact on building level leaders.

Standards develop a guide for evaluation of professional development experiences for both adult learners and school principals. Additionally, standards should serve as a framework from which to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development programming. DuFour and Eaker (1998) mentioned that school systems can utilize standards as targets when monitoring professional development programs.

The evaluation of professional development for principals, including induction and mentoring, should be centered on the characteristics of the adult learners. In Knowles et al. (2005), the authors noted that evaluation of professional development is weak. A process identified as the most practical in *The Adult Learner* (2005), is Kirkpatrick's four step evaluation model which describes different levels of evaluation. First, evaluation completed at the end of a session is referred to as the reaction evaluation. This can be obtained through forms, interviews or group discussions. Through pre- and post-tests, the learning evaluation is identified as the second step. A behavior evaluation, the third step, measures the actual behavioral changes of the participants. Lastly, the results evaluation measures the effects of turnover, costs, and efficiency, to name a few.

Guskey (2000) outlined questions that could be addressed when focusing on the reactions concerning professional development experiences. Examples include: when they completed the experience, did they feel their time was well spent?; did the material make sense to them?; were the activities in which they were engaged meaningful?; and do they believe that what they learned will be useful?" (p. 82). This qualitative approach to evaluation is the best way to begin the evaluation of adult learning needs (Knowles et al., 2005). Once the "human data" (Knowles et al., p. 134) is compiled, additional information can then be collected to support the researcher with his/her investigation.

Once all of the data is collected, program organizers need to identify how the information will be used. Guskey and Yoon (2009) advised that the individuals "responsible for planning and implementing professional development must learn how to critically assess and evaluate the effectiveness of what they do" (p. 498). First, evaluations should be ongoing and provided often to the participants. This repetition also allows the adult learner to evaluate the program's ability to support their learning. According to Villani (2006), this will allow program planners to use the information as a reference while revisions or additions are made during program implementation.

The timing of when an evaluation is administered is vital to the creation of a effective professional development experience (Villani, 2006; Wilmore, 2004). First, the amount of evaluations provided to participants of programs is not consistent across providers. Furthermore, very few programs offer pre-assessments which provide direction for workshops. On the other hand, at the conclusion of workshops, most providers administer an evaluation. Villani proposed that "program assessment should begin with new principals assessing their needs and then providing ongoing feedback throughout the year(s)" (p. 26). Also, Wilmore (2004), as

referenced in her Induction Partnership Model, recommended that “every meeting should include time for assessment...” (p. 18). Providing this opportunity will promote changing strategies that are not working; thus, meeting the needs of the learner and teacher.

In *Mentoring and Induction Programs that Support New Principals*, Villani (2006) outlined the evaluation of induction models provided through districts, states, professional associations, and universities. In district models, evaluation examples include surveys, anonymous evaluations (end of every session or program), and questionnaires which are administered at the end of every session or program and several times a year. Additionally, the Leadership Initiative for Transformation (LIFT) provided by Chicago Public Schools is evaluated by an outside evaluator every few years. The results of these evaluations are then communicated through handbooks, discussed with the superintendent and program coordinators and facilitators, or shared with a steering committee.

State models outlined in Villani (2006) included Ohio’s Entry Year Program and Mississippi’s Mentoring and Principal Network. The Ohio program is a two year program which administers a paper survey to the mentors and mentees each spring. Also a mentor panel discusses the program with the coordinators. The results are then compiled by an independent consultant and shared with the Ohio Department of Education staff, program coordinators, and content providers. Mississippi’s Mentoring and Principal Network is a one year program which uses a telephone survey, administered by the coordinator, as an evaluation. Also, written responses by participants round out an analysis of the program. This final report is provided to the legislature.

Evaluation provides evidence of the success of the professional development program. Killion (2003) mentioned that “evaluation not only provides information to determine whether

programs are effective, it provides information about how to strengthen a program to increase its effectiveness” (p. 21). In order for substantial evidence to be compiled, information must be collected which identifies how the program “changes educator knowledge, attitudes, skills, aspirations, and behaviors and how those learnings are applied in ...schools to produce student learning” (Hirsh & Killion, 2009, p. 468). With that said, it is necessary to institute effective evaluations systems that are focused on how the participant used the information to support student achievement.

Summary

This chapter began with adult learning theory and the principles which serve as its foundation. It was evident that adults arrive to learning experiences with a different set of lens when compared to adolescents. Additionally, adults learning should be grounded in problem-solving and conversation so that growth and change in assumptions occur for the learner. Next, a review of professional development best-practices and standards-based programming was presented in chapter two. Specific induction programs offered by school systems, organizations, and states were included to outline a framework of programming across the nation. Overall, the review of literature verifies that induction and mentoring of new building level leaders will impact student achievement if it supports adult learning, is standard-based, and is evaluated to meet the needs of the learners and organization.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

*“Professional development is certainly important for success,
but leaders and teachers must be skeptical consumers”*

Douglas Reeves, 2006, p. 79

Introduction

Professional development for new principals and assistant principals has been neglected when compared to the teaching profession. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and its application of school accountability has brought more attention to the role school-based professionals have in student achievement. Marzano et al. (2005) and Stronge et al. (2008), through their meta-analysis studies, supported the relationship between the effectiveness of a principal and student achievement.

In order to build the necessary knowledge and skills for building level leaders to support student achievement, professional development of principals will need to be grounded in practices of adult education and standard based professional development. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) developed a standard based professional development framework reflective of the learning needs of education professionals in the 21st century. The adult learning theory, andragogy, provides specific principles which support the learning of adults. These principles include:

- need to know;
- learners’ self-concept;
- role of the learners’ experience;
- readiness to learn; and
- orientation to learning; and

- motivation (Knowles et al., 2005).

Additionally, self-directed and transformational learning support adults as they encounter new learning environments and information.

Across the nation, colleges and universities, states, and districts have developed professional development programs for principals. These programs support the knowledge and skill development for new and veteran school principals and assistant principals through workshops, induction, and mentoring or coaching services. Several models are available as templates when creating a principal induction program. In addition, Villani (2006) provided samples of principal induction programs offered by districts or regions, states, or professional associations.

The Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership program (PIL) evolved out of Act 45 of 2007. Act 45 improved upon the use of Act 48 hours for Pennsylvania school principals and required all school principals or assistant principals to complete an induction program within their first 5 years of being named in a PIL position. Additionally, Act 45 proposed that the Pennsylvania Department of Education provide an induction program to all principals and assistant principals at no charge to the individual and their district. Also, the principal induction program, based on National Institute for School Leadership's (NISL) leadership development curriculum, is a two year co-hort program offering a mentoring component through Pennsylvania Principal's Mentoring Network (PPMN). Furthermore, the induction program is based on the PIL core standards:

1. The leader has the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success;

2. The leader has an understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader's job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school; and
3. The leader has the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system (Pennsylvania Department of Education, "PIL Legislation FAQ," para. 3).

The PIL induction program has been in existence since 2007. The NISL Executive Development Program was the topic of a 2011 study by Nunnery, Yen, and Ross. Furthermore, the results of the study were focused on student achievement and program cost. Additionally, evaluations of the program also exist in the form of end of workshop evaluations completed by the participants.

Statement of the Problem

Principal induction and mentoring is relatively new across the nation, particularly Pennsylvania. Since the focus has just recently been placed on the induction and mentoring of principals, limited evidence exists regarding its effectiveness with the development of a new building level leader's knowledge and skills. In addition, formalized evaluations systems, which also include feed-back loops, are not existent in many of the programs throughout Pennsylvania. In spite of the lack of quality evaluation systems, induction and mentoring programs are functioning under inconsistent standards for leadership development. As a result, evaluating the development of principals will be more difficult until a consistent model of leadership development is made available to be used as the framework.

The need for principal induction and mentoring has become more important because of the lack of quality principal preparation programs. The current state of principal professional development has created passive participants and focused more on theoretical studies.

Additionally, skill development in programs relied heavily on the management aspect of the principalship. In order to develop quality leaders of the 21st century, principal professional development programs must be grounded in the real work of principals, requiring building level leaders to collaborate and solve problems evident in their positions (Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004; Nicholson et al., 2005; Sparks & NSDC, 2002; Williamson, as cited in NSDC, 2000). Furthermore, while developing these leadership skills, individuals will be better supported through this transformation with a skilled mentor.

Induction and mentoring programs are vital to the development of the knowledge and skills of principals ready to serve our 21st century schools. Pennsylvania has committed to supporting an induction program to help fill schools with effective building level leaders. Currently, evaluations of the program are lacking and are only assessed through end-of-workshop feedback from the participants. This investigation will explore the perceptions of new principals and assistant principals who have participated in the PIL induction program and mentoring component.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of new school principals and assistant principals regarding their PIL induction program experiences as it relates to adult learning?
2. How has the PIL induction program supported the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the new principal or assistant principal?
3. How are the needs of beginning school principals met during the mentorship component of the PIL induction program?
4. To what extent does the PIL induction program meet professional development standards?

5. How are school systems supporting the development of new principals or assistant principals?

Research Design

A qualitative approach was used to investigate new principals and assistant principals' perceptions towards their induction experiences. This approach allowed the researcher to examine "how people learn about and make sense of themselves and others" (Berg, 2009, p. 8). The aim of this study was to determine what the "experience means for the persons who have had the experience" and "to provide a comprehensive description of it" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Furthermore, as the participants reflected upon their induction experiences, information was gathered regarding their personal growth of leadership skills and knowledge through the PIL induction program and district support systems. A benefit of the participants' reflection on their induction experiences, as listed by York-Barr et al. (2006), is the consideration of multiple perspectives, which "engage a greater variety of perspectives for addressing the many challenging and complex dilemmas of practice" (p. 13).

The researcher used a phenomenological approach to describe the essence of the new principals' induction experience and reflect on the essential themes of the lived experience (Creswell, 2007; deMarrais, 2004). Moustakas (1994) asserted that phenomenology "provides the impetus for experience and for generating new knowledge" (p. 26). The researcher used the participants' statements to develop "new knowledge" of the PIL induction and mentoring program. Moustakas (1994) declared that phenomenology uses those experiences to support a thorough description that provides a reflective analysis of the essence of the experience. Additionally, the researcher utilized phenomenology because "the self of the researcher is present throughout the process which allows the researcher to experience growing self-awareness

and self-knowledge” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 17). The researcher also assumed the role of the learner (deMarrais, 2004).

This empirical phenomenological study utilized interviewing as a mean to gain comprehensive descriptions of the induction and mentoring programs. These interviews occurred in a one-on-one format and provided a description of the meaning of the induction experience for “a small number of individuals who experienced it” (Creswell, 2007, p. 131). Since the participants came from different school districts in PIL region 7, the one-on-one format allowed the researcher to be responsive to each participant’s schedule and give them more flexibility with the interview location. Several advantages, of which were listed by Creswell (2007), regarding interviews include:

- Useful when participants cannot be directly observed;
- Participants can provide historical information; and
- Allows researcher control over the line of questioning (p. 179).

Additionally, through the one-on-one interview the researcher developed a comfortable atmosphere. The interview set-up gave the participants a more individualized and focused relationship with the researcher which in turn improved the level of responses.

The semistandardized interview questions provided the researcher with “freedom to digress...to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions” (Berg, 2009, p. 107). In the event that the researcher looked to explore a topic further with the interviewee, the semistandard protocol permitted deeper inquiry. Semistandardized questions allowed the researcher to “pursue areas spontaneously initiated by the interviewee” (Berg, 2009, p. 109). While providing the questions, information was clarified and prompts were used to gather more detailed information. Also, the interviews provided the researcher with in-depth knowledge from

participants about a particular phenomenon, experiences, or sets of experiences (deMarrais, 2004). The goal, as described in deMarrais (2004), was “to construct as complete a picture as possible from the words and experiences of the participant” (p. 52). The pictures constructed during the interviews created the themes and qualities for this investigation.

Participants

The pilot study participants were public school principals who had completed the PIL induction program between 2008 and 2010. The criterion selected pilot participants were principals or assistant principals from local school districts in Westmoreland county and known to the researcher. The researcher contacted each participant through e-mail to explain the nature of the study and inquire of the individual’s interest in taking part in the pilot. Pilot study participants were free to decide not to participate in the pilot study or to withdraw at any time. Even if they chose to participate, they had the option to withdraw at any time by notifying the project coordinator or researcher. Upon their request to withdraw, all information pertaining to them would be destroyed.

For the qualitative study, the researcher chose participants which were representative of a larger population. As a result, the findings or lived experiences of new building level leaders’ participation in the PIL induction program contributed meaningful information to district level leaders, region program coordinators, and those that develop induction programs for new principals and assistant principals in Pennsylvania.

The participants and setting for this study were criterion selected from a pool of participants working in public schools who have completed the PIL induction program in PIL Region 7 of Pennsylvania, which includes Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. All principals or assistant principals were employed within public

schools. Furthermore, in order to gather meaningful information pertaining to the induction and mentoring program, the study included individuals who had experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). The criterion described provided the best opportunity of finding individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

For this study, the researcher interviewed six (8%) building level leaders who have completed the PIL induction program in Region 7. Between 2008 and 2010, 80 public school principals or assistant principals have completed the PIL induction program in PIL Region 7. Statewide, 286 principals or assistant principals have completed the induction program between 2008 and 2010. As referenced in Creswell (2007), phenomenological studies have ranged from 1 up to 325 participants (Dukes, 1984; Polkinghorne, 1989). Additionally, Dukes (1984) recommended studying 3 to 10 subjects (as cited in Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Also, Berg (2009) advised that researchers need to take into account their level of skill when deciding on the size of the sample. As a result, the proposed number of the sample is adequate for this study.

The participants met the following selection criteria. The public school principal or assistant principal participating in the study had completed Course One and Four of the PIL induction program. The age of this individual varied because of years of service in education, but they were at least 27 years of age. In order for education professionals to attain school principal certification, they must fulfill at least five years of experience in a public school setting. The PIL induction component is required of all principals or assistant principals within five years of being named to the PIL position. This study included participants with four or more years of experience as a school principal. Since the induction component became a requirement after January 2008, participants with more than five years of experience have completed the induction component to further their leadership knowledge. This was the case with one study participant.

Furthermore, gender was not established as a criterion at this time since it does not have relevance to this particular study. Also, the participant's level, elementary, middle or secondary, is not relevant to the focus of this study, since certifications are K-12, but will be collected as demographic information. The researcher protected the privacy of each of the participants. The names of the participants were changed to maintain anonymity.

The names of the possible participants for this study were obtained from the PIL Region 7 Site Coordinator. Each of the eight PIL regions in Pennsylvania is managed by a full-time site coordinator. This individual represents the region at the state level and serves as a facilitator of workshops and contact person for school administrators within the region. The researcher e-mailed a request to the Site Coordinator to provide a list of participants in PIL Region 7 who completed the PIL induction program, Course One and Four, between 2008 and 2010. On May 5, 2011, the Region 7 Site Coordinator contacted all available participants who met the criteria for this study. The Site Coordinator then forwarded to the researcher a list of 95 possible participants who met the criteria for the study. The researcher eliminated individuals that were employed in a private or charter school and intermediate unit. As a result, 80 individuals met the criteria for this study. Once approval for the study was provided to the researcher, an invitation was e-mailed to all participants. The e-mail included the background of the study and the researcher's contact information.

The researcher received a response from eight individuals who were currently serving in roles as principals or assistant principals. One participant that replied was currently acting in a coaching capacity and no longer a principal or assistant principal. The researcher did not include this respondent in the study. Additionally, two possible participants that responded to the initial e-mail did not respond to further inquiries by the researcher. Once the initial invitation was

forwarded to possible participants, the researcher believed that it would be challenging to keep within the proposed number of participants, five to ten. Incidentally, the number of volunteers willing to participate was much lower than expected. The researcher believed that the timing of the invitation, which occurred during the busiest time of the school year, decreased possible participants' willingness to volunteer.

Pilot Study

A pilot study of the interview questions was completed with three participants from local school districts in Westmoreland County. The three participants were excluded from participation in the formal study. For this study, the researcher piloted interview questions with individuals from local school districts who have completed the PIL induction program, Courses One and Four. The criterion selected participants included individuals who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon. The researcher submitted a proposal for permission to conduct the pilot study with the proposed sample. Upon permission to conduct the pilot study, the researcher contacted principals or assistant principals in Westmoreland County and who met the criteria established for participation. An e-mail was sent to possible participants for invitation in the pilot study. The invitation contained the background of the study, purpose for the pilot study, and information about the pilot interview. Once participation was confirmed, a date for the interview was established, and a copy of the interview questions was forwarded to the individual.

The purpose of the pilot test is to strengthen the one-on-one interview protocol through a trial run. In addition, piloting the interview provided a training opportunity for the interviewer in the areas of pacing, how to respond to the answer "I don't know" and other issues that may arise. Also, the pilot served as practice with the timing and use of interview tools, such as digital recorder and protocol form.

The researcher met with each willing participant in person at a location of his/her choice to discuss the interview questions. During this initial meeting, an informed consent was completed and the researcher explained participation in the pilot study and options to withdraw at any time. While completing the interview, feedback was encouraged and detailed notes were taken on how to improve the interview questions. As per Berg's (2009) recommendation the questions were kept brief and concise to allow for clear responses and more effective analysis of the answers. During the pilot, the researcher sought feedback regarding the length and wording of the questions. Pilot participants were encouraged to provide feedback and detailed notes were taken on how to improve the effectiveness of the interview questions. The questions were also assessed for clarity and accuracy and how effectively each question provided the information necessary for use in the study.

The researcher simulated the study while interviewing each pilot participant using the same protocol in the same type of setting. In addition to the protocol, the researcher focused on the introduction which included a review of the abstract and completion of the informed consent. Also, the demographic information was completed by each pilot participant. While completing the pilot process, it was timed.

Following the pilot, the researcher made necessary corrections to the procedure, interview questions, and feedback based on the practice interview. The pilot occurred to "refine and develop the research instrument, assess the degree of observer bias, frame questions, collect background information, and adapt research procedures" (Creswell, 2007, p. 133). Also, the pilot identified if interesting and substantial data will be provided by the participants. As a result of the pilot, the trustworthiness and dependability of the instrument was assessed prior to the research study.

The pilot study occurred with three participants who were consistent with the characteristics of the study's sample: acting public school principal or assistant principal and completion of Courses One and Four of the PIL induction and mentoring program. As a result of the pilot, several revisions were made to the interview protocol. Question nine was moved earlier in the protocol because it added fluidity to the induction section of the questioning. The move maintained consistent questioning so that the participants may focus on one subject at a time. Also, the word learner was added to questions four, five, seven, and nine to support the focus of this study, the adult learner. Additionally, several sub questions in questions two, three, four, and nine were revised. The changes promoted more explanation compared to yes/no answers. The case study question was eliminated from questions four and nine. Both of these sub questions kept the second part of the question which asked participants their views regarding "solving actual problems" within induction experiences. Lastly, the pilot supported the time frame expected for the total interview, no more than one hour. Pilot participants completed the interview between 31 to 48 minutes.

Data Collection

The researcher submitted a proposal seeking permission to conduct the study to the human subjects review board or Institutional Review Board. In order to protect the rights and welfare of human research subjects, this research obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Following permission to proceed with the study, the researcher compiled a list of possible subjects from Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Region 7 Regional Site Coordinator. An e-mail was sent to 80 possible subjects who met the criteria for the study: practicing public school principals or assistant

principals in PIL region 7 and principals or assistant principals who have completed the PIL induction component, Courses One and Four, between 2008 and 2010.

Six participants willing to participate in the study were contacted by the researcher through e-mail or phone to explain the nature of the study and a date for the interview. Once the date was established, the researcher identified a location of the participant's choosing to conduct the interview. Additionally, the researcher reinforced with the participant the need for the site to be quiet and free from distractions. This strategy, recommended by Creswell (2007), helped increase the comfort level of participants and the willingness to share ideas. Participants were sent the background of the study, interview protocol, and informed consent through e-mail so that they may review the documents prior to our meeting. The participants were free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. Even if they choose to participate, they may withdraw at any time by notifying the project coordinator or researcher. Upon their request to withdraw, all information pertaining to them would be destroyed.

On the day of the interview, the researcher reviewed the informed consent form, which was completed by the participant. Also, a copy of the research abstract was provided to the interviewee. Prior to beginning the interview the researcher reminded the participant of the purpose, that there are no wrong answers, and their participation is valued. Additionally, as recommended by Creswell (2007), the amount of time that would be needed to complete the interview and plans for using the results from the interview was shared. As referenced in Berg (2009), "researchers believe that most subjects will refuse to engage in an interview once they know it may last for two or more hours" (p. 120). For this reason, total time to complete the interview did not exceed one hour. In the event that the interview exceeded the time limit, the researcher was willing to offer the participants the choice of continuing or scheduling a future

date to complete the interview. Incidentally, no interview exceeded one hour. The researcher also informed the participants that all data would be retained for at least three years in compliance with federal regulations.

Participants were first asked to complete two separate items needed for the study: background information questionnaire and consent form. The information gathered as background information included: identifying letter, gender, years as principal, building grade configuration, building enrollment, district enrollment, and geographical location/county. The results of these questions were used as a method to develop a richer understanding of the participants' experiences.

The researcher began the interview process with an unbiased, receptive presence, referred by Moustakas (1994) as *epoche*. A semistandardized interview was used to collect the data. The researcher used a set of predetermined questions to elicit the participants' thoughts, opinions, and attitudes regarding induction experiences (Berg, 2009). This prepared set of questions was used as a guide, but Silverman (2010) proposes that "departure from the guidelines is not seen as a problem" (p. 194). Also, the interview protocol (see *Appendix B*) was used as a note-taking device in the event the audio-recording failed during the interview. This protocol, or guide, only served as a basis for the conversation (deMarrais, 2004). Alternatively, a good interview requires that the researcher exhibits proficient listening skills, thus, the session was recorded so that the researcher can focus on the participants' responses which built a respectful atmosphere. Creswell (2007) recommended the use of a protocol to help the researcher organize thoughts on items such as "starting the interview, concluding ideas, information on ending interview, and thanking the respondent" (p. 135). During the interview, other open ended questions were asked,

but the information only served to support evidence of a commonality of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007).

The interview questions sought to explore two concepts: (a) their experiences in terms of the phenomenon, and (b) the contexts or situations that had typically influenced or affected their experiences of the phenomenon (Moustakas, as cited in Creswell, 2007). Probing questions were used to invite participants to expand on previous, important statements as necessary.

Additionally, the interview included a small number of questions "intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants" (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). These sub-questions incorporated Guskey's (2000) questions regarding participant's professional development experiences. Also, other sub-questions were based on the andragogical concepts which include: the need to know, self-concept, experiences, readiness to learn, life-centered, and motivation and NSDC's standards for professional learning. The researcher limited the interview questions to no more than 15-20 questions.

Most interview questions used for this study came from Marcella "Marcy" K. Aycock's 2007 study "The Induction and Mentoring of Beginning Kansas Public School Principals." The researcher received permission to use Aycock's interview questions on April 28, 2011.

Aycock's completed a mixed method study which began as a quantitative survey that led to the development of the interview questions. Furthermore, the interview questions reflected areas that needed further investigation. Aycock piloted the interview questions with three educators: one central office, one service center administrator, and one elementary school principal. The pilot team reviewed the questions for clarity and focus. Minor wording revisions to some questions were made in order to make them more concise. For this study, the researcher used

only those questions that supported this study’s research questions. Furthermore, questions were added or deleted in response to the focus of this study.

Aycock’s (2007) questions were designed specifically to support the four key areas of her study: induction experiences, induction recommendations, effects of mentoring, and job satisfaction. Three questions from Aycock were eliminated for this study (see *Appendix C*). The researcher believed that question five should be eliminated because other questions would support the study’s research questions. Also, question seven focused on principal internships, which is not relevant to this study. As a result, question seven was eliminated. The question relating to job satisfaction, question nine, was deleted for this study since it does not support the research questions. Also, the acronym PIL (Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership) was placed before the word induction in questions two, three, and four to support the research questions. Minor revisions were made to several other questions. Aycock included a question regarding participant’s identification of missing aspects of the induction program. This study revised the question to describe how the PIL induction program supported participant’s personal and professional needs. Also, Aycock directed a mentoring question towards impact on the participant’s career. This study revised the question to seek the impact of mentoring during the participant’s first five years of the principalship.

The following are the general questions that the researcher used for the interviews:

| Question Number | Question | Theory/Framework | Related Research Question |
|-----------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | What types of induction experiences were provided to you during your first few years as a principal or assistant principal? | NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 2 | Did the PIL induction activities provide the help you needed? If yes, how? If no, what was lacking? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 2 |
| 3 | What changes would you have made to the PIL induction experiences (or | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for | 2 |

| | | | |
|----|--|---|---------------|
| | lack of) that you were a part of? | Professional Learning | |
| 4 | How did the PIL induction program support your personal and professional needs as an adult learner and building level leader? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 5 | What professional development activities were provided within your district during your first 5 years of the principalship? How did these learning opportunities support your knowledge and skills of school leadership? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 5 |
| 6 | Did the individual who formally or informally mentored you make an impact on your first 1-4 years of principalship? If yes, what are the three major areas your mentor made the most impact? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 3, 4 |
| 7 | Can you give me specific examples of how a mentoring experience affected you? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 3, 4 |
| 8 | How would you describe the relationship you had with the individual you consider your most significant mentor? What was the best advice your mentor gave you? What do you wish had happened during the mentoring relationship that did not happen? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 3, 4 |
| 9 | Do you feel the experiences you had during your first year, including any induction experiences, help make you more successful in your position? If yes, how? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 2, 3 |
| 10 | Would you like to share any additional information that you feel is valuable to beginning principals, concerning mentoring or induction? | Knowles Andragogy; NSDC Standards for Professional Learning | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |

Data Analysis

Each interview was audio-taped. Upon the completion of each interview, it was transcribed. Data collected, or primary material (Creswell, 2009), during the interviews was transcribed, reviewed, coded, and then analyzed after each interview. Verbatim transcripts were forwarded to all study participants to review for accuracy. Transcripts that were approved by the

participant were then prepared for data analysis. The data in this phase of the study included reflections and philosophical views of the participants about their induction and mentoring experiences.

The researcher investigated the data to “highlight ‘significant statements,’ sentences, or quotes that provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell, 2007, p. 61) or what Moustakas (1994) calls “horizontalization” where “statements irrelevant to the topic and question as well as those that are repetitive or overlapping are deleted” (p. 97). The template (see Figure 1) created by Creswell (2007) was used as a guide for coding the responses (p. 170):

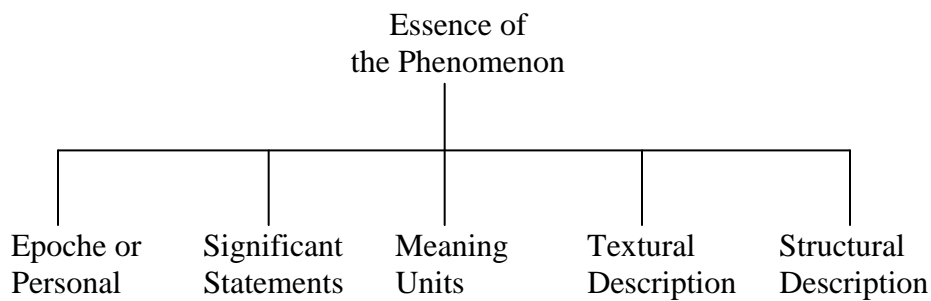


Figure 1. Template for Coding a Phenomenological Study

Prior to beginning the coding of information, the researcher entered the investigation of the data with a “fresh perspective,” or epoche (Creswell, 2007). The information was compared to the emerging categories, using the constant comparative approach recommended by Creswell.

While reviewing the participants’ responses, open coding, or development of major categories was created. The major categories included induction and mentoring experiences based on andragogy’s six principles: the need to know, self-concept, experiences, readiness to learn, life-centered, and motivation (Knowles et al., 2005). In addition, NSDC’s *Standards for Professional Learning* was used as a second major category. Following the development of the

major categories, the researcher began collecting information which fell under a major category, or the core phenomenon, focusing on that one category, defined as axial coding (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007). Additional themes or meaning units evolved as the researcher explored the personal experiences shared by the participants.

This study focused on the personal experiences of an induction program. More importantly, it is the perceptions of the induction and mentoring participants that served as a foundation for statements. The focus was on what happened (Creswell, 2007). As a result of these experiences, the researchers coded the transcripts by focusing on significant statements of the intentional experience, based on the participant's memory and meaning of the event. The significant statements were grouped into meaning units or themes (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) identifies two types of information the researcher will encounter while coding statements. He defines them as the textural (what the participants experienced) and structural descriptions (the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon). While coding the transcripts, the researcher identified both the textural and structural descriptions which later helped to describe the essence. The researcher concentrated on the common experiences of the participants during the PIL induction and mentoring program.

Knowles's adult learning theory was used as a theoretical lens of the study. This framework was based upon the *Andragogy in Practice* model (Knowles et al., 2005). Within this model, the core adult learning principles, which provide relevant targets for learning experiences, were defined. The six principles also served to support analysis of induction and mentoring activities. In addition to the core principles, this framework offered additional influences, such as institutional growth, subject matter difference, situational differences, and individual growth, within adult learning principles. Also, the National Staff Development Councils *Standards for*

Professional Learning was used as a theoretical lens for professional development. These standards support best practices in principal professional development, one of which is standards-based.

This study used the perceptions of new public school principals and assistant principals who have completed the PIL induction and mentoring program. While interacting with the participants and developing the essence description, it was necessary to follow specific guidelines to assure that this study supports trustworthiness and dependability.

Trustworthiness

The researcher employed a number of strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the data. Prior to beginning the interviews and upon first contact with participants, the researcher focused on developing a positive and collaborative relationship with individuals. The researcher used first names, created a casual atmosphere, and focused on the relationship. Additionally, the researcher began the interview with general conversation not related to the interview so that both the interviewer and interviewee were comfortable. Also, the dialogue between the researcher and participant addressed the accuracy of the descriptions (Creswell, 2007). As a result of the collaborative relationship established between the researcher and participant, trustworthiness was established. Creswell (2007, 2009) stated that the time spent with the participants will encourage trustworthiness. The researcher believes that first contact with the participant, the interview, and any follow-up was time well spent to develop trust.

As transcription of interviews occurred, detailed notes were developed to allow the researcher to identify themes between participants' experiences. The detailed notes also provided the ability to explore shared characteristics between interviewees (Creswell, 2007). Once the detailed notes were completed, specific accounts of the lived experience were

organized to form general themes prior to developing the meaning units. Although two major meaning units, adult learning and NSDC standards, currently exist, the emergence of additional units developed through continued explorations.

As per Silverman's (2010) recommendation, information was recorded in terms as concrete as possible. The transcribed information included verbatim accounts of participants' responses, supporting Seale's "low-inference descriptors" (as cited in Silverman, 2010). Those significant statements from the participants were used to develop patterns which fall under each meaning unit, or theme. Also, while presenting the data in Chapter 4, the researcher accurately detailed specific statements regarding participants' personal experiences in the induction and mentoring program.

An additional method to support trustworthiness is the use of thick, rich description (Creswell, 2007, 2009). These thick, rich descriptions were incorporated into detailed portrayals of each principal's or assistant principal's significant statements of his/her involvement in the phenomenon. Also, through the participant's stories, the rhetorical structure included words and phrases which generated a vivid account of the participants' involvement in the induction and mentoring program. The researcher layered statements through those experiences shared by the interviewee which helped create an accurate portrayal of the PIL induction program.

The researcher established verisimilitude, or the appearance of truth, by portraying the participants' stories or portraying themes found within the participants' stories. In Piantanida and Garmen (1999), they asserted that vitality within the portrayal of information supports verisimilitude. The use of vital, rich, and layered statements from the interviews were incorporated into the conclusions to simulate the experiences. As the study came "alive" during findings, the sense of vitality enabled readers to "feel a sense of immediacy and identification

with the people and events being described” (Piantanida & Garmen, 1999, p. 152). Focusing on powerful metaphors and vivid images to support vitality strengthened verisimilitude of the study.

Silverman (2010) shared that, in order to support trustworthiness, the researcher must refute assumptions about data. Referred to as the refutability principle, the researcher examined objectivity within the collected information. First, the researcher assured that sufficient time and methods are provided to determine the results of the study. Second, arriving to the interview with an unbiased, receptive presence enabled the researcher to maintain trustworthiness, described as the epoche process (Moustakas, 1992). Silverman (2010) warned that researchers may be tempted to base results too early because of predetermined assumptions. As a result, it is necessary to extinguish all preconceived beliefs prior to finalizing results. Although transcription of interviews will occur immediately, the researcher continued to review the documents to allow for themes to develop.

Dependability

Dependability within the study occurred through consistent applications of categories and procedures (Creswell 2007; Silverman, 2010; Yin, as cited in Creswell, 2009). The researcher established a summary of procedures, which was adapted from Aycock (2007), to follow during each interview to maintain consistency between each participant (see *Appendix D*). Silverman (2010) recommended that in order to support reliability in the study, the researcher needs to document the procedure and to assure the consistency between categories. The pilot study promoted consistent applications of the procedures.

Member checking, which required the researcher to ask participants their view of the findings and interpretations within the information, was employed. Although Creswell (2007) does not recommend providing transcripts to participants to review, he stated that the participants

can “judge the accuracy and credibility of the account” (p. 208). For member checking to be effective, participants received a draft of their transcripts to review for themes and accuracy. For this study, participants were provided the transcriptions to assure that their lived experiences were precisely documented. Also, Creswell recommended member checking in a focus group. For this study, a focus group may be difficult because of schedules and distances traveled for participants. The researcher provided the interviewees with copies of transcripts for their review.

Dependability of the evidence compiled during the interviews was supported through inter-coder agreement (Creswell, 2009). Inter-coder agreement requires the researcher and another person to cross-check the codes used in the transcription process (Creswell, 2009, 1998). This strategy assured that similar codes would be used by different people within the same text. The researcher chose an individual familiar with the study to assist with the consistent applications of the coding process. The individual assigned as inter-coder reviewed the complete codes developed by the researcher. Several meetings also took place to discuss the development of codes.

The researcher used different sources, methods, and theories to support the concept of triangulation. First, the use of different sources relating to adult learning, professional development, and principal induction in this study explored the perspective of participation in the PIL induction program (Creswell, 2007). As a result of the connection within the multiple holistic sources, themes were established which support dependability. As mentioned in Silverman (2010), method triangulation combines different ways to look at the phenomenon in order to get a “true fix” on it. Second, triangulation was supported through the convergence of several sources of data or perspectives from participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher

investigated patterns and themes throughout the participants' explanation regarding induction and mentoring.

Summary

This qualitative study will feature the lived experience of public school principals and assistant principals who have completed the PIL induction program between 2008-2010. The participants were criterion selected from PIL Region 7 under the guidance of the region's site coordinator. Each principal or assistant principal participated in a one hour interview using a protocol which includes questions from Aycock's (2007) study investigating principal induction in Kansas. Upon completion of the study, the researcher coded participant's perceptions into themes including adult learning theory and standards of professional development. The presentation of data in Chapter 4 will feature the accounts of the participant's lived experiences with induction and mentoring.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

“Learning and improvement can no longer be optional. Reflection, therefore, must be at the center of individual and organizational renewal initiatives.”
York-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, and Montie, 2006, p. 27

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of new principals and assistant principals who have completed the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) induction and mentoring program. As a result of Act 45 of 2007, all principals and assistant principals are required to complete an induction component within 5 years of being named to a PIL position. The induction curriculum used by the PIL program was developed by the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL). Public, private, and charter school systems across Pennsylvania are provided this program free-of-charge through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Additionally, all participants had been provided a mentor by their district or through Pennsylvania Principals Mentoring Network (PPMN) during their first few years.

In September 2011, the researcher interviewed principals and assistant principals from PIL region 7 who have completed the PIL induction and mentoring program between 2008 and 2010. Region 7 includes the counties of Allegheny, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Washington, and Westmoreland counties, commonly referred to as Southwestern Pennsylvania. Using a semi-standardized protocol, each participant met and discussed their experiences for an average of 40 minutes. This study utilized the lived experiences of principals and assistant principals as a source of evidence regarding the phenomenon, the PIL induction program and mentoring. The interview was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of new school principals and assistant principals regarding their PIL induction program experiences as it relates to adult learning?
2. How has the PIL induction program supported the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the new principal or assistant principal?
3. How are the needs of beginning school principals met during the mentorship component of the PIL induction program?
4. To what extent does the PIL induction program meet professional development standards?
5. How are school systems supporting the development of new principals or assistant principals?

The research used Creswell's (2007) template as a guide for coding the qualitative data.

While reviewing the text, the researcher identified significant statements provided by the participants. While conducting content analysis of the text, the researcher focused on the participants' accounts to establish the essence of the phenomenon, allowing for the emergence of similar meaning units. The significant statements were highlighted while notes were made in margins to be used as a form of establishing consistency among participants' experiences. Once all of the transcripts were completed and the significant statements identified, the next step in Creswell's guide, meaning units, were developed.

Through the development of the meaning units, the experiences of the participants were expressed in textural and structural descriptions (Creswell, 2007). The researcher utilized the textural descriptions, or what happened, while highlighting the experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, structural descriptions portrayed through discussions with the participants were taken into account to describe each participant's experience within their

environments. Both descriptions were woven throughout this chapter to create a more vivid account of the phenomenon (Berg, 2009).

The lived experiences of the participants have been portrayed through the themes established as a result of the conversations with the participants. These themes have been developed through and categorized under each theoretical perspective: adult learning theory, andragogy, and standards of professional learning. Additionally, this study utilized the updated standards for professional development which were revised in 2011 by the National Staff Development Council. Since this study attempts to support current and future knowledge of principal induction and mentoring, the author felt it was necessary to utilize the most updated standards for professional learning. Furthermore the themes that have been generated through these discussions were featured to illuminate the experiences within this phenomenon.

Participants

Six participants were involved in one-on-one interviews with the primary researcher. All six professionals were included in the list of possible participants provided to the researcher by the PIL Region 7 Site Coordinator. Also, all individuals included in this list met the following study criteria: principal or assistant principal in a public school and completion of PIL Course One and Four between 2008 and 2010, and geographically accessible to the researcher. Also, the names of the participants were changed to maintain anonymity.

As shown in Table 1, five of the participants worked in an elementary environment. Although secondary principals and assistant principals were included in the list of possible participants provided by the Region 7 Site Coordinator and were sent an invitation, one secondary level participant responded to the invitation. The time frame of the study, beginning

of the school year, may have caused possible secondary participants to volunteer for participation.

At the time of our interview, Andy had completed five years as an assistant principal and principal. He had started a new position in his district, that of assistant superintendent. While completing the PIL induction and mentoring program, he had been a principal at the middle school level in a suburban school district serving 460 students.

Beverly was currently serving as an elementary assistant principal in a suburban school district. Her school serviced approximately 725 students in a kindergarten through fifth grade configuration. She was in her sixth year as a building level leader.

Catherine was in her first year as an elementary principal. Her previous experience included three years as an assistant principal at a suburban middle school. The elementary school of approximately 440 students is located in the same district she served as a middle school principal.

A suburban school district is where Dave has completed a total of ten years as an assistant principal and currently principal at the elementary level. He had been a principal at a kindergarten to third grade building for four years. Currently, he is in his sixth year as the principal of a kindergarten through fifth grade building, located in the same district as his previous building level leadership position. When compared to the other participants, Dave's office had the most windows, with a view of the office. This could have been a distracter during the interview.

Eric was in his fourth year of building level leadership. He was an assistant principal in a kindergarten through fifth grade elementary building servicing approximately 723 students. His building level leadership experience has been in a suburban school district.

Faye served as a principal of a kindergarten through grade two building for one year followed by three years in a kindergarten through fifth grade school. Her current school services approximately 560 students. Faye completed PIL Course One during her first year as principal of the kindergarten through grade two building. After completing her first year as building level leader, she moved to a much larger school district, where she completed the PIL induction requirement.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Study Participants

| | Gender | Years as Principal | Level | Building Enrollment | Geographic Location |
|-----------|--------|--------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Andy | Male | 5 | Secondary | 460 | Suburban |
| Beverly | Female | 6 | Elementary | 725 | Suburban |
| Catherine | Female | 4 | Elementary | 440 | Suburban |
| Dave | Male | 10 | Elementary | 505 | Suburban |
| Eric | Male | 4 | Elementary | 723 | Suburban |
| Faye | Female | 4 | Elementary | 560 | Suburban |

Each participant served as a primary source as this study investigated the essence of the PIL induction and mentoring program. As a result of the content developed through these conversations, the researcher explored the text to explore adult learning principles, andragogy.

Andragogy

Adult learning theory, andragogy, attempts to describe the instructional needs of adults. Malcolm Knowles is referenced as a key contributor of the study of adults and how they learn. Knowles core principles (2005) are used to investigate the experiences of participants in the PIL induction program and their development needs as adult learners. Those explorations are

highlighted through the meaning units: value, reflection, ownership, goals, scope and sequence, and career-staged.

First, participants reported that their experiences were either worthwhile or time not well spent. Although participants did not use the term value, the researcher generated this meaning unit through participants' descriptions using language that was extremely positive about the experience, and also reflections concerning their honest opinions of their invested time.

Value

The participants of the PIL induction and mentoring program felt that the program overall was valuable for learning the essential knowledge and skills of building level leadership. The value of the educational experience for the adult is directly related to their motivation (Gom, 2009). This intrinsic motivation to learn is one of the core principals of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2005). Professional development experiences that support a learner's motivation provides for a learner's ability to understand the practical significance and relevance of the learning. Additionally, the value of a mentoring relationship is directly related to the significance of the relationship established between the mentor and mentee which ultimately leads to learning and growth (Drago-Severson, 2009). Participants in this study shared that their experiences within the PIL induction and mentoring, either within or through PPMN, as valuable.

Beverly reported that the entire experience, induction and mentoring, was highly valuable. She entered the principalship within a short period of time, being provided only a few short weeks to get acclimated to her new position as an assistant principal. During our interview, it was evident that Beverly was the most enthusiastic of the participants when talking about the PIL program. During the study recruitment process, Beverly was adamant about being a participant. I believe it was because she wanted to show support for a program that gave her so

much in the form of leadership knowledge and skills. Being able to participate in the PIL induction program allowed her to take "...the leap from...teacher to administrator was huge and it happened on a whim, so...I think that is exactly what I needed to know..." Additionally, throughout our conversation, Beverly, reported that the time she had with her mentor was "very worthwhile" and "I looked forward to it..." As a result of her induction and mentoring experiences, she would attempt to recruit other administrators in her district to participate in the program. When referring to successful professional development programs, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al. (2007) pointed out that programs had a core team who acted as "tireless champions" of that program. Beverly was a tireless champion for the PIL courses.

Beverly supported the idea of research question one, which sought to answer perceptions of the induction and mentoring experience as it relates to adult learning. Her response is also supportive of question two, which seeks to explain the level of support of knowledge, skills and dispositions. Participants who engaged in the activities and noticed its worth towards the experience, either through the environment or curriculum covered, will be more motivated to participate in these programs in the future. Additionally, Beverly's decision to recruit others exhibited that she felt this motivating program will be the same for other participants. Additionally, the value of the program supported the adult learners' readiness in that it was developmentally appropriate. For example, Beverly responded that the topics discussed were "timely." She shared that the topics covered "seemed to fall into what (she) needed at the time". Furthermore, she shared that the information covered is "stuff I do every single day." In addition to the content covered in the program for Beverly, Catherine felt that her experience was valuable because "...any time you can collaborate with other people, you are going to gain something from that."

When comparing the value of professional development in his own school district to his PIL experience, Dave felt that the PIL program was “more valuable.” The description of the value of the programming within the district is supportive of research question five. During our meeting, Dave was the most experienced of the building level leaders interviewed. Also, he was the only participant who had earned his doctorate. With that said, Dave did not portray total support for the professional development offerings offered within his district. Additionally, the value of the program for Dave was as a result of the “well organized” facilitators, who “considered adult learners and how they learn,” which was supportive of research question one. Andy, the individual in this study that was not entirely supportive of PIL offerings, established limited evidence regarding the value of district professional development. He referred to the value of book studies completed by the administrative team. Andy felt that this experience “helped our team.” Additionally, Beverly mentioned that her district did not offer the level of experience she received as a participant in the PIL program. It was obvious that she valued her overall induction experience. Eric, on the other hand, discussed a high level of value for the in-district professional development experience he received when entering the principalship. All support systems offered in his district far outweighed any experience he had through PIL or PPMN. He attributed this to the “rigor” he went through while participating in district activities. However, Eric shared that the PIL program was a “waste of time, just going there and sitting there.”

Several of the principals also mentioned that the induction and mentoring program would be more valuable for building level leaders in their first year. Several of the building level leaders interviewed expressed that the PIL induction workshop was more valuable for “new administrators,” or the novice principal (Kearney, 2010). Andy felt that the program was more

useful to building level leaders in their first year. This was also supported by Dave and Eric who stated that the PIL induction workshops were “beneficial to a new administrator.”

Coincidentally, several of the study participants, Andy, Dave, and Eric, had participated in the PIL induction and mentoring program after being in the position for several years, classified as a developing principal (Kearney, 2010). For example, Dave was in his seventh year as an assistant principal when he began Course One. Dave continued to share that “some of the stuff I’ve already been through,” but he thought the courses were valuable. Andy also confirmed that because he was in his third year of principalship, “some of the stuff that was given to me probably did seem repetitious.” As a result, Andy recommended that the program offer “some flexibility.”

Mentoring for the participants in this study received mixed reviews in regards to its value. Research question three seeks to answer if the needs of the new building level leaders are met through the mentoring experience. Dave did not feel that the PIL mentor experience was valuable. Dave was in his seventh year as a building level leader when he was provided a mentor which resulted in a less than favorable view of his mentoring experience. He continued to share that while he received mentoring support in his seventh year through PPMN, Dave served as a mentor to other principals and assistant principals within his district. As a result, the mentoring experience was not seen as beneficial to Dave. On the other hand, Malone (2001) suggests that mentoring is effective for all building level leaders, no matter their years of service. Malone (2007) and Spiro et al. (2007) assert that support through a mentor relationship is helpful for all school leaders as they navigate through the challenges of school leadership in all stages of their careers. Eric did not report much support for his PPMN mentoring experience. Throughout our entire conversation, it was apparent that Eric felt his district support outperformed any

outside professional development experience. No matter the question posed to him, Eric referenced the positive support provided by the district. Similarly, Faye responded favorably of the support from her district administrative team, but referred to her PPMN mentor as a “waste,” because of the level of support within the district.

Alternatively, Beverly expressed deep appreciation for her mentoring experience. Her mentor, provided through PPMN, provided her with a level of mentor/mentee relationship not found with other participants in this study who had a PPMN mentor. She described her mentor as “fantastic” and that her time with him was “very worthwhile.” She shared that she “looked forward” to her meetings with her mentor. Obviously, Beverly felt strongly that her needs were being met in the mentoring relationship, research question three. Similarly, Faye conveyed a similar level of value regarding her mentor. Incidentally, she spoke highly of the mentor provided to her from within the district. She did not communicate the same level of value with her PPMN assigned mentor. Additionally, Catherine, who was not assigned a PPMN mentor, spoke favorably of the mentor assigned by her district, which was her principal. She felt that she was “lucky” and “fortunate” to have had the opportunity to work with her assigned mentor. In spite of Andy’s low evaluation of his mentoring experiences, he reported that “I don’t think I could have survived without it,” which supports mentoring’s significance for new principals.

In addition to the value of the induction and mentoring experiences, several of the individuals who participated in the study commonly referred to reflection as a characteristic of the PIL induction and mentoring program.

Reflection

Throughout their experiences in the PIL induction and mentoring program, participants confirmed that opportunities to reflect upon their roles and responsibilities as a building level

leader and its connection to the topics covered were provided within the program. With that said, reflective practice is supportive of adult learning. In order for individual and professional growth to occur, or transformation, reflection becomes an essential ingredient in a program, whether induction or mentoring (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Drago-Severson, 2009; Hall, 2008; Trotter, 2006; York-Barr et al., 2006).

Beverly supported the fact that an opportunity to reflect was provided to participants during her experience. She shared that:

The biggest part I would say for NISL for me was reflection because you know we would go through these activities and we would do these tasks, and then I would think am I doing this the best that I can.

Beverly continued to convey that “they allowed us for a lot of time to be reflective,” which she felt is an important characteristic of an administrator, which is supportive of research question two. Also, Catherine added that the PIL induction classroom was “reflective of what we want to see teachers doing in classes.” She noted that her experience included opportunities “where you actually have goals and reflect upon the learning that had occurred.” Incidentally, the reflection application of the induction program supports the adult learning needs of the participants, outlined in research question one.

In regards to the workshop experiences, Catherine explained that the workshops “...were structured so that you took a look at something that was research based and then you had to think of it in terms of your own building and organizational model to apply it.” Catherine presented herself as the picture of professionalism. She was serious, articulate, and straightforward. As a result of the amount of information that workshops offered in two days time, Catherine responded that participants “did not always have the time right then to think about how it would

look in your building, but later you could reflect and see how you would be able to do that in our building.” Faye, on the other hand, referred to the books provided during the PIL induction program. She stated that although she has completed the workshops required for induction, she keeps the books in her office so that she can “reflect on some of the items that we talked about during the process.”

It was evident through the conversations with Beverly, Catherine, and Faye that PIL workshops supported the development of adult learning principles and the growth of their leadership knowledge and skills, research question two. Additionally, several other study participants supported the fact that reflective opportunities were made available in the PIL workshops.

Although other interviewees did not specifically share reflection as a component of their experiences, several statements exhibit a reflective environment. For example, Andy shared that during his workshops, the adult educators provided activities which allowed participants to “look at the business world and leadership styles...and talked about how their leadership made those companies great and comparing that to the educational world...” Also, Dave added that the adult educators “considered adult learners and how they learn and tried to incorporate that in the things they did,” which included exercises supportive of reflective practices. The activities, which included on-line assignments, role-playing, and presentations, allowed Eric to “dig deeper.” He continued to share that he “never thought to dig deeper,” but this allowed him to “dig and find a route in what would you do.”

Reflective practice with mentors was not as prevalent as the reflection activities within the PIL workshops. Catherine, who was not provided a PPMN mentor, reflected often with her district mentor. She referred to her numerous opportunities to “shut the door and troubleshoot.”

Beverly also had opportunities to “work through professional issues” with her assigned PPMN mentor. Faye, who absolutely loved her experience in her first, smaller district, reported that she would have preferred more “self-reflection” rather than the NISL site assignments required to be completed prior to several workshops. She would rather do a self-reflection to “see where I can apply some of those goals.” Faye continued to mention that during her experience with her in-district mentor, she was asked to reflect upon the books that were provided in the PIL workshops.

In addition to reflective practices, an adult learning environment should provide some level of control, or ownership, of the direction and topics covered in professional development. This is referred to as self-direction.

Ownership

Adults seek opportunities that provide them with ownership of the direction of their education experiences. The building level leaders who participated in this study indicated that this was an important aspect of learning experiences. This meaning unit clarifies research question one. Also, principals and assistant principals have the responsibility to seek out experiences that are meaningful and relevant to them (Garrison, 1997; Grow, 1991; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Incidentally, Pratt (1988) and Grow (1991) warned that adult learners vary in their willingness to accept responsibility for educational decisions, one of which is professional development.

Throughout the interviews, it became evident that there was a lack of self-directedness for the study participants with their professional development experiences within their districts, which answers research question five. Often times, the nature of the district professional development experience was offered in the form of monthly administrative meetings or book

studies. Incidentally, the participants' control over topics covered in the district was provided by other individuals, notably the superintendent. There was a lack of opportunity for participants to have control over the topics covered or experiences provided within the induction workshop. Comparatively, the principals and assistant principals in this study found that the PIL mentorship, if it existed, offered them a chance to establish some direction concerning topics to be covered.

Andy shared that his mentoring experience supported his ability to have control over his learning experiences. He said "I could tell (the mentor) what areas that I would like her to support...she went and found resources for me." On the other hand, Andy felt that the PIL induction program did not offer him the opportunity to dictate his experiences. He consistently referred to the induction component as "canned," which limited his ability to cover topics of interest to him. Also, Beverly confirmed this belief as she described the PIL induction program as "pretty laid out for us." In order to counter this lack of self-directedness, Eric felt that it would have been more beneficial if the program surveyed the participants regarding what they knew and didn't know. Conversely, Catherine described her induction experience and control over as "I think we kind of constructed it together because we were a cohort." Furthermore, Catherine reinforced that in each session, "they always took kind of a base line in where we were with different topics."

In order for the experiences to support self-directedness, Andy recommended that the PIL induction and mentoring experiences "should be more individualized and meaningful to the participants' position." Compared to other participants in the study, Andy was not supportive of any of his PIL experiences. Actually, he was quite negative of the entire program. Additionally,

differentiation of the workshops was mentioned by Beverly as a method to support self-directedness.

In spite of the lack of control of their experiences in their district professional development or PIL induction and mentoring opportunities, several participants felt that building level leaders were responsible for providing input regarding their professional development experiences. For example, Dave advised that principals or assistant principals should not “wait for it to come to you.” He continued to mention that as a building level leader, the professional should “be active” when seeking out learning opportunities. In the event that a professional development opportunity does not exist, it is the responsibility of that administrator to seek out that experience or topic. Also, Dave shared that the “onus is on the individual” when it comes to topics covered in a learning experience. More importantly, the principal should “take it upon self to learn.” Similarly, adult learners must accept the responsibility for their learning, but also be able to identify its usefulness (Garrison, 1997; Grow, 1991).

As the professional becomes more autonomous, Eric also shared that “it’s really what you make out of it and if you don’t tap into those resources, you were sort of a fool to not do that.” Also, Eric recommends that new principals need to “tap into your own resources in your district.” Similarly, Faye shared that you should “tap into your district mentors.” She shared that you should “really learn from what is going on.” She continued to share that “you have to take the initiative.” Faye related initiative to the access a new building level leader has to their mentor.

Participants in the study shared that there was a lack of control regarding their PIL course experience. Alternatively, their mentoring experience offered a lot more freedom regarding what occurred during the relationship. Incidentally, Pratt (1988) advises that the level of

responsibility one takes in their learning is related to the relationship he/she has with their adult educator, or in this case, mentor. It is the mentor's role to monitor this relationship so that the adult learner becomes less dependent and more self-directed (Mezirow, 1997; Pratt, 1988). This was the case either in an in-district mentoring experience or through PPMN. Throughout the interviews, participant shared their awareness of the goals of their induction and mentoring experiences.

Goals

Goals outlined at the beginning of the learning experience in an andragogical environment are developed by both the learner and facilitator. As a result of these goals, the adult learner is more apt to engage in the learning experience and retain knowledge. Additionally, the adult learning environment supports self-direction and prior experiences when goals are collaboratively developed. All but one of the research questions are referenced in this meaning unit. Because professional development standards will be covered later in this chapter, it will not be included in the participants' responses.

The adult learning principal, need to know, was made evident during the discussion with the study participants. The binder that several participants referred to provided substantial information regarding the information that would be covered in the program. This large binder provided for each unit contained substantial information pertaining to the components of school leadership that supports student learning. For example, Catherine consistently referred to a "framework." Also, Dave believed that "they did a good job of explaining their goals and focus," which were stated clearly, and were "very organized." He added that the binder would be useful once he moves into central office. He shared that he will use his binder as a resource in that position while completing the "...strategic plan, the vision, the mission..." Similarly,

Beverly mentioned the usefulness of the “four huge binders” provided to her during her participation in Courses One through Four.

The mentoring experience for the participants was reported to lack guidelines to follow. Incidentally, both mentoring within the district and PIL mentoring was absent of any formal protocol for the meetings. Participants referenced goals being used in the mentoring program, but the goals were usually established as a result of the meetings with the mentor and mentee. No formal curriculum served as the foundation of the meetings. There was no formal in-district mentoring for Dave. Any mentoring provided in his district was referred to as “tacit.” Also, he would like to have had a more “structured” experience. Furthermore, while fulfilling his PPMN mentoring experience, Andy mentioned that several professionals in his cohort were not provided a PPMN mentor because “money ran out or they ran out of mentors.”

Andy did not have goals established for his PPMN mentor. When discussing his time with the PPMN mentor, Andy stated that the requirements provided by NISL regarding the mentoring experience were “a joke.” He also shared that the mentor topics were more “what was going on at the time.” Also, the induction program’s framework was “poorly designed.” When the researcher asked specifically “how the goals were accomplished for the mentoring component,” Andy stated:

...the specific goal is just surviving. We did not sit down and have a goal meeting with my mentor and say, you need to do this, this, and this. Now as a professional I had goals that I had with my supervisor and with my mentor. I discussed those goals, but I can say that it happened.

Beverly shared that the topics “fell into what (she) needed at the time.” Also, the program’s “correlation really has been uncanny as to what we are trying to do here as to what my

NISL courses were.” She felt that professional development at her district was “thrown together at the last minute.” In reference to mentoring goals, Beverly expressed:

We kind of sat down and derived the goals, what we wanted to get out of it, so it was kind of a working session, and then whatever we decided that we wanted to focus on, then we would discuss it...

Catherine felt that the PIL program “talked about the purpose of NISL, the entire PDE framework, and the wheel driven by professional development, and what guides the entire wheel and framework.” Additionally, she shared that “through each lesson we talked about what our goals were going to be.” Her district professional development experience was also driven by the PDE framework. According to her mentoring experience, all in-district, she shared that “there were no specific goals that were put out there for us.” She believed that the goal was either a building goal or district goal established through the strategic plan.

Dave and Faye felt that referring to the documents was helpful to understand the goals of the PIL induction program. These documents included the online piece, agenda e-mailed ahead of time, and binder. Eric also referred to the goals being communicated through the binder. Furthermore, Dave felt that the PIL program stated their goals and objectives clearly. Faye felt the same way about the induction program’s communication of the goals and objectives. She shared that the program facilitator always gave you an objective that you had to meet or the goal.

The in-district mentoring in Eric’s district provided discussions of goals every six months and annual meetings. He shared that the discussion focused on “where we want to go and what we feel we need to work on.” Similarly, Faye referred to goal development, mid- and end-of-year, within her district.

Participants shared that the workshops supported their awareness of what was being learned during the experience. On the other hand, the mentor experience lacked a set of guidelines for the meetings. While participating in the PIL induction program, study participants voiced questions concerning the scope and sequence of the NISL units.

Scope and Sequence

New principals and assistant principals are required to complete PIL Courses One and Four and are provided a mentor during the induction offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Overall, the participants reported that the units were applicable to their personal and professional needs, but several interviewees recommended that building level leaders in their first year would benefit greatly from participation in Course One, World Class Schooling: Visions and Goals. As study participants referenced the scope and sequence of the induction and mentoring experiences, research questions one and two were addressed.

There were many questions posed by the study participants regarding the sequence of courses required by the PIL induction program. Andy was skeptical about the reasoning behind the requirement to complete Courses One and Four, but skip Courses Two, Focusing on Teaching and Learning, and Three, Developing Capacity and Commitment. He felt that Course Two and Three, which focus on specific subject areas, such as reading, math, and science, would have been more appropriate if following Course One. Andy felt that this “did not make sense.”

This sequence was also confusing for Beverly. She felt that the courses should have been taken in order, Course One to Course Four. She preferred to have the process “...explained just a little bit better because that was a little bit confusing cause nobody knew exactly...one and four, four and one.” Incidentally, Beverly mentioned that the topics in the course were presented at the right time during her years as an assistant principal. Alternatively, in her district, she felt

that there was a lack of thought regarding the professional development. Additionally, Beverly reported that building level leaders in the district were not offered an opportunity to provide direction regarding the professional development programming in the district; thus, sequencing of units was neither relevant nor responsive to the needs of building level leaders.

When compared to district level professional development, the PIL induction program provided a more global view of school leadership as referenced by Dave. He felt it was more a “big picture” of school leadership, but was practical. During our interview, Dave and I spent the least amount of time together. Also, we did not engage in a lot of small talk since the interview took place early in the morning. Additionally, Dave referred to the topics covered in the PIL workshop as “beyond the principal’s role.” Information beyond the principal’s role included the mission of the district and vision of district professional development, to name a few, both topics historically not assigned to a building level leader. On a positive note, he also stated that it was sequential in the way it was presented. Catherine added that the sequencing was “pretty steadfast,” but was made aware of upcoming topics that were assigned for each session.

The sequencing of the mentoring component was also questioned by the participants. For example, several study participants who had been a part of the PIL program as developing principals, three or more years, did not respond favorably regarding their mentor experiences. These responses determined that their needs were not met which was posed in research question three. Andy recommends that the program should be “tailored to that individual person.” Dave shared that his district offered “nothing in terms of mentoring.” His PPMN assigned mentor “wasn’t helpful for me” and I “can’t say I took a whole lot from it.” Eric shared that he did not “gain anything from this person.” Through our conversations, it was evident that Faye enjoyed her mentoring experience within her district during her first year. When compared to her PPMN

assigned mentor, she spoke more favorably about her district mentor. Her positive remarks were made in spite of no evidence of a clear guideline of district mentorship.

The scope and sequence of the PIL induction and mentoring experiences varied between study participants. Each building level leader referred to favorable experiences in both their induction and mentoring, yet the sequence of courses and mentoring support showed a need for improvement. Additionally, the amount of time spent in professional development experiences should support adult learners so that they are meaningful and relevant to the stage of their career.

Career-staged

The professional development needs of building level leaders vary at different stages of their career. The level of support provided to building level leaders needs to be provided for the learning needs related to the experience in the field (Kearney, 2010; Portin et al., 2003).

Professional development offerings for a novice building level leader, one to three years of service, will look quite different than the offerings for a developing principal, three to 30 years of service. Participants in this study shared different viewpoints regarding their experience in the PIL induction workshops and mentoring.

Andy and Dave did not feel that their experience was worthwhile because of the years of service prior to completing Course One. When compared to the other study participants, both individuals were at a different stage of their career while participating in the PIL workshops. Additionally, several of the participants felt that the PIL induction workshop was more valuable for new building level leaders, one to three years of service, or novice leaders. Research question one seeks to determine the induction experiences for adult learners. Andy and Dave responded that they were dissatisfied with their experience. Beverly shared that her experience occurred at the right time and that it was “practical.” Since she had just entered building level

leadership, the PIL induction experience was worthwhile as a novice principal. Catherine's district did not permit new building level leaders to complete the PIL induction in their first year because they wanted them to get comfortable in their position. Once she began participation in the PIL workshops, she responded that it was effective. Due to the fact that the perception was "you were ready to go as a principal" because you completed the district teacher induction program, Catherine felt that the PIL courses supported her leadership knowledge and skill development, which is presented in research question two.

The amount of professional development experiences, such as a doctoral program and principals' academy hosted by a local college that Andy has completed, led to his unsatisfactory evaluation of the PIL induction and mentoring program. Because he learned so much from the other experiences, Andy felt more comfortable with the information being presented in the PIL workshops. Incidentally, he felt that it was "repetitious." His recommendation was to eliminate the "canned program and try to tailor it to each individual." Andy also mentioned that the PIL induction program should be made "meaningful." He continued to acknowledge that it did not make sense for a principal with over five years of experience, a developing principal, to be in the same cohort as someone "brand new in the field." Andy felt that, logistically, the framework was poorly designed. Additionally, the mentorship should provide a "gradual release" to the principalship. In his case, he was ready to lead at year three. Comparatively, he would have liked to have a mentor in years one and two. Andy was only provided a mentor within the district for one year as a new principal. His final recommendation was that the PIL induction and mentoring program needs to be "tailored to that individual person and their needs." Andy presented several recommendations relevant to research question three. Likewise, Dave shared similar recommendations.

Dave has been a principal for seven years prior to participating in PIL Course One. For this reason, he already has “been through it.” Consistent with Andy, the mentoring experience through PPMN was not as meaningful for Dave because of his years of experience as a building level leader. He was not officially assigned a mentor in the district. Furthermore, the district mentoring program was very unstructured. Dave shared that it was more “tacit.” The person within the district he referred to as his most significant mentor served more as a “buddy” (Villani, 2006). Incidentally, while referencing his first year of building level leadership, Dave would have welcomed “someone to talk with.” During his first year, Dave’s in-district mentor was also busy which decreased the opportunities for a substantial mentoring relationship to take place.

Eric recommended that the PIL program survey administrators prior to entering workshops. As a result of surveys, program coordinators could break the workshops into two different sessions. He found that attending workshops with new principals was challenging because they were “lost” when a participant with more years of experience would share information. Two groups would also add to the “flow” of the conversations. Eric attributed his district’s rigorous professional development for his low rating of the PIL induction program.

Participants in this study exhibited strong support for career-staged induction and mentoring experiences for building level leaders. Adult learning theory themes were portrayed through participants’ description of their experiences in the PIL workshops, PPMN mentoring, and in-district induction and mentoring programs. Also, the meaning unit professional development standards will be highlighted through each participant’s participation in the induction and mentoring experiences.

Professional Development Standards

Standards for professional development allow educational consumers to evaluate their learning programs within their organization, but also assist in establishing a framework for programming. For this study, the standards developed by the National Staff Development Council, Learning Forward, are utilized as an evaluation of the PIL induction and mentoring program. The standards were revised in 2011 to support the evolving professional development needs within the educational field.

The standards for professional development for this study are featured through the following themes: collaboration, accountability, curriculum, and time. Collaboration became a common, but larger, theme among participants in the study resulting in smaller themes which fall under this category. For this reason, collaboration includes networking, relationships, trust, and problem-solving.

Collaboration

Learning communities allow individuals to participate in groups supporting a collective intelligence. Expecting educational professionals to learn independently is a practice that has been retired some time ago. As a result, learning communities allow professionals to solve problems, discuss, and utilize resources with other individuals within and outside the organization to support student achievement. The 2011 NSDC Standards for Professional Learning include professional learning communities. Additionally, the feedback provided by participants describes research question four. Within the PIL induction program, all participants are part of a cohort for each unit. Throughout the conversations, it was repeatedly stated that networking with others was a major part of each participant's experience, either in the PIL induction workshops or mentoring.

Networking. All the participants reported that networking was the most positive aspect of their PIL induction or mentoring experience. Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning* (2011) includes learning communities as one of its standards. In Duncan and Stock (2010), it is recognized that support networks are "vital for growing and retaining" school leaders (p. 306). The collaborative atmosphere described by each study participant either within the district or as a member of the PIL programming included working alongside other individuals in the profession.

Andy, after reflecting upon his experience, was seeking any type of collaboration with another professional. Instead of participating in workshops to complete his induction requirement, he was willing to have the opportunity to have "time to talk to other people in the administrative world." He wanted to have the time to talk about what is occurring in his school and "bounce ideas" off of these individuals. He felt that this would be better than discussing corporate America, which was a component in Course One.

The networking aspect was important to Beverly, the cheerleader of the PPMN mentoring experience. Throughout our entire conversation in her office, she expressed her happiness with the opportunity to work with other principals and her mentor. She felt that without this experience, she may never have had the opportunity to meet these people. Beverly also mentioned that since her principal does not like her to be out of the building, she did whatever she could to participate in activities that offer networking. She felt that this was one way to support her growth, and remain updated on current trends and practices in the field of education.

Catherine expressed that the most valuable component of the PIL experience was networking. Additionally, she felt that networking was worthwhile because it is opposite of what she does every day, "putting out fires...in the building day to day." Working alongside other

professionals outside of her district provided another perspective regarding the issues that were occurring in other districts or buildings. During our conversation, Catherine acknowledged that networking with other administrators supported her understanding of building level issues that could be dealt with in the same way as what others have shared. Similarly, within her district, Catherine felt that the activities were supportive of leadership within the schools. The district offers a PIL approved activity developed by the district. She shared that the administrators in the district meet one to two times a year to discuss data and develop binders which are submitted to the state. She also mentioned that any time you can collaborate with someone else, “you are going to gain something from that.” Catherine also reported that during her assistant principalship, her primary network was the principal. She felt it was nice to be able to “shut the door and troubleshoot.” This opportunity allowed her to receive support when needed and allowed her to continue looking for multiple angles to situations.

In spite of years of experience, Dave felt that the PIL induction workshops offered a “good chance to network with other principals.” He felt that the most he took out of the PIL workshops was networking and sharing with other principals. He believed it was “good to hear what other principals are experiencing.” Alternatively, his mentoring support did not provide the networking experience that was what others may have found helpful. He attributed this to the years of experience as a building level leader. Incidentally, early in his career as a building level leader, he felt that because new principals are overwhelmed, it would have been helpful to have someone to talk to about situations experienced in within the school setting. Because the other individual assigned in the district as his mentor was also busy, the opportunities to talk were minimal.

When Eric discussed the time in the PIL induction and mentoring program, he shared that networking was beneficial. He felt that since his district supported his professional growth at a much higher level than other cohort members, he was able to network with others regarding his experiences within the district. Incidentally, because of the support by his district, his professional needs were met through networking in his PIL induction workshops. But he mentioned that it was good to hear there were others going through the same experiences. Eric also mentioned that within his district, the administrative team communicated very well. The networking that he had available was, in his mind, effective. They were always “bouncing ideas off of each other even though we are in four different buildings.” Eric advises that all new principals should network with whomever they can, whether through the intermediate unit, induction programs, or other professionals.

Faye also felt that networking was a strong characteristic of the PIL induction workshops. She felt that the networking aspect made the experience meaningful because of the conversations with others and the opportunity to collaborate. While completing Course One and the year-long mentor program, Faye was employed in a smaller district made up of four buildings, each with one principal. This was also a similar situation for Andy. Both had mentioned that within a smaller district, networking is much easier among administrators. Coincidentally, after the first year of the PIL program, Faye moved to a larger school district. She noted the difference in networking among building level leaders. First, in her smaller district, the superintendent was much more accessible to the building level administrators compared to the administrative team in the larger district. Both Andy and Faye felt that the smaller district developed a better networking environment for its building level leaders. While talking with Faye, the researcher believed that she would rather return to her smaller district since her larger, current district did

not offer the same level of networking. Incidentally, Eric, who was employed in a larger suburban district, shared that networking among other building level leaders at the elementary level was effective. The culture of Eric's district regarding networking established these opportunities.

Faye recommended that new principals need to "build their network." This network will allow a new principal to collaborate with and take in more of their experiences. Through these conversations, the new principal "can process and see how you can apply it and make it your own." Additionally, she recommends that districts take a better stand on providing adequate mentors because it is more important than what she refers to as a "global mentor".

Networking allowed the building level leaders to have thoughtful and meaningful discussions with other professionals to support the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective leaders. In order for networking to occur, relationships need to be established within the learning community.

Relationships. The relationships that form the groups' collaborative opportunities is established through conversation and teamwork. Faye mentions specifically that building level leaders must be a "team player." She continued to recommend that as a new administrator, building level leaders will rely on the other members of the team. This collaborative structure must be put into place to allow for the relationships to grow. Lovely (2004) and Alsbury & Hackmann (2006) recommend that relationships are essential while supporting the development of a principal. Lovely reminds program facilitators and district administration that individuals will resist learning in an uncomfortable environment. Coincidentally, positive relationships are important if professional growth is to occur for new building level leaders.

Monthly administrative meetings served as collaborative opportunities with several of the study participants. Through the monthly meetings, Faye mentioned that individuals on the team formed camaraderie. This camaraderie allowed Faye to pick up the phone any time, including the assistant superintendent and superintendent, when she needed support. She shared that in her small district, she had a strong relationship with all administrators, including a retired administrator she had worked with in her first year as a building level leader. The retired administrator reminded her to contact her at any time because as a building level leader, you “need a sounding board” and “someone outside the district.” Incidentally, she did not have that level of relationship with her PIL mentor.

The effectiveness of a mentor depended on the relationship established within this professional relationship. Hall (2008) warned that an ineffective mentor/mentee relationship can negate learning. What was made evident through the discussions with Andy, Eric, and Faye, was that stronger relationships were established when the mentor came from within the district, which seeks to answer research question five. This was the case for several, but not all, of the study participants. Catherine reflected on her ability to problem solve with someone else. The collaborative structure of her mentoring relationship was helpful during her time as an assistant principal.

Beverly explained her relationships within the PIL cohort as very effective. Since the cohort she was assigned remained together for several years, or courses, they have developed a personal attachment. Also, she referred to the members of her cohort as “friends.” She further explained that they “joke around” and “know their families.” Within her district, she felt a support network was available because all of the building level leaders were “fairly young.” She continued to mention that they learn and guide one another. Furthermore, Beverly explained that

her relationship with her PIL mentor was “nonjudgmental,” which may have been one reason she spoke so favorably about her mentor. She also never feels “unsupported” by her team members. Beverly referred to her assistant superintendent as accessible. Hertting (2008) referenced his survey study of new principals and their supervisors. He found that the professional relationships new principals had with their supervisor were rated as important.

Andy felt that his relationship with his PIL mentor met his needs and was “worthwhile.” His mentor was used as another person that he could go to with a question. Alternatively, if he had followed the requirements set up by NISL regarding the mentor experience, he would have reacted negatively to the experience. He felt that what NISL had them complete in the mentor relationship “was a joke” because there was no evidence of guidelines.

Catherine reported that her relationship with her in-district mentor was very open, honest, trustworthy, and respectful. She continued to mention that both of them worked collaboratively to solve issues, but she wishes that she had more time to talk professionally versus reacting to those issues.

Within the relationships established during a mentoring experience or a member of a cohort, professionals need to feel a sense of trust to support their growth.

Trust. Within the induction process, no matter if it occurs inside or outside of the organization, building level leaders will participate as a member of a group. This group may occur in a one-on-one format, such as mentoring, or as part of a cohort. As a member of this group, it is essential that the professional feel a level of trust with the individual that surrounds him/her. Lovely (2007) shared that “when trust is present, the principal is treated as an insider and high-quality relationships blossom” (p. 67). Trust is also mentioned as an essential ingredient in the development of principal district networks (Duncan & Stock, 2010).

Additionally, within this collaborative environment, confidentiality must be felt in order for in depth conversations to occur which will support learning.

Participants in the study experienced trusting relationships within their district. Andy, who spoke favorably of his district experiences, believed that his district has a strong team, where everyone is able to depend upon each other. He stated that the team is very “open” as a result of small size of the district. Andy also mentioned that his initial mentor, provided within the district, was a veteran administrator who he did not feel “comfortable” with. As he looked back on the experience, he wishes that he would have developed a comfortable relationship because in the end, the individual that he felt was his most significant mentor was extremely valuable to him. Similarly, Faye also referenced a positive experience in her small district. Her level of access to other administrators developed a more “family oriented” atmosphere. Not only could she contact them whenever needed, but individuals would check to “make sure things were okay”. This is very different in her current district which is much larger.

Alternatively, Beverly felt that her PIL experience, induction and mentoring, offered the level of trust needed for her to share personal experiences as a building level leader. She reported:

I felt a trust amongst everybody and a confidence where if I would share something about maybe some struggles I was having, they weren't going to pick up the phone and call my principal and say you're not going to believe what she just said.

This level of trust was not seen by others in the study regarding their induction and mentoring experiences. In regards to her PIL mentor experience, Beverly shared that her mentor informed her that “you need to trust somebody until they prove that you can't trust them.” This was stated because she initially had trust issues during his service. Beverly also mentioned that this

mentoring experience offered a trusting and nonjudgmental relationship. This form of relationship is a reason why Beverly spoke favorably of her mentoring experience, compared to the other participants. Again she mentioned that she was comfortable talking to him because he was not going to “run and tell somebody what I said”.

Catherine also had an effective relationship with her mentor, which was provided within the district. She used the terms open, honest, trustworthy, and respectful when describing her experience. This type of experience supported her growth and collaborative skills.

Although Eric did not use the term trust, his descriptions of the experiences within his district, such as working with the consultant and the elementary administrative team, supported a trusting environment. More importantly, Eric showed a level of admiration for his district that no other participant communicated in this study. He shared that any time he has a question, he felt comfortable contacting his elementary education coordinator, who he referred to as his most significant mentor. He conveyed that he could “go right to him.” Alternatively, the PIL mentor that he was assigned did not earn his trust. During the year mentorship, he was assigned two mentors. One left and he received another one. Eric shared that “it wasn’t someone that I would share anything with because I don’t know where they were going with it.” Incidentally, he felt that his district resources provided the level of support that he needed as a building level leader.

Faye shared that her district mentor provided to her during the first year in a small district, which she considered the entire district team, offered an experience where there was “no fear or judgment made against you if you had a question or concern”. She added that “there was trust...that was never violated”. She continued to share that there was also a strong level of confidence. As a building level leader, you “need to know that what you say in confidence is not

going to go anywhere...or that you can speak freely and you're not going to be judged by what you say". Moreover, Faye shared that "you learn who to trust; who not to trust".

Through trusting relationships, participants are able to investigate problems which they may encounter as they fulfill the duties and responsibilities of school leadership. For some participants in their first year of building level leadership, the position may be the first time they are required to solve problems of a different nature that they have not previously experienced in their professional career.

Problem-solving. Effective professional development for school leaders engages the learners in the real work of principals (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Sparks, 2009). For this reason, practical applications for principal professional development require the development of knowledge and skills pertaining to solving problems (Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004). Additionally, Villani (2006) advises that since new principals often arrive to a leadership position directly from the classroom, it is imperative that the skill of problem solving is integrated into induction and mentoring experiences. In order to accomplish this task, opportunities must exist for professionals to discuss and develop plans of actions for leadership challenges. As educational leaders collaborate on the issues faced in their positions, their knowledge and skills are developed to insure preparedness for the future. This meaning unit seeks to answer all of this study's research questions.

Study participants shared that the PIL induction offers opportunities for problem-solving. Andy was seeking a collaborative structure to "bounce ideas." He felt that the "canned program" should be revised to offer participants time to meet with others and discuss "what is going on" in their buildings. Also, Andy shared that the PIL induction workshop did not offer participants opportunities to discuss problems. He felt that there was "no time for it." Additionally, Andy

did not feel that the workshops offered practical experience. As for Andy's mentoring experience, both in-district and PPMN, limited discussions occurred regarding data representing his students.

Beverly shared that her PIL workshop experience offered opportunities to discuss problems that she was experiencing. Because her cohort was very close, she was "able to really rely on them if I'm having a problem". She also mentioned that her cohort talked a lot about "realistic issues". This cooperative environment provided her cohort with "fun and campy" activities to support discussions regarding issues or concerns the group was dealing with in their schools. Within the small groups, the team would discuss those issues and ideas and strategies that could be brought back to the district with them to support success with students and staff. In comparison, the district did not offer any chance for problem solving among its administrative staff. Beverly also mentioned that her "rock for a good year," her PIL mentor, provided her many chances to discuss problems faced in her building. Incidentally, her response provided some insight into research question three, participants mentor experience. The mentor worked Beverly through problems so that it was her decision. At times, her mentor would provide her feedback regarding decisions she made and, often, supported her with resources. She looked forward to her meeting with the PIL mentor because, "it was professionals talking and working through professional issues."

Catherine referred to the ideas that the cohort "constructed together." She continued to mention that problem-solving activities occurred in small groups which often reported to the whole group. She felt that it was beneficial to "bounce ideas off of people who were in similar situations with similar backgrounds." Catherine utilized her district mentor to handle problems that she was faced with at the elementary level. Because she was at the middle level for many

years, she sought out assistance and guidance at the elementary level. She was also comfortable knowing that if she or her mentor did not have the right answer, they could "...work through it together and figure out what that would be."

Dave referred to problems presented as part of the NISL curriculum. He did not feel that actual problems faced by participants were solved or covered in the workshops, although they did talk about some of the current problems facing participants. Within his district, the administrative team participated in a book study. Dave shared that problem solving was a component of the book study. Reflecting upon his entry into the principalship, Dave was seeking more opportunities to "talk with someone" during his first few years of the principalship. The district mentor he was provided when first entering the principalship did not see him often.

Eric felt that "digging deeper" was beneficial to his professional growth. He admitted that in the past, he would just "keep it on the surface," but through the PIL induction workshops, Eric began to "dig and find a route." Additionally, Eric shared that problems were facilitated in the PIL induction program through brainstorming, webbing, and other presentation strategies. I asked Eric "how did the program providers help you solve actual problems faced by participants?" He responded that "in all different ways whether it was a small group on a scenario or situation and conversations." PIL induction problem-solving activities were formatted through small group discussions on a scenario or situation. Also, other perspectives were provided through these activities.

The mentor offered through PPMN offered Faye opportunities to work through problems she was experiencing in her first year as a building level leader. As mentioned earlier, she utilized her district mentor more for problem-solving because of their availability. Faye referred to "craft knowledge," which cannot be found in books. Through experiences and collaboration,

building level leaders process and apply this knowledge to develop ownership. All of the experiences she had as a teacher, math coach, and building administrator developed this knowledge. Her mentor while serving in her first year as a building level leader also supported this knowledge. In his small district, Andy reported that he and his mentor discussed past practice and policies and procedures.

A problem-solving skill that is often overlooked is the building level leader's interaction with student data. Overall, there was a lack of use of student data within the professional development experience. Although information was covered, such as worldwide performance on standardized tests which compared nations throughout the world, use of data from participants' schools was scarce. Keith (2011) advises that any professional development in the accountability era for building level leaders, no matter their career stage, needs to support the knowledge and skills of data usage. In addition, the mentor experiences of the participants also did not include student data. Dave recommended that the application of data into a mentoring relationship would be helpful to new building level leaders. He shared that collaboration involving student data did not occur in his PPMN mentor experience. Since the mentoring experience provided the perfect vehicle for this to occur, no study participant had the opportunity to have discussions related to the data from their students. Gray et al. (2007) recommend that the mentor experience offer opportunities for the mentor and mentee to work through problems, referred to as authentic learning. Andy shared that student data was not covered with his district or PPMN mentor. The focus was more on dealing with teachers and parents. Catherine mentioned data retreats occurring in her district, but had no substantial experience with data at the PIL level.

Through the induction and mentoring activities, participants reported experiences which support networks, relationship, trust, and problem solving. Additionally, the interviews included evidence of accountability within the induction and mentoring experiences.

Accountability

Standards serve as a guide through which effective evaluation and mentoring can be coordinated and implemented. The 2011 *Standards of Professional Learning* endorsed monitoring of professional learning through their resource standard (NSDC, 2011). The discussions within this study established the level of accountability that occurs within the district in-service programming for principals, PIL workshops, and mentoring, district or PPMN. Additionally, through evaluation systems, such as the end-of-workshop evaluations completed by participants (see Appendix A), it is clear that monitoring systems are implemented, but not consistently. Furthermore, there is limited evidence of follow-up of evaluations whereas alterations or revisions are made as a result of evaluation results.

It was apparent that the mentoring component experienced by all participants lacked the level of accountability expected within this professional environment. Although participants reported positive experiences with their district or PPMN mentors, no guideline was established which, in turn, resulted in no evaluation system. Additionally, no participant reported an end-of-mentor relationship evaluation. Andy shared that he felt that the NISL mentoring program was “a joke.” He felt that the components that needed to be accomplished through the program were ineffective. Consequently, Andy approached the mentoring experience in a way that benefitted him. Andy shared that he used his mentor as “another person that I could go to and say, hey, can you help me out here?” Beverly mentioned that when she met with her PPMN mentor, they sat down and talked about the goals for the year. The goals were then accomplished through several

meetings. Also, she reported a high level of satisfaction for this mentor experience, but her mentor did not arrive with a plan. Catherine stated that she and her in district mentor would follow up as needed regarding the agenda that they created at the beginning of their relationship.

Catherine referred to the development of goals within the PIL courses. Once the goals were established, participants would “reflect upon the learning that had occurred.” She also referred to a PIL approved experience in her district. Catherine shared that administrators were required to collect artifacts to “demonstrate that you are mastering” the components of the plan. As a result of their submissions, it was determined if the building level leader met the requirement and received credit. Additionally, Catherine consistently referred to a “framework” provided by state or nation education organizations. She would use the frameworks as a measurement of the quality of the programming. Faye shared that participants were aware of goal attainment within the program through the objectives set by PIL courses, which were referenced in the program binders. Dave referenced the feedback that was provided by the program facilitators, which he felt was adequate. Also, feedback that was given was relative to the curriculum that the program providers worked diligently to complete.

Additionally, participants shared concerns with individual accountability within the program. Whereas Beverly completed all of her work and was diligent about fulfilling all of the readings, Andy did not complete any of the assignments outside of the workshops, but he was able to participate with no problem. More importantly, Andy reflected that the facilitators did not monitor individuals’ assignment completion. The same was true of Dave, Eric, and Faye when evidence of on-line work was discussed. All three were diligent with completion of the on-line work, which was seen as overwhelming for Faye. Yet, in spite of attempting to balance

all of the duties and responsibilities as a new building level leader, participants completed the on-line assignments.

Eric referred to the level of accountability within his district while participating in work with the consultant. His responses helped to answer research question five. After meeting with the consultant, building level leaders were required to complete observations, followed by debriefing with the individual. He also referred to the annual reviews provided within the district. As a result of these reviews, every six months, the building level leader was aware of what they needed to work on. Also, through the discussions with the administrative team, they are “holding accountability where it is at.” Also, individual accountability in the district is established through the level of expectations within the culture.

Also, Andy questioned the significance of the PIL courses. He was confused with the fact that several other organizations were approved providers across the state. Incidentally, which program offers the best experience and support? Although he responded negatively towards the PIL program throughout the interview, Andy has a legitimate concern regarding the program. As a result of his participation in the PIL program and Western Pennsylvania Principal’s Academy, he may have felt that one was better than the other. Coincidentally, Andy was not entirely supportive of the PIL workshops. Furthermore, Pennsylvania continues to fund the PIL program in spite of other providers supporting induction. The fact that other providers are available questions the state’s accountability regarding funding of the program.

In addition to other providers, Faye referenced follow-up within her district, which may not embrace the PIL induction workshops. She felt that the district needs to support the program and its curriculum so that participants do not feel alone. Districts currently have no accountability for adoption of PIL sponsored programs or mentoring. Guskey and Yoon (2009)

recommend follow-up to professional development activities to ensure accurate implementation. Also, in regards to Act 45, districts are not accountable for alignment of the core and corollary standards. The lack of connection between PIL workshops and district in-service may jeopardize participants' motivation to attend these programs.

The level of accountability varied within districts and individual learners. Accountability within all building level professional development programs, whether in-district or out, will need to be improved in order to establish a consistent environment. The curriculum of the program will also motivate professionals to participate in the program.

Curriculum

As a result, participants are more apt to engage in productive activities grounded in the most recent research and best-practices in the field of school leadership. The *Standards of Professional Learning* revised by NSDC include curriculum in their resource, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes standards. Furthermore, program providers are responsible for assuring that program components are supportive of the needs of the adult learner.

The PIL induction and mentoring program provides the participants with a wealth of resources to support their knowledge and skill development of building level leaders in this era of accountability. In order to accomplish this feat, the induction program requires participants to complete Courses One and Four as a component of induction. Overall, the participants reported that the resources and activities provided during the PIL induction program were appropriate. Similarly, the experiences of all of the participants were consistent, supportive of the resources provided to the participants of the induction program.

Throughout the PIL induction program, an abundance of research was utilized to support the discussions and experiences of the workshops. Several of the study participants reinforced the inclusion of research-based topics covered in the program. Catherine shared that the research presented was used as a means of reflection, which was previously noted. Also, her description of research discussed was grounded in organizational and systems theory, which supports NSDC's (2000) recommendation of principal professional development. Additionally, Catherine continued to mention that the curriculum was new for participants if they had not participated in a graduate school program. Beverly, the most enthusiastic participant in this study, shared an experience where her school district was studying professional learning communities. While participating in a PIL course, it just so happened that the topic covered in the workshop was professional learning communities. Beverly shared that the "correlation really has been uncanny as to what we are trying to do here as to what my NISL courses were." Faye expressed her view of the research-based information shared in the PIL induction program. She had stated that various authors were presented to the participants through resources. Utilizing these books, participants were able to participate in active conversations regarding the books. She referred to the information in the books as the "science of principalship."

As the interviews progressed, the participants shared that the district did not offer the level of curriculum within district sponsored professional development that was experienced in the PIL workshops. For example, Beverly reported that "no type of information that I received at NISL did I have an opportunity to receive at any other time of professional development that was given in my district." She referenced "current events" as a main topic covered in the PIL induction program. Although the curriculum provided through the PIL program was more of "big picture," participants felt that the information was geared towards the principal's role. On

the other hand, Andy reported that his personal and professional needs were met through his doctoral program which he was completing while fulfilling the PIL induction requirement. Incidentally, Andy's district did not offer any specific training opportunities. Several of the participants referred to monthly meetings and book studies as the main form of professional development offered within their districts.

One principal, Eric, felt that his district did a good job supporting his professional needs and understanding of the principalship. He shared that beginning with the district interview process and continuing with the district's participation with a consultant, the district educated the administrative team well with the direction and goals of the district. Alternatively, his PIL workshop experience added to his "toolbox." He felt it was good to have a "refresher." Eric consistently reported that his district's support prepared him well for the principalship.

In regards to the curriculum offered in the PIL induction and mentoring program, Andy advised that the information seemed "repetitious" because of his involvement in other professional development experiences. Dave supported this claim because "some of that stuff I've already been through it" because he had been an administrator for seven years, compared to others in his cohort. He recommended that the program "should provide flexibility" instead of navigating through the pages of a book. To counter this perception, Peterson (2002) recommends that the experience should be "varied, engaging, and use the most current effective approaches for helping adults" (p. 231). By providing an environment detailed by Peterson, the learning environment will be more motivating, supporting research question one and two. Alternatively, Beverly believed that the curriculum offered was helpful in her role as a building level leader. Incidentally, when compared to other building level leaders in her district, she

believed that the other professionals were lacking in the basic knowledge of school leadership because they had not attended the PIL induction program.

Several resources recommend that the professional development of school principals should be career-staged (Kearney, 2010; Levine, 2005; Peterson & Kelley, 2002; Peterson, 2002; Petzko, 2004). As a result, the professional development experience should be applicable to the years of service of the school leader. Participants in this study found that the PIL induction and mentoring, in their experiences, did not offer opportunities for principals to receive experiences applicable to their time as a principal. For example, Andy did not feel that it “made sense” including principals or assistant principals with several years of service in the same cohort as new building level leaders. He continued to charge that the “framework was poorly designed.” Furthermore, Eric referenced the inclusion of new building level leaders with more experienced peers in PIL workshops. He felt that this was detrimental to the growth of the new building level leaders because they seemed “lost” during discussions.

The curriculum is essential in supporting the development of the knowledge and skills of new building level leaders. While supporting those needs through the curriculum, the amount of time offered in the induction or mentoring support is essential to the program’s success.

Time

Time for professional development in the education profession is always at the center of list of concerns for program directors. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) provides their workshops for induction and mentoring during the school year, usually September to June. As a result, building level leaders are required to commit time during their school year to participate in PIL workshops and mentor meetings. For example, Course One is offered as four two day sessions. A new building level leader will be required to attend workshops eight

times during their first year in a new and demanding position. Although the amount of time spent was questionable, participants were seeking more time within induction activities.

But overall, the participants in this study felt that their time was well spent as a participant in the induction program. Alternatively, Andy felt that participants are out of the building too much while completing the induction program. On the other hand, Andy shared that he would have liked more time to talk to other principals, compared to participating in a workshop. Andy recommended more time to solve actual problems that participants faced in their positions. The PIL induction program did not offer that time. Comparatively, Dave never felt like he was wasting his time at the induction workshops. He attributed this to the focus of leadership in PIL workshops. Unfortunately, he would have rather have done something else than spending “20 or 30 minutes to do a creative presentation”.

Catherine recommended that one day be added to the two days of the PIL induction workshop to “process through” the information covered during the workshop. She mentioned that “time was the biggest component.” Overall, Catherine felt that her time in the PIL induction workshops “saves you time later” because it makes you “more equipped to handle things,” or fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of school leadership. Also, Beverly mentioned that she would have liked Course Four to increase in days. Course Four consists of a total of four days in one school year. As a result of the quality of networking, Beverly would like to see an increase of days for Course Four. Eric felt that because of the support received in his district, his time in the induction workshops was not well spent. Furthermore, Eric consistently referred to the time spent with his administrative team and outside consultant as beneficial. He shared that this supported his professional growth much more than what was experienced in his PIL workshops.

Faye referred to her PIL induction experience in her first year as “additional stress.” She felt that as a new building level leader, she was attempting to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of the principalship, but was overwhelmed by the work assigned for the workshop. In addition, she was required to be out of the building for a total of eight days, which she felt was too many. Also, Faye felt that the computer work was “over the top.” It required additional time processing through the NISL site in order to prepare for the upcoming class. Faye would have rather performed a task that was applicable to her position, what is referred to as the real work of principals (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Sparks, 2009).

The PIL program is offered in four courses. Although the amount of time out of the building was referenced by study participants, there was no mention of the total number of courses available to building level leaders. Participants who complete all four courses attend for a total of four years. Effective professional development programs are on-going and sustained (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Donlevy, 2006; Nicholson et al., 2005; Peterson, 2002; Sparks, 2002). Therefore, the PIL program supports programming which is ongoing. On the other hand, there was limited evidence of districts offering ongoing support for their building level leaders. This also includes mentoring.

It was obvious that every participant in this study wanted more time to participate in a mentoring program, within or outside of the district. Andy believed that time with a mentor during the first few years as a building level leader should be increased. He shared that it was not until his third year of building level leadership that he felt comfortable in his position, eliminating the need for a mentor. As a result, Andy would have preferred mentor support during his first two years. The additional support he would receive until he got to that point would have been helpful.

Beverly shared that her time was well spent during the mentoring experience because the mentor was “fantastic.” She attributed this experience to her mentor’s experience and knowledge. Incidentally, the one year she was provided this mentor, she would have liked to have had this experience for an additional year or more, which is supportive of best practice recommendations (Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006). Her mentor also invited her to visit his school district to accentuate the mentoring experience. She felt that the time provided to meet and collaborate with principals of buildings in his district was meaningful.

Catherine would like to have added time to her mentorship so that she could “sit down and develop and further things.” She believed that the time would be well spent because she and her mentor could “get to those important things that we always don’t have time for.” Incidentally, Catherine was not assigned a PPMN mentor. Her experience occurred with an in-district mentor, which was her principal while serving as an assistant principal. Catherine was able to collaborate and problem solve with her in-district mentor. Additionally, as she moved from the middle school to the elementary school, the mentor provided to her from the district was supportive as she encountered a new experience.

Dave shared that both he and his mentor, provided through the district during his first year, were busy. Because of their responsibilities, they did not have the time to meet. Additionally, since there was no defined mentoring guideline in the district, the amount of time required was not established. Any in-district mentor meeting that occurred felt hurried to Dave. As a result, Dave would have liked to have more monthly meetings with his assigned district mentor while early in his principalship.

Eric's meetings with his PIL mentor were "short and brief," which resulted in him making the statement that he would rather have attended the PIL workshop. Additionally, his support within the district was referred to as very supportive when seeking advice.

Faye shared that her time with the mentor provided within the district was more beneficial. Her reasoning was that they were available whenever she needed them. When compared to the PIL mentor, who was available for a small amount of time, the district mentor was more readily available.

Summary

This chapter presented the perceptions of building level leaders who have completed the PIL induction and mentoring program. Also, as a result of the interviews that occurred with the study participants, the information was presented through the two main meaning units, andragogy and professional development standards. Through this exploration, the personal experiences of the study participants will support the conclusions and recommendations detailed in the next chapter, five.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Current principals need practical training aimed at helping them doing their jobs more effectively from the start, additional professional development to keep them fresh and adaptable, and continuous support in order to incorporate new thinking about what constitutes effective leadership.”
National Staff Development Council, 2000, p. 2

Summary of the Study

This study examined the experiences of new public school principals and assistant principals in PIL Region 7 who participated in induction and mentoring programs between 2008 and 2010. All but one of the participants in this study had completed a mentoring component through PPMN. Furthermore, in addition to the PPMN mentoring component, all study participants were provided a mentor from within their employing district. Also, the perception of the new building level leaders was explored through adult learning theory and professional learning standards. The implications of the conclusions and recommendations will be of value for future induction and mentoring efforts focused specifically towards new building level leaders. Furthermore, the analysis of chapter four provides the foundation to answer the research questions.

This phenomenological study was designed to explore the adult learning induction and mentoring experiences of acting public school principals and assistant principals. The perceptions of six individuals were gathered during one-on-one interviews, averaging 40 minutes, with principals or assistant public school principals who have completed the PIL induction program, Courses One and Four. This study utilized the lived experiences of new building level leaders as a source of evidence regarding the phenomenon, the PIL induction and PPMN mentoring programs. The research used Creswell’s (2007) template as a guide for coding the qualitative data. The findings were reported for each research question

1. What are the perceptions of new school principals and assistant principals regarding their PIL induction program experiences as it relates to adult learning?
2. How has the PIL induction program supported the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the new principal or assistant principal?
3. How are the needs of beginning school principals met during the mentorship component of the PIL induction program?
4. To what extent does the PIL induction program meet professional development standards?
5. How are school systems supporting the development of new principals or assistant principals?

Findings

PIL Induction Program: Participants' Perceptions

Research question one focused on the perceptions of new school principals and assistant principals regarding their PIL induction program experiences as it relates to adult learning. This study concentrated on how the PIL induction courses supported the precepts of adult learning: need to know, self-concept, prior experience, readiness, orientation to learning, and motivation.

All of the participants in the study reported that they were made aware of the goals and objectives of the topics covered in the courses. The curriculum, offered through NISL, supported the participant's need to know. As a result of Andy's awareness of a "canned program," the courses promoted an understanding of what was to be learned during his time in the induction workshops. During our conversation, Dave shared that the facilitators took into account adult learning principles during the workshops. He continued to share that the facilitators forwarding the agenda ahead of time supported the need to know. Additionally,

several of the participants mentioned that referring to resources was helpful as a participant of the PIL induction program. For example, the binder provided to all participants included detailed information regarding each course. Included in this information were course, and more specifically, unit goals and objectives. Catherine added facilitators' discussion of the NISL framework and presentation of the goals each morning of the workshop. Additionally, Eric included the on-line component as a means to convey workshop objectives and goals.

As a result of the curriculum, participants had very little opportunity to provide direction regarding what was covered in the workshops. The induction participants did not mind their limited role in the topics covered in the program, but they felt that some opportunities were present as they participated in discussions during workshops. For example, cohort members had opportunities to share their building level leadership experiences in small and large group discussions. Furthermore, the information presented by cohort members while participating in groups could have been relevant to the other participant's backgrounds. Developing principals, three or more years, recommended that the program offer more flexibility. Study participants with three or more years of service reported that much of the information presented, although important, did not support their needs. Also, as a result of a participants number of professional development experiences completed prior to or during their PIL participation, the value of the PIL program, especially for Andy, was viewed negatively.

Reflective practices were made available for participants in their induction and mentoring experiences. Reflection was provided through journal writing activities as a whole group and also through small group break out activities. In regards to journal writing as a source of reflection, Alsbury and Hackmann (2006) discovered in their study that participants did not view reflective journals as supportive of their growth. Additionally, the on-line work assigned prior to

the workshops offered a reflective component, but not all participants reported to have completed it. For example, Andy admitted to not completing the assignment, but was able to participate in discussions. In spite of the PIL curriculum integrating reflective practices, most of the participants did not report reflection as an important component during the program. Beverly, on the other hand, conveyed that reflection was the “biggest part” because being reflective is important as an administrator. In order for new building level leaders to grow and handle daily duties and responsibilities, reflection becomes a central component to their professional growth (Hall, 2008; Trotter, 2006). Additionally, Faye would rather reflect about her job experiences than completing reflections as part of the on-line work. Also, participants, specifically Dave and Catherine, reported their use of reflection more upon returning to their building.

Throughout the induction experiences, it became evident that each participant became resources to the discussions in the induction workshops. In spite of the canned program, the participants reported that their background and experiences were utilized during discussions and group work, both small and large. Incidentally, the inclusion of novice principals with developing principals created a learning environment which was not viewed as supportive of experienced principals’ learning needs. Novice principals and assistant principals were given the same amount of opportunities as all participants to participate in discussions. On the other hand, veteran administrators provided a wealth of information to the newer principals, although the new principals seemed “lost” during in-depth discussions. As a result of their PIL participation, participants became resources to their buildings and districts.

The participants all felt that their experience was relevant to their positions. All of the information discussed or covered offered the principals an idea of what they would encounter as building level leaders. Also, content was reported to have been geared towards new building

level leaders. They had mentioned that the presentation was more “big picture.” Topics that created a sense of a big picture included investigation of corporations such as Ford and comparisons of the United States and other nations, such as Singapore. Although reported as interesting, such topics were not viewed as practical to the building level leader. Moreover, Dave shared that the information presented was information “beyond the principal’s role”. For example, the development of a strategic plan or mission statement can be viewed as central office responsibilities.

When discussing the amount of problem-solving exercises offered within the induction program, study participants reported that it was lacking. As a result of new building level leaders entering their positions from the classroom, it is essential that experiences offer problem-solving. The PIL induction workshops incorporated exercises supporting problem-solving, but as participants reported, the program offered more of a “big picture.” Problem solving exercises that support the needs of building level leaders is focused on adaptive challenges, which do not always have a solution readily available (Drago-Severson, 2009; Helsing et al., 2008). Additionally, some cohorts were reported to have participants who controlled discussions with problems faced in their building or district. Facilitators took time during the workshop to discuss this issue with the participant. Incidentally, the issue or concern may not have been practical to others, thus wasting valuable time. In addition, participants also reported individual conversations related to issues or concerns faced in their position with peers during workshops. These exchanges were more informal.

The participants felt that the level of motivation offered in the PIL workshops was present. The new building level leaders in this study felt that they all had knowledge that they could use as they continue their careers. Additionally, the resources, binder, books, and

discussions provided during the workshops offered information that they felt would be useful for their future administration positions, but could presently be utilized. Peterson (2002) agrees that quality resources are essential to a successful professional development program. Several participants communicated that the onus was on the individuals to seek out resources. For example, Dave shared that he never felt that his time was wasted during attendance at workshops, although his prior experiences and professional development had supported this knowledge. With that said, Dave reinforced that new building level leaders need to take that initiative to seek out information and resources. He advised new building level leaders not to “wait for it.” Considering the participants of PIL workshops as adult learners, they have been provided many resources to use as they fulfill their duties and responsibilities. Each participant is then responsible to organize and identify these resources for its usefulness.

All of the participants spoke favorably of the networking aspect of the PIL induction program. With that said, adults learn best as a member of a collaborative environment which is supportive and trusting. Beverly reported that she developed positive relationships with other participants in her cohort. Also, she referred to a level of trust and confidence with the group. Once a level of trust is present in the learning environment, adult learners are more comfortable working within this learning community, supporting professional growth (Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011; Bakioglu et al., 2010; McAdamis, 2007; Reina & Reina, 1999). The adult learner also seeks out the socialization offered within the cohort group. Participants felt that while networking, it became evident that they were not the only building level leaders dealing with certain issues in their building. As a result, participants were more at ease because they did not feel alone or ineffective. Cohorts were seen as a support group. Additionally, networking in

the PIL workshops allowed participants to hear solutions or initiatives that were successful or failing and how districts or individuals responded.

PIL Induction Program: Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

This study also sought to explore the level that the PIL induction course supported the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of the new building level leader. In order for this program to be successful, new building level leaders' development of essential knowledge, skills and dispositions must be embedded into their experiences.

Participants reported that the induction workshops provided information which was research-based. Moreover, the topics covered were based on organization and systems theory. Participants shared that the research based topics supported their understanding of school leadership, but also assisted them with their daily duties and responsibilities. Study participants referred to a framework provided through the PIL program. This framework was used as a guideline regarding the topics to be covered in each course. In addition to PIL, PDE offered a framework that served as a guide for the curriculum. The core and corollary standards were reported within this framework and supported participants' understanding of what was to be covered.

Many resources were provided to the participants of the PIL program. In addition to the program facilitators, which included the regional director who was perceived as extremely knowledgeable and helpful, participants were provided with a wealth of resources that included the course binder, on-line work, and books. In addition to these supports, each participant recognized the learning that occurred with their newly formed network, or cohort. Participants consistently reported a high level of support provided within their cohort group. Cohort members shared similar situations they were dealing with in their districts. As a result, the

opportunity to build their knowledge and skill level through other colleague's sharing of information. This finding is consistent with the literature that advocates the concept of networking in the development of new building level leaders (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Nicholson et al., 2005; Peterson, 2002; Pourchot & Smith, 2004).

Each participant gained the skills of collaboration and problem-solving while participating. Although participants referenced limited amount of problem solving in the induction component, they were given opportunities to discuss situations that each were experiencing in their daily responsibilities. Additionally, group activities, usually in small groups, allowed participants to work through problems together. In regards to problem-solving activities, Dave communicated that any problem-solving experience offered during the workshops were "not the participants' problems that they were dealing with." On the other hand, problem-solving opportunities on the topic of economy and finances, which districts were currently addressing in an era of budget constraints, were evident in workshops.

Reflective practices were offered through many types of activities in the induction program, such as on-line work and daily work. Several participants mentioned that they would reflect upon the PIL experiences while fulfilling school responsibilities. Also, study participants shared that because so much had to be accomplished during the induction program, participants were given little time to reflect, resulting in reflection occurring upon their return to school. Alternatively, Beverly felt that reflection was a major part of NISL. She shared that as the group participated in activities, program facilitators offered time to reflect which she felt was an important skills as an administrator. Faye recommended more reflective practice regarding participants' experiences as a principal, compared to the on-line assignments which include required reflections.

It was evident that the participants felt that the topics covered were relevant to their daily duties. Beverly mentioned that the information presented was “stuff I do every day.” On the other hand, it was reported that the topics were more “big picture.” Items discussed throughout the PIL experience contained world views. Participants would like to have seen more of a local lens of school leadership, compared to investigations of world or national views of leadership. Furthermore, topics covered in the program were timely, or offered within a schedule that matched their school year.

Career-stages were not reported to have been integrated into the PIL induction experience. There was evidence that participants with several years of experience participated in cohorts containing new building level leaders. Additionally, several principals mentioned that the information was repetitious. If a participant had completed or was currently completing a college/university leadership course or other professional development workshop, the information presented in PIL seemed similar. But as reported by Eric, the information was perceived as a “good refresher.”

PIL Mentorship: Needs of Beginning Principals

Research question three investigates how the needs of beginning school principals and assistant principals were met during the mentorship component of the PIL induction program. Participants reported different levels of value regarding their PPMN mentor.

Beverly absolutely enjoyed her experience with the PPMN mentor. No other study participant reported this level of satisfaction with their assigned PPMN mentor as Beverly. More importantly, Beverly’s PPMN mentor had served as an administrator in the same district she is employed as a building level leader. As a result, his knowledge of the school district may have created a better experience for her. In addition to her mentor’s past experience in the same

district, the level of trust that she had with her mentor was not seen with any other PPMN mentor in this study. Her PPMN mentor provided her with a variety of experiences and support, such as visitations to other school buildings. Also, Beverly shared that their meetings were very informative and supported her needs as a new building level leader. In contrast, Eric would have rather attended the PIL workshop than participating in a short, ten minute meeting with his PPMN mentor.

It was quite evident that the PPMN mentor should not have been provided to PIL participants if they had been a principal for several years. In addition, Andy recommended that the mentoring experience should be more individualized and meaningful to the position. In order for the mentoring experience to support new building level leaders' needs, components of mentoring, such as standards-based, individualized, and meaningful, to name a few, must exist within the experience (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006; Gray et al., 2007; Holloway, 2004). In spite of his years of service, Andy felt that his time with the PPMN mentor was worthwhile because of their collaborative plan. Furthermore, the framework offered through NISL was not adhered to in their meetings. The mentoring component offered through PPMN did not provide the level of support for experienced building level leaders, or developing principals, as seen for new building level leaders.

The PPMN mentor did not provide adequate opportunities to reflect. Although, mentoring is the perfect vehicle for both mentor and protégé to reflect upon experiences, the support provided to the study participants was reported to offer little reflective practice. On the other hand, Beverly referenced discussions with her mentor to discuss and reflect upon decisions that she had made. Other participants shared mentoring support in the form of resources or an opportunity to talk to another person, but no reflection.

Study participants reported that the PPMN mentor lacked clear guidelines to utilize during this one-year experience. Andy was the only study participant that referenced requirements of the NISL mentoring support. In spite of the understanding of a document, his mentor permitted their relationship to offer more autonomy because of his years of experience. Other participants functioned in their mentor relationship with limited direction. As a result, any goals created were developed at the first meeting. In comparison, participants reported that the in-district mentor was more structured. The absence of guidelines for the PPMN mentoring support caused a lack of accountability for all learners. If mentoring is to support the new building level leader, an evaluation system must exist to monitor the relationship (Gray et al., 2007; Grissom & Harrington, 2010).

Several principals reported that the mentoring experience “was not helpful” and “didn’t take a whole lot from it.” Participants in the study referenced that they did not have a level of trust needed to work alongside the PPMN mentor. Trust is an essential ingredient in the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship (Aguilar, Goldwasser, & Tank-Crestetto, 2011; Bakioglu et al., 2010; Beavers, 2009; Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011; Duncan & Stock, 2010; McAdamis, 2007; Reina & Reina, 1999; Villani, 2006). Beverly, on the other hand, trusted her PPMN mentor more than others. She also would have liked an additional year with her PPMN mentor. Comparatively, other study participants did not seek this additional time with their PPMN mentor, but reported the need for additional years of mentoring service. Overall, the mentoring component, offered through PPMN, did not support all of the study participants’ needs while providing the service for one year.

During the PPMN experience, the principals and assistant principals in this study reported little or no involvement with student data. One participant, Beverly, reported

discussions with her mentor on the topic of her ELL population. Other forms of data, which include the PSSA, Pennsylvania's assessment for annual yearly progress, were not a component of the mentoring relationship. Although integration of student data into required monthly meetings was feasible, student data had not been a part of their agenda. Knowledge of data analysis is essential for new building level leaders while they function in the accountability era and facilitate discussions with their faculties regarding student data (Keith, 2011; Leithwood, Strauss, & Anderson, 2007; Nicholson et al., 2005). As a result, professional development experiences need to incorporate school and student data skills into the program.

When questioned about the integration of problem solving in the PPMN mentoring, study participants reported limited opportunities. Beverly reported problem solving within her PPMN mentor experience. She sought out his feedback regarding decisions that she made as an assistant principal. Her responses overall were more favorable regarding this experience. Alternatively, other participants did not have the level of problem solving opportunities with their PPMN mentor. First, this may have been a result of their relationships with their assigned individual. For example, Eric did not feel he could trust his assigned mentor. In addition, Eric felt comfortable with the supports provided within the district, which was a similar observation with other participants in this study.

PIL Induction Program: Professional Development Standards

NSDC's 2011 professional learning standards were utilized to explore the PIL induction program. This exploration occurred through the lenses: learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. These seven lenses served as the standards of professional learning.

The most significant aspect of the PIL induction program was its efforts with networking. All participants conveyed that this network was the most important factor in their growth. Additionally, networking was a component that participants could utilize in the future. Furthermore, all participants communicated that many opportunities were provided for them to work in small groups within their cohort. Often times, small groups were organized in relation to their background, or level of school in which they serve.

Substantial resources were provided to participants in the PIL induction program. For example, many of the participants reported that the binder that was utilized during the induction workshops has been and will be referred to as they continue future leadership positions, such as central office. Additionally, many leadership books were provided to all new building level leaders. These books, which became assigned reading, were often used as a source of professional conversations between the cohort, but also within some districts, as was the case for Faye. In addition, other cohort members became resources to individuals. New building level leaders' involvement in a collaborative group will support them as they navigate their daily responsibilities (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Peterson, 2002). On the other hand, participants reported that the inclusion of new building level leaders, novices, with veteran principals was detrimental to the learning environment. As Eric reported, the new building level leaders looked "lost" during discussions. On the other hand, new building level leaders were reported to have an opportunity to learn more from their collaboration with principals or assistant principals with more years of service.

Time was reported to be an essential need for all building level leaders, no matter their years of service. Participants reported that in spite of attending several days of PIL induction workshops, they recommend adding additional days to further investigate topics. Alternatively,

Andy felt that attending the PIL workshops for eight days was too much time out of the building for a new building level leader. Additionally, all participants requested more time with mentors, which included adding one to two more years with mentoring support. Literature recommends new building level leaders' participation in mentoring for more than one year (Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006).

Adult learning concepts, which support learning designs, were present during the PIL induction experience. Dave shared that the facilitators were effective and took into account the varying adult learning needs of participants. Additionally, learning strategies varied throughout the PIL induction courses. For example, individual learning, such as reading assignments, was provided prior to meetings. Throughout the PIL workshops, participants were able to collaborate as a member of whole and small groups, incorporating various resources to the new building level leader. Furthermore, the formation of learning communities supported other skills, such as problem-solving, as participants completed assigned tasks. Participation in collaborative experiences will support the professional development needs of the new building level leader (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Drago-Severson, 2009; Duncan & Stock, 2010; Holloway, 2004).

Data was reported to be limited during PIL induction workshops. Very little relevant data was utilized within the program. More specifically, there was no report of participants' school and student data being used as tools for learning. Study participants shared that data was offered through comparisons with other nations, but direct instruction concerning data from participants' schools was not evident.

Participants questioned the sequencing of PIL induction courses. They were confused about the order of Course One to Course Four. Participants who had completed Courses Two

and Three felt that they were equally as important, but not required for induction. Beverly mentioned that she would have liked to have had the process explained because the order was “confusing.” Similarly, Andy, who felt that Courses Two and Three were more relevant to the new building level leader, was puzzled regarding the sequence of courses. Incidentally, Courses Two and Three, which was referred to as being meaningful, could be skipped by participants because both courses are not requirements for principal induction.

In regards to outcomes, participants varied in their commitment to work assigned and experienced. Additionally, some participants fulfilled all of the assigned work, but felt that it was burdensome as they attempted to execute all of the additional duties and responsibilities of a new building level leader. Furthermore, participants admitted to not completing all of the assigned homework, such as reading pages of text and online work. Incidentally, those individuals reported that they were able to participate during workshops with no problem and facilitators did not confront individuals regarding assignment completion.

Schools Systems’ Support of New Principals’ Development

The support school systems provide to new principals or assistant principals is the focus for research question five. This investigation explores the induction and mentoring support provided to new building level leaders within their district.

Throughout the interviews, it became noticeable that districts offered limited induction professional development activities to their new building level leaders. The support service most often reported to have been provided was mentoring. Furthermore, no matter what district-sponsored induction service provided, it was reported that it lacked any structure or formalized curriculum, or as Beverly described “it was thrown together at the last minute” and “was wasteful.”

Districts were not reported to lack support for the professional development experiences of their administrative team, but usually whatever was provided was offered through outside organizations, such as intermediate units or local universities, or consultants. Eric, an assistant principal in a large suburban district, provided glowing reviews of the professional development experience offered in his district as a new building level leader. His district provided a consultant who performed walkthroughs with the administrative staff. Each walkthrough provided follow-up meetings which support each building level leader's understanding of the expectations of the districts instructional focus. Similarly, Beverly and her district faculty participated in work with consultants while implementing a new reading curriculum. In addition, Catherine reported that her district developed a PIL sponsored technology curriculum supporting Act 45 credits. All building level leaders in the district were required to create a portfolio which was submitted at the end of the school year. Also, activities often provided to new building level leaders included book studies and monthly administration meetings. The topic of these district sponsored activities was most likely chosen by the superintendent, which eliminated participant self-direction.

In regards to the relationships within the administrative team, all study participants reported that they had a good relationship with the other principals or assistant superintendent, if available. Additionally, new building level leaders' immediate supervisors were available as needed. As a result of his study of 100 first-year principals, Hertting (2008) recommends supervisors collaborate with new building level leaders as a source of support. The relationships were reported to have been evident as a result of monthly administrative meetings or in the event that the building level leader had to contact the assistant superintendent or superintendent.

Participants also reported trustworthy relationships with district team members. Furthermore, in-district mentors were seen to be more trusting.

There were a number of components missing which support the knowledge and skills of the adult learner or new building level leader. For example, responses were lacking significant support for problem-solving and experience with data. Both problem-solving experiences and data skill development are necessary components within successful professional development programs for new building level leaders (Germain & Quinn, 2005; Keith, 2011; Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004; Nicholson et al., 2005; Petzko, 2008). Problem solving, although limited, was reported to be used in the mentoring experience. Also, although data discussions were evident, it was not reported consistently across all participants. Catherine's district created a PIL sponsored data curriculum tied to Act 45 credits. Also, no experiences within the district supported their career-stage of the district administrative staff. Furthermore, new principals or assistant principals were provided limited or no control over the direction of the professional development experiences. Book studies were reported as a common professional development experience for principals or assistant principals, no matter their years of service, or career stage.

Mentoring within districts was reported to be more favorable with the study participants. Although improvements were recommended by the participants, mentor support offered by veteran administrators was viewed as helpful. Andy believed that he could "not have survived without it" when referred to his district mentor support. Study participants felt an effective mentor early in their career would have been extremely helpful. Similarly, Dave was seeking more mentorship early in his career. Literature supports the importance of mentoring in a new building level leaders' professional growth, which is often referred to as the most effective form of professional development for new principals (Duncan & Stock, 2010; Gray et al., 2007; Spiro

et al., 2007). Andy referenced that the mentoring should be a “gradual release.” Catherine, the only participant to not have received a PPMN mentor, shared that she was able to shut the door and troubleshoot with her mentor, who was her building principal, as she served as an assistant. Faye mentioned that districts need to provide better mentors. Similar to their PPMN mentor experience, the study participants did not have any guidelines to facilitate their mentoring support. Incidentally, participants either used their mentors in a way that they were comfortable or created goals with their mentors at their first meeting. The in-district mentor was reported to have been more structured than the PPMN mentor. The topics covered during the experience included “what was going on at the time in the school year”. In addition, mentoring also supported the protégé’s understanding of “how things are done around here.” Alternatively, Dave referred to his in-district mentoring as tacit. Mentors were more of a buddy. Both mentoring provided within the district and through PPMN were not as sequenced as expected.

The study participants felt that new building level leaders need to “tap into” their district resources, typically offered through mentor relationships. When discussing a new building level leaders’ ownership of their professional development support, participants believed that the onus is on the individual. Dave referenced that most building level leaders have this characteristic since they were functioning in a leadership position. Furthermore, study participants referred to self-direction as professionals enter leadership positions. This characteristic was reported to be an effective characteristic of a building level leader.

The use of outside consultants or attending PIL induction workshops was not seen as beneficial to the growth of several participants. Andy stated that “job training and mentorship is where you learn the most.” He added that “experience is how you get that.” A 2000 study provided by the Institute for Educational Leadership supports Andy’s claim. The study reported

that 97.2% of the kindergarten through eighth grade principals surveyed rated on-the-job experience as the most valuable to their success as principals. Furthermore, Andy shared that the canned program cannot offer this level of experience. Similarly, Faye referenced the development of “craft knowledge,” which cannot be found in books. Craft knowledge is developed through experiences. She also references “life experiences” as important to building level leadership skills.

Also, Faye and Andy, both from smaller districts when compared to the other participants, felt that their smaller districts offered more support for new building level leaders. Typically, the small administration team was built to support the new building level leader. On the other hand, Eric, who was employed in a large district, reported a high level of satisfaction with administrative support.

This summary of each research question was presented through the results of the interviews. As a result of participants experience in the phenomenon, implications of professional practice will be highlighted to improve upon the practice of induction and mentoring.

Implications for Professional Practice

The PIL induction workshops took in to account most if not all of the adult learning principles. Also, Pennsylvania has adopted a curriculum that supports the needs of adult learners. As mentioned by several participants, this curriculum has been adopted by a national organization, but is offered by trained state facilitators. Additionally, the facilitators, who are retired principals or assistant principals from the region or state, implement this curriculum. For this reason, the facilitators are aware of the distinct needs of the consumers in the cohort.

As a result of new building level leaders entering the position directly from the classroom, problem centered activities will need to be incorporated into the induction or mentoring experience (Germain & Quinn; Leithwood, Seashore Louis et al., 2004; Petzko, 2008). New building level leaders will confront a different variety of problems, such as student data, while fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Districts and organizations providing induction programs need to incorporate problem-based learning into their curriculum. The results of this study outlined limited experiences with problem-based learning. As a result, it is necessary to support this skill through learning communities that are trusting and confidential (Duncan & Stock, 2010).

The self-concept of the participants should be taken into account when planning for professional development (Garrison, 1997; Knowles et al., 2005; Peterson, 2002; Pourchot & Smith, 2004). Adult learners bring with them a tremendous amount of experiences that can be utilized in the learning environment. The study participants shared limited opportunities to provide direction with their PIL and district induction or professional development activities. In contrast, mentoring experiences for participants offered more self-direction because of the absence of guidelines. In order to support the developmental needs of new building level leaders, induction or professional development programs offered in or out of school systems should incorporate topics or tasks supportive of participants' educational experiences.

It was reported that new building level leaders participated in the same cohort as developing principals, three or more years. Incidentally, this situation was not perceived as effective by veteran leaders who were part of the study. As a result of the varying needs of principals and assistant principals, the support provided should be offered in experiences related specifically to years of service, resulting in more relevant and meaningful supports (Levine,

2005; Peterson, 2002; Peterson & Kelley, 2002; Petzko, 2004). Also, Portin, Schnieder, Dearmond, & Gundlach (2003) recommend that professional development be offered throughout the building level leaders' career.

Support for new building level leaders as they enter their first few years of their position was lacking. For some, if the PIL program was not available, their support would consist of a principal preparatory program and one year of in-district mentoring available as a new building level leader. That is professional development malpractice. First, it was evident that many in-district mentoring experiences were absent of adequate structure. Several reported great relationships and available team members, but there was no evidence of learning regarding data, problem solving situations, or any other skill necessary to be an effective leader in the accountability era. In-district experiences were described as buddy relationships and simply supported the new principals' knowledge of "how we do things around here." Incidentally, structured programs will need to be created within districts to support the development of new building level leaders. On the other hand, school districts will need to devise a plan to support its adult learners who have entered their first building level leader position. Additionally, effective monitoring systems will need to be instituted to assure consistent implementation of support for new building level leaders.

Mentoring was reported favorably for all of the participants. All building level leaders either shared positive feedback concerning their mentoring experience or they reflected that they desire to have had a more formal and worthwhile experience as a novice principal. All participants who were offered a PPMN mentor established a positive relationship, but not all felt that their time with this individual was worthwhile. On the other hand, mentoring support within the districts was reported to be much more valuable. As a result, mentoring support based on

best practices will need to be developed within districts. First and foremost, districts will need to collaborate to institute a mentor training program. The entire framework of mentoring support needs to be evaluated and developed. For example, the amount of time, funding, and identification of mentors should be reviewed in order to support new building level leaders. New principals deserve and seek out mentoring support. In the event that districts are unable to offer effective induction programs, it will be necessary to strengthen mentoring support within the district.

School districts have shown inconsistent support for new building level leaders. District support was offered through consultants, administrative monthly meetings, and books studies. Incidentally, there was limited evidence of prescriptive support for new building level leaders. For example, consultants were provided, but for only one aspect of a building level leaders responsibilities. It became obvious that a vision for new building level leader's professional development has not been developed within representative districts. In the event that the state eliminates or decreases the budget for PIL sponsored programming, districts will need to take on a lot more responsibility for induction. First and foremost, career-staged support will need to be established, beginning with induction and mentoring programming for new building level leaders.

Recommendations for Further Study

Only PIL Region 7 was used for this study. In order for substantial information of the effects new principal induction has on new building level leaders, it is imperative that a qualitative or quantitative study occurs that includes the entire state, which could take place within a PIL induction workshop. Since principal induction and mentoring has only recently become a component in a new building level leaders' professional development, limited research

is available which provides for this supports' effectiveness (Darling Hammond, LaPointe et al., 2007; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Gray et al., 2007; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Killeavy, 2006; LaPointe & Davis, 2006; Nicholson et al., 2005; Petzko, 2008). As the state continues to require an induction requirement for all building level leaders, a longitudinal investigation of the curriculum and strategies should occur to support an understanding of best practices in induction within the state.

This study occurred at a time when all education budgets, local and state, saw a limited amount of funding to support all aspects of education, specifically the professional development of school principals. For this reason, this study offered information vital to the needs of building level leaders, but additional information needs to be collected to gather evidence regarding effective components of programs across the state. Furthermore, most of participants in this study were from the elementary level. In order to gain a better understanding of induction experiences of all professionals, future studies of the perceptions of induction and mentoring experiences should include only secondary principals and assistant principals.

Further studies must also investigate how local school districts across the state are supporting new building level leaders. A quantitative or qualitative study should investigate the variety of programming that is made available to new building level leaders in their first few years. Furthermore, evaluation systems need to be established to effectively monitor the professional development of new elementary and secondary building level leaders. Also, school systems would benefit from information regarding curriculums for induction programs at the district level. Nicholson et al. (2005) advise that because school systems vary in culture and beliefs, the curriculum offered by an outside provider may not support their needs. As a result, school districts across the region and state need to become more informed consumers. Utilizing

the results and recommendations from additional studies will support knowledge of the needs of their building level leaders.

Mentoring across the state, and within study participants' districts, is a topic for future research. Additionally, explorations of mentoring across regions or the state would support the understanding of effective support services provided to new principals or assistant principals. Further studies should highlight training programs, length of mentoring, and selection of mentors.

Conclusions

Overall, the participants reported experiences which consisted of ample opportunities for professional development. Good principals are made, not born (Gray et al., 2007; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). Whether in a PIL sponsored workshop, district administrative meeting, or mentoring relationship, each building level leader gained additional knowledge and skills pertinent to school leadership. In addition, professional development for school principals, specifically new building level leaders, is supportive of professional growth when it is grounded in adult learning and professional learning standards. First, building level leaders must be made aware of the goals of their professional development experiences. Communication of goals must be improved in district professional development and all mentoring supports. Second, the experiences brought to the learning environment needs to be integrated and supported by program facilitators. This includes providing all learners an opportunity to guide their own learning by developing targets and identifying topics of interest. Handing this task over to the learners will increase their level of motivation for the learning experience.

Networking is essential as new building level leaders enter this daunting profession. Adding more resources to the novice principals' collaborative team will provide support as

he/she encounters tasks not experienced as a classroom teacher. The development of professional learning communities within the district will undoubtedly support all building level leaders, but most importantly, the novice principal. Duncan and Stock (2010) agree that networks are vital to the professional development needs of a building level leader. Additionally, collaborative structures should be developed in counties, such as intermediate units, to assist with networking of professionals. Also, a network could also be facilitated through local universities or colleges. Connecting school districts and local universities/colleges can instill professional development programming which is based on the mission and vision of districts. More importantly, no matter the collaborative opportunities provided to support the new building level leader, trust is necessary to support professional growth (Duncan & Stock, 2010).

Mentoring has shown to be an essential ingredient in the growth and support for new building level leaders. It is crucial that mentoring, which includes reflective practices, is improved first at the district level followed by any provider chosen by PDE. Also, effective mentor training programs will need to be instituted across this PIL region. Training is essential to establish an effective mentoring program (Daresh, 2004; Grissom & Harrington, 2010; Hall, 2008; Holloway, 2004; Petzko, 2008; Spiro et al., 2007; Villani, 2006). Also, programs already in existence, such as NAESP's mentor training certificate, can be utilized to sustain this essential support for new building level leaders. Furthermore, selection of mentors will need to be identified so that mentors are chosen based on quality compared to availability. Instruments which assist the matching of mentor should be used in order to match personalities. Hall (2009) supports the need to correctly match the mentor to the new building level leader. He asserts that a bad match can decrease the learning of both parties. Furthermore, school systems should also

investigate the use of coaches for administrators. Coaches, who are often located outside the school system, can offer support that may not be found within a mentoring relationship.

Districts must become more involved in the development of its novice and developing principals and assistant principals. First, induction programs, which include reflective practices, should be developed or strengthened, dependent upon its current offerings. Second, if programs do not exist or are not supported by the board of directors, mentoring support will need to be improved. Since mentoring would serve as the primary support for new building level leaders, it is vital that this service mirror effective programs across the nation. Third, if outside programs are continued, these programs should match the vision of the district. All administrative staff in the district will need to be involved in its development, implementation and evaluation. Fourth, effective evaluation systems will need to be put into place to monitor the level at which principal professional development is meeting the needs of its building level leaders. Much in the same way that Grissom & Harrington (2010) and Nicholson et al. (2005) advise the use of rigorous evaluation systems, school districts must begin to take the stance of informed consumer regarding its professional development services. Additionally, Nicholson et al. (2005) warn that since every school is different, professional development cannot be offered by outside sources that are not familiar with the culture or background of the district.

Career stage experiences will certainly improve upon the professional development for building level leaders. Placing developing principals, three or more years, in the same cohort with novice principals can be detrimental to the veteran building level leader. On the other hand, novice principals could benefit immensely from this experience. This combination of novice and developing principals should be reserved for mentoring relationships. Professional development opportunities should be made available and differentiated for all stages of the principalship:

novice, developing, and expert. More importantly, these services should be scaffolded or spiraled to ensure that the essential knowledge and skills are developed throughout each level. Also, although mentoring is recommended for the first few years of a building level leaders career, additional mentoring or coaching should be continued to support the growth of building level leaders. Lastly, problem-based practices need to be included in a new building level leaders support to prepare new leaders for experiences for which they will encounter in the first few years of the leadership position.

Minimal experiences were reported regarding the use of school or district related data. For this reason, it is vital that induction experiences integrate key skills regarding data usage into their programs, no matter the provider. New building level leaders need to have the ability to read, analyze, and develop plans of actions concerning the information presented in the data. This skill is essential as accountability measures increase in the field of education (Keith, 2011). Also, in order for new building level leaders to facilitate their faculty's ability to utilize data in the accountability era, it is necessary to incorporate this task into induction and mentoring experiences. Additionally, it is important that new building level leaders understand the different types of data and its use for their schools.

Much in the same way that data related conversations should be embraced in support for new building level leaders, problem-solving experiences also should be integrated into an induction and mentoring program. Problem-solving is an essential skill to a new building level leader as they experience the constant challenges presented in this position. Whether offered in-district or outside, such as through PIL programming, authentic problem-solving experiences will need to be implemented in order for support to exist for new building level leaders. This can be done individually, such as mentoring, or as part of a group, such as a cohort. Leithwood,

Seashore Louis et al. (2004) agree that authentic problem-solving will need to be a part of professional development for new principals or assistant principals. Expert principals utilize years of experience to gain this skill. Incidentally, in order to prepare the new building level leader, immersion into problem-solving experiences will help to build the necessary knowledge and skills to tackle issues faced in the accountability era.

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Appendix A
PIL Daily Program Evaluation Feedback



TRAINING LOCATION: _____

DATE: _____

Daily Program Evaluation Feedback

Please place a checkmark in the column that best represents your agreement with each statement

| | Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Disagree |
|---|-------|----------------|-------------------|----------|
| 1. I was challenged by the program content. | | | | |
| 2. The content of each topic was comprehensive. | | | | |
| 3. The instructors facilitated effective sessions that advanced my learning. | | | | |
| 4. I will be able to use what I have learned back in my school/district. | | | | |
| 5. What will you bring back to use at your school? | | | | |
| 6. The interactive classroom activities helped me discuss, practice, and apply the content of the program. | | | | |
| 7. The computer-based activities prepared me for the content covered in class. | | | | |
| 8. The videos (when in the unit) illustrated and/or added relevant insight to the topics discussed. | | | | |
| 9. The required pre-readings enhanced my understanding of the materials covered in class. | | | | |
| 10. Briefly describe the value of the pre-work for this unit (required computer-based activities and pre-readings). | | | | |
| 11. The printed instructional materials were easy to understand and use. | | | | |
| 12. Overall, the program met my expectations. | | | | |

If you answered "Somewhat Disagree" or "Disagree" to any of the above items, please indicate as specifically as possible what led you to choose the rating and what could be done to improve the program.

What was the most important learning for you today?

What are you wondering about as a result of today's work?

Thank you for completing this evaluation form. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee (code):

Position of interviewee:

You have been selected for this qualitative study based on the fact that you have completed the PIL induction and mentoring program in Region 7 and you are a practicing school principal or assistant principal in a public school. The purpose of this study is to investigate your perception of the PIL induction and mentoring component and how it has supported your personal and professional needs as an adult learner and building level leader.

This interview should take no more than 1 hour to complete and will be recorded for accuracy. If our interview extends beyond that time, we can either continue until we are finished or designate another time to complete the interview.

Your responses to the questions will be transcribed and provided to you for further review for accuracy. All information will be kept confidential and you will be referred to as principal _____.

Do you have any questions that you would like me to answer before we begin? We will now begin the interview and recording.

1. What types of induction activities did you participate in during your first few years as a principal or assistant principal? (Burk)
2. Did the PIL induction activities provide the help you needed? If yes, how? If no, what was lacking? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. Explain your feelings regarding if time was well spent? (Guskey, 2000)
- b. Explain how the materials made sense to you? (Guskey, 2000)
- c. How were activities in which you were engaged meaningful? (Guskey, 2000)
- d. Explain the usefulness of what you learned? (Guskey, 2000)

3. What changes would you have made to the PIL induction experiences (or lack of) that you were a part of? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. Describe how you were informed of the goals, direction, resources used in the program. (need to know)
 - b. Explain the level of responsibility and direction that was given to you during your PIL experience. (self-concept)
 - c. What would you add to support your learning? Why would you add these components? How would you add these components? (process, context, need to know, self-concept, experiences, readiness, orientation, & motivation)
4. How did the PIL induction program support your personal and professional needs as an adult learner and building level leader? (Burk)

Sub-questions:

- a. How did the induction experience support your understanding of what was to be learned? (need to know)
 - b. How were you provided autonomy or given some control over the direction of the program? (self-concept)
 - c. How were the resources, including your background, relevant and used? (experiences)
 - d. How was the induction experience related to your job? (readiness)
 - e. How did program providers solve actual problems faced by the participants? (orientation)
 - f. Describe the value of this program? (motivation)
5. What professional development activities were provided within your district during your first 5 years of the principalship? How did these learning opportunities support your knowledge and skills of school leadership? (Burk)

Sub-questions:

- a. How did your district support your understanding of the principalship and leadership within the school system? (need to know)
- b. How did your district provide you with an opportunity to provide direction for development activities? (self-concept)
- c. How were activities related to your position? (experiences)
- d. How did the activities support problem solving? (orientation)
- e. How were these activities valuable to you as an adult learner and school leader? (motivating)

6. Did the individual who formally or informally mentored you make an impact on your first 1-5 years of principalship? If yes, what are the three major areas your mentor made the most impact? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. How was the relationship between you and the person who mentored you? (process & context)
- b. How was the mentor chosen from within or outside of the district? (context)
- c. How were goals of the mentoring accomplished? (need to know & context)

7. Can you give me specific examples of how the mentoring experience affected you? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. How did the mentoring experience support your understanding of what was to be learned? (need to know)
- b. How were you provided autonomy or given some control over the direction of the mentoring experience? (self-concept)
- c. How were the resources, including your background, relevant and used? (experiences)
- d. How did the conversations relate to your job? (readiness)
- e. How did the mentor assist you with resolutions to problems encountered in your position? (orientation)
- f. How valuable was this program to you as an adult learner and school leader? (motivation)
- g. How was student data used during your conversations with the mentor? (process)
- h. What examples of collaboration skills did you take from this relationship? (process)

8. How would you describe the relationship you had with the individual you consider your most significant mentor? What was the best advice your mentor gave you? What do you wish had happened during the mentoring relationship that did not happen? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. What resources were provided to assist you and your mentor with discussion/meetings? (context)

9. Do you feel the experiences you had during your first year, including any induction experiences, help make you more successful in your position? If yes, how? (Aycock, 2007)

Sub-questions:

- a. How did these experiences support your understanding of the goal or focus of the program or activity? (need to know)
- b. How were you given some control over the direction of the experience? (self-concept)
- c. How were the resources, including your background, relevant and used? (experiences)
- d. How were these experiences related to your job? (readiness)
- e. How did program providers solve actual problems faced by participants during these experiences? (orientation)
- f. How were these activities valuable to you as an adult learner and school leader? (motivation)

10. Would you like to share any additional information that you feel is valuable to beginning principals concerning mentoring or induction? (Aycock, 2007)

Thank you for your participation in this interview. Within the next few weeks, I will forward a transcript of your responses for you to review. Please review the information and notify me with approval or revisions. Also, would you be willing to participate in a follow up phone interview? (get phone number) If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail (burkr@hasdpa.net) or phone (724-838-9421).

Appendix C
Interview Question Comparison

| Question Number | Aycock (2007) | Question Number | Burk (2011) |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|--|
| 1 | First, we will discuss the types of induction experiences you received as a first year principal. What type of induction activities did you participate in? Who was involved in the induction activities? Did these activities provide the help you needed? If yes, how? If no, what was lacking? | 1 | What types of activities did you participate in during your first few years as a principal or assistant principal? |
| | | 2 | Did the PIL induction activities provide the help you needed? If yes, how? If no, what was lacking? |
| 2 | Next, we will focus on your recommendations for changes to the induction process. What changes would you have made to the induction experiences (or lack of) that you were a part of? | 3 | What changes would you have made to the PIL induction experiences (or lack of) that you were a part of? |
| 3 | Now we will discuss the effects of induction support. Did the individual who informally mentored you make an impact on your career? If yes, what are the three major areas your mentor made the most impact? | | See question 6 |
| | | 4 | How did the PIL induction program support your personal and professional needs as an adult learner and building level leader? |
| | | 5 | What professional development activities were provided within your district during your first 5 years of the principalship? How did these learning opportunities support your knowledge and skills of school leadership? |
| | | 6 | Did the individual who mentored you make an impact on your first 1-5 years of the principalship? If yes, what are the three major areas your mentor made the most impact? |
| 4 | Can you give me specific examples of how a mentoring experience affected you? | 7 | Can you give me specific examples of how a mentoring experience affected you? |
| 5 | Were there missing aspects from your induction to the principalship? If yes, what were the missing elements? | | |
| 6 | How would you describe the relationship you had with the individual you considered your most significant mentor? What was the best advice your mentor gave you? What do you wish had happened during the mentoring relationship that did not happen? | 8 | How would you describe the relationship you had with the individual you considered your most significant mentor? What was the best advice your mentor gave you? What do you wish had happened during the mentoring relationship that did not happen? |
| 7 | What recommendations do you have for the internship required by the state? Do you feel this is a valuable requirement? If yes, what do you perceive as the value/purpose of the internship? If no, why not? | | |
| 8 | Do you feel the experiences you had during your first year, including any induction experiences, helped to make you more satisfied with your position? If yes, how? | 9 | Do you feel the experiences you had during your first year, including any induction experiences, help to make you more successful in your position? If yes, how? |
| 9 | If you could change one thing to make you job more satisfying, what would it be? | | |
| 10 | Would you like to share additional information that you feel is valuable to beginning principals, concerning mentoring or induction? | 10 | Would you like to share additional information that you feel is valuable to beginning principals, concerning mentoring or induction? |

Appendix D
Interview Procedure Summary
Phenomenological Study Participants

1. The researcher will e-mail all available participants an invitation to take part in the study. The e-mail will include a background of the study.
2. The researcher will contact via e-mail public school principals and assistant principals who were willing to participate in the interview.
3. Each participant will be contacted by phone or e-mail to schedule a date, time and location for the interview.
4. The researcher will forward each participant the following: informed consent form, background of study, and the interview protocol.
5. The 1 hour interview will take place at a location convenient to the participant. Should the interview take longer than 1 hour, the participant will be offered a choice of completing the interview at that time, or reschedule another time that is convenient to the participant.
6. The interview will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. During the actual recording, all participants will be identified by an assigned letter.
7. The completed recorded interview will be submitted to a transcriptionist who will transfer the recording to a Word document.
8. The researcher will begin developing codes to from the responses provided by the participants. Coding will develop through the investigation of each participants experience in the PIL induction and mentoring program.
9. Each participant will be e-mailed a copy of his/her interview to review and make revisions if necessary. The participant will be asked to contact the researcher regarding the accuracy of the information.
10. If changes have been made by the participant, the researcher will revise the transcripts. Participants will be forwarded a completed copy of their interview summary.
11. Each participant will be offered a copy of the dissertation upon completion of the study.

Adapted from Aycock (2007).