Exploring my leadership practice in connection to the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers

Joseph Patrick Vespignani
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EXPLORING MY LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN CONNECTION TO THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SECOND- TO FOURTH-YEAR NON-TENURED TEACHERS

by

Joseph P. Vespignani

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services and Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
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at
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Dissertation Chair: James Coaxum III, Ph.D.
Dedications

To my wife, Loredana, for her ongoing and endless support as I navigated through this journey. Thank you for celebrating every step of the way with me. Also to my parents, Arthur and Karen, for instilling in me a love for learning and desire to better myself through an education.
Acknowledgments

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Abstract

Joseph P. Vespignani
EXPLORING MY LEADERSHIP PRACTICE IN CONNECTION TO THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR SECOND- TO FOURTH-YEAR NON-TENURED TEACHERS
2015-2016
James Coaxum III, Ph.D.
Doctor of Education

This autoethnography study offers a personalized story of an elementary school principal's leadership growth and application to practice as a result of the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program at Rowan University. Specifically, this study explored leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. It is connected to the larger issue of new teacher attrition that continues to plague public schools across the nation. It is also aligned with the recent mandate of AchieveNJ that every public school in New Jersey must establish a School Improvement Panel (ScIP). Through reflective practice, I conducted a self-analysis of my leadership progress over the past five years to document my growth in leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

Data were collected through a reflective journal, interviews with second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, and an interview with the ScIP. A content analysis of documents including faculty, ScIP, and professional development agendas was also conducted. After data analysis, the findings are then presented in Chapter 4 aligned to three phases of my leadership journey. A discussion follows in Chapter 5 including implications for my professional growth, practice, policy, and research. I concluded with a self-reflection, which offers new insights and next steps as an educational leader.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

An increasing number of new teachers are leaving the profession, adversely affecting the organizational stability and fiscal accountability of public school districts across the nation (Hallam, Chou, Hite, & Hite, 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). This attrition disrupts the teaching and learning process by causing districts to scramble to find qualified replacements (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003; St. George & Robinson, 2011). This also comes at a cost. When teachers leave, the school districts lose the money that was spent for recruiting, the hiring process, and training. In fact, new teacher attrition costs billions of dollars annually that would be better spent on teacher preparation or support processes (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Effective new teacher support has been estimated to range from $3,500-$6,000 per teacher annually (Bartlett & Johnson, 2010; Moir, 2003). The associated costs of new teacher development and support could be offset by the savings achieved by decreasing the amount of dollars spent on teacher turnover, which can range from $4,000-$18,000 depending on the size of the district (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007; Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009).

The high percentage of new teachers still leaving is a compelling issue that continues to cause concern (Carver & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). The attrition rate of public school teachers has grown from 5.6% in 1989 to 7.7% in 2013 (Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014). Between 2011 and 2013, 7.1% of the teachers who left the profession had one to three years of experience (Goldring et al., 2014). Additional studies have determined that an estimated 50% of new teachers leave the profession within the first
five years of employment (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2003).

Why are so many new teachers leaving the profession? Several studies concluded that a lack of administrator support and an unsatisfactory work climate were the most prominent reasons that teachers leave the profession (Bickmore, Bickmore, & Hart, 2005; Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011; Hallam et al., 2012; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Molner Kelley, 2004; Tillman, 2005). One issue connected with a lack of administrator support is the principal’s role in creating a supportive environment through induction and mentoring services (Hallam et al., 2012). By ensuring an effective mentoring program combined with collaborative teacher practices, a principal can support new teachers through continuous acclimation while improving working conditions (Bickmore et al., 2005; Molner Kelley, 2004). Although previous research has been conducted on this phenomenon, it is yet to be resolved, as evidenced by the above mentioned statistics denoting an increasing number of new teachers leaving the profession.

Theoretically, the primary focus on the developmental needs of first-year, non-tenured teachers, combined with a lack of support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, contributes to the ongoing phenomenon of new teacher attrition. In other words, if teachers are provided with support measures for acclimation throughout the first year, but are not offered similar or ongoing assistance in subsequent years, this could feasibly impact their desire to remain in the profession. According to Ingersoll (2001), there is a strong link between organizational conditions and the motivation and commitment of employees. The fact that so many novice teachers continue to leave the profession prematurely is perhaps indicative of an organizational issue regarding the principal’s role
in providing acclimation to the profession (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010; Brock & Grady, 1998). If a principal developed an understanding of the unique needs of novice teachers and additional support services were implemented, the new teacher attrition rate could be potentially reduced (Minarik et al., 2003).

There is a need to address this issue because, as a profession, we have a moral obligation to make decisions that are in the best interests of students (Brooks & Normore, 2010; Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Supporting students by ensuring consistent, effective teaching is a necessity because the effectiveness of a teacher is the most powerful indicator of student success (Wong, 2004). Thus, we need to ensure that teachers remain in the education profession and are prepared to support the needs of a diverse student population (He & Cooper, 2011).

Such preparation is the joint responsibility of school districts and university teacher preparation programs. Guise (2013) argued that teacher preparation programs should have a continuing role in the growth of their graduates during the initial years of teaching. Due to policy shifts in public education, working in unison to better prepare new teachers for the constant change in today’s schools is a necessity. If the education profession continues to overlook this ongoing issue, then we should expect the same results that negatively impact our new teachers, students, and our schools.

Concomitant with the national phenomenon of new teacher attrition, the Teacher Effectiveness and Accountability for the Children of New Jersey (TEACHNJ) Act was signed into law by the New Jersey State Legislature in June 2012. This bill prolonged the time to acquire tenure from three years of service to four. This provided the stimulus for the adoption of AchieveNJ (Firestone, Nordin, Shcherbakov, Kirova, & Blitz, 2014). A
notable requirement of AchieveNJ was that all public schools were mandated to create School Improvement Panels (ScIPs) by February of 2013. This panel must be comprised of a principal, vice principal or an alternate, and teachers. Effective for the 2015-2016 school year, these panels are now charged with the responsibility of overseeing the mentoring of new teachers, evaluation processes, and school-based professional development.

Since a lack of administrator support is connected to new teacher attrition, and principals must oversee the ScIP, there is an opportunity to explore the current support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to determine if there are processes that can augment it. In collaboration with the ScIP, principals can cultivate methods that address the needs of all non-tenured teachers as they strive to acquire tenure. This is critical within a profession currently faced with increased accountability to improve student achievement (Stock & Duncan, 2010). In order to improve student achievement, principals must focus on retaining quality educators (Haar, 2007). Thus, the principal’s role in supporting the learning and professional growth of new teachers is of paramount importance to ensure that they remain in the profession and guide students to succeed.

Rationale for the Study

Principals are the key to the success of novice educators (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). I currently serve as a K-6 elementary school principal, and my responsibility includes guiding teachers to attain the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards. These standards are used as the benchmark for what teachers should know and be able to perform. In April of 2014, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) released a memo indicating that the State Board of
Education adopted new Professional Teaching Standards that are aligned to the 2011 InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards (NJDOE, 2014a). This new set of standards has a framework of four domains, with Standards 9-11 highlighting the professional responsibilities of new teachers.

“Principals who create professional learning opportunities that renew adults’ passion for learning while intentionally attending to how they make meaning of their experiences will support adult growth and enhance teaching” (Drago-Severson, 2007, p. 11). In an effort to guide new teachers to attain the InTASC Standards, there is a need for a comprehensive program, including ongoing acclimation and professional learning opportunities. This type of program can primarily address the need of belonging so that new teachers are encouraged to stay in teaching (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Moreover, this type of program can guide new teachers to develop the skill set to address issues within the teaching and learning process (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Depending on each teacher’s training and subsequent level of preparedness, the program may need to be differentiated.

Specific to this research, Standard 9 of the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards indicates:

The teacher engages in ongoing individual and collaborative professional learning designed to impact practice in ways that lead to improved learning for each student, using evidence of student achievement, action research and best practice to expand a repertoire of skills, strategies, materials, assessments and ideas to increase student learning. (NJDOE, 2014a)
When new teachers are encouraged to assess their own progress in meeting such standards, they are guided to form professional habits (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Consequently, to support non-tenured teachers, principals must ensure a program where professional learning opportunities are based on each individual’s unique needs and offer opportunities for reflection embedded in the process.

My strong interest in this type of program is evident in my participation in the district’s new teacher orientation in 2013. At this event, I presented a workshop for new teachers entitled, “Attaining Professional Longevity.” I discussed attaining tenure, professionalism, and teacher effectiveness. It was here that I experienced what Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) referred to as a critical moment and realized that I was only supporting first-year teachers. The second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers were not in attendance and did not have access to this formal support. This revelation began my self-study into how to adequately support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

Shortly after I had that revelation, I met with the district superintendent and recommended the creation of a New Teacher Institute. I shared my vision to turn the first four years of on-the-job experience into a phase of learning to teach (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The best method for assimilation is through a collaborative network with other novice teachers who are also working to adapt to the profession (Stanulis, Burrill, & Ames, 2007). My idea was to establish monthly inquiry group sessions for first- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to assimilate, share, and collaborate as they strive to acquire tenure. The goal was to build a culture for learning to support professional growth (Feiman-Nemser, 2003).
The superintendent asked that I speak with a district supervisor, who he felt would be a good fit to oversee such a program. Since I was new to the district and I needed to focus on the elementary school where I served as principal, I could not be available to lead this new program. Rather, the role that I played in the development of this program was to share my vision with the supervisor. We met and discussed that it could be open to all non-tenured teachers in the district and that a monthly inquiry group session could be held in different schools across the district. This rotating schedule would allow different principals and supervisors to present workshops in their respective buildings. After that initial meeting, the supervisor led the development of the program, and it was established in the 2014 school year. I then presented a workshop on differentiated instruction in April of 2015.

My experiences in working with this population generated a deeper desire for me to learn about effective acclimation processes at the school-based level. The principal’s role in the acclimation process is to establish structures that support a positive school climate (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). For example, support for the personal and professional needs of novice teachers can be organized through inter-disciplinary or collaborative teams (Bickmore et al., 2005; Hunt, 2012). In regard to School Improvement Panel processes, one support measure that I have established is for non-tenured teachers to have access to the panel. At the end of each faculty meeting, the panel meets with our non-tenured teachers to offer guidance and support.

Another practice that I have implemented is sharing non-tenured staff evaluation data at our ScIP meetings. In this case, data was extracted from our evaluation technology platform called Teachscape to provide information regarding collective strengths and
targeted areas of improvement. To preserve confidentiality, the information was never connected to an individual teacher’s name. Rather, the average of all scores within an element of the Danielson Framework for Teaching was examined. The ScIP then works together to identify instructional strategies to augment teacher practice based on the identified areas in need of improvement. I can then share this information when I meet with our non-tenured teachers for pre-observations to offer support. The result is that we are developing and motivating our non-tenured teachers while managing the instructional program (Hallinger, 2005; Klar & Brewer, 2013).

However, these preliminary support measures have only been minor adjustments. Attempting to augment ScIP processes to address the needs of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers is a greater challenge. It is critical to embrace the value of systematic change while accepting the perspectives of others throughout the process (Glanz, 2002). The indispensable component for the leader is to provide the necessary motivation for individuals to coalesce as a group so that the shared goals of the organization can be achieved (Northouse, 2012). Consequently, I must reflect on my own past practice in leading teachers while identifying processes that best prepare them to support our goals.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this autoethnographic study was to better understand my leadership practice regarding support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. In this study, I examined my professional growth as a leader through the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program in the College of Education at Rowan University. I reflected on my professional growth and practice through an experiential
learning cycle that included four phases: problem identification, observation and analysis, abstract reconceptualization, and active experimentation (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Through reflection, I explored my leadership practice in leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. Principals can create a culture that facilitates collaboration and support for novice teachers by providing access to veteran colleagues (Pogodzinski, 2015; Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Thus, I included a focus on my ability to build the capacity of the School Improvement Panel members to implement the requirements of AchieveNJ in supporting non-tenured teachers.

This study provided insight regarding the current challenges within the support system and offered a blueprint for the implementation of the ScIP mandate of AchieveNJ. As with previous research, the focus did not concentrate on support for first-year teachers, but instead addressed the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers by incorporating their perspectives into the study and seeking processes to augment my leadership. As a result of this research, I aimed to provide principals and the newly formed ScIPs with information to develop the required school-based mentoring and professional development program.

**Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. How has my leadership developed and been applied to teacher learning and professional growth as a result of a leadership preparation doctoral program?

2. How can I, as an elementary school principal, better support teacher learning and professional growth as perceived by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured
teachers while I concurrently implement the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) mandate of AchieveNJ?

3. What support processes do the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believe will augment their learning and professional growth?

Significance of the Study

This study presents serious implications for my leadership practice. Above all and connected to the phenomenon of new teacher attrition, there is great importance for me to support teacher learning and professional growth, which can be accomplished by incorporating or combining various models of leadership (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). An integrative model of leadership aligned to the needs of the school’s culture is critical (Hallinger, 2005). Thus, I need to use multiple frames to align organizational and human needs (Bolman & Deal, 2008). The result is that non-tenured staff members may be better supported as they encounter different challenges throughout the first four years of employment.

However, a significant impediment to leadership is when a leader attempts to carry the burden alone (Hallinger, 2005). To address this impediment, there is an explicit need for me to foster collaboration and focus on building the collective capacity of the School Improvement Panel to implement change (Fullan, 2011). Leaders need to develop other leaders who understand how to change the system (Fullan, 2006). Since new responsibilities have been bestowed on a group of teachers as a result of AchieveNJ, ScIP members must be guided to support non-tenured teachers. A focus must be on capacity building to develop the knowledge and skills of individuals to collectively implement change (Bain, Walker, & Chan, 2011).
By empowering teachers to become leaders within this change process, principals can contribute to the professional learning needs of the school (Hallinger, 2011). This can be accomplished through a persistent, collective focus on augmenting the setting for learning in the school (Hallinger, 2011). This setting must specifically focus on adult learning. Barbknecht and Kieffer (2001) indicated that adult learners are socially interactive, bring rich experiences, learn best in problem-based situations, and benefit from feedback. In addition, adult learners need professional learning opportunities that provide the knowledge base as well as the time to practice new skills to change their performance (NJDOE, 2015a). As I work with the ScIP, it is critical for me to understand the characteristics of adult learners, their different learning styles, and stages of teacher development in order to facilitate working with non-tenured teachers (NJDOE, 2015a).

By engaging ScIP members through meaningful learning opportunities, I can generate results that may not be attained if I led this initiative on my own (Von Frank, 2009). In return, the ScIP acts as a guiding coalition throughout the change process by generating a network of sharing (Kotter, 1996). To create such a network, I must be aware of the experiences of non-tenured teachers and their acclimation to the profession. As the principal, I can begin by implementing processes to obtain information pertaining to the professional needs of all teachers (Jimerson, 2012). This is directly related to this study because the viewpoints and ideas of non-tenured teachers can lead to improved ScIP processes. As a result, I selected second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and ScIP members as the participants to interview for my dissertation research.

In my local context, the study’s significance is that it impacts all of the schools in the Hudson Public School District. To accomplish this task, I can share my findings at a
monthly District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) meeting. This is a committee comprised of district administrators, board of education members, principals, and ScIP members. I can also present recommendations in an effort to establish horizontal consistency across all district schools to support our non-tenured teachers. As a result, my principal colleagues and their ScIPs will be better prepared to implement methods for supporting their non-tenured teachers.

Consequently, principals may benefit from this research. They will have a clearer understanding of the support measures required to support their non-tenured teachers. By establishing supportive measures in collaboration, a principal increases the effectiveness of school-based support for novice educators (Stanulis et al., 2007). This can be organized by the ScIPs, who need to establish school-based professional development programs and oversight of mentoring processes. Principals will be better equipped to facilitate this process with the findings from this study. They will have a platform to lead change throughout this transition.

If principals are informed of improved processes for support, then second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers may conceivably benefit from this study. The findings from this study reveal methods of personalized support for the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers within the district. If redesigned processes are implemented, then the professional growth needs of this population have a greater chance of being addressed. This research serves as a foundation for the identification and implementation of these processes.

This study may also have an impact on state policy for new teacher support. The current policy that mandates mentoring for first-year teachers can be re-visited and
revised based on the recommendations from this study. The findings from this study can be shared with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) for review. If deemed valuable, they can be disseminated to the state legislature. Thus, the second- fourth-year non-tenured teachers in New Jersey may have a policy that mandates support throughout the first four years of their teaching career.

At the national level, the attrition rate may be reduced if these new processes are set into policy. By looking at teacher support beyond the first year and addressing the underlying issues experienced by second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, the profession might finally experience a decrease in the attrition rate. If the issue is addressed locally through support measures, and at the state level through policy revisions, it is entirely possible that more and more new teachers will remain.

**Summary**

As a profession, we continue to watch as new teachers leave within the first few years. While research has highlighted areas that contribute to attrition, we have yet to ameliorate this issue. It is evident that the school principal plays a critical role in the learning and professional growth of new teachers. Ongoing acclimation is of paramount importance, which can be supported through the recent mandate of School Improvement Panels. Now is the time for the profession to collectively unite and eradicate the root of the problem so that it ceases to plague our schools.

**Dissertation Overview**

In this dissertation, Chapters 1, 2, and 3 follow the traditional model, including the introduction, literature review, and methods sections respectively. In Chapter 4, I present findings and align them to three phases of my leadership journey as it relates to
leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. A discussion follows in Chapter 5, including implications for my professional growth, practice, policy, and future research. I conclude with a self-reflection, which offers new insights and my next steps as an educational leader.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

New teacher attrition is a phenomenon that has been researched extensively yet continues to negatively impact public school districts across the nation. The existing literature can be organized into the following themes: (a) teacher preparation, (b) teacher induction, (c) mentoring and teacher retention, (d) professional learning communities and teacher retention, (e) impact of TEACHNJ, (f) organizational change for new teacher support, and (g) leadership for organizational change and new teacher support. Each area contributes a different component that impacts new teacher support and attrition. The literature specific to the support system for novice educators related to new teacher attrition primarily focuses on the first year of teaching. Further, the principal’s role in creating a culture of ongoing professional growth for new teachers remains understudied (Kardos, Moore Johnson, Peske, Kauffman, & Liu, 2001; Pogodzinski, 2015). This lack of support for teachers as they strive to acquire tenure is an organizational weakness that impacts school communities and contributes to this larger issue (Ingersoll, 2001).

Teacher Preparation

Teacher training within a separate department of education was first suggested at Amherst College in 1827 (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Prior to this movement, teaching was not considered a profession, and it was not until the 1920s that teacher education transformed into a baccalaureate and became part of university curriculum (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). In 1923, teacher education nationwide was accredited through the American Association of Teacher Colleges, and in 1948 the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education became the sole accrediting agency for these
programs (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). In the time between the 1950s and 1980s, teacher preparation was focused on issues pertaining to the cultivation of behavioral skills for effective teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2004). The focus was on creating effective teachers through research-based practices (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

There was a notable shift during the 1990s to a focus on local and state policy issues intended to address teacher effectiveness aligned with student performance (Cochran-Smith, 2004). At this time, teacher preparation programs were available in both public and private universities across 1,137 institutions (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). The policy focus of these programs was on fiscal resources for professional development and preparation, which carried into the 21st century and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (Cochran-Smith, 2004). The highly qualified teacher provision of NCLB, which mandated teachers in every grade level and every core academic area meet certain requirements by 2006, was in part driven by policies geared towards teacher retention and quality (Spradlin & Prendergast, 2006). A “highly qualified” teacher is defined as an individual who has earned a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college, holds a state certificate, and demonstrates competence in a subject area (Berry, Hoke, & Hirsch, 2004).

**No Child Left Behind impact on teacher retention.** Due to the NLCB call for access to highly qualified teachers, the retention of capable, novice educators has become of paramount importance for school districts across the nation (Molner Kelley, 2004). NCLB shifts part of the responsibility of teacher preparation from higher education institutions to school districts by allowing funds to be used for teacher training (Cohen-Vogel, 2005). However, many schools are not organized in a manner for teachers to learn
on the job (Berry, 2004). This creates serious implications on teacher training and presents the opportunity to reshape teacher preparation to better serve student achievement (Berry et al., 2004). There is a need for teacher preparation programs to focus on teacher quality and to prepare teachers not only through the lens of subject-matter competence, but also on how to teach it (Berry et al., 2004).

The current strategy for retention is impractical, as it focuses on increasing teacher candidates through alternate route programs while overlooking the professional growth of new teachers (Molner Kelley, 2004). Alternate route programs offer an expedited process to attain certification for individuals who did not receive a degree in education from an accredited university. The issue with alternate route programs is that candidates can be deemed highly qualified through NLCB with minimal training in the field, provided that progress is being made toward acquiring a state certificate (Berry et al., 2004).

A concern regarding teacher preparation is that teachers who received training through alternate route programs are not as well-prepared as those who attended programs at colleges of education (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). Thus, there is a link between the effectiveness of new teachers and the type of program that they attended for training. This option for teacher training presents an additional dynamic for school leaders regarding support. The support system cannot be “one size fits all” because new teachers enter the profession with different levels of preparedness and support needs based on their training through either a traditional or alternative program (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011).
As it relates to this study, non-tenured teachers have specific needs based on their training through either a teacher preparation program or an alternate route program. Depending on the level of preparation, a more targeted approach to support can be used to address new teacher attrition (DeAngelis, Wall, & Che, 2013). Principals can address this by understanding what new teachers with varied levels of training need to assimilate into the school (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). Differentiated programs based on gaps or deficiencies in training might be needed. For example, some new teachers may require extended training on classroom management, while others may benefit from support in developing instructional strategies.

**Importance of teacher training.** The effectiveness of teacher training in producing well-prepared teacher candidates is critical for two reasons. First, public aversion to schools that fail to raise student achievement results has generated a demand for accountability (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers are now expected to guide a more diverse population of students to attain much higher standards (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kardos et al., 2001). As a result, the profession is in need of qualified individuals who can prepare all students with the skills needed to compete in the 21st-century workplace (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Subsequently, teacher preparation programs must expose pre-service teachers to complex issues through deeper analysis of the dynamics of school contexts (He & Cooper, 2011).

Second, much of the attention and research on new teacher attrition is directed at the teacher preparation programs. Darling-Hammond (2000) indicated that pre-service teachers who had extended clinical preparation are more effective and are less likely to leave the profession. Pre-service education is of great importance, making it critical for
programs to provide relevant training with fidelity (Ambrosetti, Knight, & Dekkers, 2014). Thus, teacher preparation programs must ensure that students receive an ample amount of time in the field.

After pre-service teachers have completed training in the field and entered the workplace, teacher preparation programs should then incorporate methods to assess and continue to support their graduates’ performance within the initial years of the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2006a; Guise, 2013). The curricula of teacher preparation programs do not effectively prepare pre-service teachers for specific tasks, with too much time devoted to theory rather than practical skills (Berry, 2004; Liston, Whitcomb, & Borko, 2006). For example, a focus remains on content instead of district policy implementation or aligning resources to instruction (Liston et al., 2006). Disconnection between coursework and the workplace requires teacher preparation programs to conduct a deeper evaluation of first-year teachers’ needs (Hudson, 2012). If this were to occur, it is possible that new teachers would be better prepared for the rigors of teaching, which may reduce the attrition rate.

In fact, Title II of the federal government’s Higher Education Act holds teacher preparation programs accountable to report indicators of their own performance (Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, & Ahn, 2013). Data reporting is required from these programs, and in return states create public “report cards” that identify low-performing programs (Feuer et al., 2013). The United States Department of Education (ED) program entitled Race to the Top (RTTT) takes federal accountability a step further by encouraging states to identify and expand teacher preparation programs that are producing teachers who are positively impacting student growth (Feuer et al., 2013). More recently, teacher
preparation programs have been required to gather and report information on the performance of their graduates connected to student achievement (V. Cohen, personal communication, July 22, 2015). In doing so, they can target areas of improvement for their programs.

To facilitate this process and support the growth of new teachers, teacher preparation programs would benefit from developing closer, proactive relationships with school districts (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Whereas universities and schools form partnerships to place pre-service teachers in the field, this generally dissolves after teachers enter the workplace (Hudson, 2012; Stanulis et al., 2007). After pre-service, there is seldom interaction between these institutions to collaborate on programs (DeAngelis et al., 2013). In regard to new teacher attrition, the complexity of the issue makes it difficult for only one level of education to address in a comprehensive manner. This longstanding disconnect between teacher preparation programs and school districts feasibly contributes to the phenomenon.

**Fostering partnerships.** Although teacher preparation programs have the critical role of preparing the next generation of educators for the rigors of the profession, the evolving K-12 policy environment potentially impedes their ability and creates the necessity for a new organizational perspective (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). There is an explicit need for teacher education programs to develop a system to respond to such policy shifts (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). For example, as AchieveNJ mandates were cast upon public school districts, there was a concurrent need for teacher preparation programs to prepare pre-service teachers for the changes. If teacher preparation programs and K-12 school districts were to work as a cohesive unit to address the changes and
challenges of the profession, the issue of new teacher attrition may improve over time. These institutions must foster partnerships to prepare novice educators for the demands of the profession (McCann & Johannessen, 2004).

For these partnerships to be developed, an overhaul of the current relationship between universities and school districts would be needed to establish a more supportive environment for novice teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). Little consideration has been given to the relationship between pre-service and support processes offered by school districts (DeAngelis et al., 2013). The challenge is combining the levels of theory and practice together (Stanulis et al., 2007). Thus, teacher preparation programs must work with schools to develop new models of partnerships that link pre-service and induction (Liston et al., 2006).

**Teacher Induction**

Teacher induction is a relatively new process that has developed significantly over recent decades. In the 1960s, support for new teachers was informal in nature (Gut, Beam, Henning, Cochran, & Knight, 2014). By the 1980s some schools developed more structured support measures for first-year teachers, and it was not until the 1990s that the expansion of formal induction programs began (Gut et al., 2014). However, these programs vary across states and districts, creating an inconsistent patchwork of induction (Bartlett & Johnson, 2010; Pogodzinski, 2015; Wood, 2001). Many states and districts have created induction programs but do not have the appropriate funding and capacity for full implementation, especially in terms of providing ongoing learning for novice educators (Berry, 2004). Whereas teacher induction has made progress, a framework has yet to be mandated and implemented that supports the needs of novice teachers.
Although such a framework has not been established, No Child Left Behind does allow states to use Title I and II dollars for new teacher induction to meet highly qualified guidelines (Berry, 2004). Money can be granted through Race to the Top and spent on induction that includes collegial interaction, professional growth opportunities, and school-wide structures that support student performance (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Since NCLB created a shift in the onus of teacher preparation to school districts through incentive grants, priority must be given to creating sustainable induction programs that attract and retain highly qualified teacher candidates (Berry, 2004).

School districts offer support for first-year teachers through a form of induction and mentoring. Induction generally comprises orientation and workshops (Stock & Duncan, 2010). Mentoring is when a first-year teacher is paired with an experienced teacher who serves as a professional resource. Formal mentoring programs were first developed in the 1970s, and many state departments of education began requiring them as part of licensing for new teachers (Ganser, 2002). However, mentoring for new teachers is typically an unfunded state mandate (Stanulis & Floden, 2009).

In regard to structure, mentoring programs vary drastically across states and districts (Guise, 2013). In New Jersey, first-year teachers receive mentoring for one full school year. Despite this length in mentoring time, novice teachers learn in different ways, and their unique needs are met at different windows of time (Cuddapah & Clayton, 2011). For some non-tenured staff members, one year may be an inadequate amount of time for access to a mentor.

In addition to induction and mentoring, non-tenured teachers also receive professional development. In 1998, statewide requirements for professional development
in New Jersey were adopted into law (Jaquith, Mindich, Chung Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). These mandates included the creation of district and school-based professional development committees, individual professional development plans for all teachers, and mentoring for all first-year teachers (Jaquith et al., 2010). Although this established a framework, generic workshops lacking alignment to the individual needs of each teacher result in the misapplication of professional development (Mizell, 2010). The opportunity to share experiences within a professional development setting is critical for new teachers (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). The ideal setting is a personalized, school-based professional development program that addresses teachers’ targeted areas of improvement (NAESP, 2001; Wong, 2004).

The design of induction, mentoring, and professional development offers limited support for first-year teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Successful induction programs have been identified as those that offer new teachers an ongoing study group for networking and collaboration for upwards of three years in addition to other support services (Wong, 2004). This model of an induction program has a significant impact on new teacher satisfaction, growth, and retention (Stanulis & Floden, 2009). However, not all non-tenured teachers may have the opportunity to network with a support group throughout the school year. It is the principal who plays the critical role in supporting teachers’ professional growth and setting opportunities for sharing their expertise (Haar, 2007). Consequently, there is a need for principals to provide opportunities for novice educators to socialize and interact with more experienced colleagues (Tillman, 2005; Wong, 2004).
Recently, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) disseminated revised polices for the 2014-2015 school year in the areas of mentoring and professional development. Support for non-tenured teachers throughout the second to fourth years of employment was once again overlooked, and the mandate of mentoring remained for only the first year of employment. There remains a “sink or swim” mentality, leaving novice teachers with a lack of support during the first few years of teaching (Guise, 2013).

In light of this limited reform, there remains a need for principals to develop a plan to continuously lead this change. A principal must work with all teachers to support the needs of novice educators (Pogodzinski, 2015). Schools need to implement programs and processes to prepare all staff members to adapt to these changes in a timely, efficient manner. By establishing supportive measures, a principal increases the effectiveness of school-based support for novice educators (Stansbury, 2001). Since the School Improvement Panels are charged with the responsibility of overseeing school-based mentoring and professional development, there is now opportunity for principals to redesign processes that more effectively meet the needs of all non-tenured staff members.

**Mentoring and Teacher Retention**

Quality mentoring during the first year of teaching has a direct impact on teacher retention and has been noted as a critical reason as to why new teachers remain in the profession (Fluckiger, McGlamery, & Edick, 2006; Normore & Loughry, 2006). When new teachers have opportunities to learn from a veteran colleague regarding classroom management, parent communication, and student engagement, a more desirable work climate is established (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Mentoring is also considered the most
significant factor in the professional growth of novice educators (Gimbel, Lopes, & Nolan Greer, 2011; Wong, 2004). Since mentoring can have a positive impact on teacher quality and retention, it would make sense to provide mentoring for more than one year (Fluckiger et al., 2006). However, as previously noted, this is not the case in the state of New Jersey. Providing more time for support also improves the context of mentoring (Gut et al., 2014).

Principals directly influence mentoring through selection and support (Pogodzinski, 2015). The random selection of a mentor is an ineffective practice, and principals must be mindful throughout the assignment process (Tillman, 2005). Though a mentor is provided for the first year, it is often with no input from the mentee. Mentors are often assigned with little thought given to assigning a good match (Kardos et al., 2001). One way to improve the selection process would be for principals to interview mentors and mentees to establish an effective match (Gut et al., 2014). Teachers want to feel that their input is valuable and feel disenfranchised if it is not taken into consideration (Gimbel et al., 2011). Therefore, the mentoring component of an induction program would be better designed to include input from each mentee to ensure that individual needs are appropriately aligned to a mentor. This requires greater communication and collaboration between administrators and novice teachers (Wood, 2001).

Furthermore, the support system as a whole functions best when the mentoring process is viewed as an ongoing component of induction (Wong, 2004). However, the process of mentoring is often viewed as something different and separate from induction and is created in isolation from other support measures (Ganser, 2002; Stock & Duncan,
To increase the benefit of mentoring, induction should include a structured mentoring program where the mentor-mentee partnership is evaluated periodically and ongoing training is provided for mentors (Fluckiger et al., 2006; Stock & Duncan, 2010).

A lack of training for mentors and criteria for selection are areas that need to be resolved (Brock & Grady, 1998; Moir, 2003). As states compete for Race to the Top federal dollars, it would be smart to consider an innovative, incentive program for effective mentor training (Stock & Duncan, 2010). Specifically, training needs to be provided to define the roles and responsibilities of the mentors (Brock & Grady, 1998). The role of the mentor in providing guidance is not often clear, resulting in a focus on management rather than instruction (Stanulis et al., 2007). Appropriate training is required regarding how to share expertise in pedagogy development (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005).

Although mentor training may benefit the overall effectiveness of induction, schools would be better suited to move away from one-on-one mentoring and cultivate structures that offer a professional culture that promotes collective inquiry (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). A new teacher’s introduction to the school community is affected by the presence of formal structures that offer interaction with colleagues and effective mentoring (Kardos et al., 2001). Therefore, all staff members must understand how the mentor program functions, especially teachers who serve in leadership positions (Ganser, 2002).

However, many new teachers do not find themselves in this type of setting that supports their learning (Liston et al., 2006). Rather, they experience the traditional, one-
on-one mentoring model that reinforces isolated teaching practice (Fulton et al., 2005). Principals and veteran teachers must implement processes that scaffold new teachers’ professional growth (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). The benefit of a more integrated professional culture is a positive effect on teaching and student learning (Kardos et al., 2001).

**Professional Learning Communities and Teacher Retention**

The value of effective teaching as it relates to the success of a nation cannot be understated because members of today’s workforce require greater knowledge and skills to be competitive in our global economy (Darling-Hammond, 2006b). For learning to truly exist, students need access to effective teachers. Middleton and Petitt (2007) said it best:

> The power of a caring and effective teacher is how each child is embraced and supported for his or her individuality, how each child is held to high expectations and assured that his or her journey is not a solitary one, but a journey where someone will believe in him or her, will provide emotional and academic support, and will help each student be his or her personal best. (p.88)

This type of effective teaching practice occurs in collaboration. By working as a team, educators can develop strategies to connect with students through an understanding of their learning styles, different cultures, and family lives (Bickmore et al., 2005; Darling-Hammond, 1998).

Professional learning communities (PLCs) offer support for effective teaching and authentic learning through a collaborative, school-based model (Jimerson, 2012). PLCs offer three differences from a traditional school setting. First, there is a shift to a focus on
student learning (DuFour, 2004). The second difference is the establishment of a culture of collaboration (DuFour, 2004). In contrast to a traditional setting, a PLC understands the importance of teamwork in order to achieve results. The final difference can be viewed in terms of results orientation (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). PLCs congruously align their practices to their desired results and judge their effectiveness on these outcomes (DuFour, 2004).

However, in some schools, educators still work in isolation with little connection to their colleagues (Fullan, 2007). This type of setting poses a problem for new teacher support. Novice teachers need time to share, plan, and collaborate (Scherer, 2012). If collegial support is not provided, when faced with a challenge such as addressing the needs of struggling learners, new teachers may attempt to resolve it on their own. Alternatively, they may become frustrated by working in isolation and ultimately leave teaching.

Principals are in a position to address the teacher isolation that leads to attrition (Minarik et al., 2003). They are responsible for increasing school effectiveness by structuring group collaboration and supporting ongoing learning for all members (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Moore, 2012; Scherer, 2012). The School Improvement Panels can be guided to supplement the work of PLCs by supporting the collaboration of both non-tenured and tenured staff members. This type of setting may positively impact the careers of the non-tenured teachers by giving them an additional network of peers to rely on for support and guidance.
Impact of TEACHNJ and AchieveNJ on Non-Tenured Teachers

Effective teaching has been redefined as a result of the TEACHNJ Act and the subsequent system, AchieveNJ. The intent of these state legislature approved reform acts was to improve instruction to increase student performance through new evaluation models (NJDOE, 2014b). For example, for staff members who teach the tested grade levels of third through 11th, the determination of effectiveness is now directly connected to student performance. More specifically, teachers of the tested content areas of Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics now have 10% of their summative evaluation linked to student performance data from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC). This is a multi-state, computer-based exam administered in New Jersey to public school students in Grades 3-11. The student achievement results from PARCC are calculated into a student growth percentile (SGP) at the state level, which is then factored into the teacher’s summative evaluation on a 1 to 4 scale.

This evaluation reform stemmed from the aforementioned Race to the Top program that was announced in July 2009 by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Commissioner Arne Duncan (St. John, Daun-Barnett, & Moronski-Chapman, 2013). The overarching goal was to promote change in K-12 schools through incentives rather than mandates for rigorous educational policies at both the state and the local levels. In return, states would receive federal dollars as part of an incentive, points-based program by addressing six areas with specific criteria. Subsequently, there have been several critical changes in the policy landscape of public education in the state of New Jersey.
Race to the Top provided the stimulus for TEACHNJ. As a result, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted AchieveNJ mandating local K-12 districts to select a state-approved principal and teacher evaluation model to be implemented during the 2013-2014 school year (Firestone et al., 2014). This substantially transformed evaluation processes for all teachers and can potentially affect their tenure status. Teachers are now rated as ineffective, partially effective, effective, or highly effective. If a staff member receives an ineffective or a partially effective rating on a summative evaluation, then a corrective action plan must be established for the next school year (NJDOE, 2015b). This corrective action plan must be created collaboratively by the staff member and that individual’s direct supervisor. The goal of the plan is to document and implement targeted areas for improvement.

If the required improvements are not made over the course of the next year, and a second ineffective or partially effective rating is given, then that staff member is charged with inefficiency. The superintendent of schools is automatically required to submit tenure charges to the local board of education (NJDOE, 2015b). As it relates to this study, the new evaluation procedures may severely impact non-tenured teachers if they are not provided adequate support measures.

This evaluation policy issue highlights two reasons why teachers are evaluated in schools throughout the nation. The first is to ensure teacher quality through multiple measures (Danielson, 2010). The second is to promote professional development connected to the targeted areas of growth within an evaluation (Danielson, 2010). It is perceived that professional learning and improved performance can occur after the evaluation through a dialogue between the administrator and the educator. Thus, a
successful teacher evaluation system incorporates multiple measures and a culture of collaboration between teachers and administrators (Murdoch, 2000).

Moreover, this policy is connected to the study of teacher practice (Halverson & Clifford, 2006). There is a clear consensus within the education profession that effective teaching has a direct impact on student learning, yet the best method for evaluating teachers’ performance remains a challenge (Firestone et al., 2014). Public schools across the nation face intense pressure from regulators and constituents to address the issue of teacher performance (Taylor & Tyler, 2012).

The RTTT program aimed to address this issue through funding for teacher evaluation reform. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the first criterion for funding within the program is entitled, “Great Teachers and Leaders.” The manner in which the RTTT program addressed teacher evaluation was through a distributive policy (Anderson, 2011). For example, the federal government reallocates funds to states that are deemed deserving based on the implementation of policy reform to teacher evaluation. However, the competitive nature of this program has resulted in unintended consequences at the state level.

Some consequences of teacher evaluation connected to student performance include union discord, teacher inequality, and low staff morale. Some states have appealed the mandate of evaluations connected to student achievement results. For example, in the state of New York, the teachers union recently filed a formal request for a three-year moratorium to delay the alignment of student performance to teacher evaluation (Ujifusa & Sawchuk, 2014). The New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) has also raised concerns regarding the new educator evaluation systems. This is in part
due to the adverse effect on teacher equality and morale. Many experienced teachers will begin to leave the profession, and there will be a major teacher shortage as a result of this policy (V. Cohen, personal communication, April 1, 2014). If support to successfully implement this reform does not occur, this may further exacerbate the current attrition rate as more non-tenured teachers may opt to leave the profession.

The Impact of Professional Development Schools on New Teacher Attrition

One consideration in support of new teachers is to establish a Professional Development School (PDS). This setting focuses on the professional preparation of pre-service and in-service teachers to increase student performance and aims to support the transition from pre-service to the workplace (Hill, Lee, & Leftwich, 2014). In an empirical, longitudinal study of more than 1,000 participants, Latham and Vogt (2007) examined the benefit of this type of setting for pre-service preparation. They concluded that it positively affects the duration of time that teachers remain in the profession (Latham & Vogt, 2007).

Since a goal of a PDS is to assist with increasing student achievement, for this type of school improvement to occur it would also require the establishment of a joint-school university culture (NAPDS, 2008). For example, in this setting, a university professor works closely with school administrators and teacher leaders to better support pre-service and in-service teachers. This means that the principal and staff would need to be open to working with university faculty to create a culture that embraces pre-service teachers as part of the school community (NAPDS, 2008).

Furthermore, although a PDS setting may impact the longevity of one’s teaching career, schools must be willing to support change to their existing organizational
structure. The National Association of Professional Development Schools (2008) disseminated nine essentials of a PDS; the seventh essential is “a structure that allows all participants a forum for ongoing governance, reflection, and collaboration.” In other words, the principal and staff implement the necessary structural changes for school improvement to occur. This would require designated times for meetings to occur and ensuring that all participants are both willing and available to attend (NAPDS, 2008).

The challenge is that some districts and schools may not want to take on the endeavor of implementing the above mentioned cultural and structural changes. For example, teachers would need to welcome not only university faculty but also the pre-service teachers into their classrooms. Some teachers may not be willing to relinquish control of their classrooms to pre-service teachers. This is due to the fact that a teacher’s evaluation would still be connected to how well the students performed, despite the fact that an in-service teacher would be leading some of the instructional time. This is an additional issue that has been created as a result of connecting staff evaluation to student performance (V. Cohen, personal communication, March 9, 2016). It is becoming increasingly more difficult to find schools who will accept pre-service teachers (V. Cohen, personal communication, March 9, 2016). Thus, although the establishment of a PDS has the potential to decrease new teacher attrition, it requires principals and schools to support organizational change for new teacher support.

Organizational Change for New Teacher Support

Organizational change can be viewed in terms of being planned and episodic or unplanned and continuous (Burke, 2011; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Change that is episodic is characterized by relatively low-level disruptions that are controlled in a manner that
does not impact the core of the organization (McCann, 2004). Conversely, continuous change often stems from internal dynamics characterized by unsettled periods that require an organization to embrace rather than control change (McCann, 2004). Depending on the type of change, an organization will respond based on anticipation or reaction to an external or internal event (Kezar, 2001).

Continuous, unplanned change is a reality for the majority of organizations (Burke, 2011; McCann, 2004). In the K-12 public education setting, unplanned change often occurs due to a mandate from the external environment (Kezar, 2001). For example, AchieveNJ generated the need for schools to react and change their evaluation processes. The challenge with such unplanned change is that it increases anxiety, doubt, and confusion, making change difficult to sustain over time.

Change often fails to be sustained due to a lack of communication and vision for implementation (Kotter, 1996). Leaders must communicate the need for change regardless of where it originated because members of the organization may not embrace the change if they have not been informed of the need for it (Burke, 2011). Moreover, sustainable change rarely occurs if it is not connected to a strategy (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006). It is critical to strategically address both the individuals and the system (Fullan, 2006). To accomplish this task, focus must be placed on the collective talent and ability of members within the organization to support change (Jones & Harris, 2014).

This approach is not random; it adheres to an intentional process to support initiatives (Bain et al., 2011). For school change processes to occur, organizational learning is critical (Schechter & Qadach, 2012). When principals develop a vision for staff growth they provide a foundation for continuous improvement (Minarik et al.,
2003). This requires a long-term approach that addresses cultural changes within an organization (Corallo & McDonald, 2001).

Organizational culture is a multi-layered phenomenon that experiences change from external pressures (Connolly, James, & Beales, 2011). In order to change a culture, an educational leader must address the existing structures (Hess, 2013). Principals can support teachers by establishing organizational structures that enhance collegial work (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2010). For example, common planning periods can be restructured as a professional learning community to ensure that this time is used in an effective manner. This requires collective teacher efficacy with the shared belief that processes can be implemented for the betterment of the school (Schechter & Qadach, 2012).

Tsoukas and Chia (2002) defined change as a new set of beliefs and habits of action to accept new experiences. The challenge is that this requires a shift in the values and norms of staff members (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Thus, a principal must focus on addressing the values that stakeholders maintain in order to help them adapt (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Adapting to the challenges that are unique to a school context is a key component (Jones & Harris, 2014).

Effective leaders make adjustments based on the changes within their contexts (Hallinger, 2005). Shifts in policy create windows of opportunity for principals to introduce change through new organizational routines (Zoltners Sherer & Spillane, 2011). Establishing organizational routines is critical to planning school improvement and acclimating new staff members to school processes (Zoltners Sherer & Spillane, 2011). In regard to AchieveNJ and the shift to school-based mentoring and professional
development, one adjustment would be to create “in-house” experts, allowing School Improvement Panel members to share their knowledge with others. Fullan (2011) defined this as peer-to-peer learning, which can be considered the cornerstone of creating a commitment from the group. By empowering teachers to become part of the change process, their intrinsic motivation to contribute to the professional growth of their non-tenured colleagues may address any resistance.

Despite implementing this approach, there may still be some dissenters within a staff. In this situation, a leader must act with moral purpose when challenged with resistance (Fullan, 2004). By leading with moral purpose, a principal can have a positive impact on teachers. If there is resistance to this change, then moral purpose can be combined with impressive empathy to understand the reasons behind the resistance (Fullan, 2011). It is critical to use the feedback from the dissenters to make the necessary adjustments.

Furthermore, due to the complexity of change, an approach used in the past may not work well in the future (McCann, 2004). It is important for leaders to understand this gap between emerging needs and past practice (McCann, 2004). In regard to augmenting the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, a sense of urgency must be established (Kotter, 1996). In this case, attrition rate data can be shared with all staff members to highlight the emerging need for improved support for all non-tenured teachers.

**Leadership for Organizational Change and New Teacher Support**

One type of educational leadership that is necessary to enable organizational change and learning is transformative leadership (Shields, 2010). This type of leadership
supports organizational learning when all staff members are provided with an equitable playing field and opportunity for professional growth (Shields, 2010). The goal is to address the unique needs of each staff member in the hope that in return they will become internally committed (Friedman, Lipshitz, & Overmeer, 2001). Thus, transformative leadership is highly applicable when working with non-tenured teachers. This population needs an administrative contact to provide guidance throughout the initial years of teaching. If they do not have this support, then they may not remain in the profession.

The importance of transformative leadership related to the needs of new teachers is that attrition can be reduced if induction includes a supportive principal (Berry, 2004). When new teachers receive support from an administrator, this positively impacts their experience within the profession, the effectiveness of induction, and the rate of attrition (Brock & Grady, 1998; Grossman & Davis, 2012; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). If new teacher attrition is a matter of an organizational issue, such as support processes established by administrators, then principals must seek ways to guide the professional growth of new teachers through their formal interactions with mentors and other colleagues (Ingersoll, 2001; Youngs, 2007).

In addition to transformative leadership, social justice leadership can be applied to create a school culture that is free of processes that marginalize any population by promoting equitable practices (Theoharis, 2007). In this type of setting, educational leaders make it their overarching focus and priority to address inequalities through their daily practice and vision for their schools (Theoharis, 2007). Through the ethic of care and critique, educational leaders must evaluate the programs and procedures in their
schools to determine if there is a need to eliminate processes that marginalize a certain group (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011; Theoharis, 2007).

Social justice leadership to support new teachers is critical because, among other factors, a lack of support from administration has been consistently identified as the motive behind new teachers leaving the profession (Berry, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001; Jimerson, 2012). There is a real social justice issue deeply embedded within this phenomenon, as new teachers are conceivably disenfranchised by this lack of support from principals. Since the principal is in a position of authority, non-tenured teachers may acquiesce to any form of support. In return, if their needs are not met, they may leave teaching without raising a concern. If principals were to view new teacher attrition through the lens of social justice and ensure support measures for this population, then non-tenured teachers might be more inclined to remain in the profession.

Along with the above mentioned approaches to leadership, the effectiveness of an instructional leader is a defining characteristic of successful schools (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Instructional leadership refers the principal’s role and ability in leading curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2011). Schools designed for effective teaching and learning have principals who serve as instructional leaders and connect with new teachers (Liston et al., 2006). Based on measurements of five areas of leadership practice, instructional leadership was found to be more effective than transformational leadership (Robinson et al., 2008). Further, instructional leadership focuses on pedagogical work resulting in a greater impact on student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008).

Conversely, Leithwood and Sun (2012) argued that instructional and transformational leadership share several similarities, and the claim that instructional
leadership is more effective creates confusion. Moreover, the focus should not be on a leadership theory but on the practices of the organization that support the classroom conditions that all students experience (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Thus, a principal must be visible and approachable in classrooms to better support the practice of teachers (McEwan, 2003). Non-tenured teachers who believe that they can approach their principals to support their needs may decide to remain in teaching as a result.

Leadership practices that can improve student achievement can be identified in four domains, including setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program (Klar & Brewer, 2013). The key is to be goal-oriented, establish a clear vision, and motivate stakeholders to attain common goals (Hallinger, 2005). Thus, principals must set goals and direction for the School Improvement Panel to best support non-tenured teachers. The task for principals is to establish conditions that reinforce high-quality professional learning (Jones & Harris, 2014). In return, this time spent on supporting teachers can positively impact student performance and school improvement processes (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013).

These leadership practices should not be confined to the role of the principal and should be shared with teachers (Corallo & McDonald, 2001). Through the distribution of school leadership, the role of the principal is supported (Corallo & McDonald, 2001; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). In order to improve school processes, distributed leadership can benefit a school by enhancing the professional capacities of individual staff members (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). When distributed leadership is applied, it often motivates teachers and potentially increases student performance (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008).
Summary

A school’s culture has a substantial impact on the professional growth of new teachers throughout the first few years (Pogodzinski, 2015). The implication for school leadership is a principal can have a direct, positive impact on the professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers by leading change to support them. Such organizational change requires a principal to share leadership in an effort to ensure appropriate school structures are in place to best support the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. By focusing on the quality of professional and personal growth, principals empower teachers to become involved in the school community (Quaglia & Quay 2003). The current need for change has been generated by AchieveNJ. However, guidance for effective implementation of School Improvement Panel processes is still in the nascent stage. Forming partnerships with teacher preparation programs to attain meaningful, sustainable change, may enhance the experiences of non-tenured teachers and address the ongoing national issue of attrition.
Chapter 3

Methods

It is within the purview of the school principal to establish processes for supporting the learning and professional growth of new teachers. Since I serve as a principal and my oversight includes supporting new teachers, it made sense to explore and reflect on my leadership to understand how I can improve my practice in this area. Subsequently, an autoethnographic approach was used for this study. This approach moves inquiry and knowledge forward by affording the researcher the freedom to inject his or her voice into the study and by combining personal experience with those who are studied (Wall, 2006). By doing so, I was able to reflect on my practice and gain an understanding as to how I can continue my growth as an educational leader.

Autoethnographies are related to ethnographic research, which has origins dating back to the early 1990s (Duncan, 2004). An ethnography is considered a qualitative strategy of inquiry where the researcher collects data from interviews and observations of the experiences of a selected group to study (Creswell, 2009). In an ethnography, the researcher is considered an outsider who must gain access into the lived experiences of the participants (Duncan, 2004). In comparison, in an autoethnography, the researcher is the insider with a focus on personal experience (Duncan, 2004).

The autoethnographic approach has not been without its critics and has not quite reached the status of other approaches that fall under the qualitative umbrella (Duncan, 2004). Holt (2003) highlighted a primary criticism from reviewers regarding the use of self as the sole data instrument. The concern is that an overreliance on the researcher’s
own beliefs will lead to an unscholarly account of the research (Duncan, 2004). As a result, readers may discredit the research and deem it not valuable.

Although there has been some skepticism surrounding this methodology, the selection of an autoethnography could be justified for this study because it is connected to the purpose of the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program at Rowan University (V. Doolittle, personal communication, April 7, 2015). An autoethnographic approach directly applied to my leadership practice as a principal and involvement in supporting the professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. This approach connects personal and cultural experiences (Ellis & Bochner as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The primary purpose was for me to assess my performance as an educational leader and my personal connection to the culture of non-tenured teacher support.

An etic view guides exploration of personal experience (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). This allowed me to explore my leadership practice as it relates to non-tenured teacher support. By drawing on personal experience, an autoethnographic researcher extends understanding of a phenomenon (Wall, 2006). Through my experiences in supporting this population, I deepened my understanding of new teacher support and its connection to attrition.

In an effort to silence any of the above noted concerns associated with the autoethnographic approach, I also included 10 second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and five School Improvement Panel members to serve as the participants in this study. By collecting data from multiple sources, the personal beliefs of the researcher can be confirmed by the triangulation of other data (Duncan, 2004). Moreover, incorporating
the lived experiences of participants presents an opportunity to explore the factors that they believe contribute to an issue (Creswell, 2009; Stringer, 2007). In this study, I was able to better evaluate my leadership connected to new teacher support through the contributions of the participants. Participants can provide their perspectives as part of the research so their voices are heard as well (Ellis & Bochner as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In other words, in this study, the participants’ beliefs were used to attain a clearer vision for how second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers have been supported in the district.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How has my leadership developed and been applied to teacher learning and professional growth as a result of a leadership preparation doctoral program?

2. How can I, as an elementary school principal, better support teacher learning and professional growth as perceived by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers while I concurrently implement the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) mandate of AchieveNJ?

3. What support processes do the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believe will augment their learning and professional growth?

The first research question was designed to gain an understanding of how my leadership has grown, which is the essence of this autoethnographic study. It is connected to teacher learning and professional growth because I wanted to know if my practice has improved in leading change to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The second research question was included to specifically learn how I can better support teacher learning and professional growth. I connected this with the ScIP mandate of
AchieveNJ because this recent policy offers an opportunity to explore how teacher leaders can be developed to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. This second question helps support the first one because I can use the findings to reflect on how my leadership can be augmented. I purposely use the perceptions of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers because the level of support from a principal directly impacts this population.

Similar to the second question, in order to improve my leadership practice, the third question was designed so I could learn what support processes the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believe will improve their learning and professional growth. I could not just assume that I already knew what support processes were best. Rather, I needed to understand their viewpoints to reflect on and evaluate what I was doing well and what I could include in my leadership practice.

**Conceptual Framework**

In this study, I used Osterman and Kottkamp’s (2004) experiential learning cycle as my conceptual framework, including the four phases of problem identification, observation and analysis, abstract reconceptualization, and active experimentation. My goal was to reflect on my professional practice in leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The purpose was to both evaluate and improve my practice while serving as a positive force for non-tenured teacher support. Such reflection facilitates and fosters learning by offering the opportunity to critically assess practice while cultivating a deeper awareness (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Table 1 displays the experimental learning process that I went through within this study:
Table 1

Four Stages of Experimental Learning Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Identification</td>
<td>Identify a problem in my current practice.</td>
<td>Realization that I was not supporting the learning and growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation/Analysis</td>
<td>Gather information through data collection techniques and compare to my current practice. Examine my experience in context of the literature. Analyze any discrepancies.</td>
<td>Realization that my actions are not aligned with my espoused theories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract Reconceptualization</td>
<td>Continuous search for new ideas and strategies.</td>
<td>Gained deeper knowledge of how to best support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Experimentation</td>
<td>Seek methods to enact new strategies.</td>
<td>Implemented new strategies with the ScIP to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reflective practice framework was selected and can be justified because it would lead to a robust dialogue at my dissertation symposium. According to the College of Education Doctoral Handbook (2015), in regard to an objective of this culminating event, “The purpose of the questions will be to stimulate a discussion about the research
and growth in the candidate’s reflective practice” (p.18). By using reflective practice as my conceptual framework, I would be better prepared to share my growth at the symposium.

“Learning to reflect on your own behavior and thoughts, as well as on the phenomenon under study, creates a means for continuously becoming a better researcher” (Watt, 2007, p. 82). If I became a better researcher within the process, then the outcome of this study may have greater benefits. This has implications not only for professional growth, but also the effectiveness of a school (Ovando, 2003). The specific focus of my reflection was to determine how my practice could best establish a culture of collaboration in our school to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. To achieve this, I began to reflect on my leadership beginnings in my first years as a principal and doctoral student. I had identified a problem in my practice and realized that I was not supporting the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

The observation and analysis began after I identified this problem. I began to gather information from the literature and consider the effectiveness of my past practice. I realized that my actions were not aligned with my espoused theories. Subsequently, the topic for this study was selected. Through abstract reconceptualization, I searched for new ideas and strategies to gain a deeper understanding of how to best support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). I wanted to learn what the non-tenured teachers had to say about the manner in which they had been supported, so I decided to interview them as part of the research. Based on what I learned, active experimentation began through the implementation of new strategies with the School Improvement Panel to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.
In the next chapter, I connect this experimental learning cycle to my leadership journey and findings from the study. I align each stage within my five years as a principal and concurrent four years as a doctoral student. For example, problem identification occurred within my third year as a principal and second year within this program. The observation and analysis stage occurred within that same time and extended into my fourth year as principal and third year of this program. The third stage of abstract reconceptualization developed in the latter timeframe. Finally, active experimentation occurred during this current school year, which is my fifth year as a principal and fourth year in this program. The themes that developed from the study are embedded within each stage.

**Sampling**

**Setting.** The research for this study was conducted in the Hudson Public School District located in New Jersey. There are five school facilities including a seventh to 12th-grade junior/senior high school, three K-6 elementary schools, and one Pre-K and K school. The district is a former Abbott District, which is an area identified by the state as a low-income community. The district ethnic demographic is 26% White, 53% Hispanic, 17% Black, 4% Asian, and 1% self-identified as multiracial (J. Lopez, personal communication, May 26, 2015).

In the 2015 Fiscal Year (FY15), the district received $817,829 in Title I funds (J. Lopez, personal communication, May 26, 2015). This was due to the percentage of low-income students from ages 5-17 enrolled, as per the FY15 Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act (ESEA-NCLB) grant. Four of the schools receive these funds as a result of the percentage of the student population
who receive free or reduced lunch. The Title I schools include the following student enrollment and percentage of low-income students: School 2 has 125 students (53.08% low income), School 3 has 232 students (89.66% low income), School 4 has 724 students (75.97% low income), and School 5 has 560 students (53.21% low income) (J. Lopez, personal communication, May 26, 2015). As it relates to this research, this setting was appropriate because a high turnover rate of new teachers in urban schools, in particular at the elementary level, affects the ability to improve student learning (Guin, 2004). Urban schools experience two times the turnover rate of schools that have less than 50% minority students (Guin, 2004).

Participants. At the time when this study began, there were 44 non-tenured teachers in their second- to fourth-year of employment within the five schools across the district. The assistant superintendent provided a list of all non-tenured teachers, including their year of employment. I contacted all of the non-tenured teachers via email to acquire the participants of the study. In that email, I explained the scope and sequence of this study in depth, including the role of the participants. I indicated that there would be a total of 10 non-tenured teachers selected to participate in the study. The participants would include both classroom and specialist teachers. I requested that interested participants respond by calling me to confirm their availability.

The key to qualitative sampling is selecting participants who can offer experiences that the researcher can learn the most from (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). Theory-based, purposive sampling dictates the participants who will be included in a study (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). This sampling strategy is appropriate for in-depth, qualitative studies with a small sample (Patton, 2002). The small group of non-tenured
teachers who were ultimately selected as the sample was a result of this approach. The sample was selected based on varying years of experience within the profession, subject and grade level taught, and experience in different district schools. The goal was to select participants covering different categories to ensure the cultivation of a rich account of the support system. In other words, the support that they had received in each year and in each school resulted in a wider range of data. Table 2 offers a participant profile while preserving confidentiality. It includes a coded number given to each school, current year of non-tenured employment, grade band, and position as either a classroom teacher or specialist (e.g. physical education, music, world language):

Table 2

Participant Profile: Second- to Fourth-Year Non-Tenured Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year of Employment</th>
<th>Grade Band</th>
<th>Classroom/Specialist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>K-6th</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>K-6th</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>K-6th</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>7th-12th</td>
<td>Specialist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49
This table reflects that a diverse group was selected, including non-tenured teachers representing two to four years of experience, classroom teachers and specialists, and assignment within all of the five schools.

In addition to the 10 non-tenured teachers selected, five members of the School Improvement Panel in the school where I serve as principal were also selected to serve as participants of a focus group. This group included tenured teachers with varying years of experience in the profession and on the ScIP, and included both classroom teachers and specialists. The group was included to provide data that could be compared with the information gathered from the 10 interviews with the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers who were selected for the study. The purpose was to compare the areas of
support noted in the first set of interviews with what was actually occurring within my school and leadership practice. This enabled me to ascertain how my leadership practice has developed, been applied, and can be augmented in comparison to the perspectives of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers regarding new teacher support.

**Data Collection**

I collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and observations connected with a reflective journal. I also reviewed school and district documents that provided relevant data regarding the support system for non-tenured teachers and my growth as a leader. This third source enabled me to triangulate all data collected. This triangulation of data assisted in the clarification of information obtained from the interviews and observations (Toma, 2006). Furthermore, the use of multiple data points was considered critical to ensure that a scholarly and justifiable narrative was appropriately supported (Duncan, 2004). All data collection was completed by January of 2016.

**Interviews.** Data were collected through 10 separate interviews with second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The interviews were conducted in the conference room in the school where I serve as principal. On average, the interviews lasted for 45 minutes. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded.

The 10 participants responded to 16 questions from an interview protocol (Appendix A) regarding their experiences and beliefs pertaining to the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), the responsive interview technique can be used by a researcher to adapt to shared information throughout an interview. This type of open-ended interview allows participants to provide
as much as they feel necessary so that their viewpoints are expressed (Turner, 2010). Probes can then be used after some statements to collect as much in-depth information as possible (Turner, 2010). By using these techniques, I acquired valuable data pertaining to the non-tenured teachers’ experiences and beliefs about how their learning and professional growth has been supported during their time in the district.

After the interview process has been completed, a member check can be used with participants to test the initial understanding of the data (Toma, 2006). This approach establishes rigor by addressing a threat to credibility, as the participants have the opportunity to review interpretations from the interviews (Toma, 2006). I performed a member check in this study through a follow-up email. Each participant was sent an email containing the salient points from that individual's interview. I requested that the participants review these statements and confirm the accuracy. The goal was to ensure that my interpretation of the interview did not contain my bias and that it was the actual viewpoint of that participant. All participants responded to the email and indicated that the interpretations presented were accurate. Some extended the dialogue and offered additional statements related to the interpretations. As a result of this member check, I was able to develop themes from codes while addressing this threat to credibility.

After this first set of interviews was completed, I conducted a focus group interview with the five members of our School Improvement Panel. A focus group interview involves a researcher who will ask a group of participants a set of questions at the same time (Kitzinger, 1995). In return, the participants may build off of the comments and experiences of others while contributing their own knowledge about the topic (Kitzinger, 1995). The benefit of a focus group interview is that it provides information
and quality data that can lead to the progression of a program (Grudens-Schuck, Allen, & Larson, 2004).

The purpose with this focus group was to ascertain what processes and programs have been implemented to support the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in our school. Moreover, the goal was to learn their perspectives as to how my leadership has changed over the past few years. As a result of this interview, I was able to cross reference the data with the findings from the initial 10 interviews. This allowed me to gain a clearer understanding of my performance in leading change to support non-tenured teachers.

The focus group interview was also conducted in the conference room in the school where I serve as principal and lasted for 35 minutes. This interview was recorded, transcribed, and coded. The group responded to 11 questions from an interview protocol (Appendix B) regarding their beliefs and experiences pertaining to the support system within the school for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. A member check was conducted at the next regularly scheduled ScIP meeting, where I shared my interpretations from the interview. The ScIP members determined that my interpretations from the interview were accurate.

**Observations.** The attendance of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers during the monthly New Teacher Institute meetings was used as part of the data collection. These meetings were open to all non-tenured teachers within the district, but attendance was not mandatory. I collected the attendance sheets from the first four meetings to determine how many of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers were attending these professional development opportunities. In addition, since all
administrators were included in the monthly email invitation, I was able to ascertain if principals were attending these meetings to support their non-tenured teachers. These data are shared in Chapter 4, where I include the attendance rate.

Van Manen (1994) indicated that the method of close observation can be used to observe and participate simultaneously while maintaining an orientation of reflectivity. In September, I presented the first workshop of the year at the NTI regarding Domain 4 of the Danielson Model, which is Professional Responsibilities. I also attended and actively participated again in January at the conclusion of the data collection period. By attending and leading the first meeting and participating in another one midway through the year, I was able to attain a clearer picture regarding the dynamics of this inquiry group. This was accomplished by observing patterns of attendance and interactions during these sessions (Glense, 2006). Furthermore, I was able to witness firsthand the nature of these meetings and compare it with the viewpoints provided by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers during the interviews.

**Reflective journal.** Jasper (2005) suggested that reflective writing leads to learning from one’s own experience. Reflective writing in journals helps the researcher to attain centrality within the study, which can lead to a deeper understanding of experiences (Jasper, 2005). This data collection technique is fitting for an autoethnographic study to attain this deeper understanding and to determine what a researcher knows (Jasper, 2005; Watt, 2007). My goal was to attain an understanding of my experiences and what I have learned about my leadership growth.

To attain such an understanding, I wrote a one-page journal entry one to two times per week from September 2015 to January 2016 to reflect on my journey
throughout this study. A journal can serve as an additional data set of reflections (Janesick, 1999). The researcher’s experiences can be incorporated into the research design through a self-member check of thoughts (Janesick, 1999; Ortlipp, 2008). The framework for the journal included my current thoughts, new essential questions of the week, and indicators of growth. Through self-reflection, I explored my growth as a leader connected to leading change for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher support. Specifically, I was able to raise questions about my experiences during faculty, School Improvement Panel, Professional Learning Community, and New Teacher Institute meetings.

**Documents.** A review of documents can be used to complement data from interviews and journal entries (Johnson, 2013). This final data source came from a review of district- and school-level documents. In regard to examining my leadership practice and growth, I reviewed faculty meeting agendas that I created from the past five years and ScIP meeting agendas from the past three years. I also reviewed professional development schedules and new teacher orientation agendas. There were two days of new teacher orientation and three district-level professional development workshops. These days were built into the district calendar prior to the start of the school year and were full-day workshops from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The goal was to determine if the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers attended the same workshops as their tenured peers and if the training was aligned to their individual growth needs, which were discussed in the interview process.

Content analysis allows a researcher to assess and reflect on practice through written material (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). The importance of this process should
not be understated because it contributes to an inductive approach (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I used this process to identify trends observed within my leadership practice and growth that would assist in developing later themes. Since this is my fifth year serving as an elementary school principal and fourth year in this doctorate program, I was able to extract information from these documents that demonstrated changes in my practice and growth as a leader.

The above mentioned data sources were used to answer different research questions. Table 3 depicts their alignment.

Table 3

*Research Question and Data Collection Alignment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Journal and Observations</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How has my leadership developed and been applied to teacher learning and professional growth as a result of a leadership preparation doctoral program?</td>
<td>Interview with ScIP</td>
<td>Analysis of journal entries</td>
<td>Analysis of documents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Journal and Observations</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How can I, as an elementary school principal, better support teacher learning and</td>
<td>Interview with each non-tenured teacher</td>
<td>Analysis of journal entries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional growth as perceived by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers while I concurrently implement the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) mandate of AchieveNJ?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What support processes do the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believe will augment their learning and professional growth</td>
<td>Interview with each non-tenured teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of documents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collected can be interpreted by contextualizing the findings in the literature and by connecting them with personal experience (Mills, 2003). The purpose of such interpretation is to find meaning in the data and understand the implications (Mills, 2003). This is presented later in the study in Chapter 5 when I share the findings connected to my leadership practice.
Data Analysis

Initial coding, which is breaking down data into discrete parts, such as words or phrases, is a technique used during the first cycle of coding (Saldana, 2009). I used initial coding to analyze my journal and interviews. This coding technique allows for an openness regarding the direction in which a study might proceed throughout its duration (Saldana, 2009). For that reason, I selected this data analysis technique.

The constant comparative method can be used to compare an interview with subsequent ones (Boeije, 2002). The comparison of interviews helps generate theory through emerging patterns (Boeije, 2002). The repetition of key words and phrases within each interview can be analyzed and considered for both importance and relevance to a study (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The internal validity of findings increases through the constant comparative method (Boeije, 2002). These methods were used as I analyzed each interview, which led to the development of themes.

Axial coding, which is the process of grouping similarly coded data, is a technique used during the second cycle of coding (Saldana, 2009). This technique extends the work from initial coding by reorganizing the data from codes into themes (Saldana, 2009). It was used during the second cycle of coding to develop themes for this study. This technique is appropriate for studies with interview transcripts, and assists in condensing the number of initial codes into more specific themes (Saldana, 2009).

Data condensation helps breakdown data into parts to reflect on the meaning and to compare and contrast the information (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). I used data condensation to assist in such reflection. Subsequently, themes emerge with the intended outcome of incorporating the reasoning that participants ascribe to a phenomenon
(Patton, 1991). This process facilitates a final phase of data analysis of drawing and verifying conclusions (Miles et al., 2013). I completed this process by January of 2016.

The analysis of my journal entries included the initial coding process described above. Key words and phrases can be used to describe feelings or observations of events (Mills, 2003). Specifically, I focused on evidence of my leadership development, application, and growth to answer the first and second research questions. Ongoing journal analysis allows a researcher to pause along the way to reflect, identify themes, and draw conclusions (Mills, 2003). The ongoing analysis of my journal helped me develop an understanding of my leadership progress. In return, I was able to identify indicators of my growth connected to teacher learning and the implementation of the School Improvement Panel mandate.

Document analysis can be conducted by first focusing on what is missing (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I analyzed the school level documents in this manner. For example, as I reviewed content within the faculty and ScIP agendas from my initial years as a principal, I searched for missing items regarding new teacher support, collaborative practices, and examples of distributed leadership. This search for missing data allowed me to attain a better understanding of how my leadership has progressed in those areas. As I reviewed agendas in the later phases of my leadership, those documents contained evidence of these areas.

In regard to the district-level documents of professional development and new teacher orientation schedules, I used a different approach. Finding similarities and differences is a technique that can be used for the purpose of comparison (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I used this to compare the documents with what I learned from the
interviews with the non-tenured teachers. This assisted in finding consistencies and differences between multiple data sources to answer the third research question.

**Summary**

This data collection and analysis was of critical importance within the current dynamics of the education profession. It attempted to re-address new teacher attrition that has continuously plagued public schools across the nation. Previous research studies have attempted to reveal the underlying issues within this phenomenon by focusing on improving support measures for pre-service and first-year teachers. This study offered a much needed fresh angle by incorporating input from second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in an effort to identify improved processes for continuous acclimation into the profession. Lastly, it presented a significant opportunity to identify improved processes mandated by AchieveNJ to better serve and support all non-tenured teachers while potentially exposing methods to ameliorate new teacher attrition.
Chapter 4

Findings

As a school principal, I must support new teachers as they learn and grow within the profession. However, without reflection it would be difficult to completely understand if my leadership practice is in fact supporting their needs. This autoethnographic study afforded me the opportunity to explore my leadership practice and growth over the course of five years as an elementary school principal, while concurrently enrolled in a leadership preparation doctoral program for four of those years. This approach was purposefully selected because it offered the best method for investigating the focus of the research (Duncan, 2004). As a result of this study, three major themes emerged that were directly connected to my practice in leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

The themes are entitled Leadership Progress, Feedback Desired, and Support Overhaul. The first theme developed from a self-reflection of my experiences as a principal and doctoral student. In an effort to address the first research question, my leadership journey is presented throughout this chapter to document my growth. I highlight evidence of my leadership progress, supported by data from the focus group interview, content analysis of school-level documents, and excerpts from my reflective journal. Over the span of five years, it became clear that my leadership has progressed in the area of teacher learning and professional growth.

The second theme of Feedback Desired is connected to the second and third research questions. This theme was developed as a result of the interviews with the non-tenured teachers, analysis of journal entries, and analysis of documents. The data
collected from these sources demonstrated that second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers would benefit from ongoing feedback to learn and grow professionally. The third theme of Support Overhaul was also connected to data from the interviews with the non-tenured teachers, analysis of journal entries, and analysis of documents. It was cultivated from the interviews with the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in that the current support system is in need of revision. This includes the areas of professional development, programs, mentoring, and administrator support.

In this chapter, I aligned these themes to three phases of my leadership journey and Osterman and Kottkamp’s (2004) experimental learning cycle. The first phase of Leadership Beginnings covered my first three years as a principal and included the first stage of problem identification. The second phase of Leadership Challenges was during my fourth year and included the observation and analysis process and abstract reconceptualization. The third phase of Leadership Advancement occurred during my fifth year and included the final stage of active experimentation.

The following research questions are answered within this chapter:

1. How has my leadership developed and been applied to teacher learning and professional growth as a result of a leadership preparation doctoral program?

2. How can I, as an elementary school principal, better support teacher learning and professional growth as perceived by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers while I concurrently implement the School Improvement Panel (ScIP) mandate of AchieveNJ?

3. What support processes do the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believe will augment their learning and professional growth?
Leadership Beginnings: Problem Identification

My leadership journey begins with an analysis of my first three years serving as a principal. After the first year, I enrolled in a leadership preparation doctoral program. This initial phase of my journey is connected with the first stage of problem identification. It was during this phase that I realized that my leadership practice did not include support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. I open by sharing my path in becoming an educational leader to highlight the experiences that have informed my leadership practice, while exposing any bias.

How did I get here? My dream as a child was not to work in education. My mother fondly shares a story of when I was young and was asked what I wanted to be when I was older. My response to this question was that I wanted to be a cook. For as far back as I can remember, preparing and cooking food was always of interest to me. Even today, there is just something therapeutic about trying a new recipe and going through all the finer techniques to produce a great dish.

This passion for cooking remained with me through high school. I held many different positions and worked in several restaurants to learn all about the restaurant industry. In fact, the first college application that I submitted was to Johnson and Wales University. My intent was to enter the Hotel and Restaurant Management program so that one day I could open up my own restaurant and be the head chef.

While I was working in restaurants, I was also serving as captain of my high school soccer team. This position is where I began to develop my approach to leadership. I learned how to lead my teammates and how to guide the team to attain a common goal. I firmly believe that the tenets of athletics can be related to leadership in education. For
example, soccer requires collaboration, perseverance, and communication, all of which are critical in educational leadership.

Athletics also promote the process of reflection. For example, after each soccer game, our coach would analyze our performance and then give feedback to build on our strengths and focus on areas of improvement. As players, it was our responsibility to reflect on this feedback and use it to make adjustments for the next game. One reason why I was successful on the field was my desire to always improve upon my last performance.

As the captain of the high school soccer team, I was recommended to work as a youth soccer coach at a local clinic. It was my senior year, and I was working a few nights of the week at a restaurant and the other nights on the soccer field. I was training 4- to 6-year-olds who had no experience with the game. We focused on simple techniques and fundamentals of the game. The most significant takeaway from this experience was the almost magical feeling of teaching. To be able to impart my knowledge on someone and observe them grow and make progress over time was very rewarding to me. In part, this is what led me to become involved in education.

After working in several restaurants, I quickly realized that, although my passion was to cook, I could not see myself essentially living in a restaurant to oversee the day-to-day operations. I watched how the owners and managers were there every day. Even on holidays, they could not be with their families. I began to explore other options and applied to other universities. Unsure of what direction I would go in, I decided to change my major to Spanish. On my mother’s side, we are from Spain, and I wanted to explore the language and culture more in-depth since I am American born.
We are also the quintessential family of teachers. Among other family members, my mother was a high school English teacher at an alternative high school. I saw the daily impact that she had on the lives of these at-risk students. This was powerful for me because I felt that I too could have a positive impact and better the lives of students. I thought that if I could teach young soccer players, then I could teach students Spanish. I decided that I would enter the field of education. I matriculated at Fairleigh Dickinson University and enrolled in the Peter Sammartino School of Education. This college of education offered a five-year program from which graduates would also finish with a Master of Arts in Teaching.

This decision was also in part due to my involvement in soccer. I have been playing soccer since I was 3 years old, and it is something that has greatly contributed to the person and leader I am today. While in college, I continued to play and coach. I served as captain of the Fairleigh Dickinson University men's soccer team and also coached at the local Madison YMCA. Serving in this leadership position and playing collegiate soccer advanced my understanding of the nuances of leadership. At that point in my collegiate career, I had played alongside some captains who were negative in their approach and offered little support to their teammates. I knew that was not the type of leader that I wanted to be.

As a captain on the field and in the locker room, I was never a charismatic type of leader. Instead, I motivated my teammates by leading by example and demonstrated the necessary work ethic and never-give-up attitude that I expected from them. My approach also included verbal, positive encouragement. One of the nicest compliments I have received was from a teammate who expressed how much he liked playing on the team.
under my leadership because I always kept things positive. This really resonated with me because I did not understand at that time the impact a leader's attitude and disposition could have on others.

After my senior year of soccer in the fall of 1999, I had an opportunity to study abroad in Spain. I finished my degree in Spanish at the University of Santiago de Compostela in the Galicia region of Spain. This experience generated several great memories, including meeting family members for the first time, attaining a better understanding of the language and culture, and exploring this amazing country. In one trip organized by the program, we traveled to Toledo. This city is known for its winding cobblestone streets.

Some friends and I set out on an exploration one evening. We arrived at this magnificent mural that had a large set of eyes and underneath the quote, "No vemos las cosas tal y como son; sino tal y como somos." This translates to mean that we do not see things as they are, rather as we are. This quote resonated with me, and it is something that I have kept with me even in my practice as an educational leader. It has helped me understand that we all have some bias and view the world through distinct lenses. As it relates to my leadership practice and reflection, I have tried to view things from multiple perspectives.

After graduating from college in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and a Master of Arts in Teaching, I began to apply for jobs. I was fortunate in that during this time, elementary schools in New Jersey started to incorporate world language programs. I found work immediately and began teaching in the Clifton Public Schools in New Jersey. I was also fortunate in that there was an assistant soccer coach position at the high school.
At the age of 23, I became the head coach of a nationally ranked program. This led to a nine-year tenure as the head coach.

As an elementary school Spanish teacher, I taught second to fifth grade in 21 different classrooms each week in two schools. It was a great experience, as I was exposed to different school cultures and different practices for classroom instruction. The principal of one of the elementary schools encouraged me to go back for a Master’s in Administration and recommended the same program that she went through called New Jersey Expedited Certification in Educational Leadership (NJEXCEL). I began this program in January 2007 and within two years received my certification to become a principal. While I was completing my coursework, I was still coaching the high school soccer team. I began to experiment and implement many of the theories I was learning into my leadership as a coach. It was clear that my leadership training made me a better coach, which is reflected in the team’s championships and overall record before and after this training.

Ultimately, I had to leave coaching when I became an elementary school principal in 2011. However, my reflections and lessons learned as a soccer player and coach have guided me to become the leader I am today. Primarily, I learned to treat everyone I supervised in a fair and equitable manner. For example, no teammate or player was treated differently for any reason.

Before I left high school athletics, I was recognized by the Passaic County Coaches’ Association. From the accolades I received as a player and coach, this recognition was by far the most rewarding. Each year, the association selects one coach from all of the fall boys and girls sports to receive the Honor Award. This is awarded to
one coach who demonstrates integrity, fairness, and sportsmanship. It was very satisfying because this was indicative that under my leadership, not only did we win, but we won in the right way. I can honestly say that I have always had the innate propensity to ensure fairness. Little did I know that there was still much more to learn and that challenges were ahead to promote leadership for social justice in the education profession.

First year of the journey: 2011-2012. I remember the interview for my first position as an elementary school principal. This was the 2011-2012 school year, and I was not enrolled in the doctoral program. I proudly boasted a collaborative approach to leadership with shared decision making as a cornerstone of my practice. As a former high school soccer coach, teamwork and communication were incorporated into my leadership. I was operating under the assumption that this would transcend my practice as a principal. I could not have been more wrong.

Northouse (2012) indicated that an autocratic approach to leadership includes a one-way mode of communication. A review of my faculty meeting agendas from that year produced clear evidence of an autocratic style. For example, I recall being the only one at these meetings talking in front of the group. Peer-to-peer learning and professional development for staff were not processes incorporated into these meetings. The agendas did not reflect any form of distributed leadership to support the professional learning for staff. This type of leadership enhances the professional capacities of each staff member to support the principal in leading change (Jones & Harris, 2014; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008)

In addition, although I was familiar with professional learning communities (PLCs), I did not establish them in the school. To be honest, I was not sure what PLCs
involved and how to successfully organize them. Despite being a state requirement, it was never addressed by any central office administrator who oversaw my progress. Furthermore, I recall that my formal training to become a principal presented the theory behind PLCs, but did not introduce the process for successful implementation.

There was no evidence that I recognized the learning and professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers as one of my responsibilities. In August of this school year, all principals were required to attend the district New Teacher Orientation (NTO). I attended and observed that it only covered procedural obligations for all new employees. However, I did not consider the design or method of supporting new staff.

In addition, there was no mention of non-tenured teacher support on any faculty meeting agendas. There were no processes that I implemented to guide the growth of this teacher population. To say that there was a lack of administrator support for non-tenured teachers would be an understatement. At that time in my career, I was simply trying to survive the first year of the principalship with the goal of progressing toward tenure. I did not have the wherewithal to understand the importance and need for supporting our non-tenured teachers. I was not aware that the new teacher attrition rate was insidiously rising across the nation.

During this school year, there was also no evidence of staff capacity building. As a young principal, many of the teachers who I led were much older. Although I felt that I had a lot of knowledge and passion to share, my comfort level was low in regard to capacity building. This was especially true with teachers who had many more years of experience than I did at that time. I think part of this was a lack of training in how to
support the learning and professional growth of those who I supervised. In my journal, I reflected on two essential questions and pondered, “Why wasn’t capacity building of staff members in my leadership training? Would aspiring principals benefit from leadership training programs that have a curricula component of recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff members?” I believe that these areas would have benefitted my practice as a novice principal.

**Second year of the journey: 2012-2013.** A friend of mine, who was also working as a principal, suggested that we should both enroll in a doctoral program. To be honest, I had some apprehension and was not sure that I wanted to continue my education, although earning a doctoral degree would fulfill a family goal of having a doctor in each generation. My paternal grandfather earned a Doctor of Medicine degree, and my father completed a Juris Doctor degree. To have the next generation earn a doctoral degree in a different field would be a noteworthy accomplishment for my family.

After some careful consideration, I told my friend that we could at least look into some programs. After researching three other Doctor of Educational Leadership programs in New Jersey, and one program out of state, I decided to apply to the Rowan University Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership program. I arrived at this decision after reviewing the curricula and timeline for completion. It seemed like the best fit to fill in my gaps as an educational leader.

I was invited to participate in an entrance interview before being formally accepted into the program. I again highlighted my collaborative approach to leadership in the hope that this would demonstrate my value as a leader. I firmly believed that this was my style of leadership and that I could offer this as a resource to my cohort members.
One notable take away from the entrance interview was the topic of social justice leadership. It was explained that this was one of the pillars of the program and the type of leader that the program hoped to produce as a result. This was something new for me, as I was not exposed to it in my training as a principal. I was intrigued by this form of leadership and what it entailed.

I was formally accepted into the program and began my coursework in August just before the start of the 2012-2013 school year. In the Leadership Theory course, I developed a leadership platform that captured my approach to leadership. I described how I began as an instructional leader who developed democratic practices. As a result of this course, I incorporated social justice and transformative approaches. Figure 1 depicts my leadership development as a result of completing the course:

Figure 1. Leadership Development
After reading Northouse (2012), my espoused theory included a democratic approach to leadership. In comparison to an autocratic leader who directs the followers, a democratic leader serves in a more facilitative manner (Northouse, 2012). However, although the terminology of an espoused theory is modified, this does not always lead to a change in behavior (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Whereas I have never believed that leadership should be of a hegemonic nature, my practice did not reflect what I was preaching, and my espoused theories were not evident in my practice. For example, there was no indication of collaboration within any of the faculty meeting agendas. There was no evidence of an agenda item that would suggest that teachers were afforded the opportunity to share ideas or learn from each other. In actuality, while I espoused a collaborative approach, I failed to realize the autocratic tendencies that were embedded in my daily actions and decision making (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004).

After a successful first year of the principalship, I was transferred from the smallest to largest elementary school. In August, principals were again required to attend the NTO and were asked to lead part of the day. I participated in two workshops with the new staff members. At the end, an evaluation form was distributed to the group. The first-year teachers indicated that they desired additional training and guidance. However, at this time, I did not consider how I could address their needs and did not realize that I was in a position to support them.

I began the school year with our opening day faculty meeting in September with my new staff. Similar to the first year, the faculty agendas were more procedural and were still top-down. Furthermore, there was no evidence of any leadership to support non-tenured teachers. During this time, other than the additions of “sharing of good
news” and “sharing of classroom activities” agenda items, I was again the only one speaking at these meetings.

During this school year, I worked with a much larger staff that contained many non-tenured teachers. I tried my best to offer support by being visible and approachable, but there were no implemented processes that addressed their individual needs. There was also no committee or group of teachers that offered them support. I did not establish any organizational structures to guide them through the initial years of teaching. They were essentially on their own to survive.

In October of that year, I began the Professional Learning Communities course. A requirement was to develop a PLC in our schools. I selected a grade-level team and the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher to form a PLC. We worked together reading articles and navigating through the stages of a PLC. This was the first time that I placed a focus, albeit small, on adult learning to support students. I highlighted this in my journal and stated, “In my initial years as a leader, I was focused on improving student achievement by implementing programs for students.” I continued by writing, “Over the years, I became more focused on improving student achievement by implementing programs for the professional learning and growth of staff.” This shift in my growth marked the first time that I considered the professional learning and growth of staff.

However, there was still no evidence of learning opportunities for staff. Although the AchieveNJ mandate of School Improvement Panels was not yet in place, there was a school-based professional development committee. This committee was not actively involved in the faculty meetings or leadership processes within the school and was primarily used to fulfill a state requirement. As the leader, I missed a valuable
opportunity to focus on capacity building for the staff members who served on this committee. Although my focus was on student achievement, even greater success may have been attained if I had focused on this committee, which oversaw school-based professional development similar to what the ScIP does now.

I had taken the Changing Organizations course during this year, but I did not apply the learning. For example, the areas that resonated with me were the change strategies. Both Fullan’s (2011) and Kotter’s (1996) frameworks to implement change were exciting, and I analyzed my ability to lead change. However, I overlooked this chance to implement change and did not capitalize on the skill set of this committee. They were not given the opportunity to contribute to the professional growth of their colleagues, which could have resulted in shared knowledge based on collective expertise (Friedman et al., 2001; Fullan, 2011). I could have led this committee better to develop a school-based professional development plan to support the professional learning of staff.

**Third year of the journey: 2013-2014.** This year I accepted a position as a principal in another district. It was during this third year of the principalship when I experienced what Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) referred to as a critical incident. They indicated that this is when an individual has a moment of clarity and recognizes a problem. This moment occurred while I was presenting a workshop to all first-year teachers at the New Teacher Orientation in August. I recognized that in my effort to support novice teachers during the district orientation, I was only reaching a small population.

I recalled this moment in my journal and said, “In 2013, I presented a similar workshop that was only for first-year teachers at New Teacher Orientation.” After that
experience, I knew I was not supporting second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and met with the superintendent to propose a monthly inquiry group session for all non-tenured teachers. It was developed at the district level and came to fruition. I reflected on my growth and continued, “Two years later, I'm proud of the fact that I recommended a New Teacher Institute and that it was developed, offering support to all non-tenured teachers in the district.” I expanded on this thought and wrote, “I think this reflects my ability and desire to support the professional growth needs of not just first-year teachers, but all non-tenured teachers.” I quickly realized that while I was still learning the nuances of administration, there was also an obligation for me to better support the needs of all non-tenured teachers and not just those in the first year. This was especially true for the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers who I directly supervised.

This critical incident during my second year in this doctoral program led me to the selected focus for this study regarding my leadership in changing support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. I realized at this time that I was also not differentiating my supervision and aligning it with the needs of the non-tenured teachers in our school. In 2013, this was also the first time that the School Improvement Panels were mandated through AchieveNJ. However, there was no documentation indicating that this group of teachers was serving in a leadership capacity. The ScIP agenda used as part of the data collection for that school year was brief and only covered procedural aspects such as roles of the members. There was no evidence that this group of teacher leaders was being guided to oversee professional development or support non-tenured teachers. One ScIP member confirmed, “We didn't have a formal setup of the mentor program.” This quote
demonstrates that the panel was not organized in a manner to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

Guiding staff to attain a shared vision regarding change is critical (Fullan, 2007). Similar to the missed opportunity in my second year as a principal, I again failed to lead a group of staff members who were in a leadership position to support non-tenured teachers. My focus at this time was on raising student achievement, which we accomplished, but even greater success may have been attained if I led the ScIP to implement meaningful change. My training as a principal included instructional leadership to improve instructional practice, but I placed my efforts in creating programs to support students instead of on the teachers who were guiding them each day.

A slight shift also occurred this year in regard to expansion of our professional learning communities. As a result of the PLC course in this program, I expanded and created two different PLCs in Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6. However, although there was growth in comparison to the second year, not every non-tenured staff member served on one since some worked as specialists (e.g. physical education, music, art) and not classroom teachers. At this point, I had not yet created a PLC for specialists.

There was one positive change in practice that was documented on a faculty agenda. I included a “professional learning community report,” and I provided the opportunity for the presenter role within each PLC to discuss their current strategies and progress at each monthly faculty meeting. This was the beginning of what DuFour (2004) referred to as a culture of collaboration. Although there was still opportunity to further develop this type of setting, by working together, teachers could share best practices to augment student learning.
In addition to encouraging teachers to lead at these meetings, this seemed like a great way to provide our non-tenured teachers with a team of teachers as an additional resource. A new teacher’s experience is improved by the presence of formal structures that offer interaction (Kardos et al., 2001). The result was that we implemented processes to scaffold their professional growth through the interactions with the PLC (Johnson & Birkland, 2003). The hope was that this would support their needs through another model of peer interaction.

**Leadership Challenges: Observation and Analysis/Abstract Reconceptualization**

In this phase of my journey, I gathered information and examined my experiences with new teacher support in the context of the literature. After reading articles on new teacher support, I reflected on my own practice. I considered and sought alternative ways to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. I attained further clarity of how my espoused theories were not my theories in action. I still believed that I was leading through collaborative practice, but in fact I was not guiding staff members to support our non-tenured teachers. For example, I was not utilizing the School Improvement Panel at faculty meetings to offer support to our learning community. Subsequently, I became more focused on how I could lead the ScIP to make changes in a manner that supported our non-tenured teachers.

**Fourth year of the journey: 2014-2015.** A notable shift occurred in 2014-2015, which was my third year in this program, when I began the early stages of my dissertation research. I completed Dissertation Seminar I and II and began to narrow down my topic. This shift was evident in my journal when I shared, “The most significant change is my focus on the professional learning of the school improvement panel
members to address the support of both new teachers and overall school processes.” This was an example of my growth in leading change to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and highlights progress towards distributed leadership.

Also, for the first time on a faculty agenda, there was a “ScIP Checkpoint.” That year, I initiated a new practice for the School Improvement Panel members to meet with our non-tenured teachers at the end of each faculty meeting to offer support. One ScIP member shared, “So that they have that additional support that they can always come to us, and we check in with them to make sure they still feel that they’re supported even though they're no longer a first-year teacher.” This is evidence that I began to focus on the needs of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

During that school year, I also focused more on implementing effective ScIP processes by sharing relevant information with the panel. A ScIP member explained, “Also, any updates that come through AchieveNJ, we see them and we implement any new changes that arise.” As a result of focusing on ScIP requirements, for the first time on a ScIP agenda there was mention of mentoring. This documents my leadership practice and growth in leading the ScIP to ensure that additional mentoring support was offered at the school level.

In regard to another ScIP requirement of school-based professional development, I also began developing professional learning workshops with the ScIP that were connected to staff evaluation data. A ScIP member confirmed this and shared, “During our school improvement panel meetings, we've reviewed data from the Danielson Teacher Rubric. We've identified needs of improvement.” This statement shows that the
ScIP was being led to understand our targeted areas for improvement. This demonstrates my growth from the previous year.

Another example of my growth can be observed at the end of that school year, when a ScIP agenda denoted the creation of our school’s Professional Development Plan for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year. My past practice was to write this by myself and dictate the areas that would be addressed. In comparison, this school year I implemented distributed leadership and empowered the ScIP members to become part of that process. We met as a team, and the members recommended some areas of needed professional development for the staff as a whole.

During this year, I had taken the Advanced Leadership course and began to consider the change I could lead at the macro level. I learned that cage-busting leadership can have several implications on K-12 education (Hess, 2013). The term “cage-busting” refers to a different mind-set for educational leadership that includes the effective use of contracts and policies to transform organizations through change (Hess, 2013). In this case, I could use the tenets of cage-busting to rethink the way that new teacher support has been designed and delivered so that the most effective use of talent can be implemented to ensure organizational stability and fiscal accountability (Hess, 2013; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

As a result, in addition to my progress in leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers at the school level, my involvement in new teacher support at the district level also increased this year. After reading literature that indicated the need for mentors to be trained (Brock & Grady, 1998; Moir, 2003), I volunteered to present a workshop at New Teacher Orientation for all district mentors. I spoke to the
supervisor who created the agenda for the NTO, and I asked if I could present a workshop entitled, “Communication and Adult Learning.” I specifically designed this hour and a half workshop to train mentors on how to communicate with and support the development of their mentees. I guided them through Teachscape, which is our evaluation technology platform, and shared several training resources that they could complete with their mentees. If I did not select this topic as a focus of my study, I would not have volunteered to create and present this workshop. This is an example of my leadership development and application to practice as a result of this program and study.

**Leadership Advancement: Active Experimentation**

After the abstract reconceptualization stage, I gained deeper knowledge of how new teachers can be supported. During this third phase of my leadership journey, I began to seek methods to enact new strategies to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The goal was to implement these strategies with the School Improvement Panel. This was the year where processes for support started to come together. There was also a shift in my approach to leadership. My leadership platform has been revisited and revised as represented in Figure 2.

![Leadership Revisited Diagram](image)

*Figure 2. Leadership Revisited*
As indicated in this figure, there was a shift to distributed leadership as the focus of my approach. In comparison to my leadership beginning phase, this is vastly different than at the start of this program when I was focused on instructional leadership. Now I am seeking and implementing methods to use distributed leadership to lead teachers to implement instructional, transformative, and democratic approaches. In this third phase of the journey, I share how the ScIP is guided to lead instructional strategies at faculty meetings. In addition, the ScIP is guided to implement extended mentoring for our non-tenured teachers to ensure continued support. Distributed leadership for social justice is discussed in the last chapter.

**Fifth year of the journey: 2015-2016.** In the current 2015-2016 school year, support and professional learning for non-tenured teachers led by the ScIP continues to be a focus of our practice. On a faculty agenda, it indicates “ScIP PD Workshop.” In comparison to the other agendas, when I was the only leader at these meetings, this marks significant growth. We now have five teacher leaders presenting professional learning workshops to their colleagues. The focus is to improve the teaching and learning process. One member commented on being involved in a leadership role and said:

> Some of us do have supervisor certificates and principal certificates, and it’s something that has been beneficial to me to learn the whole process and to really understand how to help the staff members and what we should be looking for to improve and implement in those areas.

The ScIP member continued, “Also, it was a good practice, experience of speaking in front of your colleagues and getting ready for potentially being in that position one day.”
This quote highlights a shift towards distributed leadership and displays my leadership development and application to practice.

The ScIP agendas that were reviewed also reflect a new practice being implemented this year. A peer coaching program has been implemented to provide second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers with a formal mentor. The purpose is to extend support beyond the first year of teaching. A ScIP member explained the peer coaching program by stating, “We also act as mentors for the new teachers as well and practice best principles with them.” As a result, each second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher is now paired with a veteran teacher who serves on the ScIP. This peer coach provides continuous support as our novice teachers strive to attain tenure. As shown previously, my leadership growth is evident with this process as well.

Another new practice implemented this school year is that, at one ScIP meeting each month, we visit the classrooms of the non-tenured teachers to observe their practice and provide specific feedback. This has led to additional support for our non-tenured teachers. This was an example of distributed leadership, since one of the ScIP members had the opportunity to share this idea at a meeting. I reflected in my journal,

It was clear to me this week that my work as a principal in providing the opportunity for teacher leaders to contribute to the betterment of the school is showing signs of success. This is evidenced by the numerous recommendations from the panel to support our non-tenured teachers to improve their practice and student achievement.
A ScIP member confirmed, “We also support the non-tenured staff. We go into their classrooms to do observations and offer suggestions as to where they can improve.” This is evidence that I am leading a group of teacher leaders to support our non-tenured staff.

In regard to professional learning communities, every staff member in the school now serves on one. In comparison to my initial years as a principal, this is a significant change in my practice. One staff member from each PLC also serves on the ScIP. As a result, we have been able to take a systemic approach to generating ideas at ScIP meetings and processing them through each PLC. One ScIP member shared this process and said, “We go back to our own PLCs, our grade levels, and share what's been going on here and in the school with them.” This structure was not in place during previous school years and is an example of how this doctoral program has positively influenced my leadership.

Another significant change for this school year, as documented on two ScIP agendas, is the establishment of a Professional Development School (PDS) with the Peter Sammartino School of Education of Fairleigh Dickinson University. A PDS is a partnership between universities and school districts to support pre-service and in-service teachers in cooperation. In the previous four years there was no evidence of any collaboration with a teacher preparation program. During this research, I learned how schools and teacher preparation programs would benefit from new models of partnerships to bridge the gap between pre-service and the workplace for novice educators. I reflected on the addition of this program as an indicator of my growth by sharing:
In comparison to past years as an elementary school principal, this is the first time that I have designed such a program. I believe that this is an indicator of my growth as a direct result of this doctorate program and research study.

This reflection is an example of how my leadership has expanded to collaborate with a teacher preparation program.

To support the growth of all novice teachers in our school from pre-service to fourth year, I connected the work of this PDS to the work of our ScIP and created a new model of a partnership. In my journal I shared this moment:

This week marks a significant moment in my leadership practice and growth. I have now developed a new model of partnership between a college of education and our school. I am very proud of my efforts in creating this type of program and guiding teacher leaders in the school improvement panel to be a part of it.

The creation of this program provides further evidence of my growth as a principal.

Once a month, we meet as a PDS and ScIP to support our pre-service and non-tenured teachers. A professor in residence (PIR) attends the meetings to offer guidance. A ScIP member shared the benefit to our school by stating, “We've also had staff, faculty members, from Fairleigh Dickinson University come in and give us a different perspective of what the panel should be implementing that is definitely cohesive with what we've been doing for the past year.” This quote shows that our teacher leaders are being guided to lead.

This hybrid program has led to additional support for our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. Currently, the PIR is conducting research in the two classrooms of our non-tenured teachers. In my journal I shared:
We are garnering support from our professor in residence, who was just approved to conduct research in two of our non-tenured teachers’ classrooms. With her expertise in special education and math, this may directly impact the growth of these two non-tenured teachers.

In comparison to my first four years as a principal, this confirms significant growth in my leadership.

Our pre-service teachers who conduct field observations in our school have also benefitted greatly from this hybrid program. If it was not in place, their experience may have been much different. One ScIP member reflected on her experience as a pre-service teacher and said, “As an in-service teacher in my student teaching, I didn't know the principal, I never had anyone other than my cooperating teacher observe me or give me feedback in a very open exchange dialogue kind of way.” The ScIP member added, “I think our in-service teachers that have just left had such an amazing experience here because they were such a part of this school community. They knew the principal. They knew every teacher, not just their cooperating teacher.” Another ScIP member corroborated, “I agree. I watched our in-service teachers and I thought, ‘Oh my gosh, if I was a student teacher and I had this experience, I would have gained so much.’” These comments indicate that the setting for learning as a result of this PDS and ScIP model is having a positive impact in our school.

Although our ScIP had effectively developed some new strategies of support, I wanted to learn what the non-tenured teachers had to say about how they have been supported. I believed that this would lead to better strategies that could become part of my leadership practice. I opted to interview 10 non-tenured teachers across the district to
collect these data. This process led to the finding that there was room for my growth to support their needs.

The second research question was addressed through the interviews with the non-tenured teachers, interview with the ScIP, and excerpts from my journal. As it relates to my practice as an elementary school principal, I learned that I can better support the learning and professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers by creating processes for them to receive consistent feedback. A frequently mentioned topic in the interviews was regarding the desire for feedback. In addition to and in connection with the implementation of the ScIP, it became clear that the majority of the non-tenured teachers have not had consistent or substantial interactions with the members of this panel.

**Consistent, informal, and meaningful feedback.** The second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers benefit greatly by receiving consistent, informal feedback aligned to their growth needs. This does not mean that it comes as a result of the observation process, but instead through more casual opportunities to offer guidance. Through the interview process, it became clear that non-tenured teachers value and desire feedback that guides their growth. One participant shared, “Just try and stop in and give as much feedback as you can.” Another participant explained how feedback from a principal can serve as a guide: “Now, that I have a better understanding, still probably not the best, but I know what direction they want me to go in as I'm getting feedback.” These quotes reflect their desire for feedback.

Another participant discussed the value of feedback in a less formal setting. This occurs during common planning periods when teachers have allotted time in their
schedules together for planning. The participant shared that the principal and vice principal occasionally join the teachers to discuss expectations. The participant stated, “We can ask questions. They'll sit there, answer, talk to us, and give us feedback. Yeah, I think that's extremely beneficial.” This is evidence that administrator support through feedback is valued.

The feedback process can be facilitated by establishing a more personal relationship between the principal and non-tenured teacher. This creates a different setting in comparison to a post observation conference where the feedback is connected to an evaluation. This idea is aligned with the literature regarding the importance of administrator support for teacher learning and development (Robinson et al., 2008). One participant shared, “Spending that time getting to know them, and building that familiar relationship, and one where you're totally open to suggestions of things they need, and having that relationship, it's much easier to give them feedback.” The participant continued, “They aren't worried that it's coming from a boss or they're worried about a job, it is continual feedback.” This is evidence that informal feedback from an administrator is a valuable method of support.

Conversely, a lack of feedback from an administrator can create confusion. Non-tenured teachers need guidance for personal growth. Some participants highlighted a lack of consistent feedback after classroom walkthroughs performed by principals. One non-tenured teacher said, “I feel like they're doing a little bit more walkthroughs this year, but I haven't been getting a lot of feedback from them.” The participant continued, “I feel like, how can there be growth if there's no feedback? I would prefer there to be some sort of feedback so I can improve my craft.” A different non-tenured teacher also shared, “I
like the feedback, but I don't feel like we get it that often. They do walkthroughs, and then you hear nothing about it.” These quotes show that a lack of consistent feedback from an administrator can lead to a barrier to growth.

Feedback must also be aligned to the specific support needs of non-tenured teachers. For example, a teacher may need guidance on planning lessons. Regarding specific feedback, one participant stated, “I would say maybe lesson plans.” The participant indicated that this was an area where feedback would help. Another participant shared a practice the principal uses to provide feedback for lesson plans and said, “We put them in a binder, and then we'll get back a report saying, essentially, it's a glow and grow.” In this case, the participant indicated that feedback through the report guides growth in planning.

The School Improvement Panel is in a position to support the principal to ensure that consistent, informal, and meaningful feedback is provided to second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. However, this requires that they are aware of the function of the panel and have access to it. In the interview protocol used with the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, question 12 was designed to specifically understand if they were familiar with the role and responsibilities of the ScIP. It was apparent that several non-tenured teachers across the district have not had any interaction or knowledge of the ScIP in their respective buildings. One participant questioned the acronym ScIP and confused it with “SKIP.” Another participant said, “As far as I know, I don't know who those people are at my school.” Another corroborated, “I mean, I don't recall having much interaction. I can't say I have that much experience with that in my school.” This is
evidence that in some schools, the ScIP is not operating in a manner to support non-tenured staff.

If non-tenured teachers do not have access to the ScIP, this underutilizes a school-based resource for support. One participant commented that other teachers in the school should be used as a resource:

You can't have one administrator be in every room all the time, but you have all these other teachers there who you know the people you rely on. You know the people who do their job well. Use those resources.

In other words, the ScIP can provide support and work with the principal to address the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

The principal must lead and organize the ScIP in a manner that allows for supporting non-tenured teachers. For example, interactions at faculty meetings can be set up or classroom visits can be organized. I reflected in my journal about how faculty meetings have been used to support such interactions. I recorded:

I believe it's important that teachers are actively involved in presenting to their peers and sharing best instructional practices. As it relates to non-tenured teacher support, they are now exposed to the practice of other teachers rather than being isolated.

Since some of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers who were interviewed did not know who their ScIP members were, it seems likely that such ScIP processes do not exist in other schools.

These non-tenured teachers would benefit from interacting with the ScIP members. One practice is classroom observations once a month. This would involve a
scheduled visit by the principal for non-tenured teachers to observe their colleagues. This peer observation process is a form of preferred support that surfaced throughout the interview process. One participant stated, “For me, what I'd love to do, too, is more peer observations like observing other teachers in the building.” This process would work best if there is time that follows to meet and discuss the observed practice. For example, the scheduled classroom visit could also include an informal meeting afterwards. One participant said, “The biggest thing is being able to have time to be able to sit down and talk to teachers that are doing something right or doing some wrong in order to learn from their experience.” The participant continued, “I think a lot of times we don't have that time we've built in within the day and/or there's not enough.” This demonstrates that scheduled peer observations would be beneficial.

As an elementary school principal, I can better organize the ScIP to provide the desired feedback that non-tenured teachers seek. This is a practice that our ScIP actively experimented with during the later phase of this research study. I contacted each non-tenured teacher to discuss a peer observation. In lieu of an assigned duty, I asked that they arrange to visit the classroom of a ScIP member. However, after attempting this practice once, I began to understand that it that requires better organization. For example, I can arrange the observation for the non-tenured teachers. Furthermore, scheduled time to meet after the peer observation can be arranged to support the non-tenured teacher.

Overall, and in regard to answering this research question, I learned that my leadership practice in leading the ScIP to support the learning and professional growth of our non-tenured teachers has been positive. The idea of feedback was one that really resonated with me. I believe it is the main area where I can still improve and better
support this population. I need to continue to focus on teacher learning and professional growth while refining our ScIP processes.

While progress had been made in leading the ScIP, I still wanted to attain an answer to the third research question regarding the processes the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers believed would support their learning and professional growth. As a result of the interviews with the non-tenured teachers and analysis of district documents, it became clear that an overhaul of the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers was needed, specifically in the areas of professional development, district programs, mentoring processes, and administrator support. The non-tenured teachers believed that revisions to these support processes would benefit their learning and professional growth. Their beliefs will help contribute to active experimentation within my continued leadership practice.

**Misapplication of professional development.** The design of the current district and school-based professional development is not aligned with the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. In part, this is due to the lack of an opportunity to provide input. The review of district documents confirmed that the schedule for the two days of professional development in September is completed at the central office level. On the first day of training this past September, all teachers participated in the annual Student Growth Objective (SGO) training mandated by AchieveNJ. On the second day of training, all teachers were divided into groups by either grade level or content area and were directed to attend workshops that were deemed important by the administration. In other words, during these two days of workshops, the non-tenured teachers were not
given the opportunity to provide input and subsequently attended workshops unrelated to their individual growth.

There needs to be a choice so that the professional development is meaningful. One participant shared, “It's not like we had a choice or anything like that. It was delegated.” Another confirmed, “We were assigned.” A different participant said, “Maybe if administrators kind of give teachers a choice. Some type of choice, any choice, at least the teacher would then say, Well, at least they gave me the opportunity to choose.” Another shared, “It's nice to have a choice in the matter of where you want to go because I feel like that makes you more invested in what you want to do.” These quotes suggest that input and choice are valued.

Offering a choice will decrease the issue of unrelated professional development workshop offerings. If second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers are not given a choice, then the workshops may not be aligned with their needs. One participant explained, “Well, to be honest, they are not very beneficial for me because they are not designed for special teachers often times, they are more towards the, you know, math, science, LAL.” In regard to providing input for the professional development process, another participant stated, “That's the thing about being a second-year teacher. You don't really know how everything works yet.” This denotes that the process of designing professional development based on the needs of teachers is non-existent.

This misalignment between training and personal needs decreases the benefit of professional development. If the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers attend the same generic workshops as their tenured colleagues, this negatively impacts the opportunity for growth. One participant suggested that the design of professional
development has been the least beneficial to growth by stating, “Other than that, I feel like I was in every workshop that seasoned teachers were in. The fact that it was generalized professional development might have been the least helpful.” This is evidence that veteran and non-tenured teachers are attending the same workshops, which indicates that alignment to individual needs is not within the current design.

This type of routine design with no input for the opening two days of professional development also leads to repetitive workshops. As a result, this limits growth and continuous learning. One participant stated, “I feel like often times I’m in a professional development I’m like, I have heard this 20 times. I need something different that kind of will give me a new energy in the class or something new to try.” This further confirms that the current design requires an overhaul.

The issue is that designing professional development for every teacher in the district is a significant challenge. Creating broad topics at the macro level allows for everyone to attend some form of training. Some participants did acknowledge that the planning of district-wide professional development is a daunting task. One participant stated, “I think as a whole district, that would be very difficult to organize and please everybody.” Another said, “Quite honestly, I know they try to do their best, the district professional development have been…The last ones that we had, they hired all those expensive people to come talk to us. I didn't find that beneficial at all.” It is clear that the design of professional development has inherent obstacles yet still requires revisions to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

In contrast to the professional development days in September, the agenda for the October training differed slightly in that it was school-based. Instead of being created by
a district-level administrator, it was created by me to serve the needs of our staff. This
day was originally planned as a district-level professional development day, but it was
changed four weeks prior. A master schedule was created and disseminated, but in this
case, the building principal was given the opportunity to design the training for the day.
As a result, all staff members remained in their respective buildings rather than being
grouped by grade levels or content areas. As it relates to leadership in supporting teacher
learning and professional growth, the design of the October professional development
afforded an opportunity to connect the training to staff need. In this case, ScIPs could be
guided to design the professional development day.

**Misapplication of programs.** As part of this study, the observations and review
of attendance sheets at the New Teacher Institute meetings produced valuable data.
Supplementary data assists in building off other findings (Hannah & Lautsch, 2011). This
allowed me to gain deeper knowledge about new teacher support. For example, I
compared trends in attendance with data collected from the interviews with the second- to
fourth-year non-tenured teachers. Table 4 provides information that documents new
teacher support in the district by indicating the meeting dates and number of second- to
fourth-year non-tenured teachers and administrators who attended the monthly New
Teacher Institute.
Table 4

*NTI Attendance of Second- to Fourth-Year Non-Tenured Teachers and Administrators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Second- to Fourth-Year Non-Tenured Teachers</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of numbers in qualitative data assists in portraying what is occurring at events (Sandelowski, 2001). The use of numbers here indicates what I experienced when I attended these meetings or observed in the attendance sheets. These data denote that of the 44 second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, few of them are attending the New Teacher Institute. In fact, although the total amount from the four months was 28, only 12 different second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers attended during those four meetings. Despite the fact that the district offers this program to support all non-tenured teachers, the attendance data reflect that a large percentage of the non-tenured teachers are not attending. This poses some interesting questions: Why are the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers not attending these opportunities for professional learning and growth? Are there methods to improve the nature and quality of these meetings?

This district program can be of value to the learning and professional growth of non-tenured teachers. Giving novice teachers the chance to share and network with their
peers can lead to a sense of belonging (Schlichte et al., 2005). The interviews with the non-tenured teachers produced some ideas regarding the value of this program. One participant shared that the creation of the New Teacher Institute has offered a network system. The participant stated, “That's been a huge step because you get to collaborate with other teachers that you would never even get the chance to do. That in itself, that's been awesome.” Another participant expanded on the value and said, “I like the New Teacher Institute. That was good because it was like a mini lesson that was sharp. Since there were so many teachers, we were all kind of in the same boat.” In these statements, the value of this type of program becomes clear.

However, the schedule of the program leads to lower attendance. Typically, these workshops are held one day after school from 3:00-4:00 pm. One non-tenured teacher shared a conflict with other after-school activities at that time and said,

A lot of it was time because I often find myself having kids after school tutoring on Mondays, on Tuesdays I run my fitness club, and also have grad class at night. I felt like there were a lot of other things going on at the same time a lot of times when the institutes are being held.

This quote shows that the schedule creates some issues that require attention if higher attendance is desired.

The delivery of instruction and content of these workshops also creates issues. The content might be covered in other professional learning opportunities. One participant said, “I feel like a lot of the topics are already covered in PD days, during PD days. Or just during faculty meetings, so it's kind of just redundant in a sense.” Another participant explained an issue with the delivery,
They didn't seem to me to be wholly helpful all the time. It seemed like a lot of them were very ... They brought ideas, and it was a lot of times delivered as just a lecture with one person up front, a room full of new teachers who having just had a long day teaching are then sitting and listening for an hour.

The participant added,

A lot of them weren't done with hands-on engagement. The topics always seemed great. That was one of the things that motivated me to go, but for the hour's time or so, I feel like I would walk out with a few things, but not time. That was what I think could be built up to be a much more helpful resource.

These statements highlight that the design and delivery can also be revised to attract more second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to regularly attend.

The absence of the other 32 second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers could suggest some type of issue with the program. After attending and presenting at the first NTI of the year, I reflected in my journal, “There were only five, second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers at the workshop out of the 44 in the entire district.” I asked myself some essential questions in my journal: “How can I get more second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to come to this type of setting for professional learning? Is there another type of program that may attract a wider range of participants?” My reflection indicates that augmenting this valuable program to meet the needs of more non-tenured teachers is needed.

Administrator attendance at these workshops connotes a lack of support. In addition to the low number of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in attendance, very few administrators attended as well. In the four sessions during this data collection
period, only the first session of the year was well attended. In other cases, one administrator presented and few others attended. If a lack of administrator support is a prominent reason why novice teachers leave the profession, it would behoove the district to ensure that administrators are attending to support the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. In order to garner support from principals, a different approach is needed.

**Misapplication of mentoring.** The current mentoring process does not support the learning and professional growth of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. As noted in the literature review, the duration of mentoring, schedule, and selection of mentors has an impact on novice educators. The non-tenured teachers shared the impact that the elimination of a mentor after the first year had on their professional learning and growth. One stated:

> Yeah, I guess the first year was more structured in the sense of your mentor had to meet with you a certain amount of hours. It was logged and it was a little bit more controlled, more structured and everything. Then, second year certainly none of that. It was just like you're on your own pretty much.

Another shared the feeling and said, “It seems like, at least for me, I feel like I'm much on an island a lot of the times.” This shows that the elimination of a mentor in the second year leaves new teachers to either sink or swim (Guise, 2013).

This change in support impacts their growth in the second year. One participant suggested the following in response to the change in mentor support, “I almost feel like, when you start off everybody is like, ‘Okay, we're here for you.’ Then after that, it's like, ‘And good luck.’” The participant added:
I think for some people, they would benefit having that mentor person there maybe the second year just to have a base point. The first year you're learning exactly how everything goes. Then the second year, it's like you're on your own. Another participant explained, “It's one less person who is part of my weekly routine, someone to bounce ideas off of.” These data are aligned with my theory that a lack of support after the first year has an impact on non-tenured teachers. If schools were to offer more than one-on-one mentoring and instead created a team of mentors, a professional culture could be established for many years (Johnson & Birkland, 2003).

Extended mentoring past the first year of teaching improves support. In some schools, second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers have been receiving extended mentoring services through a peer coaching program. One participant commented on the benefit and stated:

I think the peer mentorship seems to be really effective to me. I'm trying to take suggestions that she's giving me and run with them; also inviting her to come back and see how I've implemented those changes. It's nice to be able to talk to someone who isn't an administrator, but someone who has more experience and can help and guide.

Another participant shared the impact of eliminating a peer contact while striving to attain tenure by stating, “I'm actually going to miss it, if I get invited back for my fourth year, which will be my tenure year. I'm going to miss it a lot.” It is evident by these statements that second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers see value in mentoring for more than one year.
The selection and pairing of a mentor and mentee is also critical to learning and professional growth. On the part of the principal, careful consideration must be given when selecting a mentor. One participant commented on the principal’s involvement and process in selecting a mentor and said, “The principal really puts a lot of thinking when it comes to selecting staff and pairing staff. He looks holistically at the whole individual. On the personal level, on the professional level, on the potential of the individual.” In addition, this participant highlighted a scheduling practice used in that building that ensures that time is allotted for mentors to meet with the mentees: “There's a specific amount of time set aside every week, and it's part of my schedule to meet with my NTI Mentor. That's important.” This is something that I have yet to accomplish within the schedules that I create, and I feel that I can arrange this for next year. In return, I can better support teacher learning and growth.

The selection of mentors should also involve input from the mentee. This will increase the likelihood that an appropriate pairing is aligned to the needs of the mentee. Some participants shared the mentor selection process that they were exposed to in their first year, which indicated no involvement. In regard to an opportunity to offer input for choosing a mentor, one participant said, “I have no idea of the selection process.” A different participant said, “It was just like, here's your peer mentor.” Another participant offered a preferred method and stated, “I would have preferred to be able to maybe have some input to choosing my mentor because maybe personalities or you see someone really doing a great job or teaching something that, that's the skill I need.” These quotes demonstrate how a principal can best support an effective mentoring process.
Administrator support valued. The connection that second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers have with their principals is another support process that benefits their learning and professional growth. This is directly related to the review of the literature in that a lack of support is detrimental to their growth and is a main reason why new teachers leave the profession. Administrator support often fades for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. This is the result of a new group of first year teachers requiring attention. One participant highlighted that the principal is currently focused on the first-year teachers, which impacts the ability to support non-tenured teachers in their second to fourth years. The participant stated, “Although, he's less apt to do the drop-in and the check-ins now because he has all the first year teachers in the school now. Now that time is now focused on them.” This is connected to my theory that a focus on first-year teachers combined with a lack of support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers creates an issue.

It is critical for a principal to be available for support during the second to fourth years of teaching. If non-tenured teachers know that the principal is there to offer guidance, this creates a better learning environment. One non-tenured teacher shared that the simple fact of knowing the principal is there to offer support and guidance is beneficial. The participant stated, “I think the support and the opinions of the principals. To have them guiding and supporting you is definitely one of the most important things.” Another discussed a different type of support. This was in regard to connecting with the principal on a personal level, as the participant suggested, “That was probably one of the most helpful things.” As previously shown, a principal’s support is critical to the growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.
It is also important for a principal to be visible in the classrooms of non-tenured teachers. Offering in-class support reinforces their learning. A participant shared:

Even just stopping in and actually knowing everybody's name is probably the biggest thing that every teacher, whether it's first, second, third, fourth, or fifteenth year, it's always good to have an administrator that shows you that they value who you are and what you're doing. I think that's always a big support.

Another shared a more specific in-class support practice and said, “Not so much if the principal came in to observe me because it's always so different, but if maybe the principal came in and just demonstrated a lesson or a guided reading group.” These participants have further demonstrated how support from a principal helps them grow.

Distributed leadership can be used within our school to support such growth. For example, our established professional learning communities offer the opportunity for multiple staff members to lead and support our non-tenured teachers. Now that every staff member serves on a PLC, there is an opportunity to use their expertise and offer them an opportunity to take part in the decision-making process. A principal who encourages shared decision making generates a deeper commitment from staff (Devos, Tuytens & Hulpia, 2014). The goal is to develop more teacher leaders who can help lead change to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

Putnam, Gunnings-Moton, and Sharp (2009) suggested that the PLC culture can offer support for adult learners. By aligning induction and professional learning communities, new teachers are continuously acclimated to the practices of the school (Birkeland & Feiman-Nemser, 2009). For example, we can create a school-based teacher induction program within our PLC setting to support adult learning. In other words, each
PLC can support the non-tenured teachers who serve on it by offering assistance for ongoing acclimation to the school culture. A critical component is to immediately focus on the targeted areas of improvement for each non-tenured teacher who serves on that respective PLC.

This type of support process is vastly different than the current approach taken at the district-wide induction program offered for two days in August. In the smaller PLC setting, there is an opportunity for this to occur rather than at the macro level. Since the New Teacher Institute has been poorly attended and there are no other opportunities for non-tenured teachers to learn and grow professionally, it is critical to address support at the school level. Each school can use the PLC setting so that the non-tenured teachers never feel isolated and have a team of teachers to use as a resource. As the principal, I can ensure that our PLCs are organized and operate in a manner that is aligned with the developmental needs of all non-tenured teachers in the school.

This adjustment to school-based induction through our PLCs will not be an easy task. As the principal, this will require me to guide all teachers from Model I to Model II (Argyris & Schon, 1974). In Model I, an individual does not question the practices of the organization and accepts the status quo (Argyris & Schon, 1974). In other words, if second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers are not supported appropriately, the processes are not questioned. In Model II, an individual challenges that status quo to arrive at an alternative solution to improve the situation (Argyris & Schon, 1974). In this case, the ScIP members can be used to support the shift towards supporting second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers within each PLC.
To make the necessary shift, we have to consider making a change from single-loop learning to double-loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1974). For example, more staff members will need to be included in the decision-making process, so it is not top-down coming only from those who serve on the ScIP. Moreover, all teachers must not only focus on their own practice, but instead support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers (Argyris & Schon, 1974). To accomplish this task, we must address the underlying beliefs of our staff (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). By guiding the ScIP members in each PLC to work closely with the other teachers, we can create a system where everyone can offer input for the professional growth of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

This will then require even greater focus on leading school-wide change. In regard to augmenting the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, there is a need to indicate a sense of urgency among all staff members (Kotter, 1996). In support of addressing this urgent matter, having the right people as a guiding coalition to lead change is critical for success (Kotter, 1996). Since each ScIP member serves on one of the PLCs, they can help guide this initiative.

To successfully implement this process, each ScIP member who serves on a PLC can use Fullan’s (2011) seven competencies for leading change to better support the needs of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The process can begin by using deliberate practice as a means to apply strategies for change, learn from them, and use feedback to make adjustments (Fullan, 2011). If the goal is to support the learning and professional growth for all non-tenured staff members, then their input can be used to make adjustments.
As we shift to this PLC-based induction program, there might be some dissenters within the staff. For example, veteran staff members may not want to be part of the process of providing support for their non-tenured colleagues. Fullan (2004) suggested that leaders must act with moral purpose when challenged with resistance. By leading with moral purpose, the ScIP members can have a positive impact on the lives of all teachers. If there is resistance to this change, then moral purpose can be combined with impressive empathy to understand the reasons behind the resistance (Fullan, 2011). In return, we can use this to strengthen the initiative.

The next step to implement this change in support of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers is to motivate the staff to accept the new system. This can be accomplished by giving them experiences to learn from their colleagues. The full transition to PLC-based induction will create an opportunity for even more “in-house” experts to share their knowledge with others. By empowering teachers to become part of the change process, we can indirectly impact their intrinsic motivation to contribute to the professional growth of their non-tenured colleagues.

The next step is fostering collaboration. Each PLC can develop the core goals of the professional development program for their non-tenured teachers. In this step, a focus on collective capacity building is critical (Fullan, 2011). The PLCs will need to focus on the targeted areas of improvement for their non-tenured teachers. This leads to the next step of the process for change to learn confidently. Fullan (2011) indicated that change agents maintain the responsibility of leading with confidence and humility. Although this change will be challenging, each ScIP member who serves on that PLC must act with
confidence and humility to guide their colleagues to successful implementation of a school-based program.

This is aligned with the last step of the framework of sustaining simplicity (Fullan, 2011). In order to facilitate the change process for all staff, keeping things as simple as possible is key so that they can adapt to this change. By keeping things as simple as possible, we will be able to adapt to this change as a unified, cohesive team. To accomplish this task, we must collectively and actively experiment to foster an environment that supports the learning and professional growth of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

Summary

After completing this self-analysis of my five-year leadership journey, it has become clear that my leadership has progressed as a result of this doctoral program and study. The level of support for teacher learning and professional growth has been improved through the coursework, review of literature, and subsequent experimentation with application to practice. In comparison to the first year, when I was not enrolled in this doctoral program, my ability to incorporate distributed leadership to guide change for supporting second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers has improved exponentially. As I continue to lead the School Improvement Panel mandate of AchieveNJ, this study also revealed that there are processes that I can implement to better support the learning and professional growth of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. I learned that there are areas in my practice that still require attention. In the next chapter, I discuss these areas and the implications that they have on my leadership growth, practice, policy, and research.
Chapter 5

Discussion and Implications

In this research study, my intent was to explore my leadership through reflective practice over the past five years as an elementary school principal. My learning goal was not to merely study my practice, but to explore my growth in a manner that led to continuous improvement (Feldman, 2003; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). In addition, I aimed to develop implications and recommendations that would have a direct impact on my leadership practice, support for new teachers, and the betterment of our schools (Feldman, 2003). These implications and recommendations include personal, local, state, and national improvements that can impact the education profession.

The role of today’s school leader is replete with complex challenges (Ovando, 2003). Ultimately, the burden of either the success or failure of a school falls on the principal (Spillane, 2009). I learned from the literature review that there are many theories and models of leadership that a principal can implement. For example, transformative, instructional, and leadership for social justice are all valued approaches for a principal. Due to the challenges and responsibilities that today's principal has, it became clear that distributed leadership must be an approach within the toolbox.

This is particularly true in light of recent mandates from AchieveNJ. Researchers from Montclair State University in New Jersey suggested that principals will have an increase of 36% total time spent each week on overseeing the new evaluation processes of AchieveNJ (Larkin & Oluwole, 2014). As a result, principals will need support with their many other responsibilities and roles. Thus, it is critical to locate and share
responsibility with other teacher leaders (Spillane, 2009). Distributed leadership offers
me this opportunity and is something that I have been refining in my practice.

As I reflected on my leadership journey, I learned that each passing year I have
made progress toward becoming the principal who I espoused to be in the entrance
interview for this program and interview for my first position. I have moved closer to a
collaborative approach through distributed leadership. The interview with the School
Improvement Panel confirmed that my leadership has grown to empower these teacher
leaders to support our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and student
achievement. However, since it is still a new practice for me, I must continue to seek
ways to embrace and implement this form of leadership for the betterment of the school.

Implications for My Leadership and Growth

Now that I have completed this self-analysis of my leadership development as a
result of this doctoral program and research study, I must consider what this means for
my practice. Several growth opportunities emerged where my practice in leading change
to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers can be enhanced. These include
feedback, professional development, the mentoring process, and the expansion of
distributed leadership. In addition, I must also consider the implications that these
findings have on the practice of other institutions, such as teacher preparation programs
and educational leadership training programs.

Include various methods for meaningful feedback. As it relates to my
leadership, the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers shared information that I can
use to augment my leadership practice. One significant takeaway is that these teachers
benefit from receiving consistent, meaningful feedback. This does not need to be
connected to an observation or an evaluation but can come after daily walkthroughs. This is a practice that I am not currently implementing, and it is clear as a result of the study that this is something that would benefit the learning and professional growth of these developing teachers. This was evidenced by the fact that the term feedback surfaced in the interviews with each non-tenured teacher, and a conversation was held regarding its value.

Principals who create a learning environment where feedback is offered develop teachers who are committed to attaining school goals (Devos, Tuytens & Hulpia, 2014). Though I frequently visit classrooms, I do not give any direct feedback afterward. As a result, I am missing an opportunity to guide our teachers toward our collective goals. After reflecting on this, I think it is important to involve the ScIP members in the development of this feedback process. For example, the ScIP members could request information at a PLC meeting from the teachers and then share that information at the next ScIP meeting.

One idea I have that I could share with the ScIP is a form of written feedback after a classroom visit. For example, I could leave a post-it note on the teacher’s desk indicating a glow and grow. This is a process that would give authentic feedback to the teacher for one area in which they did well and another area in which there could be growth. This would be a simple method to provide immediate feedback that is motivational while guiding the practice of all teachers.

New teachers benefit from receiving meaningful feedback that addresses both personal and professional growth (Roberson & Roberson, 2008). As I lead the ScIP, I can use these teacher leaders as a resource to assist in providing feedback to our non-tenured
teachers. Another practice that can be implemented is designating time within the schedule for the ScIP members who serve as a peer coach to meet with their non-tenured teacher to create and review lesson plans together. Until now, I did not consider establishing structures that offer guidance in the planning of their lessons. After reflecting on this research, I realized that while I have been focused on the actual instructional practice of non-tenured teachers, I have neglected to consider their need for assistance with lesson planning. This could be addressed by redesigning the schedule.

Since one member of each professional learning community serves on the ScIP, I can designate one common planning period per month for the non-tenured teachers to meet and plan with their peer coach. I could assign a peer coach that is in a similar grade level so that the common planning time is already aligned. By reserving some common planning time for lesson planning, this will also allow me to join the meeting to offer feedback and guidance. By including this in my leadership practice, I can then offer the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers an additional support process as they strive to attain tenure. In return, we can guide the personal learning and professional growth of our non-tenured teachers.

The importance of receiving feedback for learning and growth is one that has really resonated with me. I began to think about my experience as a doctoral student. Through various models of feedback, my committee motivated me to continue to work hard and to make the revisions that would strengthen my dissertation. This feedback varied and came in the form of a few kind words in an email as well as in written recommendations on a draft of the dissertation. I have reflected on what this meant to me and how it inspired me to do my best. I can relate this to the experience of non-tenured
teachers who benefit from various methods of feedback, just as I did throughout this study.

**Promulgate the need to revise the PD program.** Mizell (2010) asserted that establishing continuous professional development connected to student learning is part of the principal’s responsibility. Based on what I have learned from the interviews with the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers and analysis of my leadership, it is clear that the professional development design and delivery is not meeting their needs. The three district-wide professional development day agendas that were analyzed and cross referenced with the viewpoints shared by the non-tenured teachers highlighted significant flaws in the design of professional development. Also included in this discussion of professional development is the design and delivery of the monthly workshops in the New Teacher Institute. Similar to the three district-wide days, this program is not addressing the needs of the majority of the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

The current design of the offered professional development leads to a missed opportunity for continuing the learning and professional growth of our non-tenured teachers. They are exposed to generic workshops that are unrelated to their needs. This process does not support their learning and growth as they strive to attain tenure. As a leader within the district, I can help address this by sharing the results from this study at our monthly District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC) meetings. This committee is comprised of central office administrators and principals. My goal is to make them aware of the need to redesign these professional development days so that we can better meet the individual needs of our non-tenured teachers. Similar to the organization of the school-based October professional development day, there is an opportunity for
principals to design workshops that more closely meet the needs of the staff members within that building. A full shift to school-based professional development is recommended to create meaningful professional development opportunities for staff.

While the NTI has good intentions to offer additional support, I learned from the attendance record analysis and interviews with the non-tenured teachers that very few are attending. As a result, a program designed to better support non-tenured teachers is not being maximized to have its intended impact. Moreover, those who are attending are not taking away skills that can be applied to their daily practice. To address this issue, I will share the results of the study with the supervisor who organizes the monthly meetings. These workshops can be redesigned to more closely meet the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers by expanding the offerings each month. For example, a different day of the week can be used each month so that the schedule does not present a conflict. Also, a workshop can be presented within each school on that day so that the non-tenured teachers do not need to leave and find parking within the city. Prior to these meetings, a survey can be disseminated so that the non-tenured teachers can provide input as to what they currently need to address their learning and professional growth.

**Improve the mentoring process.** Principals who support mentoring and induction programs have an impact on teachers’ success and ultimately their decision to remain in the profession (Brown & Schainker, 2008). Currently, my practice can be augmented to support the mentoring process. First and foremost, each mentee should be given the opportunity to provide input regarding the qualities of a mentor that they believe will help guide their learning and growth. Teachers feel disenfranchised if their input is not valued (Gimbel et al., 2011). After the interviews with the non-tenured
teachers, it became clear to me that they value and feel empowered by this opportunity to be part of the selection process. I can facilitate this in the initial interview process. For example, once a final candidate has been selected and recommended to the superintendent for board approval, part of that process can be to request information from that individual regarding what type of mentor would be a good fit. This is something that I have not incorporated into my practice and learned after reading the literature and conducting this study.

The principal can facilitate mentoring processes by creating a schedule that permits consistent time and place for meetings to occur (Roberson & Roberson, 2008). I learned from one interview that this exists in the schedule at one school. For the next school year, I can include this as I design my master schedule so that all second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers have one period per week to meet with their mentor. Since we are a small school, I believe that this is feasible. Our district also requires that all teachers have one common planning period each day, so I could design it in a manner that would allow for one of those periods to be used for them to meet.

This time can also be used for the mentor and mentee to conduct a peer observation together. As it relates to attrition, the likelihood of retention increases if peer observation is included in the induction process (Berry, 2004). After a peer observation, the mentor and mentee can compare what they observed within a lesson. As noted in some of the interviews with non-tenured teachers, having time to conduct a peer observation and then meet with a colleague to discuss best practice is a valued process of support.
Finally, the peer coaching program that I have implemented in our school appears to be of value. This was evident in the interview with the ScIP and corroborated by the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher statements regarding additional mentoring. However, it became clear that this is not consistently practiced in other schools across the district. I learned from the interviews that the second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers see value in having extended mentoring services. The peer coaching program where one ScIP member is paired with a second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher is a process that can be more formalized and implemented with fidelity across the district. This is something that I will share at a DEAC meeting so that the benefit of this program reaches all second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in the district. Since the superintendent serves on the DEAC, the building principals could be directed to implement the peer coaching as a requirement.

**New Insights**

After completing this study, I have developed new insights for my leadership. This includes how the coursework and overall program have guided my growth. In addition, prior to entering this program, I do not recall a single conversation with any of my colleagues or superiors regarding the need for social justice leadership. As it relates to support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers, it becomes clear as to why I initially neglected and disenfranchised this population in my practice.

**Coursework connection.** I have to admit that on a few occasions throughout this journey, I feared that the coursework would be unrelated to my needs and would not help my growth as a leader. Moreover, I was unsure that each class would lead to a meaningful impact on my dissertation topic. There were definitely moments when I was
responding to a discussion question or writing a paper and questioned the value in the assignment.

By conducting this autoethnographic study, I have been able to reflect on my progress in this doctoral program. I am very thankful that I selected this program because I have been able to extract many critical areas of learning for the betterment of my leadership practice. I can connect the different courses from this program to my critical learning and continue to apply it to my practice. This is especially true in regard to leading change to support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. For example, in the Leadership Theories and Changing Organizations courses, I learned the value in applying multiple leadership approaches when leading change. In addition, in the Ethics course, I learned about seeing leadership through the lens of equitable processes for all stakeholders. I will take this learning with me as I continue my leadership journey.

As I complete this self-reflection on my growth and application to practice, it is evident that this doctoral program had a substantial impact on my leadership. This new insight has developed as a result of conducting this research through a reflective practice conceptual framework. The *College of Education Doctoral Handbook* (2015) suggests that a goal is to develop reflective practitioners capable of leading change in our evolving schools and society. I am confident that I have become this type of practitioner.

**Social justice connection.** In my leadership journey, I discussed an experience in my second year when I participated in the entrance interview to be accepted into this program. The term social justice was discussed, and at that time, I was not familiar with this model for leadership. Now I have a much clearer understanding of the need for today's principal to view practice, processes, and policy through this lens. As an
educational leader, I must support the mission for social justice by interrogating school processes that disenfranchise any population (Dantley & Tillman, 2010). I have ascertained that today’s schools require leadership for social justice in order to address issues that are yet to be remedied.

After a synthesis of the findings from this study, I can conclude that as the principal, I have the ability to set the organizational culture of our school. As it relates to second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher support, I can use my influence to establish a culture of teacher learning and professional growth. I have learned from this study that this has gradually become my strength as an administrator. However, there is still opportunity for me to address other aspects of the organizational culture connected to the support system for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

My reflective practice has inspired me to analyze my role by exploring if I am efficiently implementing processes for our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to be successful. After analyzing the implications on my role and professional growth as a leader, I have ascertained that leadership without support for social justice is simply untenable. This has guided me to connect more deeply with the social justice pillar of this doctoral program. It has become evident that educational leaders must be prepared with the competencies and skill set to address issues related to marginalized groups in schools.

What’s Next?

The excitement is that my journey does not end here. I believe that my journey through educational leadership is a continuous, evolving process. I consider myself a life-long learner, and I believe that I can always improve my practice. In the road ahead, I will undoubtedly need to improve upon another area of my professional performance.
Through the inquiry process, problems within practice can be addressed (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). Thus, I will continue with reflective practice throughout my career in the education profession by periodically conducting a self-analysis of my performance.

**Distribute social justice leadership.** I can conclude that while there are many theories and approaches to leadership, I must use distributed leadership to guide my teacher leaders to implement the principles of social justice. Although I have grown to understand the value of capacity building, I have yet to include a focus on social justice leadership. As it relates to an intended outcome of this doctoral program, I think it is important for me to take this new learning and guide teacher leaders to support this mission.

Kinsler (2010) shed light on the fact that the majority of teachers in the United States graduate from teacher preparation programs without training in or knowledge of social justice theory. This is critical as it relates to the national issue of new teacher attrition. In the introduction of this dissertation, I highlighted the need to retain quality new teachers to support today’s students. As a profession, we must ensure that teachers remain and are effectively prepared to support the needs of a diverse student population (He & Cooper, 2011). In an effort to retain quality educators in our diverse community, my focus is on improving my school district’s approach to supporting new teachers. If it has been ascertained that student achievement is linked to teacher effectiveness, then educational leaders should implement programs that augment the growth of new teachers (Wong, 2004). It is imperative that, as the principal, I use this newly acquired knowledge to guide our teacher leaders to understand its connection to social justice leadership. The second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers have been disenfranchised through school
and district practices, processes, and policies. It is time for me to shed light on this issue and empower teacher leaders to do something about it.

Capper, Theoharis, and Sebastian (2006) shared a framework for educational leadership programs to use for preparing social justice leaders that includes a focus on dispositions, knowledge, and skills. I am proposing that I can use this framework to assist in preparing our teacher leaders for social justice leadership. “Each principal can be a hero to their (sic) staff as someone to learn from and communicate with about many things” (Quaglia & Quay, 2003, p. 15). Thus, my immediate goal is to guide our teacher leaders to implement the tenets of social justice leadership. As I continue my focus on distributed leadership, my mission is to lead in a manner that develops teacher leaders to also enact social justice. As I serve as their leader, I want them to grow as individuals to become leaders in our profession.

I think that this process should begin by first raising awareness for social justice leadership. Since it will most likely be new for our teacher leaders, I can start by sharing articles that I have gathered from this program. I can share the work of Kinsler (2010) or Theoaris (2007) to guide the ScIP members to an initial understanding of social justice leadership. At our weekly ScIP meetings, each member can discuss and share what social justice means for our school. As a result, they can help identify the essential questions to be addressed for the betterment of our learning community. Since I am only one person, having multiple staff members begin to view things through this lens may reveal programs or processes that are potentially disenfranchising different stakeholder groups. Since I had overlooked new teacher support for many years, it is entirely possible that I am yet to uncover other groups who have been marginalized.
**Disseminate the findings.** Through distributed leadership, I have cultivated the leadership abilities of the School Improvement Panel members. As a result, the powerful impact that a ScIP can have on second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher support has been uncovered and the necessary setting for teacher learning and growth has been established in our school. We have developed promising practices to better support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. The next step is to ensure that these findings are effectively disseminated to those who can take it a step further.

At the local level, these ScIP processes can be shared with our central office. The recommendation is to meet with the District Evaluation Advisory Committee (DEAC). A recommendation to the DEAC is to host bi-monthly meetings with all of the ScIPs in the five schools. This will ensure two things. First, since it was revealed that not all of the schools have fully operational ScIPs, this will promote compliance with AchieveNJ district-wide. Second, at these meetings the ScIP members of each school can share their best practices with each other. The benefit will be horizontal consistency to ensure support for all second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. As a result, the principals and ScIPs will be better prepared to implement processes for supporting their second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

The ScIP processes will also be shared with the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA). The goal is to present promising practices for ScIP processes to inform educational leaders throughout the state of the positive influence that this panel can have on teacher learning and professional growth. Subsequently, the potential for improving support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers in New Jersey can be addressed with a wider audience.
Implication for Practice

In addition to my own leadership practice, I must consider the implications that the findings have on the practices of other institutions. This includes teacher preparation programs and educational leadership programs. I reflected on my experience in working with a teacher preparation program and my training through an educational leadership program to become a principal. I then aligned my experiences with the findings from this study and contextualized them in the literature as they relate to implications for these institutions.

Teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs across the nation implement their curricula and processes to prepare pre-service teachers for the workplace. Upon graduation, these students enter the profession of education and apply their training and skills to daily practice. However, once in the profession, their progress depends on the support processes offered by the district. In order to ensure that new teachers are being prepared in a comprehensive manner, teacher preparation programs must develop partnerships with schools to ensure that their graduates are offered ongoing support for the rigors of teaching.

A Professional Development School is one model that has supported the establishment of such a partnership. However, in the current form it only impacts a small population. For example, not every school or district is agreeable to collaborate on this type of partnership. Furthermore, a PDS supports pre-service teachers to transition to the first year and it is not a support mechanism that addresses the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.
Thus, this type of partnership between teacher preparation programs and public school districts can be augmented. Since partnerships between schools and teacher preparation programs typically dissolve after pre-service, a model is needed to continue support (Hudson, 2012). In collaboration, universities and schools can create new programs that support teacher learning for multiple years while working in the profession. This type of partnership can address the previously mentioned disconnect in the literature review between teacher preparation programs and school districts. In addition, this new model can attempt to address shifts in policy as a result of AchieveNJ.

After learning about the need to create new models of partnerships in the literature review, I contacted my alma mater, the Peter Sammartino School of Education of Fairleigh Dickinson University, to establish a PDS in our school. In collaboration, we created a hybrid program by aligning the work of a PDS with our ScIP. This hybrid program now offers support ranging from pre-service to the fourth year of teaching. For example, we have a professor in residence who works with two of our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. In the initial conversation with the director of the program, I requested a professor in residence with a background in mathematics and special education, which are the areas that our non-tenured teachers currently teach. This professor conducts research in their classrooms and offers guidance on their instructional practice to support student learning.

As it relates to the focus of this study, my leadership has been developed and applied to practice as a result of collaborating with this teacher preparation program. If I was not enrolled in this doctoral program, I would not have addressed teacher learning and professional growth in this manner. I now have a deeper understanding of the value
in the collaboration between a teacher preparation program and a school. The program that we have implemented has demonstrated early signs of success. More specifically, our non-tenured teachers and teacher leaders are being provided with additional supports that benefit the teaching and learning process.

My experience in creating a new model of partnership presents serious implications for the practice of both teacher preparation programs and principals. For example, principals must seek ways to connect with local teacher preparation programs to offer continued support services for the non-tenured teachers. If this hybrid program has been formed, there could be other possibilities for new models of partnerships. One possibility is for a professor in residence to be actively involved in the New Teacher Institute. In other words, each school can host the monthly workshop in cooperation with a professor from the teacher preparation program. Topical issues can be addressed, and workshops supporting continuous learning and professional growth can be offered. This is just one example of a new model between teacher preparation programs and school districts.

Since teacher preparation programs must now report on the success of their graduates, this may also facilitate that process. By working more closely with school districts, the teacher preparation programs can complete their own assessments as a result of an already established partnership. For example, after creating our hybrid program, we are now not only filling the gap from pre-service to the first year of teaching, but offering a continuation of support for non-tenured teachers as they strive to attain tenure. If teacher preparation programs want to ensure the success of their graduates, it would make
sense for them to contact the alumni who are currently serving as principals to develop these types of partnerships.

Similarly, if principals want to support the learning and professional growth of their non-tenured teachers, it would make sense to use the resources that teacher preparation programs have to offer schools. For example, our PDS has given our school many valuable resources. This has been through the director of the school of education attending our PLC meetings to provide professional development as well as data analysis of our PARCC results. As a result, as a school we have been able to target our areas of improvement and develop strategies within our professional learning communities to address them. If each principal in our district were to do the same and collaborate with the college of education that they graduated from, it is possible to have several different universities providing resources. Alternatively, other new models can be established to support the 44 non-tenured teachers across the district.

**Educational leadership programs.** The findings from this study may also have implications for the manner in which educational leadership programs train their candidates. Research on evaluating educational leadership programs in regard to their curricula and training processes is scarce (Capper, Theoharis, & Sebastian, 2006). Educational leadership programs offer little guidance and training for pre-service administrators in learning how to support new teachers through mentoring programs (Ganser, 2002). After reflecting on my own leadership development and practice, I realized that within my training to become a principal, I did not receive guidance on how to support the learning and professional growth of non-tenured teachers.
Devos, Tuytens, and Hulpia (2014) indicated that for staff commitment to occur, principals must learn the art of distributed leadership. Consequently, principals would benefit from training on how to cultivate the skills associated with distributed leadership. A focus on distributed leadership to offer support for non-tenured teachers was also not included within the training that I experienced. Since adequate training was not provided, this was not my focus as a novice administrator. As a result, in the early years of my principalship I did not focus on supporting our non-tenured teachers.

In part, it is understandable that there are educational leadership programs that have not included this within their curricula. There are many critical areas that require attention, such as school law, instructional leadership, special education, facilities, and finances. It would be difficult to dedicate a course solely to distributed leadership to support non-tenured teachers. However, I learned from my self-analysis that excluding this training can impact the attention given to the learning and growth of non-tenured teachers.

Drago-Severson (2007) highlighted a critical need to support principals to better support teacher learning. I recommend that educational leadership programs for aspiring principals include some form of training on distributed leadership so that once these candidates are in the workplace they understand how this model of leadership can benefit teacher learning and professional growth. If educational leadership programs ignore this area of training, then this could continue to affect the attrition rate, since non-tenured teachers may not be given adequate support as they strive to attain tenure.
**Implications for Policy**

The findings from this study can be used for policy revisions at the local, state, and national levels. There is an opportunity to revise mentoring policies at the local and state levels. In addition, policies can be set for partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts. Both of these recommended policies can have an impact on the growing attrition rate experienced within our profession.

**Extension of mentoring services.** Molner Kelly (2004) suggested the need to address new teacher support and attrition and stated, “Now more than ever, district, state, and national policy makers must take a hard look at longstanding practices that have driven promising teachers out of the profession and that threaten the quality of our future teacher workforce” (p. 447). One practice in New Jersey that is related to this is the area of mentoring services for non-tenured teachers. Currently, a mentor is only mandated for the first year. However, this study found that second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers would benefit from mentoring beyond the first year.

At the state level, I would recommend a policy revision to extend the mandated mentoring past the first year of teaching. This mentoring extension should include the formal documentation of meeting logs to ensure compliance. However, it does not necessarily require that payment be given to the mentor, as is the case in the existing policy. The peer coaching program that we have implemented in our school does not offer money to be paid to the mentor. Rather, if a staff member volunteers to serve on the School Improvement Panel, then it is understood that this committee requires service as a mentor to a second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher. This form of extended mentoring could be offered to every second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher throughout the state
if it was mandated through policy. Furthermore, it can be aligned with the AchieveNJ mandate and responsibility of the ScIP. Since the ScIP already oversees that school-based mentoring is in progress, it can be amended that they provide the actual one-on-one peer coaching.

At my local district level, I would recommend that the mentoring services become part of the teacher contract. This would first require that the union be involved in the process. For example, during contract negotiations, the executive officers could be informed of the benefit of extended mentoring for their non-tenured members. I could present the beliefs of the non-tenured teachers regarding the value they see in mentoring. The purpose would be to share how contractual mentoring services could support the learning and growth of the 44 non-tenured teachers across the district.

One possibility would be for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers to be contractually obligated to attend at least five New Teacher Institute workshops each year until they attain tenure. In addition, those who are serving as mentors would also be contractually obligated to attend five New Teacher Institute workshops each year. The result would be the mentor and mentee working together during professional development to support the needs of the mentee. Since in its current form, the mentoring program and New Teacher Institute are not written in the language of the contract, there is no guarantee or obligation for the non-tenured teachers to attend this extension of professional development and mentoring services.

If the union was not in support of contractual mentoring services, an alternative would be to provide in-service days for mentors and mentees to meet for training. For example, mentors and mentees could instead attend New Teacher Institute workshops
during the contractual school day, so they would not be obligated to attend after school hours. Substitutes could be provided to cover the classes of the attendees. It could be divided into different days so that a disruption does not occur for all schools on that day.

**Teacher preparation and school district partnerships.** If it has been established that teacher preparation programs and school districts benefit from collaboration, then a policy that holds both parties accountable to form a partnership would support this process. Currently, there is nothing holding either group responsible for designing programs to support one another. A policy could be developed that requires a college of education to collaborate with a school district that has hired one of their graduates. An option would be for a field advisor from the teacher preparation program to observe that graduate twice per year until tenure has been attained. This type of policy would not only benefit the growth of the newly hired teacher, but would support the teacher preparation program in its endeavor to collect data on how the teacher is performing.

Since teacher preparation programs were recently mandated to track the progress of the graduates, this type of policy would require the school districts to submit the necessary data that are required. Furthermore, targeted areas of improvement for each non-tenured teacher can then be exposed and shared with the teacher preparation program. This may lead to a trend analysis of how that respective program can better support the needs of their current students.

**Implications for Future Research**

The findings from this study also have implications on future research. This study highlighted a need to give immediate attention to better supporting our second- to fourth-
year non-tenured teachers. As such, it contributes to filling in the gap in the current literature for new teacher support that primarily focuses on first-year teachers. Thus, there is an opportunity for continued research on the impact of improved support processes for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. Similar to this type of research, an outcome study can be conducted to ascertain the effect that a new model of partnership between a teacher preparation program and school has on second- to fourth-year non-tenured teacher support. This type of research can enhance the findings from this study.

**Gap in literature: Effect of mentoring for four years.** Based on the findings from the study, there is an opportunity for extended research within this topic. Primarily, a study can be completed on the effects of extended mentoring services through the fourth year of teaching. In other words, this research study revealed that extended mentoring services can benefit the learning and professional growth of this population. A new study may focus on an improvement in the attrition rate as a result of this extended mentoring process. Since the bulk of the literature on new teacher support is focused on the first year, this type of study can help fill in the gap within the literature.

This research can also include the principal’s role in overseeing the mentor process. For example, a comparison could be conducted among principals who implement different mentoring processes for non-tenured teachers and how these processes affect new teacher learning and professional growth. This type of research may produce findings that contribute to the need for new policies for extended mentoring or the inclusion of different models.

**Outcome study: Effect of a PDS/ScIP partnership.** The School Improvement Panel is a relatively new committee in the state of New Jersey. As evidenced in my
leadership journey, the hybrid partnership between our Professional Development School and ScIP has implemented several processes to support the learning and professional growth of our non-tenured staff. However, the true impact that these processes have on supporting our second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers needs to be evaluated over time. An outcome study can be conducted on the effect that a hybrid program between a PDS and ScIP has in supporting the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers.

This type of study may lead to supporting the need for a policy mandating partnerships between teacher preparation programs and school districts. Depending on the results of this outcome study, it may become clear that this type of partnership can have a significant impact on the learning and professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. Attrition rate data can be used to document the positive effect of this type of partnership.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

I proposed conducting this research study to the superintendent who oversees principals and school operations. There was no foreseeable issue with entry to collect data in the selected setting. However, administrative approval was only the initial step (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005). To proceed past this approval level, I needed to ensure entry at the next level by securing a sampling that was willing to participate in the interview process (Krathwohl & Smith, 2005).

As a result of my participation in New Teacher Orientation and the New Teacher Institute over the past two years, I had already established rapport with several non-tenured teachers within the district. This assisted in securing the appropriate number of participants for this study. Although a challenge to a study could be securing enough
participants, due to my above mentioned experience as well as the current number of non-tenured teachers within the district, this study did not encounter any limitation in regard to sample size.

Each participant who was selected received a consent form. This provided information regarding the full scope and sequence of the study. The names of the participants were not used in an effort to maintain anonymity, and this was stated prior to each interview. The goal was to make them comfortable with the process.

One limitation within this study was that I concurrently served as the researcher and school principal. Thus, my position as the principal may have affected the responses of the participants who work in the same school. In other words, they might have been reluctant to offer their true perspective on how they are supported or can be better supported since I conduct their evaluations. In order to address this limitation, if non-tenured teachers who have their evaluation completed by me volunteered to participate in the study, the principal investigator would have conducted that interview. None of the non-tenured teachers who have their evaluations completed by me participated in this study.

Another limitation is that the research took place in one urban district in one state. Other districts or other states may offer a comprehensive support system for non-tenured teachers. Thus, the generalizability of the findings from this study may only be suitable for like districts throughout the state of New Jersey. In order to address this limitation, I aimed to make connections to the national phenomenon of new teacher attrition, since this has been researched and identified as a significant issue within the education profession.
Summary

The implications and recommendations discussed in this chapter have revealed targeted areas of improvement for my leadership and for the education profession. In my leadership practice, I will focus on giving feedback, professional development, mentoring, and the expansion of distributed leadership. As a profession, we must align our processes and policies to better support second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. This can be accomplished through a joint effort between teacher preparation programs and school districts. In addition, educational leadership programs can better train aspiring school leaders by preparing them to meet the needs of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers with a focus on capacity building for teacher leaders.

This study was valuable because it highlighted a principal’s leadership journey in connection with an often forgotten about, marginalized population. The second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers deserve to have processes for support to keep them growing within the profession. If we continue to implement processes that disenfranchise this population, then we should expect to experience more new teachers leaving the profession. In light of the increasing attrition rate, the findings from this study may guide educational leaders to retain more second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers for the betterment of our schools and profession.

This research study achieved its aim because I was able to reflect and learn how my leadership has been developed and applied to practice as a result of this doctoral program. Moreover, I have ascertained better processes of support for second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers that I can incorporate into my practice as a principal and to
share with other leaders in my district. These processes can guide me to continuously improve the implementation of the School Improvement Panel mandate of AchieveNJ.

Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) declared, “A school leader, in whatever role, can create the conditions necessary to support reflective practice, if only on a small scale” (p. 21). As a principal, I am in a position to guide others to reflect upon and improve the learning and professional growth of second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers. I feel an obligation to improve this support in any way possible. Even if this results in having a small impact on the increasing attrition rate, I will know that I did what I could to contribute to this area of the education profession. My new insights can be used to take my next steps.

As I conclude this dissertation, I can reflect on the genuine need for this research because it contributed a fresh angle on a principal’s ability to support teacher learning and professional growth. The focus was not limited to first-year teacher support, but rather on second- to fourth-year non-tenured teachers as they work toward attaining tenure. In New Jersey, this research is both topical and meaningful, as all schools continue to implement the ScIP requirement of AchieveNJ. At the national level, it brought attention to an overlooked contributing factor to the increasing attrition rate in that new teachers must be supported throughout the years of working toward tenure attainment. This research produced meaningful findings that bring coherence to these issues and will assist in addressing these concerns for the betterment of the education profession.
References


Ovando, M. N. (2003). *Prospective school leaders’ educational platform: A reflection prior to action tool.* Austin, TX: College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin.


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Appendix A

Interview Protocol for Second- to Fourth-Year Non-Tenured Teachers

1. What attracted you to the teaching profession?

2. How did you come to be hired by the district?

3. What training and preparation process did you go through to become a teacher?

4. What type of support processes did the district provide during the first year teaching?

5. How did the support processes change from the 1st year of teaching to your current year of teaching?

6. What component of the offered support processes did you find to be the most beneficial to your professional learning and growth and why?

7. What component of the offered support processes did you find to be the least beneficial to your professional learning and growth and why?

8. Has the district created or offered any additional support processes since your first year of teaching?

9. What are your current goals for professional learning and growth?

10. What additional support processes do you believe would address these goals?

11. In what ways can a principal support your goals for professional learning and growth?

12. What can you tell me about the role and responsibilities of the School Improvement Panel?

13. How would you describe the design of the provided in-district professional development days this school year?
14. How has the provided training during these professional development days been aligned to your goals?

15. How can our leaders and district help you improve your teaching practice while you strive to attain tenure?
Appendix B

Interview Protocol for ScIP

1. What can you tell me about the role and responsibilities of the ScIP?

2. In what ways have you been guided and supported to implement these responsibilities?

3. How has the ScIP supported the professional learning and growth of the non-tenured teachers in the school?

4. What type of support processes did the ScIP provide to all staff members during the 2013-2014 school year?

5. How did the support processes change from that first year to this year?

6. What component of the offered support processes do you believe to be the most beneficial to the professional learning and growth of all staff members and why?

7. What component of the offered support processes do you believe to be the least beneficial to the professional learning and growth of all staff members and why?

8. How would you describe the design of the ScIP provided professional development workshops this school year?

9. How has the provided training during these workshops been aligned to the professional learning and growth of staff members?

10. In what ways can a principal support the professional learning and growth of non-tenured staff members?

11. In what other ways can the ScIP help support teacher learning to improve student achievement?