Beginning Teacher Induction at Three Elementary Schools in China: A Case Study

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BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION AT THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN CHINA: A CASE STUDY

BY

JUAN MIAO

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Seton Hall University

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ABSTRACT

BEGINNING TEACHER INDUCTION AT THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN CHINA: A CASE STUDY

It is urgent to study teacher induction programs to generate data-rich results that improve current practice and ultimately help beginning teachers become competent teachers and face the challenges in their profession in the 21st century. The purpose for this study was to explore how beginning teachers at three elementary schools in Baoding, Hebei province, China were inducted. The design of this study was non-experimental and descriptive. The researcher conducted this study primarily using qualitative research methods.

Information on the three participating schools’ profiles and 15 teachers were presented and discussed to help readers understand the context and conditions in which the induction programs took place. The 15 participating teachers’ responses to interview questions were coded and put into categories in tables corresponding with the three induction components: new teacher orientation, beginning teacher in-service training and mentoring. The teacher induction activities at the three schools were analyzed and synthesized to answer the research question: “How were beginning teachers inducted at three elementary schools in China?”

The study concluded the three common characteristics of teacher induction programs at the three elementary schools in China: a) Novice teachers learned how to teach through two main activities: observing other teachers’ lessons and being observed by other teachers. b) Beginning teachers were engaged in interacting and collaborating
with faculty members constantly. c) New teachers were trained to develop, refine and master the professional knowledge and skills in a specific subject that they were teaching. The results of the study also indicated that the induction programs at the three schools are comprehensive, coherent and sustained to different extents because of their differences in history, status and culture.

Recommendations for future research were made to conduct quantitative and comparative studies, as well as to explore teacher induction effect on job satisfaction and students’ performance. Recommendations were made for improving current practices to enable teachers to observe one another and interact frequently to develop profound skills and knowledge. Current policies changes were also recommended to provide sufficient time, space and strong leaderships so that the teacher induction programs can be adopted and succeed in the United States.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Dr. Elaine Walker, my mentor, held my hands in this long, difficult and fulfilling journey from beginning to the end. She helped me choose a topic that I might have dismissed and later found it was so fascinating to study. She taught me how to conduct a study and write a dissertation paper. More importantly, I learned from her the attitude and dedication of being a scholar. Dr. Walker has guided me to overcome so many obstacles to reach my goal. I will never forget her for her intelligence, patience and kindness.

Dr. Charles Achilles, committee member, first introduced me qualitative research methods in his course. I piloted this study as one of his assignments. Dr. Achilles spent his precious time on carefully checking all big ideas as well as small details. His tremendous expertise and quick responses are most appreciated. I am especially privileged to have him on my committee.

Dr. Heather Wetzel, committee member, is also my classmate, colleague and a role model to me. She answered all types of questions with her first hand experience. Dr. Wetzel made me feel that there was a light at the end of the tunnel. She understood my frustration and shared my excitement with me.

Dr. Jian Xiang Chen, committee member, is an associate professor at Beijing Normal University. Dr. Chen discussed issues on Chinese education, school system, teacher induction and students' performance. He shared his profound experience and knowledge with me to conclude the findings of this study. I am especially privileged to have Dr. Chen on my committee.

Mr. Frank Buglione, superintendent in Rahway and Mr. Rocco Collucci, Principal at Roosevelt School, were very supportive while I was writing my dissertation. Dorothy
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By doing this study, I have had the opportunities to know the 15 great teachers through interviews and three administrators at the three schools. Their dedication for education and love to their students has inspired me to be a better educator. I express my sincere appreciation for the time they have spent on answering my questions and for sharing information with me.

Dr. Hui Quan, my husband, hardly complained about the evenings and weekends that I spent on taking courses and writing the dissertation in the seven years of my pursuing this degree. My four daughters, Rebecca, Katie, Laura and Jacqueline were very understanding when I could not show up at their special school events. I wish that I could make up all quality time that I have missed spending with them.

I offer deep gratitude to my parents, Chen, Sujing and Miao, Yitan, my brother, Miao, Li, sister-in-law and nephew for their faith in me as I achieved my professional goals, which included the completion of the Doctor Degree of Education and my professional growth in the field of education as a teacher and school administrator.
DEDICATION

To my mother, Shujing Chen, for the love, strengths, wisdom that she always
gives me and for all the sacrifices she has made for me. I love you mom!
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problems

“Mastering the art of teaching is a process that takes time, and even new teachers with the best preparation require and respond to quality support. In the 21st century, the need to guide novice teachers in successfully navigating changes in their profession, in learning standards, and in the student population itself is greater than ever before” (Whisnant, Pynchon, & Elliott 2005, p. 24). The process of entering the water and starting to swim is the most difficult and crucial period in one’s career as a teacher. “Formal teacher education constitutes only half of teacher preparation. The other half has to be accomplished on the job with the active support and involvement of the teacher community” (Ma, 1992, p.1).

The urgent problem that we are facing is that many new teachers are either not inducted at all or not appropriately inducted to meet the challenges they encounter in their early career, which can lead to other problems. Novice teachers are much more likely to call it quits if they work in schools where they feel they have little support. Beginning teachers who did not participate in an induction program were twice as likely to leave teaching (Whisnant et al., 2003, p. 12). Several studies also document the corresponding negative impact on student achievement in schools and districts with high levels of teacher turnover, uncertified staff, and/or teachers teaching out of subject (Berry, 2004; Lankford, Loeb, & Wykoff, 2002).

Across the United States, school and district leaders are beginning to recognize the importance of providing an induction program for beginning teachers. However,
studies of beginning teachers demonstrate that many new teachers do not feel adequately prepared to meet the challenge they face when they first begin teaching in their own classroom (Berry, 2004; Public Education Network, 2003). Researchers have identified the following problems that exist in the United States teacher induction programs.

“We recognize that a focus of many induction programs is that of helping novices adjust to the cultures of their schools, but simply adjusting to the existing context does not automatically lead one to be an effective teacher” (Wang, Odell, & Schwille, 2008, p. 4).

There can be a gap between programs’ articulated intentions and actual outcomes. Not all induction programs work well or perhaps as intended. Surveys of and interviews with, beginning teachers frequently cite the misalignment of intended and actual support or raise issues of relevance (Fideler & Haselkorn, 2001; Public Educational Network, 2003).

“New Teachers have more types of needs than U.S. teacher induction programs typically address. Further, induction programs could take advantage of a wider range of activities for delivering assistance than they typically do. Using more substantial and varied activities requires leaders to design their programs more systematically, yet allowing for local flexibility” (Britton, Raizen, Paine, & Huntley, 2003, p.3).

To place teacher learning at the center of school reform, school districts leaders need to assess beginning teachers’ needs and challenge dominant views of teaching and learning to teach. Further research is clearly and urgently needed on every aspect of teacher induction. Carefully constructed studies that yield data-rich analysis of effective practices can provide school and district leaders with useful insights on designing
outcome-focused programs. Then, research-based comprehensive teacher induction programs that enhance coherent and sustained professional development can be developed, implemented, and replicated nationwide.

Purpose of the Study

To place teacher learning at the center of school reform, school district leaders need to assess beginning teachers’ needs and challenge dominant views of teaching and learning to teach. In addition to examining the effective induction programs in the country, researchers have done international studies. By looking beyond our national borders and considering the experiences of induction in different parts of the world, we can consider a broader range of possibilities and challenge our assumptions about what new teachers need and how schools can help them grow.

The purpose of this study is to further the research that has been done in the area of beginning teacher induction in China. The researcher explored how new teachers are inducted at elementary schools in China. This study provides findings that can challenge the United States educators to think “outside of the box” to develop promising strategies or programs to improve new teacher induction. The ultimate goal of this research is to address the urgent needs of establishing effective new teacher induction programs that enhance beginning teacher’s teaching, and subsequently, students’ learning.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher investigated beginning teacher induction programs at three elementary schools in China (Baoding) by interviewing 15 selected teachers. The data have been collected and analyzed to answer the main question, “How were
beginning teachers inducted at three elementary schools in China?” and the following subsidiary questions:

a) What were the major common activities associated with each of the three induction components, new teacher training, beginning teacher in-service training and mentoring?

b) What were the unique characteristics of the induction programs at the three elementary schools?

c) How were beginning teachers’ induction conducted differently from one school to another?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research can be viewed in two aspects. The research deepens and furthers the emerging studies done in teacher induction in China. The descriptive research will illustrate how well crafted teaching skills and the accumulated wisdom of teaching practice are passed to each new generation of teachers. The findings of this study will include the unique characteristics of Chinese teacher induction programs and identify the essential conditions and context in which the programs work. Insights generated from this study help the United States educators to understand that the goal of establishing effective induction programs cannot be realized by a quick fix or superficial copying of some elements of successful programs.

On the other hand, new teachers in China are trained from generation-to-generation by a very systematic effort. Teachers and practitioners write articles, reports, or memoirs to share their experiences and wisdoms. In China, where the research community is not yet as developed as in the United States, Chinese researchers have
rarely conducted formal studies to explore teacher induction programs existing at schools over hundreds and hundreds of years. This study makes a significant first step in the pursuit of using modern research methodology to analyze an ancient Chinese education practice that still works wonders.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were limitations in this research in the areas of literature review, research methods, and writing. However, in every step of this study, the researcher took considerable deliberation and effort to make sure that the research was conducted thoroughly and appropriately in order to present results with validity and reliability. The limitations and delimitations of this study are discussed below in detail.

Limitations

For this research, the researcher was limited by a lack of information on the topic from the literature. In China there are only a few studies done in beginning teacher induction. Most information can only be gathered from sources on the websites. Many data are from reports and postings from district and schools’ websites. The information is rich and in great detail; but there are problems of validity and reliability with respect to their findings.

The research samples were purposely chosen from one city, Baoding, instead of from different areas, such as big urban areas and remote rural villages. Three schools out of about 30 schools in the city voluntarily were involved in this study. Furthermore, the 15 teachers were selected from 30 teachers on the list the principals provided. The principal might not have included some teachers for various reasons. Among the contacted teachers, a few declined participation for unknown reasons. The sampling
procedures limited the generalization of research results to new teacher induction programs in Baoding, China.

Data were collected through semi-structured telephone interviews. First, the questions could have limited the interviewees’ opportunities for sharing important information about induction programs. Data collected from interviews were not like quantitative data that could always be retrieved and checked for accuracy or from surveys that could be recorded clearly in an organized way on paper for verification. Some translations from Chinese to English may not completely convey the interviewees’ exact meanings in their own phrases.

The instrument of the research, the interview questions which were created by the researcher, might have flaws that were not known. In the telephone interviews, the researcher might have missed cues that could be noticed in face-to-face interviews. Interviewees were different individuals who might not be able to interpret the interview questions equally well and respond to them thoroughly. The researcher might have brought bias into this study which she may not realize because of her background. In addition, although the researcher grew up in China, her identification as a United States citizen might affect the ways that interviewees responded to the questions. It is assumed that participants gave honest and accurate responses.

While analyzing data, the researcher could unintentionally make mistakes interpreting, or translating the interviewees’ responses in open coding process. For axial coding, the researcher organized the data collected in the beginning teacher induction into three main categories, such as, (a) new teacher orientation, (b) in-service, and (c) mentoring. There may be other categories worthwhile to include. During the final
selective coding, the researcher synthesized two common activities that appeared in all
the induction components to identify the main themes of the induction programs. It is
possible that other themes were not recognized or included as a result of some responses
that have been overlooked or underestimated.

Language barriers may lead to some potential limitations in presentation of the
research. The researcher is a native Chinese speaker and came to the United States at age
25. Although she has extensive training and experience in education that enable her to
critically understand and organize the information collected, it is a real challenge for her
to present findings of analyzing a sophisticated phenomenon in the complexity of
political and educational culture in a foreign country. The researcher has to capture the
most distinguished and essential characteristics of the teacher induction existing at the
three schools, and then find simple and effective ways to describe them as clearly and
accurately as possible. Sometimes it was very difficult for the researcher to translate
some responses from Chinese to English to convey their original meaning, perhaps due to
limited writing skills in English.

Delimitations

The sample site, Baoding, China, was purposely chosen to represent many
medium-size and typical cities in China. There are 10 cities similar to Baoding in the
province of Hebei. There are 32 provinces like Hebei in the country. The three schools
selected represent three types of schools existing in Baoding, as well as in other similar
cities. The researcher used the stratified sampling method to choose the 15 teachers from
a pool of available teachers to make sure that there was a balance of differences in gender,
years of experience, and first year assignments among the subjects. The results may not
apply to schools in big urban cities like, Beijing, or rural, poor, and remote villages in China.

Although the interviewees were asked to answer pre-determined questions during semi-structured interviews, they were provided opportunities to add something that they had not been asked. The researcher also conducted a follow-up interview with each interviewee to verify his or her responses in order to obtain accurate information. Before the interviews took place, each interviewee was assured that there were procedures taken to protect the confidentiality of each participant. The researcher did a pilot study with three teachers in Baoding, China, using the instrument that was created for this research. The instrument has been revised at least twice. The researcher assumes that all the interviewees have truthfully provided all the information.

The researcher mainly used qualitative methods to analyze the rich text of responses. Detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, and interactions, as well as direct quotations are used to present findings. However, the researcher integrated quantitative research methods in this study whenever the data were available. By combining the two research methods, the knowledge and insights are not only developed from analyzing concrete cases but also objective numbers. In this way, the research is not limited by some of the weaknesses of qualitative research methods.

Definitions

In this section, the researcher provides definitions to help reader understands the terms that used in this study.

*Beginning Teacher In-Service Training or On-the-job Training:* Beginning teacher in-service training or on the job training refers to the training that teachers
received or the activities that they are required to participate in at the school or district in their first 3 years of teaching.

*Beginning Teachers, New Teachers, and Novice Teachers:* Teachers in their first to 3 years of teaching are considered beginning teachers, or new teachers, or novice teachers. These words are interchangeable.

*Competition Lessons:* Districts leaders organized teaching competitions with the goal of motivating new teachers and encouraging serious study of a preparation for teaching. The competitions also identify and honor outstanding accomplishment. (Wong, Britton, & Ganser 2005, p. 380) At each competition, many teachers showed up to watch contestants teach lessons and a panel of judges to comment on each lesson and select winners. The competition can go from lower to high levels, at the national level.

*Key Schools:* The designation of “Key Schools exists for selected schools at every educational level in China: elementary, secondary and higher. In addition, there are various levels of the “key” designation itself: There are national key institutions, provincial or municipal key institutions, and county or district key institutions. Key Schools all enjoy priority funding as well as the privilege of recruiting the best students. At elementary and secondary levels, this concept is similar to that of a “magnet” or “college preparatory” school in the United States. Entry to such schools is based on examination and academic promise and achievement. (“Overview of the Educational System of China, Key School,” 2009)

*Lessons at Other Schools:* Many teachers participate in lesson observations that are organized by the district and held at any school.
Lesson Preparation Group or Grade Level Group: A lesson preparation group consists of teachers who teach the same subject, as well as in the same grade levels. These groups engage new and veteran teachers in discussing and analyzing the lessons they are teaching. They often plan lessons together in the teacher’s office. Several lesson preparation groups can make up a teacher research group.

Mentoring: It refers to the personal guidance provided, usually by seasoned veterans, to beginning teachers in schools. Mentoring is most commonly used as a verb or adjective, because it describes what mentors do. A mentor is a single person, whose basic function is to help a new teacher. Mentoring is not induction. It is a component of the induction process.

Modeling Lessons: A modeling lesson is taught by experienced teachers who demonstrate distinguished teaching skills.

New Teacher Orientation: “Schools usually provide orientation for new faculty, such as introducing them to school and district personnel, resources, and procedures. And virtually every explicit induction program addresses to some extent the personal support of new teachers, such as handling stress and maintaining appropriate relationships with students” (Britton et al. 2003, p. 3).

Public Lessons or “Open Lessons”: Experienced teachers and novice teachers are required to teach one or two public or lessons in a term. These lessons are open for all teachers to observe with debriefing and discussion of the lesson afterwards.

Report Lessons or Passing Lessons: Wong et al., (2005) defined report lesson as, “in which a new teacher is observed and given comments, criticisms, and suggestions”
At some schools, this type of lesson is called passing lessons since it is rated as passing or fail.

**Research Lessons:** are taught by teachers who have at least three years experience to present findings of a group research project.

**Teacher Induction:** Wang (2005) defined, “Induction is a noun. It is the name given to a comprehensive, coherent and sustained professional development process that is organized by a school district to train, support and retain new teachers, which then seamlessly progresses them into a lifelong program (p. 43).” In China, “induction programs can be organized at least three levels—the municipal education bureau (all of Shanghai), district (of Shanghai) and individual schools.” (Britton et al, 2003, p.9)

**Teacher Office:** At smaller schools, several grade level groups or lesson preparation group can be working in the same office. At larger schools, teachers are in grade level group can have its own office. Teachers report to the office in the morning and work in the office when they are not teaching in the classrooms. They are also required to stay about an hour later after students leave. Each teacher has his or her own desk to work and places to store his or her personal or teaching materials. There are telephones, a copy machine, computers, and other equipment in the teachers’ office. Each teacher’s office has a teacher leader who is in charge.

**Teaching Research Group or Subject Group:** Chinese teachers are organized into a teacher research group, in which all members teach the same subject. These teachers share office space and have common meeting times. Each teacher research group is led by a teacher identified as one of the best in that subject. With a focus on improving their practice, members of teacher research groups discuss ways to teach the subject, observe
one another in class, organize in-service education, and mentor new and pre-service teachers (Preus, 2008, p.4).

Organization of the Study

Chapter I is an introduction of this study. The chapter includes a statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, delimitation and limitation of the study, definition of the terms and a description of the organization of the study.

Chapter II includes a review of research and literature on beginning teacher induction programs in China. The findings from three main review sources and the development of this research based on the previous study and practice were discussed.

Chapter III includes research design and methods, sample selection, data collection, instrument, and data analysis procedures that were used to conduct this study and analyze data collected.

Chapter IV presents the data analyses and findings of this research. In this chapter, the main training activities associated with each training component at the three schools were categorized in tables. The common elements and differences in induction practice among the three schools were analyzed.

Chapter V concludes the research by describing the common characteristics of the induction programs and their differences in effectiveness at the three schools, as well as the unique organization structures that the programs relied on to function at the three schools. Recommendations were made for further education research, policies and practice.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

Introduction

For this study, a literature search was conducted both in English and Chinese using key words such as, beginning teacher induction, new teacher orientation, in-service training for beginner teacher and mentoring. In this chapter, literature review sources, the findings of previous researches and literature, and development of this study were discussed.

Literature Review Sources

Literature review showed that beginning teacher induction in China was a relatively new research topic. Chinese teacher induction was first introduced by Liping Ma (1992) interviewed Yu Yi, a high school principal with 40 years of teaching experience in Shanghai. Based on Yi’s description of on-the-job induction program at her school, Ma wrote a paper called “Discussing Teacher Induction in China and Relevant Debates in the United States with a Chinese Teacher: A Conversation with Yu Yi.” In 1992, this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Although Ma’s work is not a scientific inquiry, many terms and ideas that Ma introduced were studied in a research project mentioned in the next paragraph.

The main review for this study was focused on the research project that was conducted in 1998-2002 by group of researchers and funded by National Science Foundation. This project studied induction programs for middle and high school mathematics and science teachers at four international sites. Shanghai was one of the
selected sites. Based on the findings of this study, Britton, Raizen, Paine, and Huntley (2003) wrote a paper called “More Swimming, Less Sinking, Perspectives on Teacher Induction in the U. S. and Abroad” about the project. Later, papers and books were published to conclude findings of this study.

The third source of literature included a great volume of articles and reports on beginning teacher induction that was found either in Chinese educational journals or on official websites written by teachers and practitioners in China. In their publications, they shared their ideas about best practices and insights. According to Ma (1992), “Their voices are considered as opinions rather than results of scientific research, are ignored and overlooked by the research circle consisting of university or research institution scholars.” (p.2)

Findings of the Review

Broader Goals of the Induction Programs in China

Most novice teachers are officially certified. However, the officially qualified teachers who have just left their teacher preparation institutions are not practically qualified teachers yet. They have to develop themselves into competent teachers throughout teaching practice. The process of “entering and starting to swim,” in China as well as in the United States is the most difficult and crucial period in one’s career as a teacher (Ma, 1992, p.1).

Paine, Pimm, Britton, Raizen and Wilson (2006) wrote, “In the United States, this time of transition—from student to teacher, from outsider to insider—is receiving more attention than ever before. Increasingly, states, districts, and national organizations are recognizing the importance of the teacher’s early career” (p.1). Paine et al. (2006) further
stated, "A different and more promising approach treats induction as a distinct phase in a
teacher's learning career. Good induction programs create the conditions for developing
the vital skills that can learn only from practice" (p.1).

In China, teacher induction programs have had much broader goals than just
assisting new teachers to adjust to the teaching roles and develop essential teaching skills.
Britton et al. (2003) explained, "They [Shanghai administrators and faculty] do not regard
the outcome of induction to be a great teacher; they see induction as guaranteeing basic
competence and accelerating the timetable for moving novices toward becoming master
teachers" (p.4).

Ma (1992) explained the importance of good induction programs was not only for
the individual new teacher's professional development, but also for a school community's
well being by saying "Leaving the new teachers to struggle with the problems by
themselves would take a long time and there would be more unnecessary suffering for
themselves, their students and even the whole school" (p.4). Therefore, induction process
"is consciously assumed as a responsibility of the whole school faculty, rather than
merely of new teachers on their own" (Ma, 1992, p.1).

Ma also acknowledged, "During the last decade, more and more elementary and
secondary schools established their own on-the-job induction programs for novice
teachers. These programs are designed, executed, assessed, modified and improved
within particular schools by school faculty" (p.1). As a result, "The on-the-job induction
programs run by schools had results beyond the initial purpose of introducing novices.
Many schools find that the programs have apparently facilitated staff development as
well. With most teachers in the school more or less involved in the program, the programs created a learning to teach atmosphere in the whole school” (p.1).

_Wider Range of Teacher Induction Activities Categorized in Three Main Components_

Based on the teacher induction study in Shanghai, Paine, Pimm, Britton, Raizen, and Wilson (2005) identified the dominant induction activities at 21 schools in four districts in Shanghai, China as follows:

- Work with mentors—specifically, a subject-specific mentor who supports instructional work, and a class director mentor who supports learning how to serve as a banzhuren, or a director for a homeroom or class of students.
- Observe others’ teaching and participate in debriefing discussion that follows with one’s own school and at other schools.
- Prepare a report lesson (an open lesson given by the novice)
- Participate in teaching competitions
- Attend district workshops and seminars for new teachers. (p.2)

Wong et al. (2005) summarized the findings from the same study and expanded the list of learning opportunities at both school and district levels for beginning teachers in Shanghai as follows:

- Welcoming ceremonies at the school;
- District-level workshops and courses;
- District-organized teaching competition;
- District-provided mentoring;
- A district hotline for new teachers that connects them with subject specialists;
- District awards of outstanding novice/mentor work;
- Half-day training sessions at colleges of education and in schools for most weeks of the year;
- Peer observation, both in and outside of school;
- Public or open lessons, with debriefing and discussion of the lesson afterwards;
- Report lessons, in which a new teacher is observed and given comments, criticisms, and suggestions;
- Talk lessons, in which a teacher, new or experienced talks through a lesson and provides justification for its design, but does not actually teach it.
- Inquiry projects and action research carried out by new teachers, with support from those on the school or district teaching research section or induction staff;
- District- or school-developed handbooks for new teachers and mentors; and
- End-of-year celebrations of teachers’ work and collaboration. (p.381)

Ma (1992) introduced three important beginning teacher induction aspects that opened communication between the novice teachers and experienced teachers in a Shanghai high school. First, at the school there was a “teacher research group” to help new teachers. Second, they selected some experienced teachers who were recognized as superior in the school community to make master-apprentice pairs with new teachers. Third, annual new teacher awards facilitated the mutual interchange among new teachers as well as master-apprentice pairs. During award nomination time, beginning teachers had their classrooms open for observations and presented their research articles on teaching, and shared their notes on reading on teaching.

The activities listed above were not only mentioned in professional articles, but also found in a great number of beginning teacher induction plans posted on Chinese
school websites. Based on the literature review, the researcher grouped the activities under the three most major components: new teacher orientation, in-service training, and mentoring. In the following, the researcher discusses the literature found in each component, which was the base of this study.

New Teacher Orientation is the first component of induction programs in China. "Welcome ceremonies at the school" mentioned by Wong et al. (2005, p. 380) can be viewed as one new teacher orientation activity in China. To know more about new teacher orientation programs in China, the researcher did an internet search using Chinese words, "Xiao Xue Xin Jiao Shi Gang Qian Pei Xun (Orientation for new elementary school teachers). Hundreds and hundreds of results were listed. The majority of them were reports or notices on new teacher orientation programs held by city, district, or individual schools in China.

Most new teacher orientation programs were held during the summer in August. The programs could last a day, a week, or a month. They also could be provided by municipal, district, or school wide. For example, in Fu Zhou City, Fujian Province, hundreds of new teachers were required to complete a 10 day orientation program held by the City Bureau of Education ("Fuzhou City New Teacher Orientation," 2008). In Lougang school district, Guangdong Province, 130 new teachers participated in a week long new teacher orientation. Some schools which had a large group of new teachers usually held its own new teachers’ orientation programs ("Luogang District New Teacher Orientation," 2007). Dongmen Elementary School, Yongtai County, Fujian Province had three-day orientation for 36 new teachers in 2008 ("Donmen School New Teacher Orientation," 2008).
All new teacher orientation programs provide general knowledge on ethics, laws, policies and school procedures. Most orientations allocate sufficient time programs that provide new teachers with more specific training in the following areas, (a) enhancing basic teaching skills, (b) observing and evaluating lessons, (c) planning, teaching and assessing students. In Fuzhou City, Fujian Province all new teachers practiced basic skills, like handwriting, speaking, making teaching materials and models that foster students' understanding ("Fuzhou City New Teacher Orientation," 2008). Participants at Yengquan school district, Anhui Province orientation were taught how to blend into the school culture by observing and evaluating other teachers’ lessons regularly as part of daily professional life ("Yengquan City New Teacher Orienation," 2007). Qi County, Shangxi Province new teachers learned how to plan and teach lessons, as well as, assess students’ learning ("Qi County New Teacher Orientation," 2008).

On top of developing particular knowledge and skills, Ma (1992) emphasized two most valuable lessons that they tried to teach new teachers. First, new teachers had to learn what good teaching was and what a good teacher was like through studying concrete examples. Secondly, every beginning teacher had to learn the necessary dispositions of a great teacher. One of the most important dispositions of a good teacher was to keep on pursuing new learning and improving yourself (p.5).

New teacher orientation programs started with a welcome ceremony or assembly program. Usually the heads of the hosting organization greet the new teachers by providing information about the school, district, or city, and wishes new teachers success in the profession. The orientation featured lectures, workshops and discussion sessions. Most of the presenters were administrators, staff developers, and teachers from within.
Gangzhou District, Gansu Province selected the best teachers to be the presenters (“Gangzhou District New Teacher Orientation Notice,” 2008). New teachers liked them because they could use examples from their experience to make connections between practical teaching strategies and pedagogical theories. More importantly, these teachers could be reached later at the same school or in the same district.

In-service or on-the-job training for beginning teachers is a vital component of the teacher induction program in China. Britton et al (2003) described

Shanghai’s system simultaneously relied on at least three levels: the municipal education bureau (for all of Shanghai), districts (of Shanghai) and individual schools. Each level has a unique function, yet there is tight alignment among the different activities. Schools provided intensive mentoring for new teachers, while districts offer a planned curriculum of workshops and study groups over the new teachers' first year that broaden the range of opportunities these teachers have (p.9).

Paine et al. (2005) estimated, “Shanghai beginners undertake a minimum of 100 hours of induction activity, although we consistently observed novices engaged in even more than intensive induction” (p. 6). Many district leaders in China asked new teachers in their first year to complete 120 hours of induction activities. For example, Wujin district, Changzhou city in Jiansu province, first year teachers are required to complete 40 hours of training by attending district workshops and 80 hours of training activities at the school site (Wujin District New Teacher Training Requirement,” 2007). In-service beginning teacher training may vary from school to school. However, improving basic
teaching skills, observing lessons, and teaching lessons were the three main in service training activities emphasized by almost every school and district.

Almost all new teachers participated in training to develop professional skills. The Britton et al. (2003) pointed out the importance of this training as, “...to leave it to chance that teachers will develop the necessary skills through trial and error is, from the perspective of Shanghai’s educators, unrealistic and irresponsible” (p.5). Britton et al. (2003) also listed the skills that teacher induction programs in China (Shanghai) provided as follows:

- Daily and long term planning of a lesson’s content, teaching strategies, and logistics,
- Assessing students’ work, including creation and scoring of teacher-made tests,
- Writing informative reports to parents about their children’s progress, and communicating more generally with parents (p.5).

Ma (1992) was even more specific on developing new teachers’ skills by stating, “It includes how to plan a lesson, how to write lesson notes, how to organize teaching materials, how to correct students’ work, how to design a test, how to assess students’ performance, etc” (p.11). There were many other professional skills that new teachers workshops targeted found on many schools or districts’ websites. At Huashi School in Guangdong Province new teachers were trained how to conduct research projects ("Huashi School New Teacher Orientation Plan,” 2005). First-year teachers at Yuming elementary school in Ningxia Province even had a lesson on how to help lower-grade students straighten up their backpacks and desks (Yumin School New Teacher Training,” 2008).
New teachers’ training in developing professional skill usually takes place in their first year of teaching. They participate in workshops and practice the skills through their daily instruction. Many contests at school and district levels are held to motivate and to evaluate the beginning teachers’ learning. Sanmenxia School Two in Hubei Province held an event that teachers competed on handwriting in chalk and reading aloud. Twenty teachers worked very hard to sharpen their skills (Sanmenxia School 2 New Teacher Training Requirement,” 2008).

The most popular in-service training activity that beginning teachers are often engaged in was observing other teachers’ lessons. Ma (1992) pointed out the importance of observing lessons, “Someone who is unable to appreciate good music can never become a good musician” (p.16). Ma explained, “Before being able to teach well, they (new teachers) have to know how to appreciate high-quality teaching first. They may not be able to reach that quality in a short time, yet they get to personally perceive what a good lesson is or what a good lesson should be.” Yang (2008) stressed, “It is a process of interacting and collaborating among teachers. It is a process of learning, reflecting, and researching that initiates changes. Observing and evaluating lessons should be a part of teachers’ daily activities that are woven into a school’s professional culture.” (p.1) Britton et al. (2003) described,

Observing peers can be part of the peer support process, although it is important to avoid creating situations where the blind are leading the blind. Observing your mentor’s practice can illustrate the advice they are offering. Observing other teachers in the same subject or grade helps increase your knowledge of how to teach similar material and diversify the teaching practices
Zhang (2008) explained how beginning teachers benefited from observing and evaluating lessons, "When teachers observe lessons that they have taught before or are familiar with, they can easily get into a training mode and relate to their practice to make changes" (p.14). Zhang pointed out, "New teachers at Jin An district in Shanghai rated observing and evaluating as their most favorite training activities among many which was evidenced by high turnover at every lesson observation events that district hosted" (p.14).

A nationally renowned teacher, Yu Qi, made this remark as cited by Cheng (2007), "I earned my honorable title, National Superior Teacher, by observing lessons after lessons and learning from each of them" (p.33).

How is observation operated in schools in China? Usually a school professional development plan indicates the number of lessons that new teachers have to observe in a term or a year. New teachers at some schools or districts are mandated to observe more lessons than those at other districts or schools. For example, at Wuling Elementary School in Zhejing Province, first year teachers were required to observe two lessons in a week or at least 40 lessons in a term (Wuling School New Teacher Professional Development Plan," 2007). New teachers at WuJin district in Jiansu Province had to watch 20 lessons a term (Wujin New Teacher Training Requirement," 2008).

The lesson observation process is a very organized process. It was monitored and coordinated by each school's instruction and curriculum office. Many different kinds of lessons are available for new teachers to observe. Yang (2008) emphasized that each
observation process was twofold: watch a lesson and evaluate the lesson afterward. Yang pointed out “Lessons observation itself, without discussing it, will not have great impact on new teachers’ learning” (p.1). “After the class, when the impression is still so ‘fresh,’ beginners should discuss what they observed with the teacher who taught the lesson. They should say what they liked in the lesson and why, also they should raise points which they didn’t understand or didn’t like. The teacher, of course, will discuss with the beginning teacher” (Ma, 1992, p. 17).

Teaching lessons for other teachers to observe was task that all novice teachers had to perform. Britton et al. (2003), stated, “In Shanghai and Japan, new teachers periodically are asked to teach a best possible lesson while being observed by many experienced teachers” (p.5). This type of lessons was referred to as a report lesson, “a lesson in which a new teacher is observed and given comments, criticisms, and suggestions” (Wong et al., 2006, p.382). “Shanghai beginning teachers conduct at least one report lesson as part of their induction” (Paine et al., 2006, p.7). New teachers in other places, for example, at Wujin district in Jiangsu Province, had to teach two report lessons a term, and four a year (Wujin New Teacher Training Requirement,” 2008).

Almost all beginning teachers devoted great time and energy to prepare a report lesson. “The intense preparation for these events, as well as the lively conversations that follow them, reinforces new teachers’ recognition that teaching is an intellectually demanding practice that requires advanced knowledge, skills and judgment” (Paine, 2006, p.7). In this learning process, beginners are supported by many colleagues. A protocol is often followed when new teachers teach a report lesson. At Wulin Elementary School in Zhejinag Province, new teachers had to explain their report lesson plan to teachers in
their teaching research group (Wuling School New Teacher Professional Development Plan," 2007). Based on the feedback they collected from each teacher in the group they revised their lesson plans prior to teaching it.

New teachers’ report lessons are formally evaluated. First, the teacher reflected on his teaching. As Paine et al. (2006) pointed out, “beginning teachers must reflect on the ways in which content and learners are coming together, so that they can articulate and argue for the benefits of their pedagogical decisions before a panel of expert teachers” (p.). Then the observing teachers provided comments. At Sanshan Elementary School, each report lesson was observed and evaluated by the Report Lesson Evaluation Committee. This committee for evaluation of lessons consists of solely distinguished teachers (Sanshan Elementary School Public Lesson Evaluation," 2007). The lessons can be rated as pass or fail. For example, At Wuling Elementary School in Zhejing Province, first year teachers who failed the reporting lessons will not be hired for the next year. Among 23 new teachers, 21 teachers taught their report lessons successfully (Wuling School New Teacher Professional Development Plan," 2007).

Competition lesson is the other type of best possible lessons that new teachers prepare and teach to refine their skills. Unlike report lessons, new teachers are not required, but encouraged to participate in lesson competitions. What are lesson competitions? Wong et al. (2005) explained, “District personnel organize teaching competitions with the goal of motivating new teachers and encouraging the serious study of and preparation of teaching. The competitions also identify and honor outstanding accomplishments. Lessons are video taped so that the district can compile an archive for
future use. Teaching thus becomes community property, not owned privately by one teacher, but shared by all” (p.384).

Usually at a competition, contestants randomly pick a lesson and a class at a given school where the competition takes place. They have an hour to plan and prepare the lesson before they teach it to the class whom they have never seen before. In another form, at Panlong Central Elementary School, Lianping County in Sichuang Province, new teachers were asked to participate in at least one teaching competition in their first year of teaching at the school. They work closely with their colleagues to prepare and polish their lesson prior to a contest (Panlong School Instruction Improvement,” 2007).

Paine et al. (2006) explained, “Typically [lesson competitions] working as a tiered system, the competitions have winners from the lower level that go on to compete at the next. At each level, panels of composed expert teachers and a local professional development specialist judge the candidates. Although winners receive a small monetary reward, the real prize is the honor and distinction of the title” (p.7). At Xian Laboratory School in Shanxi Province, a competition attracted 18 beginning teachers to teach great lessons in front of other teachers. The award-winning teachers created a power point presentation in addition to other instruction strengths. The presenting teacher was recommended by the school to participate in a city-wide teaching competition (Xian Lab. School Young Teacher Teaching Competition,” 2005).

Lesson competitions are not only held at the district level. The National Competition is the highest lesson competition level. Here is an example: The Third National Teaching Competition was held in 2008 sponsored by Chinese Education Daily, People Education Magazine and other educational media. The contestants were the
winners of teaching competitions in the city or recommended by the city Bureau of Educations. The theme for this competition was “Develop Famous Teacher, Search for Famous Teacher, and Introduce Famous Teacher” (“Notice for Xinxin National Young Teacher Teaching Competition, 2008). Five winning teachers were awarded and acknowledged on a national television network. They became teaching idols who inspire millions of teachers, especially novice teachers.

Mentoring is an essential component that takes place during the entire teacher induction period. New teachers in China call their mentor “master” (called Shi Fu in Chinese) respectively. Mentors call their “apprentice” (called Tu Di in Chinese). This type of relationship emulates the master and apprenticeship in factories, businesses, and service professions. “We believe that working with an appropriate, experienced teacher is productive. Any learning starts with two things: imitation and communication between someone who doesn’t know and someone who knows” (Ma 1992, p.13). In China, masters are usually teachers who have at least 5 years working experience. Ma (1992) listed other criteria for masters: they are excellent teachers and demonstrate great professional ethics. Ma (1992) stated, “We are selective when we choose mentors for new teachers. An experienced teacher does not equal a good teacher. Some experienced teachers are mediocre. We do not choose them as mentors” (p.17). Paine et al. (2006) noted that all new teachers in Shanghai were working with two mentors. A subject-specific mentor supports instructional work, and another mentor, a “class director” mentor supports learning how to serve as a homeroom teacher, called “banzhuren” in Chinese (p.5).
Mentoring programs officially started with a ceremony at many elementary schools in China in September or October. At the ceremony, principals first spoke and were followed by masters. At Qitao Elementary in Xiangshui County, Henan Province, the principal asked masters to be strict, patient, sharing and apprentices to respect, be diligent and obedient. Masters expressed their willingness to help new teachers. At the end of the ceremony, apprentices acknowledged their masters. At Jiwei School at Huaiyin District, Shandong Province, apprentices presented flowers to their masters to show their gratitude (“Mentorship Ceremony at Jiwei School,” 2007). At Fangcaoyuan Elementary School in Nanjing, Jiansu Province, the ceremony ended with five pairs of master and apprentice signing their names on master-apprentice contracts (Fancaoyuan Elementary School Mentorship Activities,” 2007).

Zhao (2004) stated “Mentoring is an approach that helps new teachers become adept to the new profession. It can shorten the period of a new teacher’s maturing and becoming an expert” (p. 47). Zhao described that during the mentoring process teacher learning took place gradually by going through the four planned stages. “First, observe a master’s behavior; careful and extensive observation helps new teachers understand teaching. Second, imitate what a master is doing; by copying, new teachers can learn a master’s knowledge and skills. Third, help new teachers solve problems; new teachers have to be taught how to cope with different situations and satisfy students’ needs” (p.48).

Most mentoring programs in China include planned activities for both masters and apprentices to complete. These activities are indicated on either a school professional development plan or a master-apprentice contract. Observing each other’s lesson and planning lessons together are two of the common activities among many in which
masters and apprentices engage in. The number of lessons that a master and apprentices are required to observe each other varied from school to school. Tanshan Elementary School in Chenchou City, in Zhejiang Province, masters were asked to model two lessons, watch his or her apprentices four times and had conversations on teaching and planning eight times each month during the first year of teaching (Tanshan Elementary School Mentoring Procedures, 2004). At Wuling Elementary School in Zhejiang Province, new teachers were mandated to watch their master’s lesson two times a week. Each of their lesson plans was reviewed by their masters before they actually teach the lesson (Wuling School New Teacher Professional Development Plan,” 2007).

Development of This Study Based on the Review

To develop this study, the researcher reviewed a great amount of literature in Chinese found in reports and articles written by teachers. However, this study was a structured inquiry instead of collection of reports and teachers reflections on induction programs. On the other hand, this research was different in many aspects from a previous study in teacher induction in Shanghai, China conducted by Britton, Paine and Raine as described in the following paragraphs.

Britton et al. (2003) interviewed teachers, mentor teachers, administrators, and 21 middle and high schools in four districts in Shanghai as well to study math and science teacher induction programs. In this study, the researcher decided to select sample in Baoding, a medium-sized city in northern China, which is very different from Shanghai, a very unique metropolitan center in the Southern China. The researcher selected three schools as research sites and chose a total of 15 teachers to explore teacher induction programs at elementary school levels from teachers’ perspectives.
The research instrument was constructed based on the information obtained from review of previous research, theory and literature. The instrument contained interview questions in four areas. Participating teachers' background information was collected from their responses to the questions in the first area. The questions in the first areas aimed to collect the teachers' background information. The questions in the rest of three areas focused on three induction components. The researcher classified dominant induction activities that were mentioned by Ma (1992) and Britton et al. (2003) into two main teacher induction components: in-service training and mentoring and created the questions in the two areas. After reviewing a great amount of reflection and reports on new teacher orientation in China, the researcher included questions regarding another component, new teacher orientation.

Britton et al. (2003) collected data from observations, document analysis, interviews, and surveys to study how teacher induction programs were organized and provided to fit within Chinese educational system and how teacher induction programs were consistent with teachers' pre-service training and promoted professional development. In this study, the researcher mainly collected data from interviewing the 15 teachers and three principals of the participating schools. Different from the previous research described above, the goal of this research was to understand the aspects and content of school based induction programs and how they situated within and predominately supported by a given school's organizational structure and culture.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher described the main literature review source on teacher induction in China, a relatively new research topic. The results from the previous
studies, theory and literature showed that teacher induction in China had broader goals and wider activities in the area of new teacher orientation, in-service training and mentoring. At the end of this chapter, the researcher also explained how this study's was developed and how it was different from the previous studies. In the following chapters, the research design and methodology, the research findings, and the conclusion and recommendations will be discussed in detail.
Chapter III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose for this research was to explore beginning teacher induction programs at three elementary schools, in Baoding, Hebei Province in China. In this chapter, the research design and methods chosen to conduct this study are discussed. The sample selection rationale and process to access the participating teachers and schools involved in the study are also described. In addition, the researcher explains how raw data were collected and analyzed to generate findings to answer the research question: “How were beginning teachers inducted at three elementary schools in China?”

Research Design and Methodology

The research design for this study was non-experimental and descriptive. The researcher explored a phenomenon that was non-manipulative and already occurred. This research was conducted mainly using qualitative research methods. As Krathwohl (1997) defined it, “Qualitative methods are especially useful for exploring a phenomenon, for understanding it, and for developing an understanding of it into a theory” (p.243). Flick (2002) pointed out: “Qualitative research is oriented towards analyzing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, and starting from people’s expressions and activities in their local contexts” (p.13). Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, observed behaviors, and direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs and thoughts and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories” (Patton, 1989, p. 22).
The goal for this research is to examine beginning teacher induction programs in their natural settings and try to understand how they operate or function at three elementary schools in China. The researcher attempted to investigate the three schools' beginning teacher induction programs. Meaningful events and activities are explored in the context of each participating school and described by 15 individual teachers who have experienced them. The study is focused on how the beginning teachers are inducted, as well as on what are the common characteristics and the differences of the induction programs at the three schools.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that there are three major components of qualitative research. First, there are the data, which can come from various sources, such as interviews, observations, documents, records, and films. Second, there are the procedures that researchers can use to interpret and organize the data. These usually consist of conceptualizing and reducing data, elaborating categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and relating through a series of prepositional statements. Written and oral reports make up the third component (p.12).

This study consists of all the major components of a qualitative research mentioned above. In this study, the researcher acts like a human instrument of data collection. Fifteen teachers from three schools were interviewed and their responses regarding beginning teacher induction experiences contained rich information as the main data source. The researcher predominantly used inductive data analysis. The raw data were categorized, and reduced to generate the findings and answer the research questions. The qualitative research reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive language and the presences of voices in the text.
This researcher mainly used qualitative methods to investigate induction programs that existed at three schools in China in the past 8 years. However, some quantitative research elements were adopted. First, the elementary school profiles were described in numbers. Fifteen teachers' induction experiences were not only illustrated in words, but in numbers as well. Second, raw data were organized in categories and displayed in tables to show the different aspects of an induction component while many qualitative studies do not present findings in tables. Third, the researcher inevitably analyzed numbers such as counting and averaging included in the participants' responses to make sense out of them. These quantitative elements complemented the qualitative methods to interpret concepts and relationships in raw data and understand the phenomena better.

Sample

Webster (2003) defined population as “A body of persons or individuals having a quality or characteristic in common” (p. 966) and sample as “A representative part or a single item from a larger whole or group” (p.1100). In this study, population included teachers who were teaching at elementary schools in China in 2007 when the research was conducted. In this study, the researcher used purposeful sampling to choose three elementary schools within one district in a city as sampling sites. Krathwohl (1997) described: “Purposeful interviewing or theoretical sampling is the most common pattern—that of selecting individuals who meet some information need or provide special access” (p. 294).

Purposeful sampling is the dominant strategy in qualitative research. Purposeful sampling seeks information—rich cases which can be studied in depth. Patton (1990)
identified 16 types of purposeful sampling. In this study, the researcher used typical case sampling and convenience sampling. Baoding is a typical medium-size city in China. It is 1 of 10 administrative cities in the Hebei province. Baoding is located around 140 kilometers south of Beijing. The Baoding urban area has a population of around 635,000. It has four municipal districts, same as school districts, in the city and 22 counties (Wikipedia, 2004). The researcher grew up in Baoding and was a former student of the Baoding public school system.

The researcher selected elementary schools in the South District rather than any other districts in Baoding because of the district’s culture and history. This district was the original area established as a significant center of culture in the Ming Dynasty and early Qing Dynasty. It served for many years as the province capital until 1970. Baoding’s historic buildings, provincial, and municipal institutes are located in this area, along with some of its larger shopping centers. This area is also the most populated residential area in the city with many established schools, hospitals, and other facilities. More important, this is the only district where the researcher can find all three different types of elementary schools.

First, Yuhong Elementary School was chosen as an extreme or deviant case sampling to include a particularly successful and exemplary school in beginning teacher induction in this study. It is the only citywide key elementary school overseen by the city Bureau of Education although it is located in the South District. The school is allowed to enroll students living anywhere in the city. The admission is very selective and each student has to pay a substantial amount of money as tuition. The school is richer than any
other school in the city. Yuhong School is well known for its students' achievements and staff professional development. The school's profile is shown in Table 1 (see Chapter IV).

The South District Office is in charge of 10 elementary schools. Among them, two elementary schools are district-wide key schools. They are the two best schools in the district in terms of quality instruction and students' performance. The two district key schools are allowed to enroll students living anywhere within the district and collecting tuition. The tuition is not as much as that of Yuhong Elementary School. These two schools are better off financially than any other schools in the district. To maximize sample variations, the researcher decided to select one of the two key schools. This type of school is not the best, but better than average of the majority of community schools.

Using typical sampling, the researcher chose the third school in this study from one of the eight regular community schools. This type of school admits any students who reside within the school boundary. They are tuition free. Some of the schools used to be competitive schools before the key school was identified about more than one decade ago. Now, in many areas they are behind the city and district key schools. Unable to attract talented students and without tuition funding, many regular schools are facing many challenges. For example, the reduced student enrollment and low morale among teachers.

To get the principals' permission for teachers to participate in this study, the researcher sent solicitation letters to all the elementary principals in the district. The principal of the Yuhong Elementary School responded and expressed the willingness to participate in this study, as well as Xian Elementary School Principal, one of the district key schools. Two regular elementary school principals also responded to the letter. The researcher chose Jianguo Elementary School randomly as a representative of 8 regular
community schools. The researcher had a 45-minute phone conversation with each principal of the three schools chosen to participate in this study. The researcher gathered information and obtained a list of recently hired teachers including their background information and first-year teaching assignments.

The three schools selected were the results of purposeful sampling and so were the 15 teachers who participated in this research. The researcher used maximum variation sampling to integrate teachers who were as different as possible, to disclose the range of variation and differentiation of teachers on the list provided by each of the principals. The researcher carefully selected 6 teachers from a total of 19 teachers on Yuhong Elementary School list, 6 from 12 listed teachers from Xian Elementary School and 5 from 8 available Jianguo Elementary School teachers. The participating teachers from each school represented teachers with different backgrounds, experience, ranks, and gender.

A Letter of Solicitation was mailed to the 17 teachers. They had to sign and return an Informed Consent Form. Fifteen of the 17 teachers returned the consent form, with 6 teachers from Yuhong Elementary School, 4 teachers from Jianguo Elementary School, and 5 teachers from Xian Elementary School, respectively. The teachers’ background information is presented in Table 2 (see Chapter IV). Assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was given to the participants in the study through the Informed Consent Forms. The participation of the teachers was voluntary.

Data Collection

There are a variety of ways to generate qualitative data. Two prevailing forms of data collection associated with qualitative inquiry are interviews and observations.
Webster (1993) defined interview as “A meeting at which information is obtained from a person” (p.655). Krathwohl (1997) further explained, “Wherever there is a desire to tap an internal process, to gain knowledge of a person’s perceptions, feelings, or emotion, or to study a complex individual or social behavior, some form of interviewing is most helpful” (p. 286). In this study, the researcher used interview questions to probe the teachers’ induction experience in their first year of teaching. Observation is not practical because of the length and scope of the induction programs studied and long distant sample site locations.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather data from the 15 subjects because it suited the nature and scope of the study. Krathwohl (1997) described a semi-structured interview as “Questions and order of presentation are determined. Questions have open-ends; interviewer records the essence of each response” (p.287). In the semi-structured interviews, the researcher used a list of questions to explore the different aspects or components of the beginning induction programs. Although the questions were predetermined, there are no predetermined responses. The questions made interviewing multiple subjects more systematic and comprehensive and kept interaction between the interviewer and interviewee focused. The semi-structured interviews ensured good use of limited interview times.

The interviews were conducted by the researcher, who had taught sixth grade students for 10 years and has been an elementary Assistant Principal for 8 years in the USA. The researcher grew up in South District, Baoding, and finished her schooling from elementary to high school there before she entered Beijing Normal University, Beijing to study Education. The introduction to the interview and a list of the interview questions in
(see Appendix A) acted as a guideline for the semi-structured interviews. From her residence, the researcher called each interviewee in China and interviewed him or her over the telephone.

The interviews were conducted in July, August, and October, 2007. During the interviews, the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation with the consent that the interviewee provided prior to the interview. Follow-up interviews were conducted in November and December, 2007. Over the telephone, the interviewer read the responses to all the interview questions that each interviewee made at previous interview to make sure that there were no areas of uncertainty. If there were areas that did not make sense, the interviewer checked with the interviewees for clarification.

Each interviewee was assigned a code. The confidentiality and anonymity of all interviewees and of all schools participating in this project were preserved. The information from the interviews was solely used for purposes of analysis. To insure confidentiality, the collected taped data and interview notes were stored at a secured location, in a locked box in the possession of the researcher. Only the researcher had access to this information. All recorded and documented responses will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study. All participants in this study will receive a copy of the abstract upon request.

Instrumentation

The interview questions consists of five sections (see appendix A). The three main sections of the interview questions, section two, three and four, were developed based on reviewing research and literature to corresponding with the three teacher induction components: new teacher orientation, beginning teacher in-service training, and
mentoring, categorized by the researcher in Chapter II. In each of the sections, the researcher constructed a set of subsidiary and open-ended questions to explore the participating teachers' induction experience in one of the three components. In the first section, the subjects were answered questions to describe their background and first-year assignments. Their responses, along with the information collected about the three schools will help the readers to understand the settings and conditions in which the induction programs take place. In the last section, the interviewees were allowed to reflect on the answers to the questions to make clarifications. They were also given opportunities to ask questions and add comments that were not asked.

At each interview, the researcher, the sole interviewer, asked the same questions in the same way and in the same order. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. All the interviews were conducted in Mandarin, the respondents' native language. The open-ended questions allowed each interviewee to provide personal descriptions and perceptions, which insured reliability of source, as well as its validity, and reduced the intrusion of the interviewer's biased judgment.

Data Analysis

In this study, the collected data were analyzed using a procedure to make interpretations and generate findings. Flick (2002) stated, “Theoretical coding is the procedure for analyzing data which have been collected in order to develop a grounded theory. This procedure was introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and further elaborated by Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1990)” (p.177). He also pointed out, “In the process of interpretation, different ‘procedures’ of dealing with text can be differentiated. They are termed ‘open coding’, ‘axial coding and ‘selective
coding” (p.177). The following are explanations of how the researcher used these three coding procedures to analyze data, generate findings, and answer research questions.

In this study, analysis begins with a process sometimes referred to as “open coding.” During the open coding, researcher regularly and repeatedly addressed the participating teachers’ responses to the subsidiary interview questions such as, what, who, how, when, where, and how much, and so forth. The researcher identified and named the subcategories into which the phenomena observed would be grouped. Words, phrases or events that appear to be similar can be grouped into the same subcategory. The goal was to create descriptive, multi-dimensional subcategories which form a preliminary framework for analysis of each of the three main components of beginning teacher induction in China: new teacher orientation, in-service training for beginning teachers, mentoring.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined, “The process of axial coding is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories to form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena” (p.114). During the axial coding, the researcher organized the subcategories developed during open coding and presented them in tables. Table 1 was presented based on the information from the three participating schools’ principals. Key words and phrases from the 15 teachers’ responses to interview questions were used to construct Tables 2-5 in Chapter IV.

As Krathwohl (1997) mentioned, “Graphics help us see the relation of one variable to another and facilitate developing explanations and theory” (p. 310). In this study each table helped sort the repeating patterns and observe the consistency or
inconsistency practices among participating teachers and schools in one induction area. Following each table presentation, in the narrative report the researcher compared how different schools conducted beginning teacher induction similarly or differently. The participants’ quotes were used to illustrate the themes that identified practices at the three schools to understand the phenomenon. The research findings generated from axial coding are presented in Chapter IV.

Selective coding, according to Flick (2002), “continues the axial coding at a higher level of abstraction. The aim of this step is to elaborate the core category around which the other developed categories can be grouped, and by which they are integrated” (p. 182). A central category (sometimes called the core category) represents the main theme of the research. It consists of all the products of analysis condensed into a few words that seem to explain what this research is all about. A central category has analytic power. What gives it that power is its ability to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole. A central category should be able to account for considerable variation within categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990 p. 146).

After axial coding, the researcher examined the subcategories in the Table 3 and 4 on new teacher orientation, Table 5, on in-service training for beginning teachers, Table 6, in mentoring. Core categories were identified because similar subcategories appeared in each table. The concepts in the core categories were logical and consistent although there were variations from school to school. These central categories pulled subcategories in all the tables together to form an explanation of how beginning teachers were inducted at the three elementary schools in Baoding, China. The concepts developed in different central categories would help answer different research questions: What were the common
training activities in all three induction components at the three schools? What were essential characteristics of the school structure that the induction programs relied on to function? The results of selective coding as the conclusion of the research were discussed in Chapter V.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the research design and methodology. This study was conducted primarily using qualitative research method. The 15 teachers were selected from three elementary schools in Baoding, Hebei province in China, using purposeful sampling. The data were gathered from the teachers through semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed each of the subjects twice on the telephone. The open-ended interview questions were created by the researcher as results of literature review. The data were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding to identify a central category or categories to conclude the research findings that help us understand how beginning teachers are inducted at the three elementary schools in China.
Chapter IV

DATA AND ANALYSES AND THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the data and analyses for findings for the study that was designed to explore the new teacher training programs at three elementary schools in Baoding, China. The data are analyzed to answer three research questions, "What are the main components of the beginning teacher induction programs in China? What are the common activities evidenced in each of the components? How are the induction programs conducted differently one from another at the three schools?"

The data collected in this research are presented in the following five sections, (a) the three schools' profiles, (b) the 15 participating teachers' characteristics, (c) new teacher orientation, (d) beginning teacher in-service training, and (e) mentoring. The information gathered about the three schools and the 15 teachers participating in this study is recorded in Tables 1 and 2 respectively and discussed in narrative form to put the main findings in context. The 15 teachers' responses to interview questions regarding their first year induction programs at three schools are coded and shown in categories in Tables 3 to 6. The main training activities of the each component of induction programs at each school are analyzed and compared with supporting quotations from the subjects.

The Three Schools' Profiles

Three administrators, one from each of the three schools, provide a one page description of the school profile and some verbal information about the school. The data collected are coded and presented in Table 1 in the following four areas: school, student, staff, and schedules. In each area, each school's characteristics are discussed and the
comparisons are made to identify the similarities and differences among the three schools. The administrator working at School One was referred to as Administrator One. Similarly, Administrator Two and Administrator Three are referred to when their responses were cited.

Table 1

**Profile of Three Study Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Schools</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founding year</td>
<td>1896 first modern school</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Sometime during Ming Dynasty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of schools</td>
<td>City Key School</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>District Key School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievements</td>
<td>Named as an “Excellent” school, Awarded in four areas, Involved in 14 research projects</td>
<td>Girls’ championships soccer team</td>
<td>Named as a “Model” school, involved in 6 research projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award winners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ schedule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Information**

The three schools in the study are representative of three types of primary schools in the city. Each school has its unique history, culture and issues. Yuhong Elementary School was founded in 1896. It is the first modern elementary school in the city. In 1996, with its outstanding records of past educational accomplishments, Yuhong Elementary School was entitled to be the only key primary school out of a total of 30 schools in the city. Key schools are given priority in the assignment of teachers, equipment and funds.
They also are allowed to recruit the best students for special training to compete for admission to top schools at the next level.

Yuhong Elementary School has the largest campus among all elementary schools in the city. It has three large main buildings for classrooms and labs, two smaller buildings for administrative offices, one building for student dorms and cafeteria, an outdoor 400 meter track and two tennis courts. The key school status has enabled the school to attract the best students from all over the city. The school is not only well known in the city, but also has established partnerships with schools in America, Austria, Canada, and Korea. Yuhong School is a leading school in educational research and has involved in many research projects, three at the national level, two at the provincial levels and 11 at city levels. The school has received awards in many areas, such as bilingual education, research in teaching and character education. For five consecutive years, the school has been recognized as an “Excellent” school by the city bureau of education, and is one of the top ten schools in the province.

Jiangou Elementary School was founded in 1944 during the Japanese occupation of China. It was established by a Japanese flour company to educate its workers’ children. After the People’s Republic of China was founded, the original name was changed. Jiangou Elementary School is a regular school. There are nine regular schools and two key schools in the district. It admits all students in the neighborhood. Jiangou Elementary School does not receive extra funds or resources as the city and key schools do.

Jiangou Elementary School has the smallest campus of the three schools. It has only one building with about 20 classrooms, two computer labs, a media room and an English language lab. The school is very famous for its girls’ soccer team. The team has a
record of winning 4 province and 10 city championships. One of the school team members is a player on the national women’s soccer team.

Xian Elementary School is the oldest school in the study. It opened in the eighth year of the Ming Dynasty and was called “Culture Temple.” In 1949, the school changed its name and became a modern school. For many decades, Xian Elementary School has been one of the best schools in the city. In 1998, Xian Elementary School was recognized as one of the two district key schools. Since then, School Three has started enrolling students who applied to the school from different neighborhoods in the district and has been provided with extra funds and support by the district office.

Xian Elementary School has a small campus with two main classroom buildings. Xian Elementary School has been noted for its strengths in instruction and research for instructional improvement. The school has been involved in six research projects led by national, provincial, or city research institutes. Faculty members have published more than 200 research papers in different professional journals. The school has been named as a “Model” school in teaching by the district office. Many students at School Three have won prizes and awards at numerous academic and extra curricular competitions.

Students’ Characteristics

The three schools vary greatly in terms of the number of students, class size, and student characteristics. Yuhong Elementary School is the largest school in the city with 3600 students, and the number is growing every year. Since it became the only city key school, the open enrollment has resulted in a soaring number of applicants. Over the past 10 years, the student population tripled. In each grade level from grade 1 to 6, there are more than 10 classes. The number of students in each class has exceeded 70 in some
years. The overcrowded situation has been changed as the school principal points out, "After moving to the new site and hiring more teachers, the school has been able to put a cap of 50-55 students per class. It also has started eight 'Experimental' classes with only 35-40 students."

Yuhong Elementary School has established its own admission procedures to admit new students. The principal shared, "A pool of candidates first is randomly chosen from hundreds of applicants. Then, admission will only be given to the candidates who are selected from individual personal interviews." Students at Yuhong School have to pay an annual tuition of 1800 Yuan and additional fees. For students living a long distance from the school, parents must provide transportation. The cost of studying at School One is the highest in the city.

Most students at Yuhong Elementary School are from middle and upper-class families. Most parents are professionals with college degrees. They treat their children's education as the family's first priority. They trust the school and support the teachers 100%. Almost all of the newly admitted 6 year olds at the school have attended noted preschools in the city. They have above grade level academic skills and are taking private lessons to develop special interests and talents. These students continue excelling in all areas during the next 6 years because the school has kept a good balance providing high quality core curricular instruction, character education, and extra curriculum activities. The principal emphasized, "Our goal is to develop every student wholesomely in ethics, arts and sports, and academics. Furthermore, we teach our students how to apply what they have learned in books and classrooms to real life to become a better person."
Jiangou Elementary School is a very small school with fewer than 500 students. There are only 12 classes with two classes on each grade level from grade 1 to 6. In each class there are fewer than 40 students. Ten years ago, Jiangou Elementary School had many more students and larger class sizes when there were no key schools in the city and district. The school has lost one third of its student population to the key school. The school’s biggest problem is maintaining the current enrollment. One of the solutions is to admit students who reside out of the original school zone in nearby villages. The school admits any students who come to register and is tuition free.

Most students at Jiangou Elementary School come from lower socio-economic families. Their parents are factory workers or peasants with only junior high or high school diplomas. Although they want a good education for their children as other parents do, they do not have time, money, and knowledge to help their children in learning besides providing food, clothing and a home for their children. The principal shares, “When our teachers call parents for students’ problems, the only thing the parents could do was yell at and beat their children. Our students are not motivated to learn.” After the school expanded its boundary, newly enrolled students had more family, behavioral, and learning problems. Teachers work harder and harder to encourage students to follow the school motto, “Be cooperative, diligent, truthful, and upbeat.”

Xian Elementary School is the largest school in the district with 1800 students in 31 classes. There are five or six classes per grade level. In the first grade level, each class is capped with 55 students. Starting from the second grade up, the class size becomes larger at each grade level. Some fifth grade classes actually exceeded 70 students. The administrator at the school explains, “Each year we add several talented and exceptional
students as transfer students to each class because we have a long waiting list. The increased class size leads to serious issues.” He continued, “Our teachers are over loaded with extra work, and our students are over crowded in smaller and older classrooms with less fresh air and extreme heat in summer,” worries the principal at the school.

Almost every 6 year old will apply for admission to one of the two district key schools. Xian Elementary School admits students solely by random computer lottery. There are no additional tests, and no interviews are conducted to screen new first graders. The annual tuition for School Three is 1600 Chinese Yuan, which is just a little less than the tuition of Yuhong Elementary School. The majority of Xian Elementary School students live within walking or biking distance.

Although students at Xian Elementary School are not carefully selected as are students at Yuhong Elementary School, these students make great achievements in academics and extra curricular activities. These students are from middle class families. Their parents are not as educated as parents of students at Yuhong Elementary School. On the average, these parents had lower income. However, these parents have a strong desire for their children to have better education and better adult lives than the parents have. They did not contribute a bigger portion of the income on tuitions, but they did spend more time in communicating with teachers and helping their children with homework. Teachers at Xian Elementary School were known for delivering quality instructions not only in major subjects but also in other lessons, such as, ethics, music, art, sports, and computers. The school’s slogan is “United, Honest, Diligent and Progressive.”
Staff

Organizational and administrative structures are very similar at the three schools. Teachers are divided in groups according to the grade levels and subjects they teach. Teachers in the same group work in a shared office when they are not in the classroom teaching. They prepare lessons, meet with other teachers, and conduct conferences with individual students and parents at the office. Each teacher has a desk and ample room to store teaching materials. In a teacher’s office there are also telephones, fax machines, computers, and other equipment that all teachers share. Reference books, magazines, and newspapers can be found in any teacher’s office, too.

Each group, as a small unit of a school organization, has a group leader. A group leader is either elected by group members or appointed by the administration. The group leaders are usually exemplary teachers respected by his or her fellow teachers. They are expected to help individual teachers solve problems and are responsible for the whole group accomplishing all types of instructional and administrative tasks. Group leaders report to curriculum directors and participate in administrators’ meetings for group leaders. They are paid as teachers. Group leaders report to curriculum directors and participate in principals’ administrative meetings. Many group leaders step up to administration positions.

All elementary teachers are ranked in four categories in ascending order of quality, the levels are: Level Two, Level One, Level High, and Level Superior. The teaching ranks correlate with salary payment scales. All new teachers start their rank at Level Two. Every several years, principals are called to recommend teachers for promotion to the next teaching rank based on achievement, peer evaluation, educational credentials,
publication in research, and years of teaching. It is quite easy to get promoted from Level Two to Level One. It takes more years for many teachers to reach Level High because of the rigorous requirements and competition among qualified teachers for limited spots. Only a few teachers in a city reach the rank of Level Superior. These teachers have demonstrated exceptional performance and contributions in the profession. Most of them have received awards at the provincial or national level.

The differences in student enrollment and nature of the schools have resulted in differences in staffing among the three schools. Yuhong Elementary School has a large faculty with 190 teachers and nine administrators. Since there are so many classes at each grade level, teachers are grouped by grade levels and subjects. For example, there is a first grade math teacher group, first grade English teacher group, and first grade Chinese teacher group. There are a total of 25 teacher groups and 25 teacher offices. Among the teachers, over 140 teachers are hired after the school became the only key elementary school in the city. In some years, between 20 and 30 new teachers were hired in September because of dramatic increases in student enrollment. Among the 6 teachers interviewed from this school, 5 of them are Level Two teachers, and only 1 teacher is a Level One teacher. A total of 40 teachers have received awards given by a national or provincial Department of Education, or the city Education Bureau.

Jianguo Elementary School has a very small faculty with only 35 teachers and 3 administrators. They all have over 7 years working experience. There are only three teacher’s groups at the school: Lower Grade Teacher’s Group (Grades 1-2), Upper Grade Teachers’ Group (Grades 3-6), and Special Teachers’ Group. There are only two teacher offices at Jianguo Elementary School, one for the first two teachers’ groups and the other
for the last group of teachers. All the interviewed teachers have over 5 years of teaching experience. One of the interviewed teachers is a Level High teacher and 3 others are Level One teachers.

There are 84 teachers and 5 administrators at Xian Elementary School. Several new teachers are hired each year. Xian Elementary School teachers are divided in 7 groups based on grade levels and subject areas. They work in 7 offices with a group leader in each office. Out of 5 interviewed teachers, 1 teacher was a Level High teacher. Two teachers are Level One teachers and 2 teachers are Level Two teachers. Eleven teachers at School Three have received different awards or recognition from the province or city. Thirty teachers were named as excellent homeroom teachers.

Schedule

The three schools have the same school year calendar which is decided by the city Bureau of Education. There are two terms in each school year. The fall term and spring term are separated by winter vacation. The winter vacation lasts about a month around Chinese New Year based on a lunar year calendar. The summer vacation takes place during July and August. All schools have morning and afternoon sessions. In between the two sessions, there is a 2 hour break for students to have lunch and take a short nap. Students have six or seven periods, four in the morning and two in the afternoon. There is a 10 minute break between every two periods. Students use the time to play around the classroom and go to the bathroom. During the breaks, students are not supervised by any teachers.

Among the three schools, students’ and teachers’ daily schedules are slightly different from one school to another. Yuhong Elementary School students start their day
at 7:40 a. m. instead of 8:00 a. m., earlier than students at the other two schools. For three
days a week, Yuhong Elementary School students also end school at 5:30 p.m., an hour
later than the students at the other two schools. At Jianguo Elementary School and School
Three teachers finish their day at 5:30 p.m., an hour after students leave. Teachers at
School One work 1 hour longer than teachers at the other two schools.

The three schools that participated in this research are all elementary schools in
one city. Students at the three schools from grades 1 to 6 are instructed based on the same
nationally uniformed textbooks in all academic subjects. The schools have very similar
organizational structures and daily schedules. All teachers are paid according to the same
salary scale that correlated with their professional ranks. However, the three schools are
three different types of elementary schools in terms of reputation, resources, students and
teachers, which have great impact on the teacher training practices. The individual factors
of each selected school have an effect on its new teacher practices.

The 15 Teachers’ Background and First Year Teaching Assignments

There were a total of 15 teachers who were asked to answer the structured
interview questions regarding their educational backgrounds, working experiences, and
their first full year regular assignments. The interviewed teachers were ordered
alphabetically from A to O. Each teacher was identified and referred to by a letter, such
as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and so on. Their responses were coded in
subcategories in Table 2. The similarity and difference among participants were analyzed
with supporting citations in the following areas, Degree, Years of Teaching,
Subject/Subjects, Number of Periods per week, Number of classes, Grade Level/Levels,
and Gender.
According to Teachers Law of the People's Republic of China adopted in 1993 (1993), "To obtain qualification for a teacher in a primary school, one shall be a graduate of a secondary normal school or upwards" (p. 3) A secondary normal school is a school that "enroll junior high school graduates with a schooling of usually 4 years and sometimes 3 years ("Vocational Education System in China," 2008). This law was established 16 years ago, however, teacher education has changed a lot since then. Gu, President of China Education Association (2006), pointed out, "The secondary normal schools are gradually disappearing. The primary school teachers are trained in the three-year teacher colleges" ("The Reform and Development in Teacher Education in China," 2006). Currently, most elementary school teachers in Baoding are graduates from three-year teacher colleges with an Associate degree. Many teachers who started the job with a

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T*</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>#Year</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>#classes</th>
<th>#periods</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gym</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Associate</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Math &amp; Chinese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Math &amp; Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Math &amp; Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T* (Teacher)
secondary normal school diploma are required to update their degrees through continuing education.

All 6 teachers from Yuhong Elementary School earned their associate or bachelor degrees through formal education. Only 1 has a bachelor’s degree from a 4 year college. Most college graduates teach at the high school level, but Teacher C chose to be an elementary teacher. He explains, “I prefer to work with younger children. Yuhong Elementary School is a prestigious school. When I was offered a position at the school, I declined other offers from middle and high school.” The other 5 teachers have earned Associate degrees from a 2 year higher normal school and interned at Yuhong elementary school. As a group, participating teachers from Yuhong Elementary School teachers are better educated than the teachers from the other two schools.

Three of the 4 teachers from Jianguo Elementary School began teaching with a secondary normal school diploma which was equivalent to high school diplomas and the lowest degree that teachers were required to have. During their years of teaching, 3 of them obtained a bachelor’s degree or an associate’s degree in Education by studying part time. One teacher, Teacher J, still held a secondary normal school diploma without furthering her education. Now she is required to obtain an associate degree within 5 years. She points out, “I am one of a few teachers who holds the lowest degree. I cannot be promoted to the next teaching rank without upgrading my degree.”

At Xian Elementary School, 2 out of 5 teachers had an associate or a bachelor’s degree when they were hired as new teachers. The other 3 teachers started their teaching with a secondary normal school diploma and advanced their degrees through continuing education. Comparing the teachers from three schools, the teachers from Xian
Elementary School have better educational backgrounds than the teachers from Jianguo Elementary School.

Teaching Experience

The 15 participating teachers' work experiences ranges from 1 to 8 years. The 6 Yuhong Elementary School One teachers, as a group, has the fewest years of work experience. Only 1 teacher has worked 5 years. The rest of the teachers had no more than 3 years of experience. Two thirds of the teachers at this school were hired after the school became a city key school because of increased student enrollment. Each year in the past Teacher B recalled, “I was hired along with 20 other new teachers in 2002.” The 6 teachers’ responses to the interview questions reflect the teacher induction practice that took place within the past five years at Yuhong Elementary School.

Among the three schools, teachers from Jianguo Elementary School as a group have the longest teaching experience. All 4 participants from School Two have taught more than 6 years. Teacher G pointed out, “The last group of new teachers was hired seven or eight years ago. There were a total of eight of us. Since then, there have been no new teachers hired because our enrollment has decreased dramatically over the past 10 years.” The teacher induction program that this group has experienced might be very different from the former group of teachers because it happened about 10 years ago and the two schools are very different.

Five selected Xian Elementary School teachers had an average of 5 years work experience. Among them, there were 1 first year teacher and 1 second year teacher. Two teachers have taught for 6 years and 1 for 4 years. To answer the interview questions, each of them reviewed their new teacher training in their first year of teaching. Their
responses indicate first year teacher training activities that existed between 2001 and 2007. We can find out if the induction program has changed within these 7 years at Xian Elementary School.

The Subject/Subjects and Class/Classes Taught in the First Year

Out of the 15 teachers, 8 teachers taught either Chinese or math or both subjects in their first year. Among the other 7 teachers, 4 teachers were English teachers and 3 teachers were special subject (Science, Social Studies, Art, Gym, Music, or Computer) teachers. Out of 6 teachers participating in this study, there was 1 Chinese teacher, 1 math teacher, 2 English teachers, and 2 special subject teachers. All teachers at Yuhong Elementary only taught 1 subject. The Chinese teacher only taught 1 class. The 2 Math teachers and 2 English teachers taught two classes. The 2 special teachers taught Science and Gym respectively to 4 classes. All the teachers taught one grade level.

Among the 9 teachers interviewed from Jianguo Elementary School and Xian Elementary School, 5 lower grade (first and second grade) teachers taught two subjects, both math and Chinese, to one class in their first year. At these two schools, students started having separate Chinese and Math teachers in third grade instead of in first grade as students at Yuhong Elementary School did. The Math teacher at Xian Elementary School taught two classes in grade 3. Both English teachers from these two schools taught more than two classes. The English teacher at Jianguo School taught 12 classes and the English teacher at Xian Elementary School taught 4 classes. The special teacher at Jianguo School taught computers to 12 classes weekly whereas the 2 special teachers at Yuhong Elementary School only had 4 different classes.
Number of Periods Taught in a Week/Day

According to the participating teachers' responses, the maximum number of periods they taught was 18 and the minimum was 10 per week. Usually major subjects teachers, like English, Chinese, and math teachers had fewer teaching periods than special subject teachers. Teacher C reasoned, "Chinese and math teachers, as well as English teachers, need to spend much more time on checking students' work, providing individual assistance to students and meeting with parents." Teachers who taught the same subjects might have different numbers of teaching periods. The school where they taught and the year they started teaching resulted in the different working loads in their first year.

At Yuhong Elementary School, 4 out of the 6 teachers taught either Chinese or math in their first year. They had 14 periods a week. The 2 English teachers only had 10 periods each week. Teacher D described, "I taught only 10 periods a week, which was dictated by the English instructional program that my school was involved in. We had common preparation periods daily and met with researchers once a month." The 2 special subject teachers, a science teacher and a gym teacher, had 16 periods a week respectively.

Compared to teachers at Yuhong Elementary School, the 9 teachers at the other two schools taught more periods in a week during their first year of teaching. The 5 grade 1 and grade 2 teachers taught 16 periods a week. So did one third grade math teacher at Xian Elementary School. The computer and English teachers, who were considered special subject teachers, taught 18 periods a week. Jianguo School Principal states, "Teachers at any school in our district are assigned the same number of teaching periods. Yuhong Elementary School is different. It is supported by the city with special funds for
special programs and a large budget for hiring extra teachers. It can afford that some
teachers teach fewer periods per week.”

Grade Level/Levels

New teachers in elementary school usually start their first several years teaching
lower grades. Out of the 15 teachers participating in this study, 12 teachers started
teaching in the lowest level possible. The principal at Xian Elementary School explained,
“We usually assign new teachers to teach in lowest level. Teachers who teach both
Chinese and math started in first grade level, teachers who only teach Chinese or math in
third grade level (the lowest level that at most elementary schools math and Chinese
taught by separate teachers). We have them keep teaching the same class up to six grade
level. In this way, they get a chance to become familiar with the curriculum at multi-
grade levels in one subject.”

All teachers at Xian Elementary School and Jianguo Elementary School were
routinely assigned to the lowest grade level to teach in their first year. Three selected
teachers taught first grade and 2 math teachers started with third grade. In addition to
working with the lowest grade level of students, all the new teachers had the experience
of looping with the same class for several years to the sixth grade. Teacher M stated, “I
looped one class from grade 1 to 6 in my first 6 years of teaching. I taught this class
Chinese and math in the first 2 years and only Chinese in third grade and above. I became
familiar with both curriculum and students at all grade levels. I have benefited from this
experience throughout my career.”

At Yuhong Elementary School, however, first year teachers started teaching at
higher grade level. One teacher started teaching with a second grade class. Two teachers,
however, taught grade 4 and 5 students respectively. Teacher A explained, “I requested to teach fifth grade because my mentor was a fifth grade teacher. It made it easier for me to learn from her when we taught at the same grade level.” Teacher B recalled, “Elementary students started science lessons at grade three. Since I student taught science grade 3 classes at the same school, I continued working with the same group of students but taught at the next grade level after I was hired.”

**Gender**

Five out of 15 teachers participating in this study are male teachers. Four of them are from Yuhong Elementary School. The principal at the school stated, “Usually, there are only a couple of male teachers at each primary school. However, we have more than 20 young male teachers.” Although all 4 male teachers were qualified to teach at junior or even senior high schools where most male teachers prefer to teach, they chose to work at Yuhong Elementary School, a prestigious elementary school for different reasons.

One male teacher was attracted to the school by its city location. Teacher B said, “I would rather teach at a city primary school than at a high school in a rural area. I grew up in a very poor and remote county. Working condition at my hometown high school is nowhere near this elementary school.” Teacher B joined the faculty at the school because of “…the better facilities, motivated students, friendly colleagues and supportive administrators.” Teacher F claimed, “Our school is a dream school for students and teachers to be at. People respect me more than a regular elementary teacher when I mention my school’s name. I work harder than teachers at other elementary schools, but I have better students and parents to work with.”
The 15 subjects selected in this study were all elementary teachers from three different types of schools. There were common characteristics existing in the teachers within one school or two schools. The 6 teachers from Yuhong Elementary School started teaching most recently and with higher degrees compared to the 9 teachers from the other two schools. They also had lighter assignments in their first year. All 6 teachers had fewer teaching periods in a week than the teachers at the other two schools. The lower grade teachers at Yuhong Elementary School only taught one subject instead of two subjects. The differences among selected schools in teachers’ backgrounds and first year assignments, along with the schools’ other characteristics attribute to many differences in new teacher training areas.

New Teacher Orientation

In this study, teaching induction in China is viewed as consisting of the following three major components: new teacher orientation, in-service training, and mentoring. To explore the training activities in each of the components, the researcher has developed interview questions. During the interviews, each subject is asked the same interview questions in the same way. Their responses to the questions are recorded and analyzed to answer the research questions posted in Chapter I. New Teacher Orientation is the component with which almost every teacher induction program starts.

The 15 subjects were asked to recall their new teacher orientation experience. Each participant was informed that orientation meant the training that they had received after they were hired as a teacher and before they started their first regular full year of teaching. Teachers were asked a number of structured questions on the topic. Their responses were classified and recorded in the three sub-categories described in Table 3.
and Table 4. All 6 teachers from Yuhong Elementary School considered their intense summer training as new teacher orientation; whereas the 9 teachers at the two other schools perceived their substituting teaching experience as new teacher orientation. Each of the two types of new teacher orientation is explained in terms of length of time and activities. The common characteristics of these two types of orientation are analyzed.

**Summer Training at One School**

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>T</em></th>
<th><em>L</em></th>
<th>General training</th>
<th>Observing lessons</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Planning lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6 wk.</td>
<td>New teachers' evaluation</td>
<td>Lessons on tapes and lessons taught by trainers</td>
<td>12 lessons</td>
<td>Planned lesson using computer software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>6 wk.</td>
<td>Organize activities, discipline students</td>
<td>Watched a science teacher teach lab lessons</td>
<td>12 lessons</td>
<td>Planned lessons prepared materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3 wk.</td>
<td>School traditions &amp; history</td>
<td>Watched and discussed lessons on tapes.</td>
<td>6 lessons</td>
<td>Learned how to plan lessons from a trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3 wk.</td>
<td>Safety procedures and rules</td>
<td>Learned many teaching games from a trainer's simulation lessons</td>
<td>6 lessons</td>
<td>Planned lessons together with other teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>6 wk.</td>
<td>Effective ways to communicate with parents</td>
<td>Learned how to question students from trainers' simulation lessons</td>
<td>8 lessons</td>
<td>Paced the curriculum and planned many lessons together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>6 wk.</td>
<td>Homeroom teachers' responsibilities</td>
<td>Simulation lessons taught by one of the best Chinese teacher at the school</td>
<td>12 lessons</td>
<td>Learned how to plan lessons step by step by doing with others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Yuhong School, new teacher orientation takes place during the summer. The training provided by the orientation can be on or off the school site. The length of the training varies from year to year and from teacher to teacher. Four out of the 6 teachers involved in this study had a 6-week intensive training experience. Teacher B recalled, “In the 2 months of summer vacation, I had only 10 days off after new teacher orientation was over.” Teacher E noted, “I spent six weeks attending new teacher orientation activities and two weeks on my own preparation before I started my first year.” Teacher F commented, “In the entire summer, I had only two weeks off from school.” Teacher A
had not only on-site training but off-site as well. She described, “First, I was away for a month of training at a state teacher’s university. Then, I participated in 2 weeks of new teacher orientation at my school.”

Out of 6 teachers, 2 teachers had 3 weeks of training for different reasons. When a teacher is hired in the middle of summer, he or she may miss some part of new teacher orientation. Teacher C revealed, “I was hired in August, I joined other new teachers at new teacher orientation for the 3 weeks left.” New teacher orientation programs seem shorter when fewer new teachers are hired. Teacher D shared, “My orientation period was relatively short because in that year there were 5 new teachers starting in September.”

New teacher orientation at Yuhong Elementary School has morning and afternoon sessions. In the morning session, participants attend lectures as a whole group. The lectures are presented by administrators at the school. They are covering topics about the school, procedures, and homeroom teachers’ responsibilities. “On the first day, our principal introduced our school’s history and tradition, which makes us feel proud being a part of this prestigious school. She urged us to make a contribution to this wonderful learning community,” said Teacher C. Teacher A stated, “The curriculum director informed us of the comprehensive procedures on which new teachers were evaluated. She also made sure that we understood the school organization structures rules and the chain of command.” Teacher E explained the homeroom teacher training part, “One of the vice principals shared with us effective ways of communicating with parents.”

In the afternoon, new teachers are divided into small groups. Each small group consists of new teachers who teach the same grade level or same subject. Each new
teacher group is facilitated by a designated trainer from within the school. The trainers are experienced and expert teachers familiar with the subject and grade level the new teachers are assigned to teach. In each group, new teachers are engage on observing lessons, teaching lessons, and planning lessons.

New teachers can watch be model lessons on tapes, but in most cases, the trainers teach demonstration lessons with new teachers acting as students in the classroom. In their lessons, the trainers provide examples on how to apply certain teaching strategies. The 4 teachers made comments about what they observed. “I watched demonstration lessons taught by our trainers. In different lessons, she focused on different teaching strategies. For instance, in one lesson, she showed us how to raise questions to guide students to solve word problems,” said Teacher E. Teacher D stated, “In the English teacher group, I learned a lot of interesting games from an exemplary teacher’s lesson demonstration.” Teacher F shared, “I watched simulation writing lessons taught by one of the best Chinese teachers in my school.” Teacher B, a science teacher, described, “We watched how our trainer prepared materials for experiments and how he conducted these experiments in lessons.”

After observing lessons for 2 weeks, arrangements are made for new teachers to teach lessons in front of others on selected afternoons. On any given day of the next two weeks, two teachers are scheduled to teach each afternoon for others to critique. Teacher C remarked, “During orientation period, I prepared and taught my very first four lessons. All teachers in my group provided valuable feedback to me. Having a chance to practice teaching lessons and being corrected is the best training part for me.” The rest of the teachers have taught at the schools as interns, but they valued the teaching experience too.
Teacher E explained, “I taught at least 8 lessons and learned how to evaluate lessons. I became more comfortable teaching lessons in front other teachers.” Teacher A pointed out, “We spent many hot afternoons watching and criticizing one another. It was not fun. However, after school started in September, we realized it worthwhile.”

For the last 2 weeks, new teachers spent planning lessons in the afternoon. The trainers guided new teachers plan lesson after lesson. Teacher D stated, “In that summer, I learned how to plan a lesson step by step.” Teacher E remarked, we learned so many lesson plan strategies from defining objectives to summarizing a lesson.” In each small group, teachers actually planned many lessons that they teach in the first month of teaching. Teacher A reported, “We, English teachers, planned uniformed lessons using computer software.” Teacher B recalled, “We planned 10 lessons together that contained difficult concepts and skills to teach. We also prepared the materials for all lab lessons.” Teacher C commented, “I was the only teacher who had no teaching experience at all. A trainer worked with me individually. We went over each lesson that I was going to teach in September.”

Two English teachers had off-site training as a part of the new teacher orientation. The off-site training may not be only for new teachers. They are subject related training focusing on developing certain skills. Teacher D recalled, “I went to Beijing for a 5 day conference for English teachers. I attended workshops given by nationally renowned experts. They illustrated their methods and philosophy by showing their model lessons on tapes. I was inspired by their passion and their skills.” One of them attended a program at a college and her learning was evaluated. Teacher A said, “I attended a 4 week training program at a province university. Foreign professors gave us lectures on teaching
At the end of the program, we were evaluated based on the two lessons that we taught.”

**Substituting at Two Other Schools**

**Table 4**

*New Teacher Orientation at Jianguo and Xian Elementary Schools: Substituting*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>T</em> (Teacher)</th>
<th><em>P</em> (Period)</th>
<th>Training activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Meeting for general training</strong></td>
<td><strong>Observing lessons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G 1 yr.</td>
<td>Discussed issues we encountered</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3 mo.</td>
<td>Watched lessons on tapes.</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Half yr.</td>
<td>Discussed discipline students</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Half yr.</td>
<td>Planned lessons</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K 2 mo.</td>
<td>Discussed problems and progress by groups</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Half yr.</td>
<td>Discussed teaching methods and planning</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4 mo.</td>
<td>Discussed teaching methods and planning</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 2 mo.</td>
<td>Explored different ways of teaching English</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O 3 mo.</td>
<td>Solved problems &amp; dealt with issues</td>
<td>Regularly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Jianguo and Xian Elementary School, new teacher orientation is very different from that at Yuhong Elementary School. Instead of attending new teacher orientation programs in summer, new teachers at these two schools are hired and start working in spring or even earlier in the year. They play a role as a substitute teacher and at the same time are involved in many new teacher orientation activities such as, meeting with administrators, observing lessons, and being observed teaching lessons. Teachers who make greater progress are assigned to a regular teaching position earlier. Among the 9 teachers interviewed from the two schools, 5 teachers have substituted for as short as 2, 3,
or 4 months while 4 others for as long as half a year or a whole year. For example, Teacher H started substituting in March. In June, she was told her regular teaching assignment at the end of May after the principal watched her teaching a lesson.

Substitute teaching is one part of the orientation program, although the assignments for the substitute teachers are quite different. Five teachers substituted based on a fixed schedule whereas 4 teachers only covered classes occasionally. Although the number of lessons that the substitutes teach varied greatly, they all gained their first hand experience of teaching lessons and valued it greatly as stated by Teacher G, “I entered teaching with an associate degree in computer science. After a year of substitute teaching classes at all grade levels and covering all subjects, I learned so much about teaching and students.” Teacher N explained her different experience, “In my first month, I substituted lessons for a second grade teacher who was absent. It was a tough start, but I got the opportunity to teach right away. Later on, I knew what I was looking for when I observe lessons.”

Lessons Observation was another important activity that all substitute teachers participated in daily. All 9 teachers reported that they observed lessons while they substituted. However, some teachers observed more lessons than others. For instance, 4 teachers spent most of their days observing lessons on a regular basis. As an example, Teacher O stated, “I had been a substitute for 3 months. I shadowed a teacher by watching her teaching lessons and doing all other duties most of the day.” Five teachers who taught regularly as substitutes also observed other teachers teach. Teacher G said, “Whenever I was not teaching, I was observing teachers. I observed teachers at different grade levels and teaching different subjects.” Teacher J explained, “I substitute taught
Chinese lessons to a first grade class. To better prepare my lessons, I observed my partner teacher’s lessons almost daily. She taught the same subject to the other first grade class. I was able to copy some of her ideas.”

In addition to substitute teaching and observing lessons, new teachers are called for meetings with their principals or other administrators for orientation activities. In certain years, the meetings are held regularly to provide a big group of new teacher information and training. Here are two examples from two schools respectively. Teacher K said, “I started working along with six other new teachers. Our principal found a small room for us to use as a new teachers’ office. He met with us there once a month. I learned about the school, teachers’ responsibilities and teaching methods.” Teacher H pointed out, “Our curriculum director at my school met with me and other new teachers a few times. She showed us lessons on tapes. Afterwards, we discussed the strategies that the teachers used to teach and manage learning activities.”

In other years, new teachers may find that they are meeting with a principal or an administrator alone. They are provided individual assistance on solving problems or training in instruction. Teacher I from Jianguo Elementary School remembered, “I had several behavior problem students. My principal met with me and helped me generate intervention plans for each of them.” Two teachers from Xian Elementary School received individual training. Teacher M recalled, “My principal met with me individually. We discussed teaching methods. He also checked my lesson plans and made comments.” Teacher O mentioned, “My principal met with me several times since I have only substituted for three months. He taught me how to solve problems with parents.”
To end the substitute or orientation period, new teachers are required to teach an observation lesson or lessons. At Jianguo Elementary School, substitute teachers, like regular teachers, are required to teach a lesson each term. All teachers and administrators are allowed to observe this lesson and are required to comment on them. For instance, Teacher G stated, “Most substitute teachers taught only once for observation. I taught twice because I had substituted for two terms instead of one.” Teacher I recalled, “I was so nervous when I was teaching the lesson. As an English teacher, I substituted for a Chinese teacher. I had to teach a Chinese lesson for observation.” Both Teacher J and Teacher H pointed out, “Several experienced teachers helped me prepare the lesson before I taught it in front of other teachers.”

At Xian Elementary School, observing new teachers deliver a lesson also serves to signal whether or not that a teacher is ready to be given a regular teaching assignment. All 5 teachers at the school reported that a principal watched them teach at least one lesson before he/she decided to assign them a regular position. Here are two examples. Teacher M explained, “My principal watched me teach a Chinese lesson. After the lesson, he praised me for doing such a great job. Several weeks later, he told me that I was going to be a first grade teacher next year.” Teacher O described a similar experience, “My principal watched me teach a lesson right before the school year ended. He told me that I had satisfactory performance and that I would have a regular position in September.”

Substituting, observing lessons, meeting with administrators for training, and being observed teaching lessons were the main pre-service training activities taking place on the two school sites. Off-site pre-service training sessions for new teachers were provided by the district office. Seven out of the 9 teachers participated in the district
training. Three teachers attended 1 week of summer training before they started their first regular assignment. Teacher L explained, "A trainer from district office met with us, seven new math teachers, for a week. We were taught how to plan and pace lessons to cover all chapters in the textbook. She also presented several lesson demonstrations."

Two teachers were involved in 2 month of weekends training while they were substituting. Teacher O also revealed, "I attended classes and received general knowledge that teachers needed. We practiced planning and teaching lessons in small groups." One teacher only had 1 week pre-service training. Teacher J reported, "I attended 1 week of computer training after school. I learned how to use information on the computer for planning lessons." Teacher N recalled, "I only had two day district training on new English curriculum in the summer before her first year teaching started."

In conclusion, new teacher orientations at the three schools took two forms: either Six-week Intensive Summer Orientation or Orientation during the substituting period before receiving a regular teaching assignment. In addition to participating on school site orientation activities, 8 out of 15 teachers were sent to off-site programs as part of new teacher orientations. Three common training activities appeared in both types of orientation programs. First, administrators and principals provide general information on the school organization, professional knowledge, and skills training for new teachers. Secondly, new teachers are provided opportunities to observe and evaluate other teachers’ lessons. Thirdly, new teachers have taught observation lessons and receive feedback from the observing teachers for improvement.
In-Service Training

In this study, in-service training was defined as the training that all subjects received during their first full year of teaching a regular assignment (substitute teaching was not considered as a regular assignment). The 15 teachers described their in-service training by answering structured interview questions. Their responses were recorded and categorized in Table 5. The fifteen teachers were mainly required to participate in training sessions, observe lessons, and to be observed teaching lessons as in-service training at the three schools. However, each school structured its in-service training based on its individual school situation. The commonalities and differences existing at the three schools in each area of the in-service training are discussed in details in the following paragraphs.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T* (Teacher)</th>
<th>Participating in Training Sessions to obtain skills</th>
<th>Observing others' lessons</th>
<th>Teaching being observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S* (Session)</td>
<td># L* # T*</td>
<td># L* Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 20</td>
<td>Different teaching methods</td>
<td>30 5</td>
<td>1 Passing Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 12</td>
<td>Skills such as handwriting, making speech</td>
<td>30 5</td>
<td>1 Passing Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 20</td>
<td>Computers and teachers' ethics</td>
<td>30 5</td>
<td>1 Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 12</td>
<td>Teachers' duties teachers should perform</td>
<td>35 5</td>
<td>1 Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E 16</td>
<td>Speaking English</td>
<td>40 5</td>
<td>1 Passing Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F 16</td>
<td>Student discipline and management</td>
<td>40 5</td>
<td>1 Passing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G 3-4</td>
<td>Teachers' ethics and discipline students</td>
<td>20 3</td>
<td>3 Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3-4</td>
<td>Skills in handwriting, speaking, planning</td>
<td>25 3</td>
<td>2 Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I 4</td>
<td>Skills in handwriting, speaking, planning</td>
<td>20 3</td>
<td>2 Public Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J 4</td>
<td>Behavior management methods</td>
<td>25 3</td>
<td>2 Public Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K 8</td>
<td>Skills in handwriting, speaking, planning</td>
<td>15 4</td>
<td>2 Public Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L 4</td>
<td>Planning and problem solving strategies</td>
<td>10 4</td>
<td>1 Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 8</td>
<td>Skills in handwriting, planning, speaking</td>
<td>15 4</td>
<td>2 Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 5</td>
<td>Pacing and planning</td>
<td>20 3</td>
<td>1 Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O 6</td>
<td>Planning using professional magazines</td>
<td>20 3</td>
<td>1 Public Competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T* (Teacher) S* (Session) L* (Lessons) T* (Types)
Attending Workshops or Training Programs

Attending workshops or training programs is one of the important parts of beginning teacher in-service training. All 15 teachers responded that they participated in workshops to develop their professional skills in their first year teaching. In-service training for new teachers may vary from school to school because it is arranged by individual schools to fit the school and teachers’ needs. In the following, the difference of first year teachers’ in-service training between Yuhong Elementary School and the other two schools are analyzed based on the teachers’ answers to interview questions.

At Yuhong Elementary School, new teacher in-service is very organized and tailored to fit the school’s unique characteristics. All 6 teachers in this study reported that they participated in a new teacher group training program called “30 & Younger.” This program is held annually. In some years, the number of teachers participating in this program is larger than others based on dramatic increases in student enrollment. Teacher A commented that this program trained 30 teachers in his first year of teaching. New teachers meet for this program regularly and frequently during the beginning of their first year as Teacher F indicated, “We met for the program three times a week and had a total of 16 sessions in September and October. All sessions took place during our prep periods or after school hours.”

“30 & Younger” training sessions are led by experienced teachers and administrators within the school. It helps new teachers develop the basic knowledge and skills they need to assume their daily teaching duties. The 6 participating teachers mentioned that they had training sessions in the following areas, handwriting, speaking English, communicating with parents and students, using computer in lesson planning,
teaching and behavior management strategies. The teachers have revisited and acquired a
c better understanding of the concepts and strategies that were introduced during a summer
orientation program. School-wide competitions or events are held to motivate these
teachers to practice and master these skills. Teacher B recalled, “I participated in three
competitions and won a first prize in a speech competition. More importantly, after
intensive practice and preparation for the contexts, my basic teaching skills really
improved.”

In addition to the “30 and Younger” program, there are smaller training groups,
for example, the first grade new teacher group. Teacher E explained, “In my first year,
there were six or seven of new first grade new teachers formed a group. We meet once a
month for the first year. Experienced teachers shared with us how to teach and discipline
first grade students based on their age characteristics.” Teacher A also expressed, “We
had a group of new English teachers met once a month. We watched many model lessons
on tapes and engaged discussions afterwards.”

At both Jianguo and Xian elementary schools, first year teacher in-service training
is not as formal as that at Yuhong Elementary School. They also have much fewer in-
service training sessions. Beginning teachers at JianGuo Elementary School only meet
with administrators for the fewest times, three or four times, in their first year. However,
the new teachers at the schools have opportunities to attend off site training while
teachers at Yuhong Elementary School do not. Five of the 9 teachers had the opportunity
to attend workshops or training provided by either the city education bureau or district
office. These off school site training programs are usually held either at a city teacher
professional development school or district office. They are usually for new teachers from all elementary schools in the district.

The in-service training at the two school sites was also aimed at developing new teachers’ basic skills similar to the “30 and Younger” program. Seven of the 9 teachers from the two schools had group training sessions. Two teachers provided insights into their training experience. Teacher I shared, “A curriculum director showed us how to print Chinese neatly in chalk on the blackboard. She also taught us how to organize and present key ideas on the board while teaching a lesson. We practiced what we learned and had a handwriting competition among eight new teachers.” Teacher M stated, “At some training sessions, we are trained how to speak as a teacher should. I learned that my voice was too low to be heard by the people sitting in the back of the classroom. In next few months, I kept on practicing speaking louder and clearer. Soon, many teachers noticed my improvement.”

Only two teachers at Jianguo Elementary School met with their principal individually for in-service training because in some years, only one or two new teachers are hired. Teacher L explained, “I was the only teacher hired in that year, I had four meetings with my principal in my first year after school. The meetings are more casual and less frequent. The training is more focused on providing individual assistance in problem solving rather than developing a set of skills. Here is one teacher’s description of the training. Teacher J stated, “In my first year, I shared my frustrations in managing the students’ behavior with my principal. She observed me teaching and showed me the strategies that I could use. Before winter vacation, I finally gained the confidence of controlling students.”
Six out of 9 teachers at the two schools had off school site training experience.

Three of 5 of the teachers mentioned that they had attended classes at a Municipal Teacher Professional Development School on weekends for a half year. Teacher H shared, “There were 150 new teachers who participated in the workshops at the city professional development school when I was there. The training covered general topics such as, curriculum and instruction, teaching technology, effective management as a homeroom teacher, and so forth.” Teacher M, pointed out the greatest benefit of this type of training, “We were able to make connections with teachers working at other schools through group discussion and group projects. Some of them have been my best teacher buddies for years. We often exchange information and ideas on teaching.” Three other teachers attended new teacher workshops at the district office. Teacher N reported, “Since improvement on English instruction were more and more emphasized at the district, New English teachers in the district from different schools were called to meet at the district office for training from time to time. My principal made sure that my lessons were covered and I was able to attend each training event.”

Observing Lessons

Observing lessons is probably the single activity that new teachers spent the most time on. The rationale of observing lessons is that new teachers need to see the good lessons in order to simulate them in their own classroom and later develop even better ones. At elementary schools in China, new teachers are mandated to observe a certain number of lessons in their first year of teaching. They are exposed not only to great lessons, but different types of lessons and lessons taught by different teachers. In addition, they are engaged on many post observation activities. In the following pages, new
teachers' lesson observations at each of the three schools are compared and discussed based on the 15 teachers’ responses.

All 15 teachers at three study schools stated that they had to complete a number of lesson observations in each term of their first year of teaching to satisfy new teacher in-service training requirement. However, the requirement varies from school to school. At Yuhong Elementary School, a city key school which promotes quality teaching and professional development, first year teachers are required to observe at least 30 lessons in each term or 60 lessons in their first year of teaching. Teachers who teach major subjects such as Chinese, English, and math usually are asked to observe 35 to 40 lessons. Teacher E explained the reason for the difference, “To gain the same level of competent teaching, the major subject teachers needed to watch more lessons because of the width and depth of the curriculum they covered. They also had more prep periods than special subject teachers. Teacher C, a gym teacher, pointed out, “I needed to watch 30 lessons, but I watched a lesson everyday in the first three months of my teaching, which was already 60 lessons.”

At Jianguo Elementary School, new teachers are not required to observe as many lessons as the teachers are at Yuhong Elementary. The number of required observations for teachers went down from 30 lessons to 20 lessons in recent years. Teacher G stated, “About ten years ago, new teachers were mandated to observe at least 30 lessons a term. The principal used to facilitate and supervise lesson observations. Now he is busy with playing politics and making connections to help our school survive the enrollment and financial crises.” However, main subject teachers, Chinese and math teachers, have to
watch 25 lessons per term while other subject teachers only have to do 20 observations according to Teacher H.

New teachers at Xian Elementary School conduct the lowest number of observations comparing to teachers at the other two schools. Among 5 teachers at the school, 2 teachers claimed that they had to observe 20 lessons per term, 2 others 15 lessons per term, and 1 teacher only 10 lessons per term. Teacher L justified the reason why she only had to observe 10 lessons a term by saying, “All teachers at our school had much a heavier work load than teachers at other schools, namely, larger classes and more teaching periods in a week. For example, I had four periods a day. My principal did not want us to be overwhelmed or overworked by allowing me to only observe ten lessons a term.”

At the three schools, lesson observation is an arranged activity. Different types of lessons are available for teachers. Schedules are posted in advance so that teachers can make arrangements to be at the lessons that they are interested in watching. At Yuhong Elementary School, there are more types of lessons available for teachers to be observed by teachers because of the school’s extra resources associated with the city key school status and its strengths in staff development. Each type of the schools is discussed below.

Passing Lessons: These are lessons taught by first or second year teachers. Teacher A explained, “The passing lessons are evaluated by observers and recorded either ‘Pass’ or ‘Fail’ as a part of assessment of a new teacher’s performance.” Every first year teacher is required to observe all passing lessons. Regarding the benefit of watching a passing lesson, Teacher E pointed out, “As a new teacher, I liked to observe other new teachers’ passing lessons because I saw the mistakes I could make as they did in their
lessons.” Observing passing lessons fosters new teachers to interact and collaborate with one another. Teacher D stated, “I still remember that another first teacher came to see me at my first Passing Lesson. She stayed afterwards to cheer me up since I felt I taught a terrible lesson. Ever since then, we have been close and helped each other.”

Modeling Lessons: This type of the lessons is taught by experienced teachers who demonstrate distinguished teaching skills. All new teachers are encouraged to observe model lessons taught in the same subject, or grade levels, or both as they do. By observing modeling lessons, new teachers are exposed to the best practice at beginning of their career. Teacher B shared her experience by saying, “From watching modeling lessons constantly, I have learned much more about teaching than that I had from studying books. Their teaching skills, passion, and dedication have inspired me. This great experience has really fostered my growth as a new teacher.”

Selective Lessons: These lessons are taught by selected teachers from different teacher groups. In each teacher group, teachers first watch one another teach a lesson. They select the best one to represent the group. Selective Lessons at school wide are taught once a term. New teachers can benefit both from teaching and watching this type of lesson. Teacher A stated, “The process of selecting excellent lessons provides an opportunity for new teachers to learn from each teacher in her group. It also helps us relate to one another easily and collaborate with one another.” Teacher F describes, “New teacher’s lessons can be selected as long as they are the best in the group agreed upon by other teachers. Some first year teachers who taught great selective lessons demonstrated great potential. Teacher D claimed, “I watch modeling and selective lessons all the time,
because they are great lessons. They are the resources that I use to gather my teaching ideas.”

Research Lessons: These lessons taught by teachers who have at least 3 years experience to present findings of a group research project. Teacher F explained, “In my group, 15 second grade Chinese teachers meet once a week doing research together. At the end, we prepare a lesson as a group and choose a teacher to teach this lesson.” Every teacher at Yuhong Elementary School teacher is required to watch all research lessons and keep up with updated teaching strategies. Teacher A described “The research lessons are held in a huge conference room because sometimes there are more teachers than students attending the lesson. The post observation conference starts right after the observation. It shows new teachers how to research and implement new ideas in teaching.”

Lessons at Schools in Other Cities: Five out of 6 teachers at Yuhong Elementary School were sent on out-of-city observation trips. Some of them traveled long distances to different parts of China. Teacher A treasured his experience of a 3 day trip to Nanjing and Shanghai with her principal and 5 other English teachers by saying, “On the trip, we were too excited to sleep at night and spent hours discussing the extraordinary lessons that each of us saw during the day.” Teacher B, a Science teacher, has traveled to 4 different cities in Southern China for observations. Teacher D and F both went to Beijing for lesson observations in their first year. Teacher D shared, “I took 2 trips to Beijing to visit schools and watched lessons taught by teachers who participated in the same project as I did.”
At Jianguo and Xian Elementary Schools, new teachers usually observe three types of lessons. Jianguo Elementary School is a very small school whereas Xian Elementary School is a much bigger and district-key school. Although teachers at the two schools observe similar types of lessons, their lesson observations are not exactly the same due to the two schools’ differences in many aspects. In the following, new teachers’ lesson observations at the two schools on three types of lessons are discussed.

Public Lessons or Open Lessons: They are the most typical lessons observed at the two schools. “Public” meant that it is open to all teachers for observation. Since Jianguo Elementary School is a very small school, new teachers actually have chances to see each teacher’s public lesson. Teacher G shared, “When I started teaching, I observed each teacher’s public lesson within two months. I quickly became familiar with all the teachers, grade levels and subjects.” At Xian Elementary School, the teachers usually make sure that they watch the public lessons taught in their subject and grade level. It is worthwhile to observe the public lessons because “Each teacher spent great efforts and time on preparing a public lesson fully to showcase his or her knowledge teaching skills,” Teacher K stated.

Competition Lessons: This type of lessons is usually organized by district office. At each competition, many teachers showed up to watch contestants teach lessons and a panel of judges to comment on each lesson and select winners. There are different types of teaching competitions, for example, “Young Teacher’s Teaching Competition,” “English Teacher’s Competition.” Xian Elementary Teachers expressed their enthusiasm in watching competition lessons. Teacher K said, “I loved to be a spectator at teaching contests. I could learn from both watching lessons and listen to the judges’ comments on
each lesson.” “In one competition, I saw contestants were only given two hours to prepare a lesson and teach it to a class of students whom they never met before. I was amazed by the winners’ effective teaching and behavior management skills,” Teacher H said.

Lessons at Other Schools: Many teachers at the two schools participated in lesson observations that were organized by the district and held at any school. Teacher J explained, “We often receive notices of observation events from the district office and the City Bureau of Education. Our principal encouraged us to observe the lessons at other schools by switching our preps so that we could have the whole morning free.” Teacher G explained, “These lessons were either the best public lessons taught or the lessons taught by the best teachers at a school.” Xian Elementary School’s new teachers participated in lesson observations not only at schools in the district but also in the city. Teacher M shared, “In my first term of teaching, I went to observe lessons three times at other district-key schools in the city. Our school as a district-key school established collaboration relationship with other schools like our school.”

At the three schools, lesson observations do not end when the teachers finish watching lessons. There are two main post-observation activities that are required to be accomplished afterwards. First, new teachers have to reflect on each lesson that they have observed by keeping a log in a notebook. From the teachers’ viewpoints, keeping observation notes is a great way to collect new ideas on best practices. Teacher D said, “I recorded tips or anything unique that I observed in a lesson. I sometimes flipped the notebooks through to look for ideas when I was planning my own lessons.” Similarly, Teacher F explained, “Writing notes after each observation is a learning process. I
compared the lessons that I saw with my own lessons to find the areas that I need to make improvements.”

The observation notebooks are checked and documented as evidences that new teachers’ in-service training requirements are met or not. At Yuhong School, “Notebooks were checked by specialists from the curriculum office regularly. The number of observation logs should match the number of lessons that a new teacher was required to observe,” Teacher E reported. Teacher L explained how this was handled at Xian Elementary School, “The notebook was evaluated at the end of the year. New teachers received one of the three ratings: high, medium, or low in this area as part of annual performance.” At Jianguo Elementary School, the 4 teachers mentioned that they had to turn in their observation notebooks to the curriculum director at the end of the year.

Secondly, after each observation, all new teachers are mandated to attend post observation conferences at the three schools. At Yuhong Elementary School, “After watching a lesson, observers will gather in a big conference room immediately to discuss the lessons,” explained Teacher D. Teacher J from Jianguo Elementary School described, “An observation lesson usually lasted for one period. The post observation conference would take place in the very next period when everyone remembered the lesson clearly.” At Xian Elementary School, “A follow-up lesson evaluation would be held at the end of the day after students left. In this way, all observers could be at the meeting to make comments,” said Teacher M.

All 15 teachers expressed that they benefited greatly from attending the post observation conferences. Here are three great responses made by the teachers from three schools respectively. “I always paid attention to the teacher’s self reflection on the lesson
taught. I learned from their first hand experiences how to make a good lesson plan and execute it by dealing with all types of questions and problems that appeared in the lesson,” Teacher B stated. Teacher K pointed out, “I benefited more from listening to other observers’ comments than the observations itself. The observations would not have had the same impact on my first year teaching if we had not analyzed the lessons’ strengths and weaknesses at the meetings.” “At the post observation meetings, every observer had to provide feedback and engage in discussion, which forced me to think hard and interact with other teachers. By doing so, I became better and better at critiquing lessons including my own,” Teacher M stated.

Teaching Lessons Observed By Colleagues

In addition to attending workshops to develop professional skills and observing lessons, beginning teachers have to teach a lesson or lessons. The lesson/lessons are being observed and evaluated to satisfy the in-service training requirement for new teachers. At Yuhong Elementary School, this type of lesson is called “Passing Lessons.” At the two other schools, it is called “Public lessons.” In other elementary schools, it may be referred as “Report Lessons” or “Open Lessons.” Yuhong Elementary School not only named the lesson that new teachers required differently from that of the two other schools, but also held higher evaluation standards. The process of teaching and evaluating a passing or public lesson at the three schools are discussed below.

At Yuhong Elementary School, new teachers teach a passing lesson only once a term, however, they treat teaching a passing lesson very seriously. Teacher B explained, “As new teachers we did not want to be embarrassed in front of our colleagues by teaching a bad lesson if we could not impress them with a great one.” Every first year
teacher spent many hours and energy on preparing a passing lesson. Teacher E recalled, “I started preparing my first passing lesson a month prior to the scheduled teaching time. I planned the lesson, mock taught it three times before I officially did it in front of more than 20 teachers.” She added, “It was painful to go through teaching and revising over and over again. However, it was the best way to learn how to teach. I felt that after teaching each passing lesson, my skills and confidence went up to higher level.”

Each passing lesson is evaluated by all observers based on standard and rigorous procedures established at Yuhong Elementary School. Every aspect of the lesson, such as objectives, teaching strategies, behavior management skills, and so forth, as well as the teacher’s attitudes, speech and attire are being assessed. Teacher E described, “Every observer had to score a passing lesson using a comprehensive check list at the end of a post observation conference. All observers’ scores are collected and averaged to decide if the teacher passed or failed.” New teacher’s greatest fear is failing a passing lesson, which meant that he or she has to teach it all over again. Teacher D explains, “After failing two times, he or she will not have a regular teaching assignment for next year and has to take a non-teaching position, such as, an assistant librarian.”

Teachers at Jianguo Elementary School reported are required to teach at least two public lessons in a term in their first year of teaching. Teacher J remembered, “I have taught two public lessons in my first year of teaching although my first lesson went successfully.” Teacher G recalled, “I was asked to teach three times, probably because I did not have formal training in education.” The 4 teachers at Jianguo Elementary School also spent a lot of time and put great efforts on teaching their first two public lessons but their preparation was not as intensely evaluated as the teachers at Yuhong School.
Teacher H recalled, “To get ready to teach my first public lesson, I worked with several new teachers. After school, we stayed late to plan lessons and listen to one another’s simulation lessons. We polished one another’s lesson. When we finished working, we had dinner together, which was fun and relaxing.” Teacher G stated, “A math teacher picked several mistakes that I had made after I practiced teaching my first public lesson to her class.”

After each observation, observers make suggestions on the public lesson to help the new teacher improve. When asked if there was a pass or fail grade for the lesson, Teacher J answered, “No”. However, she shared that she repeated teaching her first public lesson by saying, “My first public lesson did not go well. Based on the observers’ comments, I revised the lesson plan and taught it again. No one really forced me to do so, and I did it to improve myself. My second public lesson was better received than the first one.”

At Xian Elementary School, most new teachers teach one public lesson a term. There were cases that a new teacher taught two public lessons or a new teacher taught the same public lessons twice in their first year. Here are the examples. Teacher L shared her experience, “I taught my second public lesson twice. First, I taught it to the teachers and administrators at my school. They recommended it to the district as one of the best three public lessons of my school. I taught it again to teachers from other schools to watch.” A Chinese teacher, Teacher M, taught two public lessons in her first term, too. She stated, “A few leading Chinese teachers strongly suggested that new teachers teach at least two public lessons a term to enhance their skills in order to maintain the school’s high quality level of Chinese instruction.”
Teachers at the Xian Elementary School view the process of planning and teaching their first public lesson as a learning experience. New teachers are not graded as failing or passing their public lessons, however, many of them are willing to teach their public lessons again based on the comprehensive suggestions they have received from all observers. Teacher L recalled, “My first public lesson was good, but I made changes based on the great feedback provided. It became even better when I taught it again in front of our curriculum director. She helped me polish the lesson for the third time before I represented it as one of the best public lessons at my school.”

In addition to Passing/Public lessons, Competition Lessons is the other type of lessons that some new teachers have taught in front of their colleagues. Seven out of 15 interviewed teachers had competition experiences. Regarding teaching competition at different levels, Teacher O described, “Any teacher can participate in a school level teaching lesson competition. Only the winner is selected to compete at the district level. The finalists of each district will enter citywide competition.” Teacher B talked about the importance of participating and winning teaching competitions to both a teacher’s professional and materials status. “Winning teaching contests would add credits to a teacher’s records and increased the chances to be promoted to the next teaching rank sooner. In my first year, I participated in a teaching contest and was a third place winner.”

Three teachers shared their experience of teaching or trying out for competition lessons. Teacher A recalled, “In my first year, I competed with other new teachers at my school and my district. I continued at city level against 70 other teachers. Thirteen teachers won prizes. I was not one of them.” Teacher E participated in a group teaching
contest held at the school. She recalled, “In the second half of my first year, I represented my group to compete with representatives from other groups. Although I taught this lesson, it was a whole group’s efforts. My group and I received awards because the lesson won second place.”

Two teachers’ experiences of teaching competition lessons at Jianguo Elementary School were different from those of teachers at Xian Elementary School. Teacher H remembered, “At my school, we did not have school wide competition. I was chosen by my principal to participate in the district ‘Young Teachers Teaching Competition.’ It was an honor and a great learning experience for me, even though I did not win at the district level.” Teacher I shared, “At the district level, most competitions were in teaching Chinese and Math. I did enter a citywide English teaching contest, which was rarely organized. I was called to talk to people about my lesson plan, but never heard from them again.”

Most new teachers seek teaching competitions for extra opportunities to practice teaching rather than wining prizes or honors. Teacher E at Yuhong Elementary School entered many contests whenever she was allowed in her first 2 years of teaching. She said, “I always challenged myself to participate in as many teaching competitions as I could. To prepare such lessons, I read more extensively and reached out to more teachers for advice. The extra effort on planning, rehearsing, teaching, and reflecting on such lessons helped me grow quickly.”

In conclusion, the 15 teachers’ responses provided rich information regarding their first year in-service training at the three schools. New teachers attended workshops or training sessions to obtain professional skills that they needed in daily practice. They
also observed a certain number of lessons and certain types of lessons to recognize the best practice in order to acquire them eventually. Furthermore, they all taught passing/public lessons observed by their colleagues. The feedback provided on these lessons has helped them make steady and speedy progress. In-service training with emphasis on the three core activities is a fundamental training component in the beginning teacher induction. In the rest part of this chapter, mentoring as last but not least of the three components is discussed.

Mentoring

The teachers from the three schools were asked to discuss their mentoring experiences in the first year of teaching. Not all teachers had a mentor. Thirteen out of the 15 who had mentors answered subsequent questions. Their responses were coded in the chart. The analysis of the data was categorized in the four areas as listed in Table 6. Based on the data, the teachers’ mentoring experiences at the three schools are analyzed and compared in the following areas: (a) Mentors: masters, partner teachers, or group leaders, (b) The length of mentorship, and (c) Three most common mentoring activities.
### Table 6

**Mentoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T*</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Interacting</th>
<th>Observing</th>
<th>Being Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answering all questions</td>
<td>3 times a week</td>
<td>Twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provided immediate help</td>
<td>2 times a week</td>
<td>Twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discussed everything about students</td>
<td>2 hrs. a day</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Checked and corrected my plans</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Discussed problems and plans</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Helped me solve problems</td>
<td>2 times a week</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Partner teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Understood me and helped me with everything</td>
<td>One lesson a day</td>
<td>Once a week, once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Helped me solve and prevent problems</td>
<td>4 times a week</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Group leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Understood me and helped me immediately</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>Did not mention being observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Group leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Trouble shot for me</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>Did not mention being observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Group leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discussed my issues at group meetings</td>
<td>Once or twice</td>
<td>Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Helped me solve problems</td>
<td>2/3 times a month</td>
<td>2/3 times a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Partner teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gave me straight forward suggestions</td>
<td>2 times a month</td>
<td>Several times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T* (Teacher)

**Mentors: Masters, Partner Teachers, Group Leaders**

Thirteen of the 15 teachers interviewed from the three schools considered that they had a mentor or two mentors. Two teachers at Jianguo Elementary Schools reported that they did not have a mentor. Mentors are called differently at different schools or by different teachers at the same school. At Yuhong Elementary School, the 6 teachers always greeted their mentors as masters following the rules of a master apprentice contract. “The contract indicates master and apprentices’ responsibilities and the tasks they need to complete together. It is developed by administrators and signed by both a master and an apprentice,” explained Teacher A. The relationship between a master and an apprentice at the school is very traditional and similar to the one at a factory. Teacher
E stated, “Apprentices must respect and obey masters with respect and politeness. Masters are responsible for their apprentice’s professional development and conduct. When a new teacher is good, his or her master is credited for bringing him or her up right.”

At Yuhong Elementary School, beginning teachers have the freedom of choosing their own master. One teacher selected a master who had the same teaching assignments as she did. Teacher A stated, “She was able to show me teaching crafts step by step in the way shoe makers train their apprentices because we were teaching the same content.” However, 5 out of the 6 teachers chose a master because of their expertise. Teacher E shared, “I taught first grade students math in my first year, but I asked a sixth grade math teacher to be my master because she was one of the best math teachers in the city.” Teacher C, a gym teacher, stated, “My master was a first grade Chinese teacher who had 30 years of experience working with lower grade students. She was a good match for me because I have had no prior experience working with children. She helped me understand children and satisfy their needs.”

Seven teachers out of the 9 teachers at Jianguo and Xian Elementary schools had mentors who were arranged for them. They called their mentors differently, such as masters, partner teachers, or group leaders. Two teachers considered their partner teachers as their mentors. The name of partner teacher refers to the teachers who teach the same subject at the same grade level. Teacher H described, “My principal paired me with an experienced partner teacher. We each taught a first grade class. I learned almost everything about teaching from her.” Teacher O explained, “My partner teacher and I taught two math classes in the third grade. She had 20 years of teaching experience and
was a person whom I felt comfortable with asking questions at any time. She was a great
mentor to me.”

Another 2 teachers from the two other schools called their mentors masters
although they did not have a formal contract. Teacher N pointed out, “The principal
arranged a master for me. We both taught English but at different grade levels. She
shared with me different teaching methods, as well as tips on how to communicate with
parents.” The other teacher had two masters. Teacher J explained, “I had two masters.
They both were great teachers. My principal had each one of them working with me a
year right before they retired. I was the lucky one who inherited the ideas, strategies, and
materials that they accumulated in their 30 years of teaching.”

Three teachers at Xian Elementary School claimed that their group leader played
the role of mentoring them. Teacher L explained, “My principal introduced my group
leader to me on the first day of work. The group leader and I worked in the same office
and she helped me whenever she could. More importantly, she encouraged other
members of the group to support me.” Teacher M said, “I considered my group leader as
my mentor. She helped me deal with all kinds of problems and made sure that I
accomplished all tasks.” Teacher K claimed, “My group leader acted as my mentor
temporarily for a year. She asked another teacher to mentor me before she became too
busy with other responsibilities.”

*Mentoring Periods*

When asked how long their mentorship lasted, the teachers at Yuhong Elementary
School reported that they were required to have a 5 year mentorship whereas the teachers
at the two other schools stated they needed only 3 years. Teacher E reasoned, “In the past,
elementary schools had 5 grade levels. A new teacher had to learn how to teach all the
grade levels in the first 5 years. Therefore, he or she needs a mentor for 5 years.” Teacher
F stated, “For new factory workers and teachers at other schools, the apprenticeship or
mentorship is only 3 years. At my school, it is a tradition that new teachers must finish 5
years of apprenticeship. Personally, I feel that I need the 5 years.”

The 7 teachers at the two other schools claimed that it took them 3 years to
complete their mentorship. Four teachers had the same mentor for 3 years. Teacher H
recalled, “My partner teacher mentored me for 3 years while we taught grade 1 to 3
together.” Teacher N stated, “I had a master for a year in my first year of teaching. She
will continue working with me in the next two years.” Three of the 7 teachers have
changed or will change mentors. Teacher J stated: “I had 2 different masters in 3 years.
They had different personalities and teaching techniques, but both of them were great
mentors to me.” Teacher K remembered, “My group leader took care of me as a master in
my first year of teaching. Then an experienced teacher who had more time mentored me
in the next 2 years.” Teacher L said, “My group leader is my mentor now. Next year, I
would like to switch to someone who is not as busy as my group leader.”

Mentoring Activities

“What were the main activities that you and your mentors did together during
your first year of teaching to foster your professional growth?” Thirteen of the teachers at
the three schools answered this question. From their responses, the following three
common activities that they engaged in were identified. First, mentors helped protégés
solve problems in teaching and planning. Second, protégés observed their mentors teach
lessons. Third, mentors observed and critiqued the lessons that their protégés taught.
The most common mentoring activity is that mentors help protégés solve problems and plan lessons. Many teachers illustrated the frequencies of their interactions with their mentors and the different ways that their mentors assisted them. At Yuhong Elementary School 2 teachers and their masters worked in the same office. Teacher A described her interaction with her master, “My master and I do many things together, such as planning lessons and grading students’ work. She is even there when I meet with my students and parents. She lends a hand to me whenever she feels it is necessary.” “In the past 5 years, I was able to get immediate help from my master at any time since we worked in the same teacher’s office and our classrooms are next to each other.” Teacher B emphasized.

The 4 other teachers and their masters worked at Yuhong School worked in different office, but they were able meet frequently and regularly. Teacher C stressed: “In my first year of teaching, my master and I supervised her class during lunch period and had our lunch alone afterwards. During that hour, I asked her questions and reflected on my teaching.” Teacher D pointed out, “My master checks my lesson plans regularly. Sometimes we stay after school working on them if she sees that I need to make changes.” Teacher E stressed, “I met twice a week with my master in my first year of teaching. We usually discuss the problems that I encountered in teaching and planning.” Teacher F said, “My master and I did not see each other everyday, but she called me almost everyday to check on me. She would come to my office immediately if there was something urgent I needed to discuss with her.”

At Jianguo Elementary school, mentors and new teachers are always partner teachers. They teach the same content, work in the same office, teach in the classrooms
that are adjacent to each other. This arrangement enables protégés to reach out to their mentors immediately. Teacher H recalled, “Whenever I had a question, I could ask my partner teacher right there in the office or go to her classroom to get an immediate answer.” Teacher J stated, “I worked with two mentors (partner teachers) one after the other in my first 3 years. One of them would wait for me to ask her questions and took time and explain to me clearly and slowly. The other would give me advice whenever she felt that I needed it. They both helped me with problem solving and planning.”

All 5 teachers at Xian Elementary School constantly interacted with their mentors in their shared office. Three of them had their group leaders as their mentor. The group leaders are also effective mentors because of their excellent teaching and leadership skills. Teacher K said, “When I asked questions, my group leader could understand what I meant immediately. She was always able to offer me solutions.” Teacher L mentioned, “My group leader was my trouble-shooter when I had a crisis. She was very dependable and experienced, which was the reason we elected her to be our leader,” shared Teacher M. “My group leader always encouraged me to share my difficulties in teaching and planning in our group meetings. In this way, I would get many suggestions instead of only one.”

The 2 other teachers conversed with their mentors daily. Teacher N stated, “My master and I always engaged in open discussion in the teacher’s office. When I asked her how to solve problems, she did not only do the talk but also walked me through each step of solving the problems.” Teacher O expressed: “When I shared my lesson plans with my partner teacher, she always pointed out my weaknesses frankly. Our communication was straightforward and very effective.”
The second most common mentoring activity is that beginning teachers observe their mentor or mentors’ lessons. Seven teachers reported that they observed their mentor frequently and regularly. Teacher C explained, “In my first year, I spent 2 hours in my master’s classroom daily so that I would quickly become familiar with young children’s characteristics since my undergraduate study was not in education.” Teacher J reported, “I watched my master teach a lesson each day. I hardly skipped a day.” Teacher H recalled: “When I first started teaching, I watched my partner teacher teach two math lessons and two Chinese lessons each week.” Teacher A mentioned, “I observed my master three times a week.” Teacher F stated, “I watched my master once or twice a week when she was teaching a new lesson.” “Before teaching a difficult lesson, I would see my partner teacher teach it first. I did this probably several times a month in my first year,” remembered Teacher O.

Six teachers expressed that their observations occurred only occasionally due to different reasons. Here are their explanations. Teacher D pointed out, “My master was not teaching first grade classes as I did. I watched her teach from time to time, but not as often as I watched other first grade teachers.” Teacher E told her story, “My master was a sixth grade teacher while I was teaching first grade. I did not observe her frequently, but I attended all her model lessons and other lessons.” Three teachers only observed their mentors once or twice their first year. For instance, Teacher L shared, “My mentor is a group leader with many responsibilities. She has never made arrangements for me to watch her teach. I only watched her teach public lessons twice in my first year.”

The third most common activity that takes place during the first year mentorship is that the mentors observe protégés’ lessons. Eight teachers from the three schools had
the experience of being observed by their mentors. At Yuhong Elementary School, all 6 teachers reported their masters watched them teach lessons and provided them with feedback. Two teachers stated they were observed by masters as often as two times a week in their first year. Another 2 teachers were observed once a week. The last 2 teachers did not mention exactly how many times their masters saw them teach lessons.

Four Yuhong School teachers commented on how their masters’ observations and feedback on the lessons fostered their growth in instruction. Teacher A said, “My master observed me very carefully. She even paid attention to the facial expressions that I made. She taught me all the subtle gestures that I could use to encourage students’ participation in learning.” “My master pointed out that I spent too much time on reviewing previous knowledge before I introduced a new lesson. She recommended that the review part not be longer than 3 or 5 minutes,” recalled Teacher B. Teacher D mentioned, “My master taught me how to control my emotions when I felt frustrated with students’ learning and behavior problems.” Teacher F stated, “After each observation, my master would go over what I said in the lesson sentence by sentence to show me how to deliver instruction in simple and precise language to elementary students.”

The teachers at Jianguo Elementary Schools also talked about how often their partner teachers observed them and the effects of the observation. “My partner teacher came to my classroom almost daily in my first month of teaching, then at least once a week in the rest of the year. She watched me teach all the important lessons and helped me make revisions” said Teacher H. She continued, “She either watched me teach or checked the way that I managed my students’ behavior. She provided me with specific strategies to help my students. She even knew most of my students’ names.” Teacher J
reported, "In my first year, I often asked my master to watch me teach a lesson that contained difficult concepts and skills. She was always generous in term of sharing her secret tips that could help me deal with the weaknesses of the lesson."

Compared to the teachers at the two schools mentioned above, the 5 teachers at Xian Elementary School were observed the fewest times by their mentors. Teacher N's master watched her teach the most, "...two or three times a month in my first year. She taught me how to organize activities to motivate students to learn English," said Teacher N. Teacher O stated: "My partner teacher saw me teach several times in my first year. She taught me other approaches to teach the same concepts and skills." Teacher M described, "My mentor, who was also my group leader, came to see me teach twice along with other members in my group. Afterwards, she and every group member critiqued my lesson." Two other teachers did not mention that their group leaders or mentors had ever observed them.

Mentorship was provided to 13 teachers of the 15 teachers interviewed in their first year of teaching at the three schools. At Yuhong Elementary School, mentorship took the form of apprenticeship with formal contracts. Beginning teachers called their mentors masters. At the Jianjuo and Xian Elementary schools, the mentorship was conducted not as formally as at Yuhong School. Mentors were partner teachers or group leaders. Most Yuhong School new teachers prefer to choose masters who were expert or master teachers whereas new teachers at the two other schools tended to choose teachers who taught the same content. The mentorship lasted 5 years at Yuhong Elementary School, 3 years at the two other schools. Problem solving, mentors' observing protégés'
lessons, and protégés’ observing mentors’ lessons were the three most common mentoring activities.

Summary

Three elementary schools were involved in this study. The similarities and the differences of the schools in four aspects were recorded in the charts and discussed. There were a total of 15 teachers who participated in this study. Their background information, such as, degree, experience, the grade level they taught in the first year, the number of class/classes they taught, and the number of students they had in each class were classified in categories and described. This study focused on the 15 teachers’ first year induction in the three areas: new teacher orientation, in-service training, and mentoring. The teachers’ responses to interview questions were categorized and analyzed. The commonalities and differences among the three schools in beginning teacher induction were identified and synthesized to answer the research question: “How are beginning teachers inducted at three elementary schools in China?”
Chapter V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Most beginning teachers who are not provided with quality induction programs have difficulties meeting the challenges that they face in their first year of teaching. It is urgent that we implement effective induction programs to satisfy novice teachers’ multiple needs. Studies have been done to investigate Chinese teacher induction programs and any reports on websites also reflect the current practice at different schools in China. Previous research and practice has guided the researcher to develop the methodology of this study to further examine how elementary school teachers were inducted in China.

The researcher interviewed 15 teachers at three elementary schools in Baoding, Hebei Province in China. The participating teachers’ responses were classified into categories to identify the main training activities taking place during new teacher orientation, beginning teacher in-service training, and mentoring periods. The common and different practices among schools in these three components were analyzed. In this chapter, the researcher concluded the three unique characteristics that were reflected in all three components and at all three schools to answer the research question, “How are the elementary teachers inducted at three different schools in Baoding, China?”

Common Characteristics of the Teacher Induction Programs

The first common characteristic of the teacher induction programs at the three schools was observing lessons and teaching lesson observed by colleagues were two core training activities for beginning teachers. Three training activities were identified in each
of the induction components based on the 15 teachers’ responses. Furthermore, observing lessons and being observed while teaching lessons were two main activities that occurred in every induction component at the three elementary schools in Baoding, China. It can be simply said that Chinese teachers learned teaching from observing and teaching lessons themselves. This finding confirmed the results generated by Paine et al. (2006) based on their research conducted at middle schools and high schools in Shanghai, China. Paine et al. identified five dominant induction activities and three of them were about new teachers’ observing lessons and being observed teaching lessons. In addition to identifying the main training activities, this study described how these two main training activities took place during new teacher orientation, in-service training, and mentoring periods at the three schools.

All 15 teachers expressed that they had extensive lesson observations in their first year of teaching. During new teacher orientation, Yuhong Elementary School teachers observed lessons on DVDs and lessons taught by expert teachers and the other new teachers in their small group. The two other school teachers also observed many other teachers’ lessons when they were not substituting. In-service training required all new teachers to observe a certain number of lessons at the three schools with more lessons required at Yuhong School than the two other schools. Observing a mentor’s lesson was also one of the dominant activities that took place during mentoring period at three schools.

The other main induction activity was novice teachers being observed by their colleagues while teaching lessons. Two types of lessons were taught for observation purposes. Teachers at Yuhong Elementary School simulated teaching lessons in front of
their trainers and other new teachers in their grade level group. During the first year of
teaching, Yuhong Elementary School teachers taught passing lessons while teachers at
other schools taught public lessons as required. The observers evaluated the novice
teachers’ performance and provided feedback for them to make improvements. The two
major induction activities took place in the classrooms and were closely tied to teaching.

The second common characteristic of the teacher induction programs at the three
schools was new teachers’ interacting and collaborating with colleges during all training
activities. At the three schools, new teachers constantly interacted and collaborated with
other new teachers, veteran teachers and administrators in all training activities and their
daily practices. All the teachers had very similar interaction and collaboration with their
colleagues as Li Mei, a teacher in Shanghai, did in her first year. “Li Mei worked with a
mentor, a group in her school that planned lessons together, a research group that enabled
her to observe others’ teaching, and district level new teacher seminar groups. She cannot
imagine entering the profession without this wide range of guides and opportunities to
view and talk about teaching” (Paine, 2006, p.1).

The rich data collected in this study provided insight on how new teachers
interacted and collaborated with veteran teachers and their peers in their first year
induction period at three different elementary schools. During the new teacher summer
orientation, beginning teachers at Yuhong School worked in small groups which
consisted of teachers who were going to teach the same subjects. They engaged in
activities such as planning lessons together and observing each others’ lessons. After 6
weeks of working together everyday, new teachers bonded and connected with their
trainers, expert veteran teachers at the school.
At the two other schools, new teachers were oriented while substituting lessons when school was in session. With reduced teaching periods and responsibilities, they spent a great amount of time on shadowing a teacher, observing lessons, and meeting with administrators for planning and training. This period could last from 3 months to a whole year before they were finally assigned to a regular teaching assignment. By going through substituting, new teachers had opportunities to associate with almost all the teachers and even establish closer collegial relationships. The administrators made sure that they perfectly fit into a teaching research group in which they were going to be members.

In-service training was the induction phase when the beginning teachers maximized their interactions and collaborations with all faculty members by participating in mandated group activities. These groups had specific objectives, timetables, and leadership to ensure all members cooperation in order to be productive. At the three schools, novice and veteran teachers who taught the same grade level and same subjects worked together planning lessons. Therefore, this group was called lesson plan group. More teachers who were teaching the same subject on different grade levels researched different curriculum and instructional issues as a teaching research group. In addition, novice teachers with fewer than 2 years of experience formed their own groups, communicated and shared ideas among themselves. At Yuhong School, this group was called “30 and Younger.” It was the most organized new teacher group among that of the three schools.

In this study, the researcher purposely collected data about the participating school and teachers. The background information yielded interesting information that
explained how teacher induction operated at given schools and were coherent with the structure of school organization, teachers' assignments and working schedule. The three schools had very similar organizational structures which provided sufficient time, convenient meeting places, and a group leader for teachers to work together. Every teacher was scheduled to teach only two or three periods a day or a maximum 18 lessons a week. They had two or three preparation periods during the day and an extra working hour after students left. The total of teaching and preparation times was about equal.

During the preparation time, the following collaboration took place: informal meetings at the office, observations and debriefing of the observations, lesson plan meetings (once a week at Yuhong, and every other week at the two other schools), research group meetings (once every other week at the three schools), and whole faculty meeting (once a week).

Mentoring enabled new teachers at the three schools to interact one on one with an exemplary teacher intensively to enhance skills and solve problems. At the three schools, most mentors and novice teachers were working in the same office, having the same teaching assignment, and teaching in classrooms that were next to each other. Their interaction could take place any time during the day and their discussion could be on any topics. The effective communication cooperation between novice teachers and their mentors was a crucial factor that teaching crafts could pass successfully from one generation of teachers to another in China.

The third common characteristics of the teacher induction programs was new teachers' learning on developing professional knowledge and skills in a specific subject/subjects. Beginning teachers' induction at the three schools was focused on developing professional skills and enhancing knowledge and abilities in effectively
teaching specific content areas. “In China, it is believed that novices should develop a deep understanding of subject matter, curriculum, and professional ethics, as suggested by their centralized curriculum and subject based teaching” (Preus 2007, p.1). Britton et al (2003) concluded that new teachers at middle school and high school in Shanghai received intensive training in their subject area. This study also found that new teachers at elementary school level in Baoding were also expected to spend considerable time becoming familiar with what instructional techniques were most effective for helping children master the skills that were appropriate for them to learn.

During the new teacher orientation, new teachers at the three schools not only became familiar with the policies, rules, curriculum, and general teaching strategies, but also learned how to observe lessons, how to plan lessons and apply specific teaching techniques to teach certain lessons in the curriculum. They planned lessons and mock taught these lessons. The new orientation was not just a ceremony. It was a training camp or pre-service on site training. It was not only a week long or 10 days, but lasted weeks or months at the three schools. It provided sufficient time and opportunities for new teachers to develop, practice and acquire professional skills.

During the in-service training period, teachers attended workshops aimed at developing specific skills that competent teachers demonstrate in their daily practice, such as lesson planning, handwriting, speaking, and so forth. The instructional skills and content knowledge were developed through observations and teacher group activities. Through observations, new teachers learned various teaching strategies and content knowledge from different teachers. In group activities, they had opportunities to study
curriculum standards and explore different ways to teach difficult concepts and skills effectively.

At the three schools, mentoring played an important role in guiding new teachers to go through curriculum content because most mentors were assigned to teach the same subject and grade level as novice teachers were. Side by side, they helped new teachers plan each important lesson in the curriculum, develop every step in a lesson, and acquire specific techniques. In addition, they demonstrated to new teachers how to handle unexpected situations and how to keep improve teaching by constantly self reflecting and studying. After 3 or 5 years of mentorship, all the new teachers became independent and competent. “We find that many apprentices excel their masters and they have developed the habit of self-improvement in teaching. At that point, we feel that we can say that the process of teacher preparation has been accomplished” (Ma, 1992, p. 6).

Differences in Teacher Induction Practice among the Three Schools

Wong (2005) defined that all effective induction programs have the three basic parts:

1. Comprehensive. There is an organization or structure to the program consisting of many activities and many people who are involved.

2. Coherent. The various activities and people are logically connected to each other.

3. Sustained. The comprehensive and coherent program continues for many years.

(p 47)

The teacher induction programs at the three elementary schools had the three common characteristics as mentioned above, but they were comprehensive, coherent and
sustained to different extents. A school’s history, status, resources, student population and teachers’ background affected the ways that its teacher induction programs’ function and quality. In the following, the different extents of effectiveness among the induction programs at the three schools are discussed within the school context.

Yuhong Elementary School is one out of 30 elementary schools in the city. There are only 10 schools in the province that can compete with the school. With great resources and privileges that the school entitled, new teachers at the Yuhong School were provided with the most organized and comprehensive training activities. They interacted with the most talented faculty members. They were also expected to meet more rigorous requirements that were cohesive with the school’s higher performance level. As a result, after 5 years of intensive and extensive training, almost all of the beginning teachers became confident, competent and competitive teachers.

Xian Elementary School is one of the two best schools out of 10 schools in the district. Due to overcrowded situation, teachers had heavier working loads and larger classes than teachers at the two other schools. To meet new teachers’ needs and fit into their busy schedule, the induction programs at the school were designed to be comprehensive, yet efficient and flexible. Beginning teacher’s learning was emphasized on the skills and knowledge acquired rather than a certain number of training hours reached and observations made. The induction programs were very coherent with the school’s high instructional standards. New teachers worked very closely with other teachers in their groups which had strong group leaders who were expert teachers. New teachers participated in very structured and sustained activities that lasted at least three years.
Jianguo School is a regular community school. Eight schools out of 10 elementary schools have the similar status in the district. Administrators are constantly caught with the schools financial and enrollment issues and struggling to keep the school open. Teacher induction was highlighted by the unique mentorship that took place between partner teachers one with experience one without. At Jianguo School, new teachers were able to interact with all teachers constantly and closely because of the small size of faculty. For the same reason, new teachers were able to observe all teachers’ lessons and be observed teaching lessons more frequently than new teachers at other schools. Most of the activities for new teachers took place in their first year of teaching.

As the conclusion of this study, it could be said beginning teachers at the three elementary schools in China mainly learned how to teach through observing lessons and teaching lessons being observed. New teachers interacted and collaborated both with their peers and veteran teachers constantly for professional purposes. They were involved in different types of teacher group activities that took place in teacher offices during the day and after school. Their learning was focused on developing specific professional skills that they needed in daily practice. Knowledge and strategies in teaching a particular subject were also being studied intensively over the 3 to 5 years of the induction period. To different extent, the three schools’ induction programs reflected the elements of effectiveness: comprehensive, coherent and sustained.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this research study, the recommendation was made for further research, policy and practice.
**Recommendation for Educational Research**

1. The focus of this research was on three main components, new teacher orientation, beginning teacher in-service training, and mentoring. Some smaller induction activities were mentioned by the interviewed teachers and reports on the internets such as reading a book, writing professional articles, reporting an action research project and taking college courses, could be studied in the future research.

2. This study can be duplicated to analyze data collected from a larger pool of subjects representing teachers from schools in various regions in China to conclude the findings that have higher generalization power.

3. This study was conducted mainly using qualitative research methods. In the future, empirical, quantitative research can be conducted to examine the correlation between beginning teacher induction programs and students' achievements at schools in China.

4. This study also can be continued by interviewing the same subjects with a new set of structured interview questions to investigate the teachers' perception on the teacher induction programs' effectiveness and their impact on job satisfaction and attrition.

5. An international comparative study can be developed based on this research. A duplicated study can be conducted in the United States. Its findings can be compared to the results of this study to examine how elementary teachers are inducted differently in these two countries.

**Recommendation for Education Practice**

1. Districts and schools should design beginning teacher induction programs that include orientation, in-service training and mentoring components. Each component
plays an important role in the process of developing a competent teacher. The rules, structures, and activities of the training activities for each component should be established and implemented.

2. Learning how to teach by observing lessons and actually teaching lessons should be placed at the center of three training components. Novice teachers should be provided opportunities to observe and discuss many lessons taught by different teachers, especially by exemplary teachers’ lessons. They should also invite their colleagues to watch their teaching lessons periodically and be provided with feedback. New teachers learn teaching better by watching lessons and teaching lessons than being lectured.

3. Novice teachers and veteran teachers’ interaction and collaboration should take place throughout the induction periods by working in groups. New teachers should associate with other teachers who teach the same subject and same grade level in groups planning lessons together and research effective teaching strategies and techniques. The group work should be woven into teachers’ daily schedules instead of being a once in a while event. The objectives, leadership, tasks, activities, meeting schedules, members’ responsibilities and accountabilities should be prescribed.

4. Teacher induction programs should emphasize new teachers’ development on general skills in the profession, subject related knowledge and teaching methods, and understanding of students’ developmental characteristics throughout new teacher orientation, in-service training and mentoring activities. Specific skills should be identified and aligned with training and practicing activities. The specific teaching subjects and content should be identified and studied in group activities.
5. The accountabilities and responsibilities of new teachers, experienced teachers and administrators who are involved in teacher induction activities should be specified, valuated and documented.

Recommendations for Educational Policies

The recommendation made above is meant to improve current teacher induction practices in the United States. However, it is very important to be aware that elementary schools in China and America are very different in terms of organization structure and teachers assignments and schedule. As Britton et al. (2003) mentioned, “We already are seeing some examples of induction that could be adapted to refine or supplement current U.S. induction programs. But attention must be given to the context of programs abroad when considering how to use them in the U.S. Some practices may not be appropriate in the U.S.” (p.47)

The three conditions that are featured at elementary schools in China are vital to the induction programs function and success. First, new teachers in China only teach two or three periods out of six periods a day and an extra working hour after students leave. They have ample time to engage in training activities. Second, all teachers have a shared office where they can meet with other teachers whenever they are not teaching in the classroom. Third, teachers who teach the same grade level and same subject are organized in grade level groups working on assigned teaching and researching tasks with a group lead teacher who is an expert teacher in the area. The sufficient time, designated common working place and small professional work unit are the three conditions supporting comprehensive, coherent and sustained induction programs at the three schools in China.
To adopt the effective induction programs in China, education policies must be modified or established to provide sufficient time, a designated office, and grade teacher leader positions for the induction programs to survive at elementary schools in the United States.

1. Reduce new teachers’ as well as experience teachers’ teaching periods during the day so that they can have two or three periods during the day to engage in training activities, such as lesson observations and meet for group or mentoring activities. In addition, teachers should be paid to work together an extra hour after students leave the school at least two days a week.

2. Provide designated offices for teachers to work together while they are not teaching. Teachers who teach the same grade level as a group should be stationed in the same office, as should all special subject teachers. Be flexible in assigning group or groups in a teacher office, depending on the space of an office and the size of a teacher group. With a shared office, teachers will not be isolated in their individual classrooms and can constantly interact with other teachers informally and formally for professional development.

3. Assign a grade lead-teacher to each grade level group. The qualification and responsibilities and compensation for the grade lead-teacher positions should be specified. The lead teachers should work closely with teachers, as well as school administrators to make sure that the school’s objectives are carried out and members of a group stay focused on the task. Teacher induction can be one of many tasks. Without a strong leadership, a group of teachers can not automatically and effectively assume professional engagement, even though they are provided with sufficient time and a work place.
4. Establishing new policies is a complicated process involving working with state and local government agencies and legislatures. Resources must be identified to support the new policies to provide funding to provide the time, space and leadership as mentioned above. The Board of Education and a local teacher’s union must reach a contract that agrees with the new policies.

5. It is much easier to implement the teacher induction programs at one school instead of all schools in a district. It is wiser to pilot this teacher induction program at a school with supporting school organization structure to provide the time, space and leadership needed for the program. The program’s effectiveness should be evaluated and improvement should be made accordingly and consistently. The long term result of the implementation of this model of induction program can provide crucial information and insights for policy makers and public to make decisions on new policies that have great impact on all schools.
References


Appendix A: Interview Questions
1. Please describe your first year teaching experience by answering the following questions.
   a. What degree did you have when you first started teaching?
   b. How many years have you taught?
   c. What subject or subjects did you teach in the first year of your teaching?
   d. What grade level did you teach in the first year of your teaching?
   e. How many classes did you teach in the first year of your teaching?
   f. How many teaching periods did you have on each day or week?

2. New teacher orientation includes the training activities that you participated in after you were hired and before you started your first regular whole year assignment. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.
   a. When did the orientation take place? How long did it last?
   b. Where did the new teacher orientation take place?
   c. Who were the trainers?
   d. Who organized the new teacher orientation?
   e. What did you do during the orientation?

3. In-service training meant the training that you received during the first year of your teaching. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main in-service training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.
   a. What in-service workshops or training programs did you attend in your first-year of teaching? Please describe them in detail.
b. What were the main activities that you were involved in or required to participate in? Please name them and describe each one in detail.

c. Were there other in-service training activities or requirements for new teachers? If there were, please list them and explain.

4. A mentor is a person who advises a new teacher. Did you have a mentor during your first year of teaching? If you did not, please say no. If you did, please describe the experience in detail by answering the following questions.

   a. Who was your mentor? How did you find your mentor? Would you please describe your mentor’s assignment and characteristics?

   b. How many years of mentoring were required at your school?

   c. Please name three main training activities that you and your mentor were engaged in and explain each of them in great detail.

5. As the conclusion of this interview, I would like to ask you the following questions.

   a. Do you plan to continue teaching?

   b. What would you like to clarify
Appendix B: Sample of Transcript of Interviews
Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher induction programs at three elementary schools in Baoding, Hebei province in China. The three main components of teacher induction are categorized by the researcher as new teacher orientation, in-service training for beginning teachers and mentoring. The participating teachers’ responses to the interview questions revealed their education background, first year of teaching assignments, and their induction experience in new teacher orientation, in-service training, and mentoring as shown in the transcripts.

A total of 15 teachers were interviewed. Each of the teachers were assigned codes: Letters A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, and O, stood for the participating teachers. The responses to the questions were in the first sections were recorded with phrases on the blanks. The answers to the questions in the second, third, and fourth sections were recorded in sentences. The letter A stood for answers, and R stood for the research.

The interviews were conducted in Chinese over the telephone. The researcher first transcribed the answers in Chinese and then translated in English. The research only selected one teacher’s interview transcript from each of the schools listed in the appendices as samples due to the large number of participants.
Participating Teacher E

The date of the interview took place: 7/27/07

School: Yuhong Elementary School

1. Answers to the background and first year assignment questions:

   Education Degree: graduated from a three-year normal college, Associate Degree

   The year started in teaching: 2004

   The subject taught in the first year: Math

   The grade level taught in the first year: First Grade

   The number of classes taught in the first year: 2

   The number of students in each class: 50 plus students

   The number of periods taught per week in the first year: 3

2. New Teacher Orientation

   New teacher orientation includes the training activities that you participated in after you were hired and before you started your first regular whole year assignment. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

   a. Q: When did it take place? How long did it last?

      I was doing my student intern at the school when I was hired. When the school year was over, I started the new teacher orientation right away in July. I spent almost the whole summer at the school. I had six weeks of new teacher orientation and the two weeks of my own preparation for the first year. I did not remember if I had a week off. I did take a trip to Beijing and Jingdao in Shandong province with other teachers at the school. Our
school always organized this type of summer trip for teachers. New teachers were encouraged to go to take this opportunity to get acquainted with experienced teachers. Since our school covers a part of the cost, many teachers go.

b. Q: Where did the new teacher orientation take place?
A: It took place at the school.

c. Q: Who were the trainers?
A: Administrators gave us lectures and expert teachers worked with us in groups.

d. Q: Who organized the new teacher orientation?
A: The school administrators organized the whole new teacher orientation and there were more than 20 new teachers who attended the orientation activities. However, not everyone attended the orientation from beginning to the end as I did. Some of the teachers went away for training and some teachers joined us in the middle of the program because they were hired in the middle of August.

e. Q: What did you do during the orientation?
A: We had morning and afternoon sessions. In the morning, administrators working took turns giving us lectures in the areas that they were in charge. For example, one of the Vice Principals shared with us effective ways of communicating with parents. In the afternoon, we were divided into groups. In my group, there were six or seven new math teachers in the first grade level with two expert teachers as our trainers alternating on different weeks. In the two weeks of orientation, we watched the demonstration lessons taught by our trainers. In different lessons, she focused on different teaching strategies. For instance, in one lesson, she showed us how to raise questions to guide students on how to solve word problems. In next two weeks, new teachers would mock teach lessons
that they were assigned. All the important lessons containing difficult concepts and skills in each unit were identified and mock taught by new teachers in the group. Following the lessons, our trainer would make comments and share her understanding of the curriculum and her teaching strategies, and her experiences of working with students based on their development characteristics with us. Each of us had to say something to evaluate the lessons. I taught at least 8 lessons and learned how to evaluate lessons. I felt more and more comfortable teaching lessons in front of other teachers. In the last two weeks, we analyzed each teaching unit in the math curriculum. We paced the lessons and planned lessons together. I learned so many lesson plan strategies from defining objectives to summarizing a lesson. Toward the end of the orientation, I also felt that I became much familiar with the teachers whom I was going to work with and the curriculum that I was going to teach.

3. In-service training for beginning teachers

In-service training meant the training that you received during the first year of your teaching. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main in-service training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: What in service workshops or training programs did you attend in your first year of teaching? Please describe them in detail.

A: I felt that in-service workshops were even more important and helpful than the new teacher orientation because I learned something that I could use to improve my teaching in my daily practices. For in-service training, I participated in “30 and Younger” training programs. This program was for first and second year teachers. A group of more than 20 new teachers met regularly for training sessions. The training sessions covered many
topics. I remember that we have had many sessions on English speaking because we were encouraged to teach students to speak English as much as we can in all subjects. We also practiced handwriting in chalk. We had contexts in these two areas. In addition, we had a new first grade teacher training program because we had about six or seven new teachers in the grade level. In the program, we meet once a month for the first year. Experienced teachers shared with us how to work with younger students based on their characteristics. We discussed different teaching and behavior management issues and planned lessons together.

b. Q: What were the other activities that you were involved or required to participate in your first year of teaching? Please name two and describe each one in detail.

A; I have to say that new teachers including me frequently engaged in lesson observations. We observed lessons whenever we could. As required, I had to observe 40 lessons in my first term. There were about 22 weeks in a term. In average, we had 2 observe about 2 lessons in a week. I think in my first year, I actually I observed more than 40 lessons. At my school or most of the schools in the city, the major subject teachers, like Chinese and Math, are asked to watch more lessons than special subject teachers. It makes sense because we had extra preparation periods than special subject teachers and to gain the same level of competency, the major subject teachers need to watch more lessons because of the width and depth of the curriculum we covered. I used my preparation time to observe lessons. If there was not enough time for preparing lessons during the day, I could do it at home. I observe my mentor five or six lessons and rest that I observe other teachers lessons. Mostly I observed public lessons of math teachers or first grade teachers because I was a first grade math teacher. I also observed
teachers who taught math at higher grade levels. I also watched other types of lessons, such as, passing lessons, research lessons, selective lessons, and so forth. Passing lessons at my school were taught by new teachers. It was called passing lesson because new teachers may fail the lesson and end up teaching it again or prepare a new lesson to teach in order to pass. The passing lessons were scored by all the observers based a comprehensive check list. All the observer’s scores are collected at the end of the post observation conference and averaged to decide if the lesson pass or fail. A new teacher only has three chances to pass a passing lesson. The one who do not pass will have trouble keeping the teaching position at the school. As a new teacher, I was required to observe each new teacher’s lesson. I liked to do so because I saw the mistakes that I could make as they did in their lessons. By observing different teachers’ lessons, I could borrow good ideas from different teachers and make myself a better one. After each lesson observation, the observers will meet in the teacher’ conference room for one period post observation conference. The teacher who conducted the lesson will speak first talking about her plan and her actual teaching. Then, each of the observers had to make comments. In addition to attending post observation conference, new teachers had to keep observation note during or after each observation. Notebooks were checked by a specialist from the curriculum office regularly. The number of observation logs should match the number of lessons that a new teacher was required to observe.

Observing lessons opened my eyes to great lessons, but I really improved my teaching skills by teaching lessons in my first year. First new teachers were required to teach a passing lesson once a term. I told you about passing lessons. Every new teacher is required to teach a passing lesson a term. Every new teacher is afraid of failing it.
Therefore, we all put great efforts preparing it. In order to prepare the passing lesson, I started preparing my first lesson a month prior to the scheduled teaching time. I planned the lesson, mock taught it five times in different first grade classes before I officially did it in front of more than 20 colleagues. It was painful to go through teaching and revising over and over again. However, it was the best way for me to learn how to teach. I felt that after teaching each passing lesson or other important lessons, my skills and confidence went up to a higher level. In my first year, I also worked with a vice principal and tried to teach math lessons in English for a vice principal. The vice principal asked me to prepare and teach lessons for her to observe. After each observation, she would provide me with feedback. I would revise the lesson and teach it again. After several times repeating teaching one lesson, I absorbed so many ideas from her. Gradually, I enjoyed it and I started looking for opportunities to teach lessons for other teachers to see and critic. They could be lessons for the teachers in my groups or lessons for a teaching competition. I always challenged myself to participate in as many teaching competitions as I could. To prepare such lessons, I read more extensively and reached out to more teachers for advice. The extra effort on planning, rehearsing, teaching, and reflecting on such lessons helped me grow quickly. Practice really made me better. Learning how to teach is like learning how to play piano, you need practice, practice, and practice. Nothing else can replace teaching itself.

c. Q: Where there any other in-service training activities that you were engaged in?
A: At my school, teachers new as well as experienced were encouraged to do research project by grade level groups. I learned a lot from other teachers while doing projects with them. The project was aimed at finding solutions for solving problems and better
ways to teach lesson. In addition to doing research project, new teachers were also asked to reading professional articles and write reports. The reports had to reflect the strategies or theory that we have learned from reading and how we applied them to improve our practice. New teachers had to write three reports per term. This really forced us to read and keep updated with current educational research. I see these two activities as a part of in-service training too.

4. Mentoring

A mentor is a person who advises a new teacher. Did you have a mentor during your first year of teaching? If you did not, please say no. If you did, please describe the experience in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: Who was your mentor? How did you find your mentor? Would you please describe your mentor’s assignment and characteristics in detail?

A: I had a mentor, I call her my master. She is a master teacher. I taught first grade students math in my first year, but I asked a sixth grade math teacher to be me master because she was one of the best math teachers in the city. Based on our school’s master-apprentice contract, apprentices must respect and obey masters with respect and politeness. Masters are responsible for their apprentice’s professional development and conduct. When a new teacher is good, his or her master is credited for bringing him or her up right. My master is a very giving person. She treated my like a mother.

b. Q: How many years of mentoring were required at your school?

A: At my school it requires five years of mentorship. In the past, elementary schools had 5 grade levels. A new teacher had to learn how to teach all the grade levels in the first 5
years. Therefore, he or she needs a mentor for 5 years. I have been with my master for 2
years. With teaching a new grade level each year, I certainly need her guidance.

c. Q: Please name three main training activities that you and your mentor were engaged
in and explain each of them in great detail.

A: Although we were not working in the same office, my master always made sure that
we met twice a week in my first year of teaching. My master helped me plan lessons. She
shared with me everything she knew. She helped me with my passing lessons by going
every sentence that I was going to speak during the lesson. It would take five or six years
for me to figure out the tips that she taught me. She explained to me how to connect
lessons between unit to unit, different grade levels, as well as between different subjects.
During our meetings, she gave me opportunities to talk about my frustrations and the
problems that I encountered. She was able to guide me to find solutions. Sometimes I did
not totally understand what she told me right there and then, however when I was
teaching in my classroom her ideas came up and it worked like magic.

In addition to the meetings for planning and problem solving, my master and I observed
one another’s lessons. My master invited me to see her lessons when she tried to
demonstrate some common methods that apply to teaching math to students at all grade
levels. Although I did not observe her as frequently as other new teachers observed their
masters who were teaching at the same grade level as they were. As a well known teacher,
my master frequently taught model lessons, research lessons, and lessons for visitors, and
so on. I observed all of these lessons. My master observed my lesson in the first year of
teaching. She intensively observed me prior to my passing lessons. Based on the
observation, she would make suggestions on how I should plan my lessons. Then, she
would teach the lessons that I planned and asked me to make changes. I would teach it again for her. We repeated this process until both she and I were happy with the final version. For each terms, she would observed me at five or six times.

5. Ending Questions

As the conclusion of this interview, Please answer the following two questions.

a. Q: Do you plan to continue teaching?

I just finished my first three years of teaching. I felt that I worked so hard in the past three years without taking anytime off in the past three summer vacation. I became a better teacher. Now I become confident in teaching any class and any lessons on three grade levels. I taught many great lessons and were recognized and awarded by the school and the city. However, I felt so exhausted. I did not know how long I will continue to teach. I like the profession, but I felt too much pressure. The pressure is from parents, administrators, and colleagues. I could not really relax at all. Teachers' compensation was not equal to what we gave. In other profession, people put much less efforts and get great reward. As long as I continue teaching, I will do my best and give all I have to my students. I stay wit the teaching ethics.

b. Q: What would you like to clarify?

A. I hope that I answered all your questions. If you have any more questions please call me again.

R. Thank you very much for answering my questions. I really appreciated it.
The date of interview took place: 8/3/07

Participating Teacher: H

School: Jianguo Elementary School

1. Answers to the background and first year assignment questions:

   Education Degree: graduated from second normal school with a high school equivalent degree

   The year started in teaching: 2001

   The subject taught in the first year: Math and Chinese

   The grade level taught in the first year: second grade

   The number of classes taught in the first year: 1

   The number of students in each class: about 50 students

   The number of periods taught per week in the first year: 3

2. New Teacher Orientation

   New teacher orientation includes the training activities that you participated in after you were hired and before you started your first regular whole year assignment. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

   a. Q: When did it take place? How long did it last?

      A: I was hired and reported to the school in April and got my first year assignment in June. I considered that my new teacher orientation took place in these three months.

   b. Q: Where did the new teacher orientation take place?

      A: It took place at the school.
c. Q: Who were the trainers?
A: The curriculum director and the two teachers whom I was assigned to work with were my trainers.

d. Q: Who organized the new teacher orientation?
A: The school organized the whole new teacher orientation and there were about 8 around the same time that were involved, however our experience was not exactly the same.

e. Q: What did you do during the orientation?
A: At first, I was arranged to work with two teachers. I helped them to do whatever in preparing materials, grading students’ work, and managing students. Occasionally they asked me to teach lessons in their classrooms. I also taught lessons when some teachers were absent. Our curriculum director met with me and other new teachers a few times. She showed us lessons on tapes. Afterwards, we discussed the strategies that the teachers used to teach and manage students’ learning activities. In June, I taught a public lesson in a first grade class. Administrators and many teachers observed this lesson and provided feedback to me afterwards. This was considered the ending of the orientation because soon after I was told that I would have a regular assignment for next year.

3. In-service training for beginning teachers

In-service training meant the training that you received during the first year of your teaching. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main in-service training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: What in service workshops or training programs did you attended in your first year of teaching? Please describe them in detail.
A: I remember that five or six other teachers met with the curriculum and instruction several times. We had someone from outside the school came in several afternoon gave us lessons in English. A teacher from the school with the best handwriting worked with us to improve our penmanship. The training took place at the school after students left. In addition, I have attended half year new teacher training at Baoding Municipal Teacher Professional Development School on Saturday and Sundays. The training covered general topics such as, curriculum and instruction, teaching technology, effective management as a homeroom teacher, and so forth. There were about 50 teachers in my classes and 150 students in total three classes.

b. Q: What were the other activities that you were involved or required to participate in your first year of teaching? Please name two and describe each one in detail.

A: I was required to observe 25 lessons in a term. At my school main subject teachers were required to observe more lessons than special subject teachers. In my first year, I observed much more than 25 lessons in my first term of teaching. I finished observed all teachers’ public lessons in the first three months of my teaching and spoke to each of them at the post observation conference. I got to know them better and know each teacher’s strengths. In each term, we were also sent to other schools two or three times to observe lessons. Usually the observations at other schools took a half day. I had to switch lessons around to have someone cover my lessons. In the city and the district, there were teaching competitions. I always try to watch these lessons because they were taught by the best teachers or new teachers with great talents. In one competition, I saw contestants were only given two hours to prepare a lesson and teach it to a class of students whom they never met before. I was amazed by the winners’ effective teaching and behavior
management skills. We were required to take notes during the observation and turn the notes at the end of the term.

I had to teach two public lessons at my school. To get ready to teach my first public lesson, I worked with several new teachers. After school, we stayed late to plan lessons and watched one another’s try-out the lesson and provided feedback to polish lessons. After we finished working we had dinner together, which was fun and relaxing. In addition to public lesson, I taught some competition lessons. At my school, we did not have school wide competition. I was chosen by my principal to participate in the district ‘Young Teachers Teaching Competition.’ It was an honor and a great learning experience for me, even though I did not win at the district level.”

c. Q: Where there any other in-service training activities that you were engaged in?

A: At our school, new teachers were encouraged to teach model lessons at rural schools so the teachers there can learn some new teaching methods from urban more developed areas. I prepared the lessons and helped me to be a better teacher. While I was there at the school, I saw how poor the school was and how much the students try to learn with the limited condition. I came back with appreciation and inspiration. I think that was good training for me.

4. Mentoring

A mentor is a person who advises a new teacher. Did you have a mentor during your first year of teaching? If you did not, please say no. If you did, please describe the experience in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: Who was your mentor? How did you find your mentor? Would you please describe your mentor’s assignment and characteristics in detail?
A: My principal paired me with an experienced partner teacher. We each taught a first grade class Chinese and Math, as well as being in charge of the class as its homeroom teacher. There were only two first grade classes. That was why we were called partner teachers. I learned almost everything about teaching from her. My partner teacher was very experienced.

b. Q: How many years of mentoring were required at your school?
A: My partner teacher mentored me for 3 years while we taught grade 1 to 3 together.

c. Please name three main training activities that you and you mentor were engaged in and explain each of them in detail.

A: In the first three years of teaching, I was with my partner all the time. We worked in the same office sitting behind our desks and facing each other. Our classrooms were next to each other. Whenever I had a question, I could ask my partner teacher right there in the office or got to her classroom to get an immediate answer. In the first several month of teaching, my master often came to my classroom to help me solve problems. She knew each student in my class. She could tell me how to guide each of them using specific methods. My master and I planned the lessons together. I would ask her how to teach some lessons that I thought was very difficult. She also warned me the lessons that she thought was difficult for students to understand and had me prepared.

When I first started teaching, I watched my partner teacher teach two math lessons and two Chinese lessons each week, almost one lesson a day. Sometimes, I watched her to teach the same lesson after I taught the same lesson. I was amazed by her ways to teach the same lesson objective so differently and effectively. My partner teacher came to my classroom almost daily in my first month of teaching, then at least once a
week in the rest of year. She saw me teach all the important lessons and helped me make revisions. By observing each other’s lessons, I really learned how to plan and to teach lessons one by one in the three years.

5. Ending Questions

As the conclusion of this interview, Please answer the following two questions.

a. Q: Do you plan to continue teaching?

A: I am going to continue teaching until I retire because I love this profession and I love the children. I volunteered for a special half-year teaching assignment at a rural and poor school in a remote county. My students really missed me and some students went to my house and found the school’s address where I was working. The whole class came to the school to see me. I was cried. I had taught this class for six years from grade one to six. Now these group students were like my family. I knew them so well. I gave my best six years to them and they gave me back even more. After they graduated, they still call me, send me e-mails, and come to my house at holidays. The profession was so rewarding.

b. Q: What would you like to clarify?

A: It is nice to talk to you and I will you good luck.

R. Thank you very much for answering my questions. I really appreciated it.
Participating Teacher: N

The date of interview took place: 8/21/07

School: Xian Elementary School

1. Answers to the background and first year assignment questions:

   Education Degree: Three-Year Normal College with an Associate Degree
   The year started in teaching: 2006
   The subject taught in the first year: English
   The grade level taught in the first year: 1
   The number of classes taught in the first year: 4
   The number of students in each class: 52 students
   The number of periods taught per week in the first year: 16

2. New Teacher Orientation

   New teacher orientation includes the training activities that you participated in after you were hired and before you started your first regular whole year assignment. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

   a. Q: When did it take place? How long did it last?
   A: I started working on May 9, 2005 and finished the school year in the beginning of July. I worked for two months to get oriented. In the summer, I participated in the two day curriculum training organized by the district.

   Q: Where did the new teacher orientation take place?
   A: It took place at the school.

   c. Q: Who were the trainers?
A: Administrators, my group leader teacher, and teachers in my English teacher group were my trainers.

d. Q: Who organized the new teacher orientation?
A: The school organized the new teacher orientation. The principal gave me the two assignments, introduced me to staff members, and arranged for me to go to the two day district training.

e. Q: What did you do during the orientation?
A: The principal brought me to the English teacher’s office and introduced me to the group leader and the teachers. In the first month, I substituted lessons for a teacher who was absent. It was a tough start, but I got the opportunity to teach right away. In the second month before the school year was over, I worked with a teacher who was teaching three classes in the sixth grade. I watched her teach lessons and helped her whenever she needed me. Whenever I had a chance, I also observed other English teachers’ lessons.

The administrators met with us from time to time. The vice principal talked about the school rules and procedures. The curriculum director spent time on explaining teaching strategies and answering our questions. The group leader held a special welcome meeting for everyone to greet me. There were 11 teachers in the group. Whenever I had problems they would help me as the group leader asked them to. I taught two lessons for other teachers in my group. They were very kind to tell me where was good and were very straightforward with pointing out my shortness.

3. In-service training for beginning teachers
In-service training meant the training that you received during the first year of your teaching. If you did not, please say no. If you did, please name three main in-service training activities and discuss each of them in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: What in service workshops or training programs did you attend in your first year of teaching? Please describe them in detail.

A: I met with new teacher group training. We usually meet during the day with different trainers who were experienced teachers. The new teacher training always cover the basic skills, like handwriting, making speech, lesson planning, and strategies of working with lower grade students. English in the district at different schools were called to meet for different professional training. Our principal emphasized improving English instruction always sent me to different training programs even though I had to call substitute teachers for me.

b. Q: What were the other activities that you were involved in or required to participate in during your first year of teaching? Please name two and describe each one in detail.

A: New teachers at my school are asked to observe at least 20 lessons a term. We have to write down the observation notes and make reflections because administrators will check lesson observation notebooks. Last year, I observed almost every teacher’s public lesson. At my school we have a lesson competition every term. I observed all the competition lessons. In addition, I went to other schools in the district to observe lessons. After each observation, I participated in the post observation conference as other observers did. The post observation conference was usually held on the same day. Everyone had to make comments. I learned from different teachers’ comments because they all talked about
how to make a lesson better using different approaches. I could not figure out so many
different ways by myself, but I can borrow their ideas

Not only observing lessons, new teachers are required to teach lessons for others
to observe. I taught three lessons for other teachers to watch in my first year. I taught two
public lessons. To prepare the public lesson, my master helped me put the lesson together.
She watched me teach it. Other teachers in my teacher group also observed me when I
taught this lesson again after I made revisions. They provided more feedback for further
improvement. With so much support, I successfully taught my first public lesson. Besides
teaching, public lesson, I also taught one lesson to show other teachers from different
schools in the district.

c. Q: Where there any other in-service training activities that you were engaged in?
A: As a new teacher, I also learned how to teach by reading professional journals and
books provided by the school. There are a lot articles in the periodic and books that share
teaching strategies and lessons plans. In my first year, I used to read a lot to get ideas for
my lessons. Now, I get quickly get the same information on line.

4. Mentoring

A mentor is a person who advises a new teacher. Did you have a mentor during
your first year of teaching? If you did not, please say no. If you did, please describe the
experience in detail by answering the following questions.

a. Q: Who was your mentor? How did you find your mentor? Would you please describe
your mentor’s assignment and characteristics in detail?
A: My principal arranged a master for me. My master taught sixth grade students last
year. My master is relatively young and in her thirties. She is very sharing and open. She
does not try to keep secrets from me. She helped me familiarize with the curriculum not on first grade level but in all grade levels. She taught me different teaching methods and tips. She also shared with me how to communicate with parents.

b. Q: How many years of mentoring were required at your school?

I had my master last year. I was told that my master would help me in my first three years of teaching.

c. Please name three main training activities that you and you mentor were engaged in and explain each of them in detail.

A: My master and I worked in the same office. My master and I always engaged in open discussion in the teacher’s office. When I asked her how to solve problems, she did not only do the talk but also walked me through each step of solving the problems right there with me. We observed each other’s lessons about two to three times a month last year.

There was no requirement on how many times we had to see each other teach. After each observation, we meet for discussion. She was very frank in terms of pointing out the weaknesses of my lessons. My master really identified a lot of my teaching problems and showed me how to fix them. For example, my master helped me to organize interesting activities to motivate students to learn English.

A: 5. Ending Questions

As the conclusion of this interview, Please answer the following two questions.

a. Q: Do you plan to continue teaching?

A: I just finished my first year teaching. I still need to learn a lot crafts in this profession. I will continue the job because it is not easy to find a job. It took me one year to find this job. In addition, jobs in other professions do not have the security as a teaching position
has. My school is a great school. I feel that being a teacher is very respected and appreciated by parents and students. Talking about students, I love my students, which is the main reason that I love to be a teacher. My students are very interesting and innocent. They love me too. Whenever and wherever they see me, they greet me warmly. When they feel that I stand there for too long, they will get a chair for me and ask me to sit. They care about me and listen to me, which makes me give out my best to them.

b. Q: What would you like to clarify?

A: I think that I have another reason to continue teaching. I like the school where I work. Teachers and administrators are very straight forward and open. There is not much politics at the school. In this environment, I do not feel pressure even I have to work hard. Your questions really make me think what I have done last year as a new teacher. If you have any more questions, please feel free to call me at any time.

R. Thank you very much for answering my questions. I really appreciated it.