

## ABSTRACT

Thomas A. English, TEACHER READINESS, BELONGING, AND CULTURAL AWARENESS: A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION (Under the direction of Dr. Matthew Militello). Department of Educational Leadership, May 2021.

Attrition rates at international schools are often high, requiring annual rounds of new teacher hiring. Although many of the teachers possess prior experience, they require personal and professional supports to be ready for the new teaching assignments and to adjust to unfamiliar settings. In a qualitative study at the Thai-Chinese International School in Bangkok, Thailand, a Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team designed a phased teacher induction program to address the orientation, support, and professional growth needs of new teachers and carried it out with two cohorts of recently hired teachers. Using improvement science principles and Community Learning Exchange (CLE) protocols over three iterative cycles of inquiry, the CPR team and the new teachers planned, facilitated, and reviewed data from CLEs, focus groups, observations, and design-thinking activities. The induction process was expanded from a 1-week orientation to an extensive teacher induction program that lasted from the time of hire through the entire first year of employment. Thai and Chinese instructors and directors were more equitably involved in the induction process, which previously had been dominated by Western faculty and staff. The incoming cohort of teachers experienced improved readiness, feelings of welcome and belonging, and enhanced cultural awareness of the school and its host country. Other international schools that engage new teachers through a structured teacher induction program may obtain similar results, especially if they employ a participatory design process when establishing their induction practices.



TEACHER READINESS, BELONGING, AND CULTURAL AWARENESS:  
A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION

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by

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A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION

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## **DEDICATION**

This PAR Dissertation is dedicated to Robin Kay English, my wife. Her constant support, encouragement, and understanding throughout my doctoral journey allowed me the time and space to accomplish this project.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## **CHAPTER ONE: NAMING AND FRAMING THE FOCUS OF PRACTICE**

After 26 years serving as a teacher, principal, and school superintendent in Michigan, my wife and I moved to Bangkok, Thailand, to work at an international school. As a curriculum coordinator, I experienced the new teacher orientation at the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS), 5 days of acclimation to Bangkok and sessions to orient us to the new school. We formed relationships with the other new teachers; however, there was no formal preparation for our classroom assignments nor any cultural education about the country or the students. We all felt ill-prepared to start the school year.

As the first year of international education concluded, I was assigned responsibility for the 2017 new teacher orientation program. I was determined to draw from my experiences and those of my fellow new teachers to provide a more meaningful orientation program. Although we made small adjustments, the orientation provided little more than time to tour the campus and a settling in period. Upon concluding the 2017 orientation week with new teachers, I initiated planning to improve the onboarding experience for the 2018 cohort. We received positive feedback about how the orientation aided teachers in the transition to the urban Asian setting; however, we neglected the specifics about the teaching expectations at TCIS, how Thai and Taiwanese students learn, and cultural awareness.

Concurrently, I began coursework for an International Doctorate in Educational Leadership through East Carolina University in June 2018; I had on my mind creating a better experience for new teachers arriving in August and thought it might reduce the annual teacher turnover. During the first two intense weeks of classes, we used the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) axioms and improvement science principles, and we were exposed to focusing on equity in educational settings. I intended to apply these pedagogies to learn how to implement

a thoughtful and effective teacher induction program for international schools, I utilized several aspects of the new learning to provide a better orientation experience with the incoming 2018 cohort. While the process was an improvement over the previous years, teachers remained dissatisfied and shared they “wanted to get into their rooms, have technology issued earlier, have full access to curriculum, and be able to plan stuff from the first day” (T. English, reflective memo, July 25, 2018). Based on their feedback and the rate of teacher retention being an issue raised by the Board, I concluded that a one-week orientation program was insufficient to support new teachers in an international setting. As a result of my experiences over three years, I was committed to providing a better introduction and full support system to new teachers, and I chose that topic as the focus of practice (FoP) for the participatory action research (PAR) project. This resulted in a three-phase induction program that started on the day of hire, included a stronger orientation week, and continued through the entire first year of teaching.

In the presentation of the FoP that follows, I provide a rationale for the project and study and an analysis of the assets and challenges related to induction in three contexts: micro, meso, and macro. In establishing the significance of the induction process to the local context at TCIS, I provide a preliminary analysis of relevant research for teacher induction and introduce possible implications for policy. In addition, I examine issues of equity and the need to amplify the voice of underrepresented members underlying the project. Then, I present a purpose statement and research questions before providing the overview of the inquiry cycles of the PAR project based upon a theory of action (TOA) and describe how I utilized tools from the improvement sciences to describe in depth what I hoped to accomplish and how I proposed to do that. The chapter concludes with a summary connecting the PAR project with improvement science principles and

Community Learning Exchange (CLE) axioms and a brief overview of Chapters Two through Eight.

### **Focus of Practice**

In examining the issues facing TCIS in terms of teacher turnover, I discuss the rationale for selecting the implementation of a teacher induction program to address the orientation, support, and professional growth of teachers new to TCIS as the FoP. Next, I explain the assets and challenges facing TCIS and describe the significance of an orientation program to the local context, current practices involved in new teacher orientation, and relevant research. Finally, I identify issues of equity.

### **Rationale for Focus of Practice**

Teacher turnover at TCIS is high, which triggers the need for substantial resources for recruiting, hiring, and onboarding. But more importantly, teacher turnover affects the quality of the academic program for students. New teachers constitute approximately 14% of the professional teaching team annually. Valuable school resources are used to recruit and hire teachers who often teach for two or three years before transitioning to another international assignment. The result is a lack of continuity in curricular implementation that impedes the growth and development of a stronger community of practice (CoP) at TCIS. Based on my personal experiences at TCIS since July 2016, increasing the support to teachers new to TCIS could improve the quality of professional relationships among teachers, students, and parents as well as the quality and coherence of instruction at the school.

The current hiring process at TCIS had been the responsibility of a small group of persons. The head of schools (HOS) recruits and hires all teachers at job fairs in the United States and Canada held in January and February for the following school year; often, the specific

teaching assignments are not known at the time of hire. The human resources department has been the point of contact for the new teachers until their arrival in mid-July for new teacher orientation, and all those communications are about technical aspects of the position. These communications are significant for the teachers who are generally involved in a teaching assignment with their current school through the end of the school year in June. While focusing on their professional duties, they are preparing to make the transition to Asia as well as to a new school. I wanted to expand the contacts with new teachers to establish relationships with the principals with whom they would be working.

Before Christmas break of that first year at TCIS, I was promoted to the position of high school principal and assigned the responsibility of facilitating the one-week summer teacher orientation program for the next group of new teachers in 2017. I reflected on my own experiences in those roles, solicited thoughts and ideas from the other new teachers, and included my observations of the organizational and cultural dynamics of TCIS with the goal of improving the orientation week.

### **Influence of Place on the Project**

At most international schools, the teaching staff is composed of an eclectic mix of teachers from around the world. For the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 school years, TCIS averaged 73 professional teachers from nine countries per year. To develop teamwork, relationships, and trust, we needed to foster a network of community (Secretan, 1999). Those characteristics did not fully exist at TCIS, and often communications and relationships suffered. For example, during my first year at TCIS, one of the new teachers did not finish the year because of poor relationships with parents. At times, communications with parents were difficult because teachers and parents do not speak the same language, which is the case for most of the

Western-trained teachers at TCIS. As the person responsible for teacher orientation, I vowed not to allow this to happen again but had no idea how to improve this other than attempt to foster deep and trusting relationships among teachers, parents, and students. However, while I did not have the full toolkit yet, I gradually learned what teachers needed and wanted, which resulted in a teacher induction program that starts from the date of hire through the entire first year. But before that happened, I had a great deal to learn through three cycles of inquiry and listening to teachers.

With very little input from other teachers and administrators, I conducted the July 2017 one-week program and established relationships with the new cohort of teachers. Teachers and the HOS gave positive feedback about the experience. Before long, however, parents were expressing concerns about one of the new middle school teachers, very similar to what had transpired the previous year. I intervened during a few tenuous months to support the teacher and concerned parents in developing understanding and trust. Then, the teacher and the students flourished.

I began to realize the orientation program was focused on anticipating the needs of teachers in basic areas to help ease their anxiety about the international move but lacked a more personal, relationship-building component that proved difficult to develop in a 5-day summer orientation session. Because of the significant problems I witnessed with several new teachers relating to students and to a lesser extent, interpersonal relationships with other teachers, and our desire to retain good teachers at TCIS, we needed to develop and implement a process to support teachers and promote a CoP over the course of a school year. Teacher orientation at TCIS needed to be more than a one-time event. My hope was to work with co-practitioner researchers (CPRs)

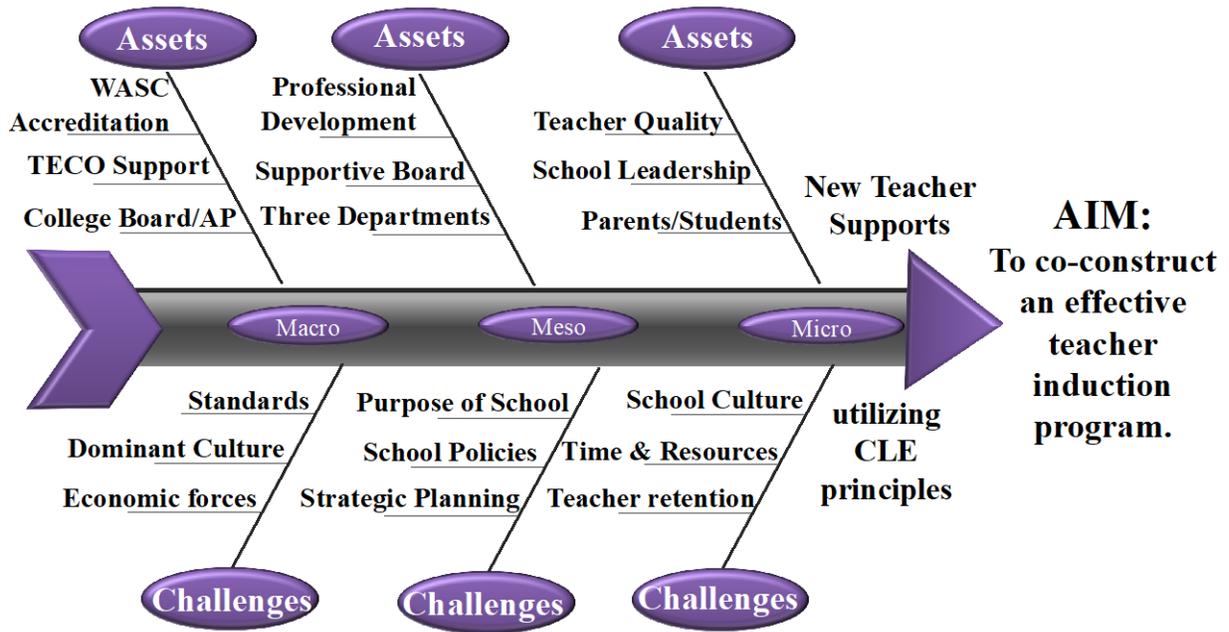
and teachers from TCIS to identify the gaps and obstacles as we co-constructed a collective journey toward supporting teachers and building relationships among teachers, parents, and students.

The intent of implementing a robust and comprehensive new teacher program was to increase the level of teacher satisfaction and support, resulting in stronger professional relationships for all teachers. At the outset, I hoped to address teacher retention, but as the PAR process unfolded, I realized that retention was not the end goal. Rather, I should be concerned about how to get teachers ready professionally and personally to be full members of the TCIS community. I immediately saw a vast difference between the current model of a 1-week teacher orientation program and the desired state of teacher induction based on generating a safe space for storytelling, conversations, and relationships, which are the building blocks of Community Learning Exchange pedagogy (Guajardo et al., 2016). To accomplish this, I explored the assets and challenges facing TCIS as a point of departure for developing a teacher created induction model.

### **Assets and Challenges of TCIS**

Through an understanding of the current assets and challenges facing TCIS, I set out to identify the school's needs in supporting teachers through a planned process of induction (Bryk et al., 2015). I engaged the CPR team to collaboratively understand TCIS's current thinking about teacher orientation (see Figure 1) and facilitated a generative process to implement improvements. To analyze the assets and challenges of the present TCIS teacher orientation program, I used the fishbone analysis tool.

## Fishbone Analysis of FoP



*Figure 1.* Fishbone diagram. Analysis of assets and challenges of FoP.

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### ***Macro***

At the macro level, TCIS has both assets and challenges that influence meso level school policies and impact the ability to attract and retain teachers, administrators, and students. TCIS offers a College Board/Advanced Placement (AP) program for high school students while requiring all students to attain proficiency in Chinese, Thai, and English. TCIS was in the process of expanding its College Board AP course offerings to better prepare students for the rigors of university study, yet the school struggled to meet the College Board standards for AP courses while simultaneously requiring a tri-lingual language program (Chinese, Thai, and English) replete with the infusion of Chinese and Thai culture. Shifting demographics due to economic forces resulted in Thai students outnumbering Taiwanese students by a 2 to 1 margin.

Guided by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation standards, the school engaged in school improvement efforts. At TCIS, improvement processes “tend to maintain existing schooling practices and results” (Eubanks et al., 1997, p. 1). There was a conservative culture that discouraged change because the Western school leaders were reluctant to address the policies and practices that promoted the continuation of business as usual, which prevented the school from transforming into a CoP. Significant changes in school leadership, specifically my role as the high school principal and administrator responsible for teacher orientation, created the opportunity to transform TCIS into a more cohesive learning community through this PAR project.

### ***Meso***

TCIS had meso level assets and challenges. Under new school leadership since 2017, the new HOS was able to hire a leadership team that was committed to staying on for several years to bring needed stabilization to the school. The leadership team consisted of three building

principals, and for the first time in the school's 24-year history, they instituted coordinated planning and professional development across all three divisions (high, middle, and elementary schools) as well as the three departments (Thai, Chinese, and Western). At the meso level, as is often the case in international schools, organizational practices at TCIS perpetuated and reproduced patterns of hierarchy and the transactional, quid pro quo ways that schools often operate. Conversations typically employed deficit language and were not geared toward collaborative solutions.

### ***Micro***

At the micro level, traditional staff meetings and professional development opportunities were common; however, principals and teachers have the mindset that the solutions to our problems and issues were somehow easily resolved in trainings or directives from school administration. It was common to hear people say, "That's not my job" at TCIS. While we have ample resources, a supportive Board, devoted parents and students, and even support from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO), the school culture is reflective of a factory model. Individually, teachers were well prepared in their respective content areas yet remained compartmentalized due to the established organizational structures. Teachers worked specific hours because they relied on school-provided transportation and only attended required events. The limited time at school for teacher support and relationship building was a significant challenge at TCIS.

The HOS assigned teacher leadership roles. Staffing practices and frequent teacher turnover resulted in annual change in department level leadership, which resulted in instructional inconsistencies over time. I engaged the CPRs to identify a way to distribute departmental leadership and generate increased instructional consistency from year to year. TCIS is fortunate

to have dedicated and well-intentioned educators but lacks a culture of community, shared vision, and accountability. The organization primarily operated on a top-down leadership approach, which is quite typical of international settings. When problems or issues arose, administrators provided the solutions, and teachers viewed their directives as the “fix.” Adult behavior, accountability, and responsibility were seldom analyzed as part of the instructional issues; rather, new people were hired, and different instructional approaches initiated with little regard to a long-range plan for improvement other than to increase student enrollment. As the administrator responsible for new teacher orientation—soon to evolve to a broader program of induction—this was my opportunity to influence the entire school culture through the PAR.

In terms of the assets and challenges at the macro, meso, and micro levels, TCIS was poised for a dynamic, long-term, systematic approach to teacher induction with consistent leadership at the elementary, middle, and high schools. Three general components of teacher induction programs served as the central drivers for ours at TCIS.

### **Key Components of Teacher Induction**

We needed clear processes for a broader induction program that included orienting teachers, mentoring for continued support, and offering professional development that met their needs; the focus of practice could have an influence on TCIS and other international schools (Wong et al., 2005). Because the PAR project targets the support of teachers new to a school, we needed an approach that worked for their needs and we needed to have that approach adopted as policy at the school.

According to the report on best practices in teacher induction programs by the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (2016), the current teacher orientation week was inadequate to prepare and support teachers new to TCIS because it only addressed one

of the three essential components of teacher induction programs. TCIS offered a 5-day orientation prior to the start of a school year to introduce teachers to general school procedures, policies, and practices. However, the other two elements of a successful induction program, mentoring and professional development, did not occur in any organized and official manner at TCIS.

The TCIS governing structure has not set a purposeful policy about teacher induction. The school is governed by a Foundation Board and is voluntarily accountable to an external accreditation agency, the Accrediting Commission for Schools Western Association of Schools and Colleges (ASC WASC). The results of this FoP could influence the adoption of school policies. This would impact the overall professional development process for all teachers, which has large implications for the budget. Adopting policy for teacher induction that causes the review and alignment of professional development throughout the school could, in time, positively influence the culture of the school. Developing a teacher induction program at TCIS was a significant step toward improving teacher job satisfaction which may, in turn, improve retention of quality teachers.

### **Connection to Equity**

Issues of equity are a part of the fabric of schools, and TCIS has some specific issues that arise in this context. These issues have to do with communication and contractual arrangements, which are integral to establishing relationships and building an effective CoP. As well, there are issues of the differences between the international staff and the national staff of directors and teachers, who have longevity at the school.

### ***Communication***

We wanted to establish relationships and build community with new teachers from the point of hire. Communication is central to relationships, and careful analysis is necessary to ensure that all teachers, especially those whose mother tongue is not English, are equitably supported through the induction process such that subtle cultural barriers do not minimize or silence the individual and collective voice of the underrepresented group, namely Thai teachers. To foster a collaborative community at TCIS and thus transform the discourse to a higher level, we examined issues of equity through the PAR and specifically, how non-native English speakers could be marginalized by lack of attention to their needs during crucial communications.

At TCIS, all teachers attend divisional (high school, middle school, and elementary school) meetings based on their teaching assignment. Divisional principals and Western teachers, all educated in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom, speak English while the Thai and Chinese teachers have limited English proficiency. As a school providing an American curriculum with English-speaking school leaders, divisional meetings and daily communications were all conducted in English. While non-Western teachers do speak English, several shared that it is difficult and exhausting to do so. To ease this, communications are generally passed through the Chinese and Thai Directors to the respective teachers. This response to second language learners mutes the voice of teachers from the Chinese and Thai departments.

### ***Contractual Arrangements***

TCIS policy dictates different contractual provisions for Thai teachers. Generally, all teachers have the same teaching expectations; however, Western and Chinese teachers earn substantially more than Thai teachers. As a private, international school, TCIS has no collective

bargaining agreements with teachers. However, as a means of engaging in the spirit of collaboration, a Faculty Association (FA), comprising five teachers, provides input in general matters and has presented proposals to increase pay for teachers. The FA had four Western teachers and one Chinese teacher with no teacher representation from the Thai department at the onset of this PAR. There was no differentiation for teachers with varying levels of experience, mother tongue, or gender. The PAR helped me to identify disparate issues and inform policy with the aim of supporting all groups of teachers equitably and amplifying the voice of groups of underrepresented teachers.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

In this section, I explain how we co-constructed a teacher induction program, share the research questions, as displayed in Table 1, the theory of action (TOA), driver diagram, and proposed project design. The purpose of the PAR project was to implement a teacher induction program for the teachers new to TCIS.

### **Co-Constructing a Teacher Induction Program: A Theory of Action**

The purpose of the PAR project is to co-construct an effective teacher induction program at TCIS. Facilitating multiple learning exchanges over the course of three cycles of inquiry, two cohorts of new teachers, the participants, and a group of Co-Practitioner Researchers (CPR) co-created a new model of teacher induction based on qualitative evidence centered on the power of place and the wisdom of people (Guajardo et al., 2016).

An effective teacher induction program is an integrated system of teacher supports over the course of one or more school years to increase teacher effectiveness and retention in an international setting while building a strong, equity-centered community (Moir, 2009). Assisting teachers as they orient themselves to the new international setting in Bangkok at TCIS was a

Table 1

*AIM Statement and Driver Diagram*

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AIM: To co-construct an effective teacher induction program.

Primary Drivers: People and Processes	Secondary Drivers: People and Processes
<p>HS Principal &amp; CPR members will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-create initial orientation supports by engaging in praxis: Reflection to action</li> <li>• Co-create ongoing induction supports</li> </ul>	<p>Human Resource Department and HOS Provide necessary resources for the intake and orientation sessions to acclimate new teachers to Bangkok and TCIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing/Finance/Health</li> <li>• Employee evaluations and contracts</li> <li>• Curriculum and Technology</li> <li>• Culture (Thai and Chinese)</li> </ul>
<p>The current new teacher orientation process will undergo revision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determining which supports are useful for orienting to TCIS</li> <li>• Determining and developing ongoing supports and embedded systems to address the professional growth needs of teachers</li> <li>• Engaging the CPRs and 2019 new teachers in co-constructing the induction program</li> </ul>	<p>Curriculum Director &amp; Building Principals Provide ongoing and embedded professional development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a teacher community and clarify expectations for teachers</li> <li>• Integrate cultural awareness</li> </ul> <p>The current new teacher orientation process supports revision by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitioning from a one-week summer orientation to a long-term, (multi-year) embedded induction program</li> <li>• Being incorporated into a TCIS annual Professional Development plan to institutionalize desired outcomes for all teachers</li> <li>• Developing one learning community at TCIS (new and veteran teachers; Thai, Chinese, and Western teachers)</li> </ul>
<p>High School Principal Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary researcher but also engages the CPR in analyzing evidence</li> <li>• Conducts regular Learning Exchanges with new teachers, CPRs, and all teachers to gather evidence of individual and institutional growth and improvement.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for teacher leadership</li> </ul>	<p>District Leadership supports the induction process by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifying the organizational chart (roles and responsibilities) of all employees</li> <li>• Ensuring required resources are secured in a timely manner</li> <li>• Providing time and the resources needed for the long-term, embedded professional development for all teachers</li> </ul>

fundamental beginning step. Building strong relationships among teachers, positively influencing instructional practices, and empowering teachers to address issues of equity were desired outcomes.

The overarching research question guiding the study is: To what extent can school leaders in collaboration with teachers co-create and implement a teacher induction program that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of teachers new to the school? The PAR sub-questions are:

1. To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction program establish relational trust between and among school leaders and teachers new to the school?
2. To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes that fully support the professional and personal lives of teachers new to an international school?
3. How do I grow as a leader to be an agent of change in my school through the implementation of a teacher induction program?

The theory of action for the PAR project: If the school leaders implement a useful teacher induction program, teachers new to TCIS will form stronger relationships with new colleagues and feel supported as teachers and value and learn from the personal and professional growth experiences. Working with the CPR group and guided by the CLE axioms and improvement science principles, we addressed the needs of teachers new to TCIS through a co-created process of on-going supports. I collected and analyzed contextual qualitative evidence of this work in a systematic way to support the inquiry and used iterative cycles of evidence to diagnose and design as we proceeded (Spillane & Coldren, 2015).

## **Participatory Action Research Project Design**

The PAR took place at Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS), an international school in Bangkok, Thailand. TCIS was founded in 1995 as an American curriculum, tri-lingual school for students founded by a Foundation Board of Taiwanese business owners. At the time, favorable economic conditions in the Bangkok area attracted Taiwanese businesses, which necessitated the creation of a school for the children of the business owners rather than relying on the local Thai public schools. TCIS is accredited through WASC, offers an Advanced Placement (AP) program, and requires students to study Thai, Chinese, and English. A team of 73 Western, Chinese, and Thai teachers deliver instruction to approximately 640 students, starting with 2-year-old students through Grade 12.

As the primary researcher, I identified and established a voluntary group of CPRs to utilize their wisdom and experiences to co-create a meaningful induction program for the 2020 new teachers. The CPR group consisted of administrators at TCIS who expressed interest in participating in the PAR. We engaged the 2019 new teachers to gain input about their orientation experience at TCIS. As the high school principal, I was responsible for new teacher orientation; I collaborated with a co-practitioner researcher (CPR) group who co-created a teacher induction program to equip new teachers for success while building a community of trust and reciprocity. I gathered and analyzed qualitative evidence throughout the process of creating and implementing the induction program.

The CPRs held a series of engagements during school hours to “co-create space to explore, imagine, and create alternative realities” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 25) for an induction program at TCIS. CPR members identified TCIS community-based assets by first sharing their own stories with teacher orientation at TCIS. Through community-building activities, their

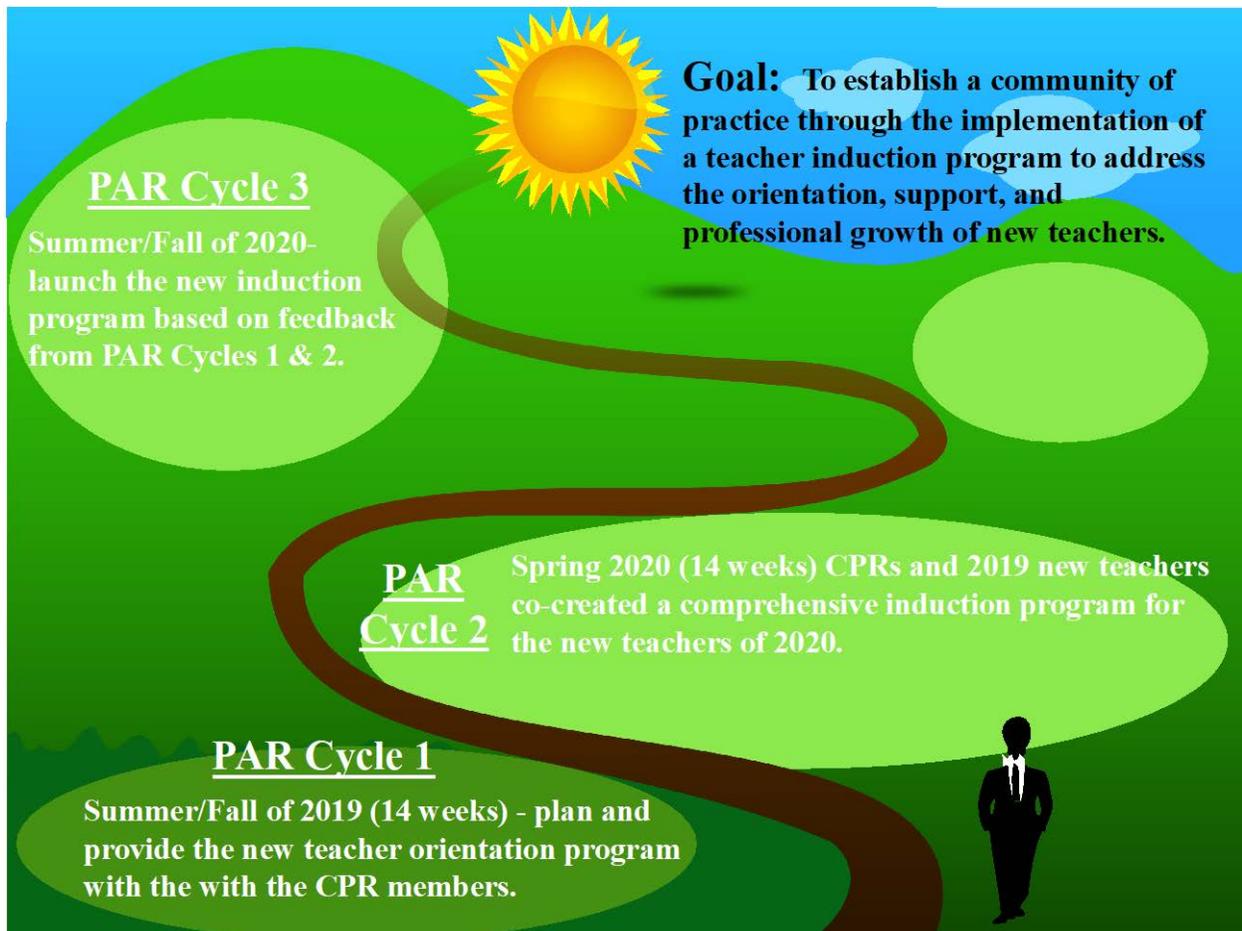
voices were a driver in the reimagination process of teacher orientation at TCIS based on specific needs they identified. We were careful to include CPR members representative of all ethnicities? at TCIS to ensure that the program eventually created was equitable.

The group of teachers hired for the 2019-20 school year played a significant role in the process of co-creating a teacher induction program. Through an analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the 2019-20 new teacher cohort regarding their orientation experiences, the CPRs guided the design and construction of a reimagined process for the new hires for the 2020-21 school year. As stipulated in the employment contract of new teachers, the primary engagement occurred during the 5 days preceding the 2019-20 school year. Follow up with the new teacher cohort was limited to the days provided in the annual professional development plan implemented for the entire school.

The full implementation of a new teacher induction model occurred with the group of new teachers hired for the 2020-21 school year. As displayed in Figure 2, I designed the PAR to evolve over three 14-week cycles. PAR Cycle One involved the new teacher orientation for the summer of 2019. PAR Cycle Two took place during the spring of 2020, utilizing CLE pedagogies and was affected by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. PAR Cycle Three was launched with the new induction program based on the analysis and feedback from PAR Cycles One and Two.

### **Study Considerations: Confidentiality, Ethics, and Limitations**

Data collected for this study was protected and stored to maintain confidentiality. The data collected were used to generate new knowledge, achieve action-oriented outcomes, educate the researcher and participants, and provide results relevant to TCIS. Data collection and analysis was based on sound and appropriate research methodology (Herr & Anderson, 2014). The data



*Figure 2. Participatory Action Research Cycles.*

supported confidence in the truth of the findings and confirmability because the co-researchers and participants contributed to the findings, which served to neutralize my own researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used participant names with permission, and confidentiality was honored through secure storage of all data, which I will keep for 3 years and then destroy. A report of the findings and recommendations was shared with the Foundation Board and administration at the November 25, 2020, Foundation Board meeting. I discuss these considerations for the study more fully in Chapter Four.

Findings of this study, based on one international school in Bangkok, Thailand, should be interpreted with caution. Therefore, transfer of ideas to other school communities and contexts should be conducted after careful analysis of variations in local context.

### **Summary—Co-Constructing a Teacher Induction Program**

In this chapter, I introduced the FoP, purpose statement, research questions, and the proposed PAR project. International schools typically have an annual teacher turn-over rate between 14% and 25%; therefore, we provided an induction program for teachers with the hope that establishing relationships and building trust as a community will increase teacher retention. Nevertheless, our top priority was to ensure that new teachers felt supported, became oriented quickly, and felt part of the TCIS community. As an international school, TCIS conducted annual orientation programs to introduce teachers to the school processes and procedures. However, feedback about these sessions indicated that teachers want more focused and purposeful ongoing supports. Providing improved, teacher-centered supports for new teachers as part of the orientation program will have a positive effect on school culture as a whole and on retaining teachers.

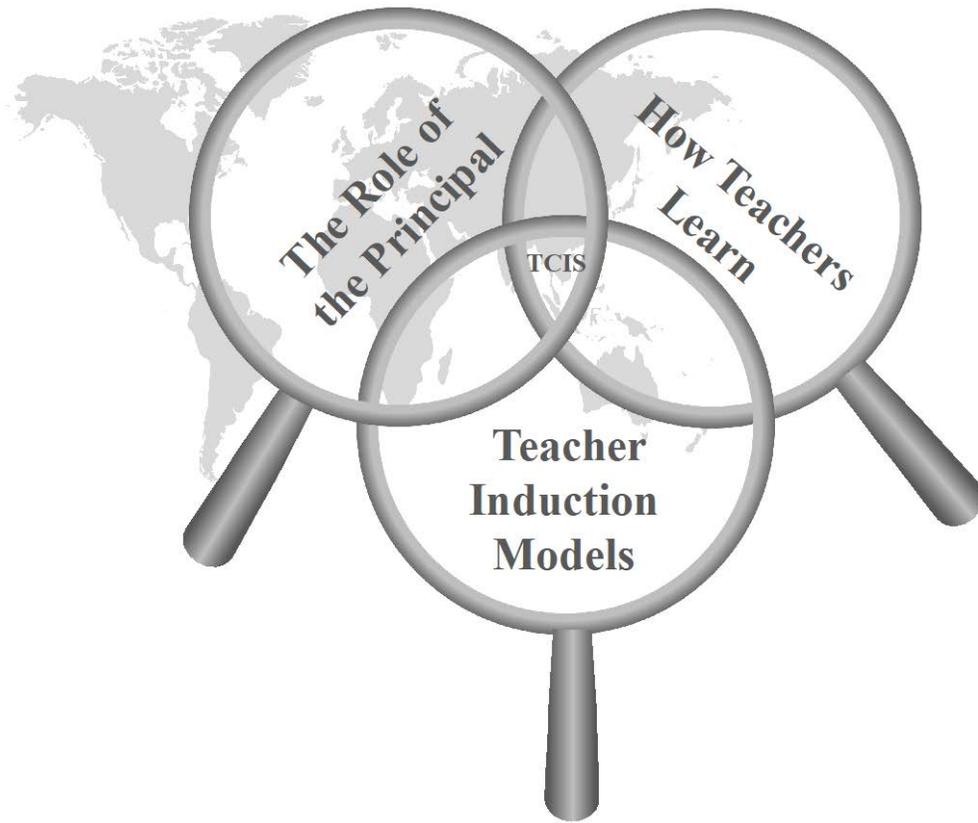
The PAR operated using a disciplined inquiry approach over the course of three cycles, which are described in Chapter Four. Administrators served as CPRs and co-constructed a teacher induction model for teachers new to TCIS. Chapter Two provides a review of literature about teacher induction; Chapter Three is a description of the TCIS context; Chapter Four describes the PAR methodology, and Chapters Five, Six, and Seven are the three PAR cycles. In a concluding Chapter Eight, I summarize the implications for TCIS and the possibility of applying the lessons learned to other international schools.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

*In 1991 I fulfilled the requirements for the State of Michigan teaching certification and spent the next school year serving multiple school districts as a substitute teacher. The year proved to be valuable and provided the opportunity to gain needed teaching experience. Before long, I realized I was learning more on the job than from my college classes. In the spring of 1991, I was one of 125 individuals who accepted a teaching position with a large, urban Michigan school district. With such a large group of new teachers, the district provided a week-long summer orientation. I remember participating in several community-building activities to get acquainted with the other new teachers and to learn about basic processes and procedures for use on the job.*

*After nearly 30 years serving as an educator in Michigan, I found myself responsible for the annual new teacher orientation at an international school in Bangkok, Thailand. In reflecting on my earliest memories of the assistance provided upon entering the teaching profession, I feel keenly the importance of assisting new teachers as they join the team at the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS). Those early experiences guide my interest in teacher induction processes, adult learning, and the role of the principal in teacher induction (see Figure 3).*

The aim of the participatory action research project (PAR) is to build a community of professional learners through the implementation of a teacher induction program to address the orientation, support, and professional growth of teachers and school leaders. By improving new teachers' overall professional growth and job satisfaction, we want to use the strength of an induction program as a recruitment tool to attract teachers, offer consistency in the pedagogical approaches, and increase teacher retention. Teachers may be new to the profession or new to the setting, which is the Thai Chinese International School (TCIS) in Bangkok, Thailand.



*Figure 3. Literature review.*

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Although most new teachers at TCIS arrive with prior teaching experience, they have diverse professional learning needs. International schools, like their counterparts in the US, prepare teachers for the start of school through teacher orientation, a series of events to introduce policies and expectations. Support beyond teacher orientation is not structured, planned, and ongoing at TCIS, and the high rate of teacher turnover at international schools indicates a need for effective induction programming. In reviewing the literature, I concentrate on three key areas: the attributes of effective teacher induction; adult learning theory and practice; and the role of the principal in teacher induction. First, I present an overview of the elements of effective induction. Second, I review the evidence of adult learning principles and examine how teachers learn. In the final section, I address the role of the principal in teacher induction and conclude with direct applications to inform the PAR project and study.

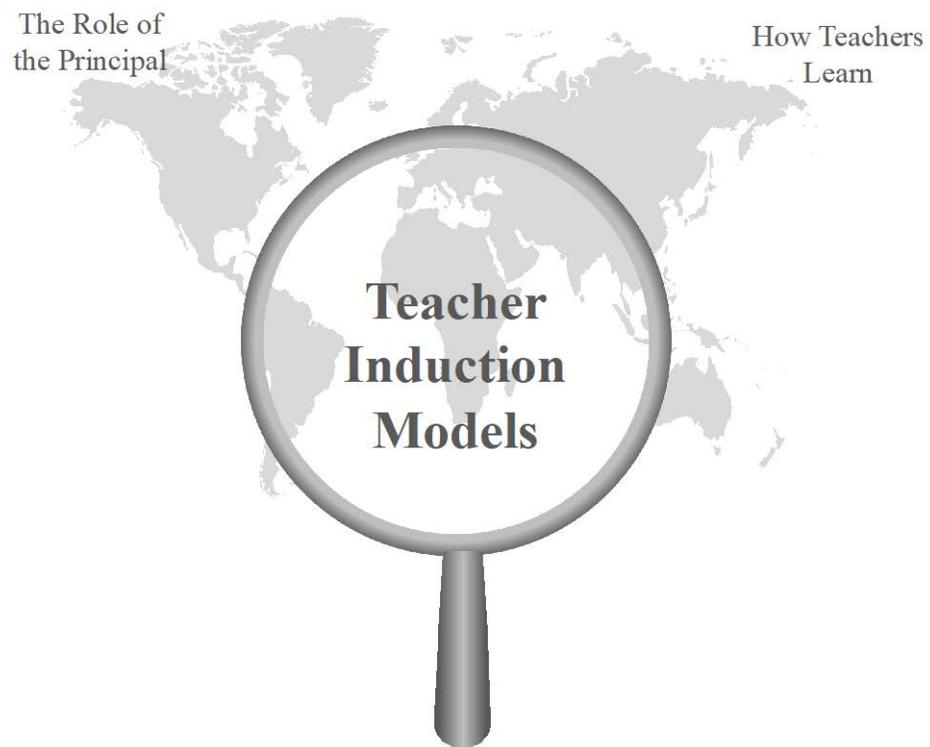
### **Teacher Induction**

Teacher induction is a process a school undertakes to support teachers entering a new school and, in some cases, initial entry into the profession of teaching. Induction programs must respond to a variety of factors, such as novice teachers, experienced teachers joining a new school, and local priorities. Teacher preparation programs at universities concentrate on the theory and practice of teaching as a novice teacher, and most induction programs typically are designed to address the needs of novice teachers. Induction programs may be based on federal or country standards, and some programs also are aligned with state/provincial or local standards. However, induction programs for districts or schools should be designed to respond to context-specific needs and should arise from local community priorities (Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Moir, 2009; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al.,

2003). After defining induction, I review the characteristics and structures of effective teacher induction models (see Figure 4).

### **Definitions and a Process of Development**

Induction as a process includes a professional and personal adjustment to the teaching profession as well as to a new organizational setting for teaching and occurs over an extended period. I identified key elements that define induction and then address the developmental considerations that influence how we approach teachers as a group and as individuals through an induction program. Defined structures, collaboration, and professional learning, including mentoring, are key elements of teacher induction programs (Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). Kearney (2017) describes teacher induction as “the primary phase in a continuum of professional development leading to the teacher’s full integration into a professional community of practice and continuing professional learning throughout their career” (p. 787). Castetter and Young (2000) explain induction as a “systematic organizational effort for helping personnel adjust readily and effectively to new work assignments so that they can contribute maximally to organizational goals while achieving work and personal satisfaction” (p. 141). They extend the meaning to include growth and development of the individual personally as well as professionally and suggest induction is necessary for all individuals new to their assignments, not just for those new to teaching. Wong et al. (2005) provide a more comprehensive definition: “Induction is a highly organized and comprehensive form of staff development, involving many people and components, that typically continues as a sustained process for the first 2 to 5 years of a teacher’s career. Mentoring is often a component of the induction process” (p. 379). Induction is a process more than merely an event.



*Figure 4.* Teacher induction models.

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## **Characteristics of Teacher Induction Models**

Teacher induction models are highly structured, involve professional learning, and are built on collaboration (Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). Distinct, key elements are common in effective models of teacher induction: they extend throughout at least the first year of teaching; include collaborative support through a mentor and other individuals; and utilize lesson observations and discussions as a means of professional development. Although approaches to teacher induction vary, three major characteristics appear in effective models based on a meta-analysis of induction models: “They are highly structured, they focus on professional learning, and emphasize collaboration” with peer support, lesson observations, and extend throughout the first year or more of teaching (Wong et al., 2005, p. 383). I reviewed teacher induction models from Switzerland, China, New Zealand, France, and Japan that include structures for ongoing professional development and rely upon a collaborative approach (see Appendix G).

### ***Systems of Support***

Teacher induction should be highly structured. Kearney (2017) outlines the basic elements for an effective induction program with a mentoring component. “The teachers found the provision of a mentor was the most critical and useful aspect of the program at the school” (Kearney, 2017, p. 790). New teachers are assigned a mentor in their content area, and both are given a reduced teaching load to allow the new teacher and the mentor ongoing opportunities to meet weekly to observe and reflect on the new teachers’ practice. At the end of each year, new teachers and mentors evaluate the induction program to provide ongoing adjustments. The new teacher is also required to observe other teachers regularly and to create and maintain a record of

their professional learning. Finally, the new teacher is expected to meet several times each year with the principal.

**Mentoring.** The mentor teacher or the administrator should build and sustain a relationship to provide pedagogical and academic support with the new teacher. A key aspect of the assimilation of new teachers into the school culture is the connection with the people most closely associated with the school—other teachers (Guajardo et al., 2016). Historically, a common practice is to link veteran teachers and new teachers to enable the latter to understand the processes and procedures of the new school. However, a shift toward a more collaborative approach in which the new and experienced teachers are viewed as co-learners may be a key component (Flores et al., 2011; Howe, 2006; Little, 2006; Moir, 2009). Many districts now require mentor teachers to receive specialized training to serve as mentors. Emerging teacher induction projects require year-long internships to provide better linkage between theory and practice (Howe, 2006). Novice teachers can support effective co-learning with veteran teachers, and structured internships with groups of novices and a coach can improve outcomes such as increased collegial dialogue and reflective practice (Goldstein, 2015). Moir (2009) states, “The best induction programs blend support for novice teachers with expertise from veteran teachers, creating collegial groups that benefit all teachers and all students” (p. 15).

The New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz provides six dimensions of a high-quality induction program (New Teacher Center, 2007), which serve as a framework for the mentor-new teacher process. These are:

- a multi-year program, spanning at least the first 2 years of teaching;
- sanctioned time for the mentor-new teacher interaction;
- rigorous mentor selection criteria;

- initial training, ongoing professional development, and support for mentors;
- pairing of new teachers and mentors in similar subject areas, and grade levels;
- documentation and evidence of new teacher growth.

The mentor teacher should be provided training and clear expectations of the mentorship role.

The mentor should meet with the new teacher at least weekly to listen and support the new teacher's adjustment to the school and teaching. According to Moir (2009), this practice leads to inquiry and "results in a strong teaching culture where lines between new and experienced teachers are blurred and all teachers feel they have a voice in school improvement" (p. 18). One of the key responsibilities of the mentor is to lead teachers in the process of collaboratively analyzing student learning (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Moir, 2009; Wong et al., 2005). With the advance of technology, online mentoring can supplement mentoring; however, successful induction programs have well-defined expectations, roles, and responsibilities for all members (Moir, 2009). Two models provide examples of an induction program based on a system of supports.

***Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA).*** The California model originated as the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) and was primarily designed by the UC Santa Cruz New Teacher Center (NTC) based on state standards for the design, implementation, and evaluation of induction practices. Howe (2006) found several valuable elements in this comprehensive 2-year process for first- and second-year teachers. The main structures of the 2-year induction period in the BTSA are ongoing mentoring and teacher-specific formative assessments used to improve teaching practice rather than for administrative evaluative purposes (Howe, 2006). During the induction period, an Individualized Induction Plan (IIP) is developed to establish targeted goals for the individual teacher, an action plan for

achieving the goals, and the evidence that will be used to document the attainment of the goals (Howe, 2006; New Teacher Center, 2007, 2018). Mentors receive substantial training and could be master teachers from the school district or persons specifically hired by the district to serve as mentors.

***Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM).*** Another model, the Connecticut Department of Education Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) program, is a professional learning program comprised of five modules (classroom environment, planning, instruction, assessment, and professional responsibility), each about ten weeks long, to be completed by every new teacher during the first three years of teaching (Connecticut State Department of Education, n.d.; Ellis, 2016). With the assistance of a mentor teacher, new teachers engage in a multi-step process in each module in which they create an action plan, develop, and apply their new knowledge from the module, and submit a reflective paper to a review committee after each module. The committee determines if the teacher has completed the module. All TEAM program requirements must be successfully completed to be eligible for Connecticut's provisional educator certificate.

Like BTSA, the TEAM model requires a mentor teacher and the development of a plan to provide evidence of professional growth (Ellis, 2016). According to Moir (2009), effectively designed induction programs benefit new teachers, veteran teachers, and students by connecting the experience and wisdom of veteran teachers with new teachers in a collaborative learning environment. Including all constituent groups in the design of an induction program that includes high-quality mentoring leads to ongoing professional development for all teachers and, Moir (2009) contends, deepens the commitment of teachers to the profession and school district.

Successful induction programs have well-defined expectations, roles, and responsibilities to promote accountability for all stakeholders (Moir, 2009).

**Relationship Building and Maintenance.** Relationships between the new teacher and the mentor matter, as does the overall school climate (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Flores et al., 2011; Little, 2006). Beyond the individual pairing, a new teacher is joining a learning community with many other adults—teachers, administrators, parents, and local community members. The new teacher needs to navigate the adult dimensions, meaning the regulations, management style, professional organizations, public trust, and the societal expectations of the school (Lynn, 2002). According to Flores et al. (2011), “Understanding induction as an enculturation process requires recognizing that working conditions and school culture powerfully influence the character, quality, and performance of novices” (p. 370). The culture and climate of a school can foster or stifle collaborative inquiry (Fullan, 2001; Ingersoll 2002; Iordanides & Vryoni, 2013). New teachers need ongoing support as most of their learning through mentoring occurs in the second and third year of teaching (Britton et al., 2003; Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Pain & Schwillle, 2010; Wong et al., 2005). Support should be accelerated for teachers new to international schools in the first and second years because of the abbreviated tenure of most international teachers.

At the NTC in California, the essential element is the mentor-mentee relationship. A mentor can be one of several persons: an outside mentor, an in-school mentor-teacher, or the principal who acts in a clinical supervisory role as support and guide. According to the new teacher standards of the NTC, “The heart of our model is regular, one-on-one mentoring in which new teachers are matched with exemplary teachers who analyze their practice and, using

classroom data, offer constructive suggestions for improvement” (Moir, 2009, p. 16). By meeting regularly, the mentor and new teachers form a relationship that encourages self-reflection.

The mentoring relationship should include support through activities, such as observations, classroom visits, reflective journaling, and discussion because these are key components to effective teacher induction programs (Kearney, 2017). Orientation activities; training and professional development opportunities including workshops, university courses, or conferences; and collaborative networking opportunities are additional effective components. Incorporating the opportunity to evaluate the induction process is another important element for an effective teacher induction program for teachers at diverse stages of their professional development.

Next, I discuss the characteristics of effective teacher induction models that include incremental professional learning embedded throughout the first years of teaching at a school to provide formative feedback and reflective conversations.

### ***Professional Learning***

Effective professional learning for new teachers involves daily work and is aligned with the overall professional development program for all teachers. An induction program should provide a gradual acculturation into the school rather than a "sink or swim" approach (Britton et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Gold, 1996; Howe, 2006; Kearney, 2017; Shanker, 1987; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Establishing a regular time to meet and reflect on the feedback is vital (Flores et al., 2011; Kearney, 2017; Moir, 2009). Howe (2006) asserts that a well-organized induction program to support and inform new teachers is beneficial at the beginning of the acculturation process. Providing formative evidence or feedback of a teacher’s instructional practice, which the supervisor and the teacher can use to have

conversations about practice, is another critical component (Paryani, 2019). Next, I present two components of professional learning for new teachers: orientation and the teacher evaluation process.

**Orientation.** Teacher induction does not end with orientation. Orientation is the beginning of teacher learning at the school. The principal, through a teacher induction program, facilitates the formation of collegial relationships that forge a shared purpose, which is the basis of a professional learning community (Hord, 2009). In many cases, orientation is the whole induction program as is the current practice at TCIS. After orientation teachers are left to “sink or swim” (Britton et al., 2000). A more thorough and ongoing process of orientation is required to acculturate new teachers. In a practice-oriented article based on the collective experiences of 25 heads of schools from Central American international schools, Zilber (2009) divided orientation into four stages: recruiting and contracting, after contracting/before arrival, after arrival, and follow-up. The focus of the recruiting and contracting stage is presenting the school to prospective teachers. The second stage, after contracting/before arrival, is the optimum time to provide information and resources for employment. Before arrival, communication with principals and pairing with “buddy teachers” frequently takes place. Upon arrival, teachers are given access to their classroom and instructional resources and begin to learn about the processes and procedures utilized in the day-to-day operations of the school (NTC, 2018). The orientation can last from a few hours to a few weeks. In the follow-up stage, teachers are encouraged to deepen their self-reflections about their personal experiences and to analyze their professional practices. School principals and sometimes mentor teachers provide guidance. Professional learning opportunities should be incorporated throughout the school year.

**Teacher Observation and Evaluation.** Evaluations that focus on growth and development are components of professional learning and can be a powerful and dynamic process by providing feedback to the teacher that is observational and non-judgmental (Paryani, 2019; Schön, 2017; Toch, 2008). Typically, principals are involved in new teacher evaluations and thus, an intrinsic part of the teacher induction. Also, assigned mentor teachers can provide feedback to new teachers; because of their non-supervisory status, the mentors' feedback more readily fosters a dialogue with the new teacher. According to Paryani (2019), however,

Supervision from principals can only be effective if teachers are working together and collaborating in the process because the key purpose of clinical supervision is improving teaching. Principals may have the final say, but the process is more useful when teachers are given a platform to express their feelings or give suggestions and co-construct ways to change their practices, they are more likely to do so if they are encouraged by the supervisor (p. 11).

New teachers need time to reflect on feedback to improve their practice. Professional learning through the evaluation and observation process can happen through formative feedback and structured time for reflection with principals, mentors, or peers.

**Formative Feedback.** According to Darling-Hammond (2014), teachers “crave useful feedback and the challenge and counsel that would enable them to improve” (p. 5). Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) suggest teacher evaluation systems should be utilized for teacher professional growth and development and should be based on professional standards of effective teaching practices such as those of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The process should involve teacher collaboration. The authors acknowledge the use of teacher

evaluations in personnel decisions but advise using protocols for multiple observations based on written feedback and the use of teacher artifacts such as lesson plans, student assessments, and recordings of lessons (Acheson & Gall, 2003; Saphier et al., 1997; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013). Effective induction activities should facilitate reflective thinking, which creates a culture of coaching among all teachers to be more credible, caring, and connected. These features suggest teachers receive formative feedback and engage in conversations to improve their practice. Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) indicate effective teacher observation and evaluation systems provide a process to document the impact of teachers' actions on student learning.

Based on the premise that teaching is a social activity, a structured lesson observation protocol coupled with a mentor teacher is a common element of induction programs. Providing a structured system of peer observation and feedback for new teachers can provide benefits such as the promotion of reflective practices and increased dialogue. Howe (2006) urges an increasing focus on the clinical practice of teaching coupled with induction programs to attract higher-quality teaching candidates, reduce teacher attrition, increase job satisfaction, improve professional development opportunities, and have a positive impact on student learning. Site-specific programs are effective because they are generated to address the needs of those directly involved (Bransford et al., 2001). Structured lesson observation protocols, peer observation and feedback, and a mentor teacher are integral to teacher induction as they relate to the PAR project. The implementation of an effective teacher induction model at TCIS necessitates a change in policy and practice. Specifically, systems of peer support through mentor teachers, peer observations, and lesson observations are elements of effective induction models.

***Time.*** Professional learning requires ample time for collaboration, feedback, and reflection (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). New teachers

are often assigned to the most difficult classes and are required to manage extra duties beyond teaching (Howe, 2006). Moir (2009) asserts the additional time it takes for new teachers to prepare effective lessons during the first year, coupled with the general reluctance of many new teachers to share their concerns, questions, and frustrations, impacts overall job satisfaction. Howe (2006) cites the clinical practice of “reduced teaching assignments for beginning teachers with an emphasis on assistance rather than assessment” (p. 287) to provide the necessary time to participate in ongoing, school-specific observations and practice with other teachers. However, Moir (2009) argues that whatever processes are included in a teacher induction program should be specific and realistic so as not to overwhelm the new teacher.

### ***Collaboration***

Effective teacher induction models emphasize collaboration (Britton et al., 2000, Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Pain & Schulle, 2010; Wong et al., 2005). According to the New Teacher Center (NTC), induction programs benefit new teachers, veteran teachers, and students when built on collaboration. Moir (2009) contends that connecting the experience and wisdom of veteran teachers with new teachers in a collaborative learning environment fosters a culture of commitment. Collaborative structures are presented in the next section about how teachers learn because they originate from adult learning principles.

Effective new teacher induction models have common elements: defined structures, professional learning, and collaboration. Kearney (2017) found that international best practices included: “the provision of subject-specific mentors; reduced teaching load for both the beginning teacher and the mentor; and the evaluation of the program each year by teachers who undergo the program, which has led to modifications to the program” (p. 794). Collaboration

between new and veteran teachers, ongoing and embedded professional learning opportunities, and well-thought-out structured models are elements of effective teacher induction programs around the world (Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). Next, I discuss how teachers learn and think about their learning (see Figure 5).

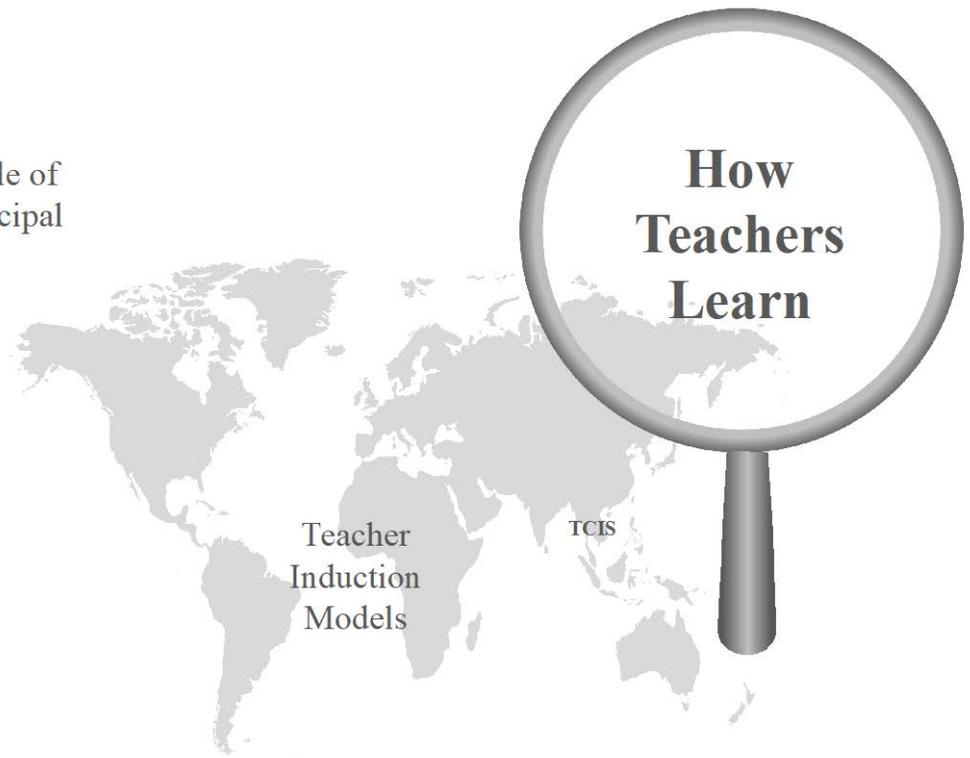
### **How Teachers Learn**

In this section, I examine adult learning principles and review the evidence of how teachers learn. First, I examine literature about adult learning. Second, I present a perspective of teacher learning based on interactions and experiences. Third, I discuss the four pillar practices of adult learning. Teacher's professional learning should be intensive and ongoing and enhance the instructional goals of the school. Finally, teacher learning should be embedded into daily practice (Moir, 2009).

#### **Adult Learning**

Understanding how adults learn is central to constructing an effective international teacher induction program. Adult learning through the lens of the Constructivist Developmental Theory (Kegan, 1994, 2000), serves as the foundation to the pillar practices of adult learning: teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). The pillar practices are connected to the stages of professional learning for teachers (Berliner, 2001; Dolmage, 1996; Fessler, 1985; Gschwend & Moir, 2007; Moir, 2009). Teacher induction programs should be a continuation of pre-service teacher training and thus necessitate an understanding of what teachers know about subject area content and the pedagogy of teaching and learning (Howe, 2006). Teacher induction programs should be constructed around adult learning principles. We

The Role of  
the Principal



**How  
Teachers  
Learn**

Teacher  
Induction  
Models

ICIS

*Figure 5.* How teachers learn.

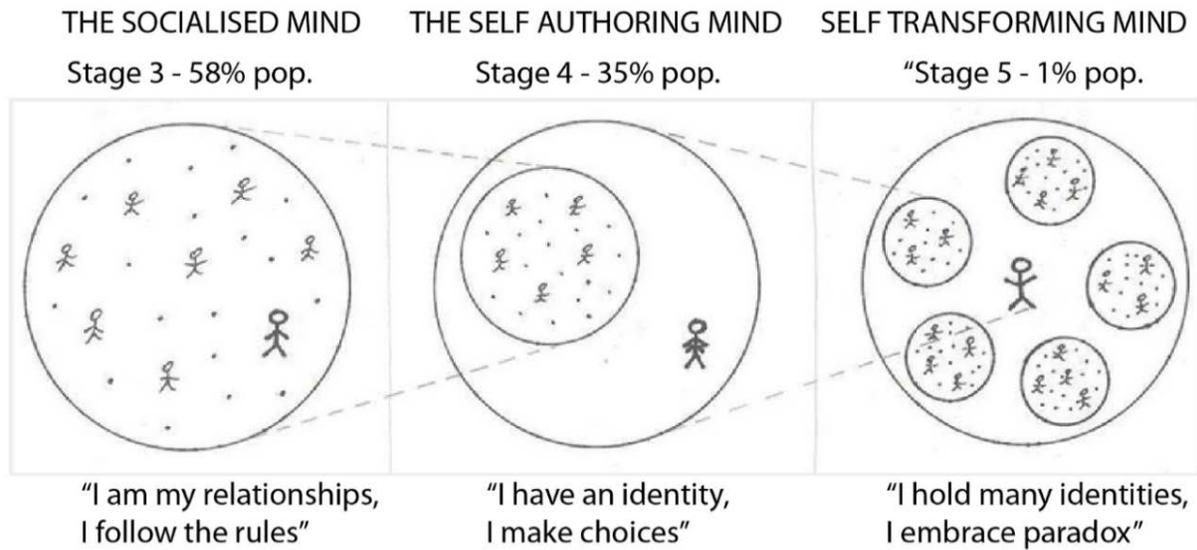
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construct our knowledge of the world based on individual experiences (Dewey, 1938; Vygotsky, 1978). Piaget in the 1930s identified psycho-social stages of child development (sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational), which cover the period of birth to adolescence and describe how children acquire knowledge at different stages of cognitive development. Vygotsky offered a similar theory of child intellectual development with the addition of the belief that children acquire knowledge through social interaction and culture—not necessarily in precise phases but through intersubjectivity, the interaction between peers.

Kegan extended the theories to adults and incorporated concepts from Piaget and Vygotsky. There are five stages in Kegan’s Constructivist Developmental Theory (impulsive mind, imperial mind, socialized mind, self-authoring mind, and self-transforming mind), which purports to explain how adults make meaning or acquire knowledge. Figure 6 shows that 93% of adults are at Stages 3 or 4 and that only 1% transform to Stage 5 (Kegan, 1994). Drago-Severson and Blum-Destefano (2018) explain that “each of us constructs our understandings of the world and our unique places in it” (p. 24). Adult learning principles are central to the focus of practice (FoP) of the PAR project and study as they provide a framework for adults’ meaning-making or ways of knowing to inform practice with teachers as adult learners. Through teacher induction programs created for adult learning needs, teachers should become reflective, collaborative practitioners empowered to make professional choices about their practice.

### **Teacher Conceptions of Learning**

Three conceptualizations inform how we think about teacher learning: process-product, cognitive modeling, and situative and sociocultural (Russ et al., 2016). Teacher learning is central to new teacher induction and professional development. Therefore, how teachers learn should provide a guide for how we design supports for teacher learning. In the 1970s and 1980s,



Excerpt: Constructive Development Theory - Robert Kegan "In Over our Heads"

*Figure 6. Kegan's Stages of Constructive Developmental Theory.*

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psychologists viewed “process-product research” in the study of how teachers learn as a process dependent on specific actions of the teacher and their relationship to student outcomes. Process-product research did not focus on the teacher’s mental processes to explain why and how the teachers decided to implement the actions. The focus on teacher learning was rare because of the lack of understanding about the metacognition critical to all learning. Teachers and their supervisors did not fully co-construct an understanding of the teacher’s thinking about teaching—the cognitive modeling necessary for learning. However, even with metacognition and cognitive modeling, which enhanced the ability to understand some parts of the why of teaching, there was a missing component that may support stronger teacher learning (Russ et al., 2016). Teachers operate from a set of perspectives which include social, physical, cultural, and historical contexts and identities.

The third conceptualization of teaching and teacher learning utilized a more complete social perspective revolving around interactions, termed the *situative and sociocultural perspective*. In this application, *situative* refers to the local context of the school community coupled with the policies and administrative regulations. The *sociocultural* element includes the personal and professional relationships and cultural variety that exist in international schools. The situative and sociocultural lens frames the PAR project because the local community of the school—comprised of teachers, students, parents, and administrators—becomes an intrinsic part of the new teacher’s experience. Furthermore, international schools are distinct given the composition of their communities and should generate the ideal process for new teacher relationship building and learning based on their unique local insights. The understanding of teaching and teacher learning is “fundamentally interactional” (Russ et al., 2016, p. 403). Cobb

et al. (2009) posit that “a teacher’s instructional practices are not merely influenced by but are partially constituted by” (p. 166) the unique communities in which they work.

According to the situative and sociocultural lens, teacher learning involves community rules and norms of participation. New teachers need to become attuned to the rules and norms of a new learning community before fully participating in it. Yet, that involves bringing their sociocultural perspectives as outsiders to schools in which cultural perspectives might be quite different. According to Greeno et al. (1996), it takes time for a new member of a group to learn the rules and norms of the group and to fully engage and participate. Russ et al. (2016) posit: “Adapting this perspective has led researchers to view classrooms as communities with cultures and histories in which groups of individuals interact with and learn from each other as well as relevant artifacts and representations” (p. 403). The value of providing reflective experiences combined with structured collaboration underscores the key criteria for effective induction.

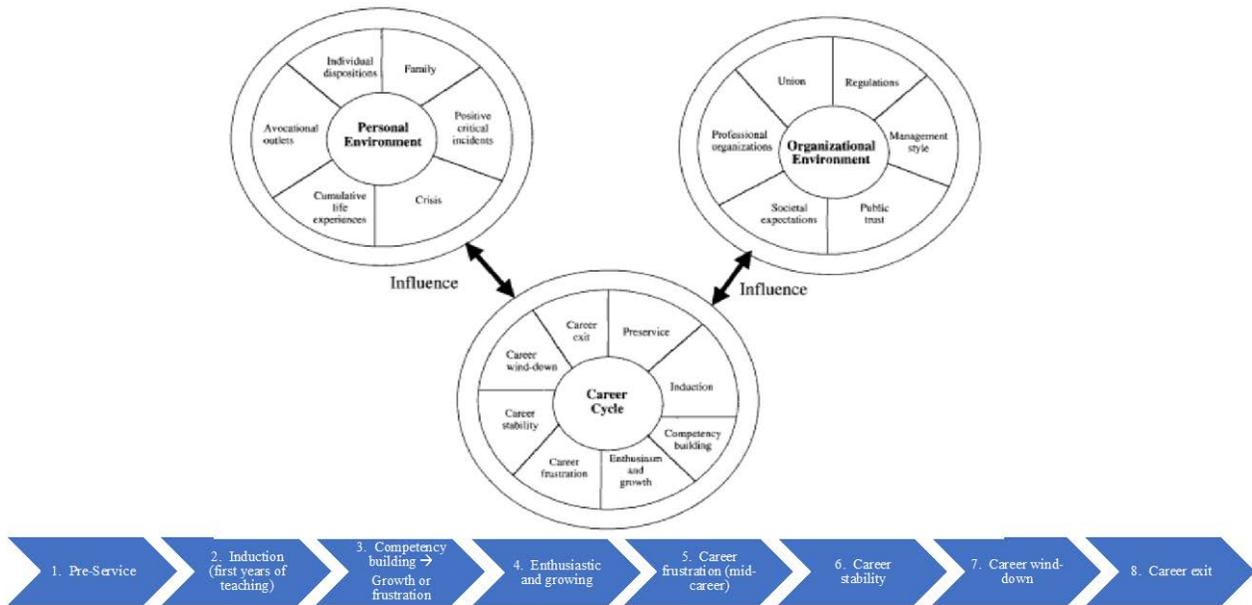
Olebe (2005) provides a summary of the value of new teacher induction programs:

First, teachers’ thinking matters, and during induction beginning teachers’ thoughts about their practice and profession should be fostered and respected. Second, induction is as much about schools and school cultures as it is about supporting individual teachers. Working conditions and school climate matter, especially to beginners. Third, diverse understandings of practice, coupled with clear agreements on underlying purposes and principles, are essential to the long-term sustainability of both teachers and programs (p. 159).

Implementing a structured program of supports, including lesson observations, feedback, mentors, and professional development involving interactions with other teachers, should be incorporated into the design of a teacher induction program.

Teachers undergo college or university training, receive clinical practice to varying degrees, and then launch directly into a classroom teaching assignment. According to Howe (2006), new teachers frequently complain that their formal training at the university lacked relevancy in contrast to on-the-job learning, which was instrumental to their work. We expect teachers to continue to learn and develop professionally over the entire course of their careers (Berliner, 2001; Dolmage, 1996; Moir, 2009). The classroom space and student learning for which the new teacher is responsible now doubles as an adult learning arena that offers many experiences from which the new teacher makes meaning. The first years in a classroom are a critical time in the development and self-reflection of new teachers and underscore the need for support from the principal and a mentor teacher because new teachers are in Fessler's competency-building stage and need assistance to make sense of their learning. Fessler's eight stages of teachers' professional development should inform teacher induction activities, serve as a guide to individualize teacher professional development, and focus on the support of the teacher in personal areas (see Figure 7). According to Lynn (2002), teachers dynamically move through Fessler's eight stages of a teaching career in response to school and environmental influences. At TCIS, most teachers are new to TCIS but not to teaching.

The research reviewed targets teachers in the first years of their career. Feiman-Nemser (2003) states it takes about "three to four years to achieve competence and several more to reach proficiency" (p. 27) for new teachers to transfer the knowledge gained from teacher preparation programs into classroom practice. Similar to the teacher career cycles, teachers go through phases and stages of learning and require collaborative, situational, and ongoing professional development that fosters reflective practice (Berliner, 2001; Dolmage, 1996; Huberman, 1989, 1993; Moir, 2009).



Fessler's Eight Stages of teachers' career cycle

*Note.* (Lynn, 2002).

*Figure 7.* Model of teacher career cycle and environmental influences.

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Emotional support should be a component of a new teacher program (Langdon, 2011; Moir, 2009; Pain & Schulle, 2010). What we know about the attitudinal phases of new teachers during their inaugural year of teaching guides the development of programs to address the support of new teachers and teachers new to a school. These phases influence their cognitive capacity to learn and transfer knowledge as they absorb the situative and social-cultural influences of the context in which they learn to be teachers (Russ et al., 2016) or adjust to a new school. Based on work and subsequent qualitative data from the New Teacher Project described earlier, Moir (2009) identified five psychological or feeling phases teachers experience during their first year: anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, and reflection.

According to Moir (2009), during the anticipation phase, new teachers often experience feelings of excitement and confidence in their ability to transfer their enthusiasm for teaching into dynamic learning experiences for their students. After just a few weeks, many teachers see that not all instructional methods go according to their plans. They become aware that transferring theory into practice takes tremendous effort and time. Acclimating to a new community along with the site-specific regulations and hours of lesson preparation leads teachers into “survival” mode. After a month or two in survival mode, new teachers may begin to question their choice of career—the disillusionment phase.

For about the first six months of teaching, new teacher attitudes generally decline to a low point around the mid-year (winter) break. The break allows for the new teacher to rejoin friends and family while disconnecting from their role as a teacher for rest and rejuvenation. Teachers tend to return from winter break re-energized and ready to apply the on-the-job learning experienced and generally get to April or May when they begin a period of reflection on their first year of teaching. As the school year concludes, teachers tend to loop back to the

anticipation phase. Teachers may experience these phases in isolation and can benefit from additional attention, mentoring, and orientation (see Table 2).

Adult learning is a theme of effective models for pre-service teachers and is embedded in the FoP because how teachers make meaning and come to understand new information informs the PAR project and study. Adult learning structures serve as key components of a framework for meaningful professional development opportunities for new and veteran teachers (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012; Kegan, 1994, 2000; Knowles, 1980). These practices are critical to creating a learning environment focused on the teacher as an adult learner. Next, I investigate the pillar practices and discuss the more complex process of how teachers transfer theory to practice.

### **Pillar Practices of Adult Learning**

As adult learners, teachers are empowered to navigate their professional learning. Using Robert Kegan's (1994) Constructivist Developmental Theory of stage development describing how individuals construct ways of knowing throughout adulthood, Drago-Severson and Blum-Destefano (2018) identify four structures or pillar practices of their adult "learning-centered model: teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring" (p. 4). These structures provide the framework to develop and create learning opportunities specific to the local school priorities and individual needs of teachers. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), there are 10 themes to effective teacher preparation. They posit teacher learning is a continuum grounded in collaborative, clinical practice; is informed by research; and offers leadership opportunities. There are similarities between the themes and the four pillar practices (teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring).

Table 2

*Phases of New Teacher Attitudes*

Phase	Onset and Duration	Summary
Anticipation	Pre-service to first weeks	Excitement is high about the opportunity to make a positive impact on students and accomplishing a career goal.
Survival	First months of school (August to October)	The excitement has waned, and the reality of the full responsibility of teaching surfaces.
Disillusionment	About two months into the school year (October to December)	Acknowledgment that lessons do not always go according to plan, and the sheer amount of time required to plan and prepare often becomes overwhelming—new teachers question their career choice.
Rejuvenation	After Winter Break (January)	After a brief respite from the day-to-day rigors of classroom instruction, teachers return to school refreshed and ready to engage students.
Reflection	After Spring Break (April to May)	As the school year comes to an end, teachers engage in self-reflection, reaffirming their commitment to teaching or deciding to move in another career direction.

*Note.* (Moir, 2009).

### ***Teaming and Leadership Roles***

Communities of practice rely on time and collective inquiry by teachers facilitated by the principal with a focus on results. The fundamental purpose is to ensure that all students learn at high levels. Creating a collaborative culture is accomplished through structured meeting times during regular school hours to allow teachers to focus on student learning. Darling-Hammond (2014) states, "Teaching improves most in collegial settings where common goals are set, the curriculum is jointly developed, and expertise is shared" (p. 13) (see Table 3). Through a collaborative structure, teachers engage in ongoing, collective study to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the school with the commitment to continuous improvement driving the inquiry (DuFour et al., 2004).

To promote an effective induction program that supports new teachers, ensuring the school climate is conducive to collaboration is key (Baker-Gardner, 2016; Britton et al., 2000; Howe, 2006; Iordanides & Vryoni, 2013; Little, 2006; Moir, 2009; Talbert, 2010; Wong et al., 2005). Four of the ten elements identified in successful induction models by Mangione et al. (2018) address collaborative practices: observing experienced teachers, tutoring by qualified mentors, a supportive academic context for the new teacher to engage in promoting collective responsibility, and the purposeful structuring of spaces for new and experienced teachers to engage in professional dialogue. PLCs are an example of a community of practice and offer a framework for embedded collaboration among school staff (Hord, 1997, 2009; Little, 2006). PLCs were popularized in the 1990s (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Essential to PLCs is a commitment to ongoing collaboration focusing on what students are learning based on teacher inquiry and dedicated time for collaboration on a regular and frequent basis as well as a sharing of the responsibility of the success or failure of every student. Talbert (2010) outlines challenges

Table 3

*Similarities between Themes of Effective Models and Pillar Practices*

Themes of Effective Teacher Preparation Models	Pillar Practices of Adult Learning
1. High social regard for teaching	
2. Selectivity into the profession	
3. Financial support for preparation and professional learning	
4. Professional standards outline teaching expectations	
5. Preparation and induction grounded in well-defined curriculum content and well-supported clinical training	Teaming, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring
6. Teaching as a research-informed and research-engaged profession	Engaging in collegial inquiry
7. Teaching as a collaborative, not isolated, occupation	Teaming, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring
8. Teacher development as a continuum	Mentoring
9. Opportunities for leadership	Providing adults with leadership roles
10. Systems organized to support quality teaching and equity	Teaming and mentoring

*Note.* (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, pp. 13-16; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018, p. 4).

to building a professional learning community, which go beyond creating collaborative opportunities for teachers. Talbert (2010) asserts schools need to reinvent ways of doing things, often in contrast to the existing bureaucratic processes in schools. Additionally, all levels of leadership in a school need to support the change to professional strategies. Without the support of the entire leadership team, PLCs are not sustainable.

School leaders need to reallocate resources and provide the time to promote system changes and ensure quality learning opportunities across the school.

### ***Collegial Inquiry: Collaborative, Situational and Ongoing Professional Development***

Teaching is a social process and requires continual learning for the teacher that incorporates professional collaboration, dialogue, and self-reflection. However, Tuncel and Çobanoğlu (2018) analyzed 494 novice teachers' views and opinions of induction program training and found minimal value. The researchers posit that the programs were not thoughtfully constructed to address what we know about novice teachers and suggest that a thorough “planning process should be carefully carried out in order for in-service training to be effective and sustainable, and the andragogy principles should be taken into account in organizing the teaching and learning process” (p. 1). The National Staff Development Council’s 2009 report on teacher development in the United States and abroad includes conditions necessary for effective, ongoing teacher training intensive enough to cause a change in teacher behavior (over 50 hours) and connected to current instructional initiatives (Wei et al., 2009).

Professional collaboration is an essential element of school culture in which teachers are provided time to meet for collegial inquiry, one of the adult learning pillar practices, regularly. A professional learning community (PLC) provides the context for professional learning and is an example of Drago-Severson's pillar practices in action. A school's culture must be focused on

both the students and teachers as learners—not just the students. The PLC approach is a shift in the teaching and learning process from an instructor-centered to a learner-centered approach (Hord, 2009). Learning becomes embedded into the ongoing efforts of teachers and not simply a workshop or training in isolation, which is often the case at international schools.

PLCs provide the optimum learning environment for teachers and operate through purposeful structures, which align with the four pillar practices of a learning-centered model: teaming, providing leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring (Drago-Severson, 2009, 2012, 2018). Little (2006) presents an approach to develop professional learning embedded in the teacher’s workplace and focusing on the “collective capacity” of the school. In a learning-centered school, professional learning focuses on the experiences of the teachers throughout daily work with students. These experiences are the basis for the ongoing, critical examination of student work and their thinking and need time and support for teachers to engage in collective inquiry about the progress of the students. Kearney (2017) and Little (2006) characterize a professional community as close professional relationships with the common bond of teacher learning and professional development focusing on continuous improvement. In such a community, teachers share responsibility for student learning. Unlike learning cultures in which classroom work remains private and teachers are reluctant to discuss instructional problems, teachers in a professional learning community readily discuss classroom and instructional issues and assist one another in generating solutions to problems of practice.

### ***Mentoring and Orientation***

Individual teacher support with mentoring and associated activities such as observations, classroom visits, reflective journaling, and discussion are key components to adult learning. These activities are critical in supporting the psychological needs of new teachers as they form

their teacher identities, often navigating their first professional employment in their early to mid-twenties. Orientation activities and professional development opportunities including workshops, university courses or conferences, and collaborative networking opportunities augment effective components of a teacher induction program (Olebe, 2005). Through experiences in the workplace or classroom, teachers begin to make meaning, deepen their understanding, grow professionally, and identify their own needs (Lupu, 2012). Working with a mentor teacher, new teachers and teachers new to a school can accelerate their learning about the school community, students, and administrative expectations (Moir, 2009). According to the socio-constructivist perspective, knowledge is generated by people working together in the learning community, not just through the assembling of facts (Russ et al., 2016). As Nelson and Sassi (1999) share, “Learning proceeds through the individual’s construction of understanding” (p. 2). Teachers are motivated to learn because they understand the usefulness of the new knowledge and the positive impact it has on the learning community (Bransford et al., 2001).

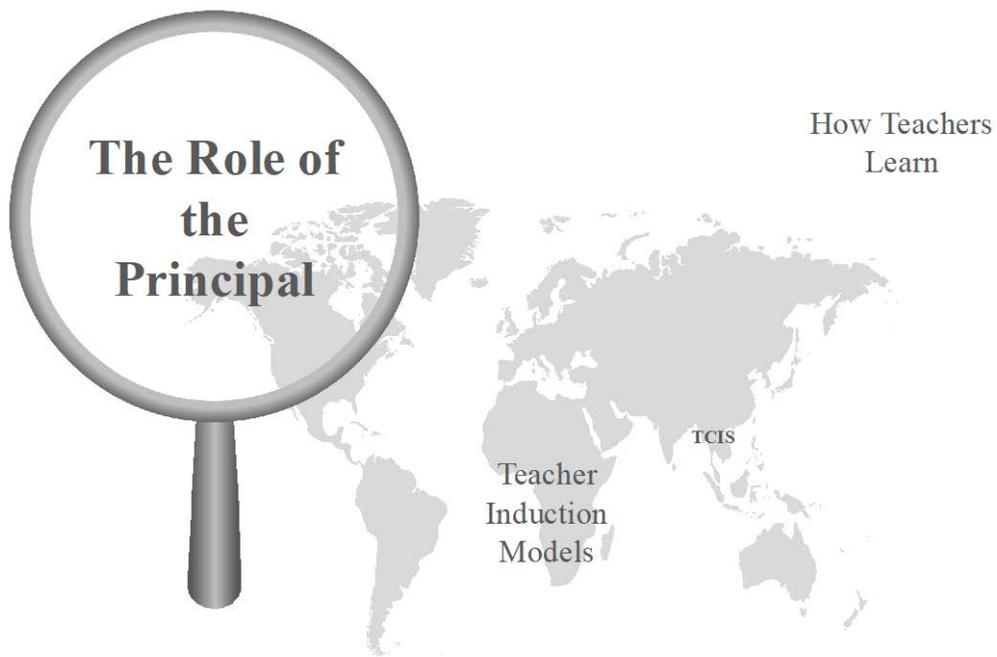
A teacher’s metacognition has a role in transferring the knowledge gained from the university teacher training program and prior experiences to the classroom. Beyond knowledge about learning, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1989) claim teachers need knowledge of their individual learning preferences and guidance for developing the ability to navigate their learning (National Research Council, 2000). New teachers require 3 to 4 years to advance from a novice to a basic competence level (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Progression through the early stage of growth is often fostered by effective pairing with a mentor teacher or coach and a supportive principal in a school climate that is conducive to adult learning.

In the previous section, I reviewed adult learning constructs and professional learning needs of in-service teachers in learning-centered schools. Transferring pre-service learning into

classroom practice takes 3 to 4 years for new teachers to attain a basic level of proficiency and requires the application of effective adult learning approaches coupled with in-service teacher professional development (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Drago-Severson and Blum-Destefano's (2018) pillar practices for adult learning (teaming, leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring) are structures conducive to meaning-making for teachers as adult learners. In the early stages of teaching, individual mentoring accelerates learning and fosters knowledge generation through facilitating the processing of the new teacher's construction of understanding (Moir, 2009). Throughout all stages of a teaching career, professional learning should be intensive, ongoing, and enhance the current instructional goals of the school. Finally, teacher learning is best situated in the workplace in which the focus is on the teacher as a learner (Moir, 2009). Communities of practice are built on professional relationships with the common bond of teacher learning centered on student work, instructional problems of practice, and reflective practice (Little, 2006). Next, I present what the literature says about the role of the principal in the teacher induction process with a focus on professional development (see Figure 8).

### **The Role of the Principal**

Here, I explain the role of the principal in teacher induction with a focus on professional development. I describe the role of the principal as the instructional leader and enumerate specific responsibilities—particularly about supporting the growth and development of teachers who are either new to the profession or new to the cultural situation at TCIS. The principal as an instructional leader is responsible for identifying experienced teachers as mentors. The principal's responsibility is to foster a professional learning environment for all teachers. School leadership is essential to transition to and nurture professional learning communities to build the necessary structures to allow regular collaboration and reflection through teaming by purposely



*Figure 8. The role of the principal.*

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establishing groups of teachers at grade levels and departments (Little, 2006; Moir, 2009). Thus, I discuss the role of the principal in teacher induction with emphasis on systematic mentorship via purposefully paired mentor teachers.

### **Community of Practice**

The principal, as the instructional leader of the school, should be knowledgeable of and play a significant part in the teacher induction process. The principal is responsible for the creation and maintenance of a dynamic and learner-centered school culture and to help new teachers adapt and become contributing members of the community (Angelle, 2006; Wood, 2005). The school principal's support is an integral element of successful induction programs (Brock & Grady, 1998; Gschwend & Moir, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002).

### ***Professional Development***

The professional development component of the teacher induction program should be incorporated and aligned with the overall professional learning opportunities for all teachers. A principal focused on a learning-centered model of professional development aims to create an environment of collaboration and support responsive to the problems of practice as identified by teachers (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016). An environment of collaboration is ultimately a path to improved student performance. In addition to student gains, the principal leads the way from the isolated and individualistic perspective of teacher growth to one of harnessing the "school's collective capacity" as a result of a "strong professional community" (Little, 2006, p. 3). Principals need to facilitate meaningful professional development through the four pillar practices (teaming, leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring), which guide the leader in providing learning opportunities aligned to the needs of teachers as adult learners.

### ***New Teacher Acculturation***

The acculturation of new teachers to the school is the responsibility of the principal. The new teacher's relationship with the principal is a significant factor in teacher success and retention (Andrews et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ganser, 2001; Olebe et al., 1999; Stansbury, 2001). The emotional phases experienced by new teachers (Moir, 2009) provide context for principals when orienting teachers to ensure that they understand the policies, procedures, and practices of the school. Further, principals should foster conversations and supports aligned with the phases new teachers are experiencing throughout the school year.

Moir (2009) and Breaux and Wong (2003) summarize shifting attitudes of new teachers in their five-stages construct. The principal's involvement with new teachers impacts the rate at which teachers acclimate to the school. Fultz and Gimbert (2009) state, "Principals must be actively present and available to assist with the needs and concerns of novice teachers" (p. 3). The principal conveys information to the new teachers, facilitates the mentor identification process, and ensures the needs of new teachers are met before the first day of school. New teachers can acclimatize to the school culture and accelerate the development of their teaching skills during their first years (Moir, 2009) if the conditions are set by the school and especially the school administration.

### ***Mentoring and the Principal***

The principal's responsibility is to ensure new teachers are paired with effective mentor teachers and to further ensure that the mentor teachers are equipped to provide guidance and feedback to promote self-reflection and continuous improvement. In many international schools, identifying mentor teachers may prove difficult, so the principal may serve as a mentor teacher. The principal should set up specific expectations and conditions for the mentor. However, the

pairing of new teachers is important, and peer learning is critical. New teachers benefit from a supportive and collegial relationship with a purposefully paired mentor teacher.

### **Learning-Centered Community**

The principal is responsible for fostering a professional learning environment while promoting equity for all teachers (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Flores et al., 2011). Because teaching is a social process, research on the characteristics of a learner-centered community to guide all teachers in the process of meaning-making must be considered. The role of the principal in teacher induction is based on the culture of collaboration (DuFour et al., 2004). Two examples of a learning-centered community are a Professional Learning Community (PLC) (Hord, 1997, 2009; Little, 2006) and the Community Learning Exchange (CLE).

#### ***Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)***

PLCs rely on time and collective inquiry by teachers facilitated by the principal with a focus on results. At the core of the PLC is a strong principal committed to empowering teachers to “do whatever it takes” (DuFour et al., 2004, p. 147) to ensure a high level of student learning. The principal should foster an environment that emphasizes co-learning among teachers and administrators (Howe, 2006). According to Talbert (2010), the process is about organizational change and relies on the principal’s understanding of PLCs and principles of change processes. School leaders need to reallocate resources and provide the time to promote system changes and to ensure quality learning opportunities across the school.

#### ***Community Learning Exchanges (CLEs)***

The principal has the key responsibility for using the processes and protocols of the CLE to organize the professional learning of teachers. CLEs are a fundamental way of meaning-making for both new and experienced teachers (Guajardo et al., 2016). At the core of a school-

based CLE are relationships that revolve around the practice of teaching and learning, which in turn inform individual and collective thinking. The five guiding principles, referred to as axioms by Guajardo et al. (2016) and explained in Table 4, provide the framework for school leaders to facilitate the transformation of a school into a learning-centered school that focuses on both students and teachers as learners (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Flores et al., 2011; Kearney, 2017; Little, 2006; Moir, 2009). The CLE axioms highlight the need for the instructional leader to be willing to let go of the status quo by embracing others' experiences in a collective search for solutions to locally identified issues.

The principal is instrumental in leading the school community through change by focusing on “relationships, assets, stories, place, politics and action (RASPPA)” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 4). According to Baker-Gardner (2015), “Principals will also have to be innovative and proactive and utilize action research to discover solutions that work best for their institutions” (p. 58). Ensuring that new teachers are provided adequate transition support into the learning community is vital because teachers new to the school often have tremendous skills and new ideas that too often are not shared with veteran teachers because of their newcomer status (Howe, 2006). According to Iordanides and Vryoni (2013), “Many researchers claim that a positive school culture and a positive school climate contribute effectively to the smooth induction of new teachers and their professional growth” (p. 77).

In summary, the school principal should play a role in creating and fostering a learning-centered community, participate in teacher induction, and establish a process for the matching of mentor teachers with new teachers to accelerate their learning and acclimate to the school community (Andrews et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Flores et al., 2011; Ganser, 2001; Little, 2006; Olebe et al., 1999; Stansbury, 2001). The principal should guide the professional

Table 4

*Five Axioms of Community Learning Exchanges*

Axiom	Summary	Principal's Role
Learning and leadership are a dynamic social process.	Leadership is collaborative based on individual and shared learning.	Facilitate a collaborative environment of teaming with opportunities for teachers to serve in leadership roles such as mentoring.
Conversations are critical and central pedagogical processes.	Relationships are key, and personal stories and conversations the primary drivers in safe space.	Prioritize time to engage in conversations about student learning and supporting teachers.
The people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local concerns.	Through stories, people can generate collaborative momentum to address their own needs by context-specific processes. People can change processes they deem to be less than ideal or effective.	Engage teachers, students, parents, and community members to co-create solutions to issues they identify.
Crossing boundaries enriches the development and educational process.	Creating safe spaces that allow people to be free of current systems of organizational hierarchy serves to amplify individual and collective voice and disrupt the status quo.	Foster equitable structures to promote conversations about learning-centered practices that honor the experience of people outside of the school.
Hope and change are built on assets and dreams of locals and their communities.	A shift from focusing on what is not working to the strengths of the individuals and community is central to reframe problems of practice to opportunities for hope.	Celebrate successes.

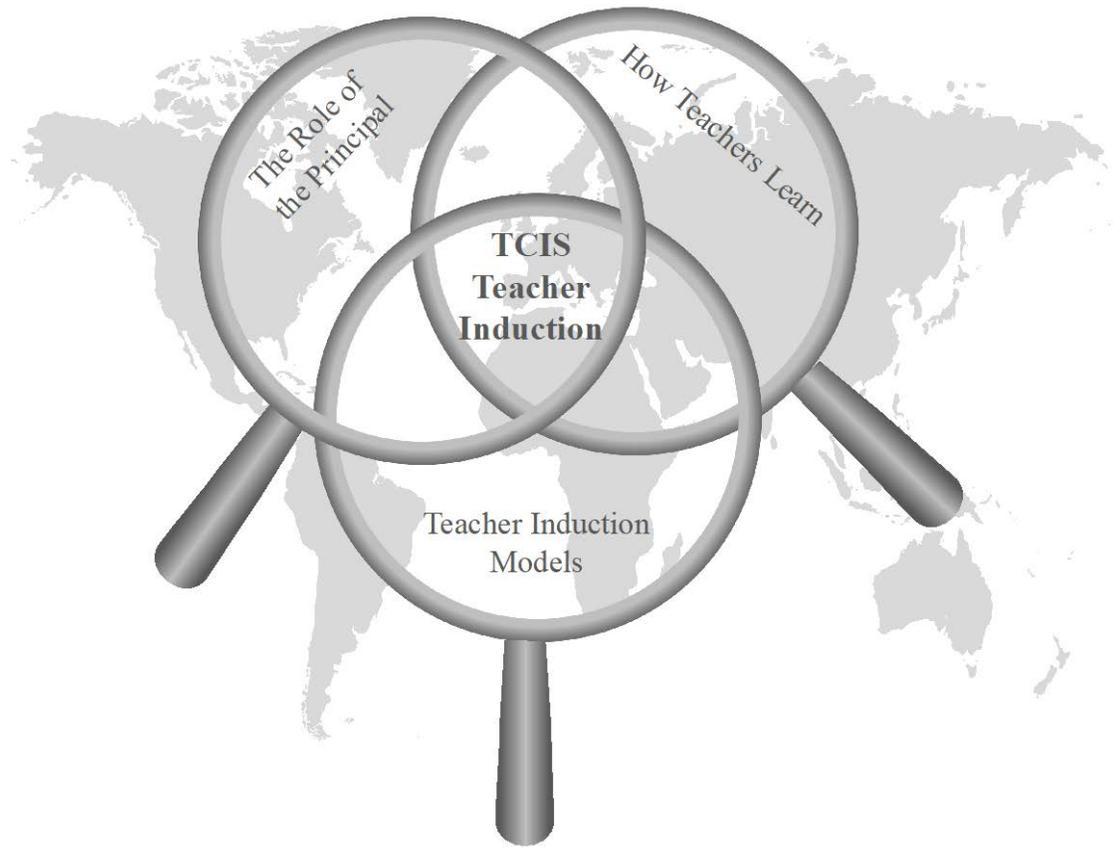
*Note.* (Guajardo et al., 2016).

development of all teachers by facilitating teaming, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring—the pillar practices of adult learning. The relationship between the principal and the new teacher is a significant factor in the efficacy of the orientation process as well as in the job satisfaction of the new teacher, which can improve teacher retention rates. As an extension of the relationship, the principal assigns a mentor teacher to provide on-going support and advice to the new teacher. Next, I summarize new teacher induction programs, how teachers learn, and the role of the principal in the induction process and provide connections to my PAR at the TCIS (see Figure 9).

### **Conclusion—Three Legs of Teacher Induction**

The chapter focused on the literature related to the co-creation of a teacher induction program to support and develop teachers at an international school. Like many international schools, TCIS experiences high annual teacher turnover. Based on the U.S. College Board Advanced Placement Program and the Common Core State Standards, the school seeks to maintain excellent teachers trained and certified in the United States. Several countries are providing comprehensive new teacher induction programs based on adult learning needs. According to Howe (2006), the benefits of effective teacher induction programs “include attracting better candidates; reduced attrition; improved job satisfaction; enhanced professional development; and improved teaching and learning” (p. 287). Induction programs are effective when they are embedded, ongoing, provide support, align with professional development plans, and are integrated into the culture of the learning-centered school (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Flores et al., 2011; Kearney, 2017; Moir, 2009).

Several factors are of critical importance to the development of the teacher induction design. First, the school principal is a critical organizational actor in the teacher induction



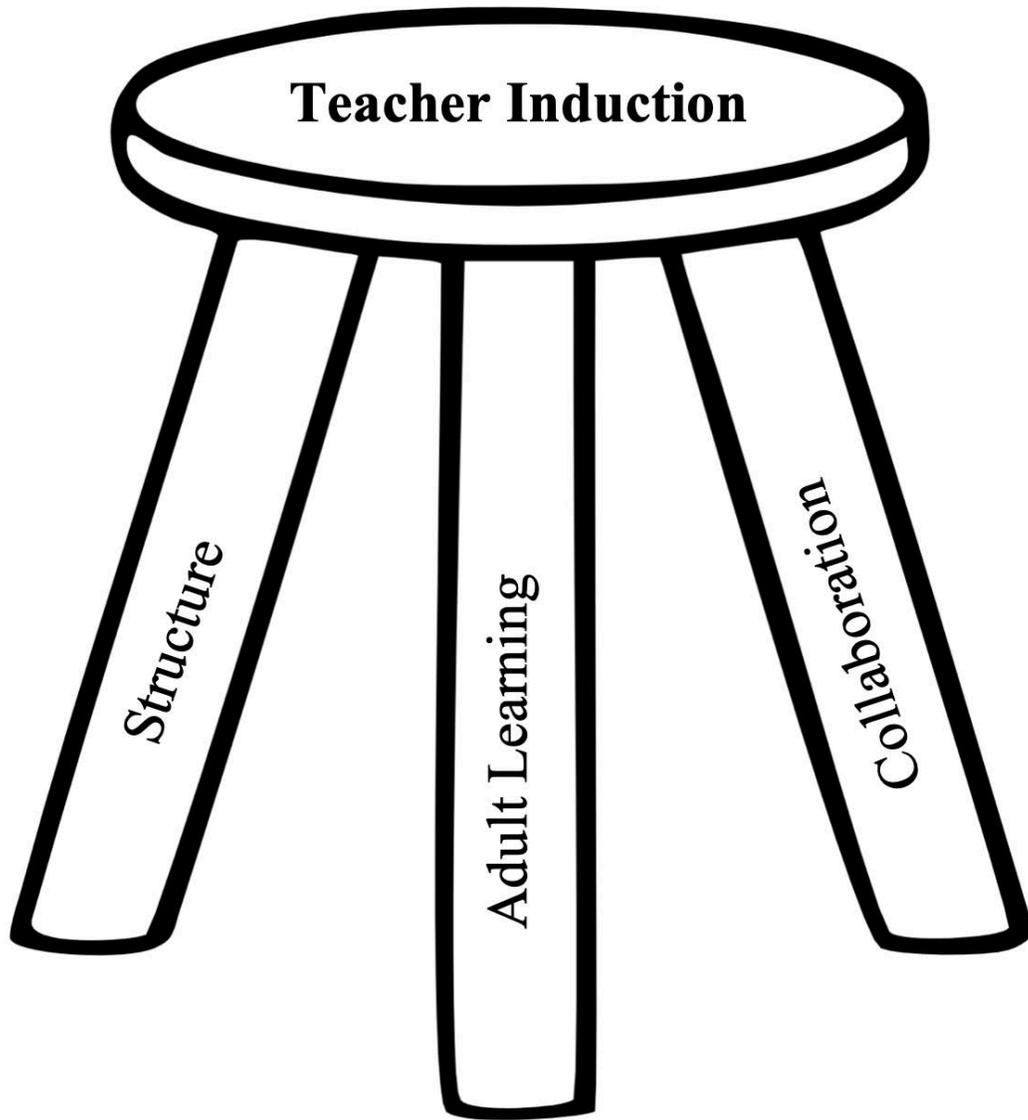
*Figure 9.* TCIS teacher induction.

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process. The essential roles and responsibilities are: ensuring structures are in place to facilitate adult learning practices embedded in professional development activities; developing collaborative structures to support teachers as co-learners; and developing a learner-centered culture to attend to the development needs of adults. The PAR aim is to co-create an effective teacher induction model to meet the needs of teachers joining TCIS while addressing the professional growth needs of all professional educators.

Most teacher induction programs address new teachers, meaning those individuals beginning their teaching career upon completing the university requirements. A unique aspect of TCIS teachers is that most join the school with prior teaching experience, which has implications for the design of an effective induction program. The teacher induction program was created to define structures, use adult learning principles, and foster collaboration (see Figure 10). Models of effective induction programs are highly structured, collaborative, and utilize adult learning principles for professional learning, which guided the PAR. With five co-practitioner researchers (CPR group) at TCIS, we utilized a three-legged approach to generate a co-created new teacher induction process that was highly structured, emphasized collaboration, and focused on adult learning practices. The program should be integrated into the school's professional development plan for all teachers, which had not been the case. Addressing the collaborative aspect presented opportunities as well. Collaboration began with the CPRs in the development of a teacher induction program situated for the unique needs of TCIS teachers, beginning with orientation week activities and integrated into the professional learning plan for all teachers and school leaders.

The TCIS teacher induction program should be constructed through the lens of teachers' attitudes and phases of growth, regardless of years of experience in the teaching profession. As a



*Figure 10.* Three legs of a teacher induction program.

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result of the frameworks in this chapter, we were able to develop an approach that honored the teacher's career path as well as balanced with the necessary personal and professional supports for acculturation and orientation to the unique context of the TCIS. As we involved the CPR team and new teachers in the co-construction of a teacher induction program, we built the program based on the four pillars of adult learning (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). Because we heeded advice about increasing collaboration among teachers and focused on creating culture into a learning-centered professional environment, we increased the teacher's readiness, feelings of belonging, and familiarity with the school culture and host country culture. Engaging principals in the co-creation and implementation of the teacher induction program necessitated the coordination and planning of collaborative professional learning opportunities throughout the school year. Through the leadership of the TCIS principals, systems and processes could be modified to align with the site-specific needs of all teachers and not just the teachers new to TCIS.

In the next chapter, I explain the context and the location of the PAR and provide an overview of my roles and responsibilities at TCIS.

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE THAI-CHINESE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

*Elle presented herself among the group of teachers new to the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS) as strong, confident, and experienced. She arrived with 22 years of successful public elementary school teaching experience from Colorado in the United States. She was assigned to teach English and social studies to forty grade 4 students along with a one-year veteran teacher who managed the mathematics and science lessons. After the 5-day summer new-teacher orientation, her strength, commitment, and experience promised to add great value to the TCIS elementary program. However, first impressions can be deceiving. Just 42 school days into her first international teaching stint, Elle suddenly left Bangkok to return to Colorado. She offered no advance communication to her principal or the head of schools about personal concerns or issues. A simple email message arrived stating she was not coming back.*

*Before her departure, she told one of the school counselors that she was not adjusting well to the city of Bangkok, her teaching partner was not a team player, and she had very few curriculum resources with which to work. She expressed concern that the younger elementary teachers were not welcoming to new teachers and added that friends had contacted her concerned about her son, a college student in the United States, who was struggling with severe depression. Her abrupt departure was a loss for TCIS and illustrated the need for developing relational trust and structural supports for teachers who may be experienced but new to the international setting.*

In this chapter, I describe the history of TCIS and provide information about its demographics and organizational structure as well as the political environment in which the Participatory Action Research (PAR) takes place. Then, I describe the people who joined the PAR project, the available assets, and some issues or challenges. I conclude with an explanation

of my role in the PAR project and study and how I expected the project to impact my personal leadership development and growth.

### **TCIS History, Location, and Mission**

The Thai government-designated areas of Bang Na, a working-class suburb of Bangkok, as economic growth zones in the 1990s. At that time, Thailand was governed by a constitutional monarchy under military control. Numerous companies from the Republic of China (ROC), referred to as Taiwan, made investments in the area that brought a large influx of Taiwanese families who wanted an international school for their children close to the investment zone.

The founding school board was a group of Taiwanese businessmen whose vision was to create an American curriculum school to prepare students for United States universities with an additional Chinese language program comparable to the best schools in Taiwan. TCIS is a non-profit organization and has no income other than tuition. The school follows the Thai Ministry of Education rules and requirements. Strong ties with the ROC remain, and the ROC government provides cultural support for TCIS.

As a result, TCIS was established for 155 students in Bang Na on donated land in 1995. A 20-minute commute from the heart of Bangkok, Thai nationals live traditional lives in Bang Na along *klongs* (canals) and narrow, concrete streets lined with food and clothing vendors—a stark contrast to the cosmopolitan cityscape of Bangkok where most of the school's western teaching staff choose to reside. TCIS serves almost exclusively Thai and Taiwanese students. Tuition for one semester at TCIS is more than most adults in the surrounding areas earn in one year.

The TCIS community is an oasis of sorts and is a campus situated within a Thai industrial, working-class neighborhood. The Thai children living in the vicinity of the school

attend local Thai public schools and do not receive English or Chinese language instruction. There were no students who resided with their families in the surrounding neighborhoods attending the TCIS, yet all support staff (custodial and maintenance personnel) live in the neighborhood. During the 2019-2020 school year, three teachers and three students lived in a residential hotel a short walk from the school as their parents remained in the Republic of China (ROC) or other locations away from Bangkok. TCIS families transport their children to and from school. Several have a one-way commute over 90 minutes.

The mission of the school is to provide a strong educational program based on American curriculum standards and three required languages: Chinese, Thai, and American English. The vision of the school is to create an international environment where both Eastern and Western philosophies and cultures are taught and encouraged. The TCIS motto, “Eastern Window, Western Skies,” reflects the school board’s desire to provide an American educational curriculum combined with daily Chinese language instruction. Initially, graduates were expected to go to the ROC or the US for post-secondary education.

### **Demographics**

The 2018-19 student population was 664 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students. Seventy-three teachers, three administrators, 17 teaching assistants, 27 support staff, the Board, and the parents constitute the TCIS community. The typical TCIS student is from Thailand or the ROC and is an English Language Learner (ELL). While historically there was a larger ROC student population, the ROC presence gradually decreased from 46% of the student body in 2002 to 18% in 2020. The February 2020 onset of the COVID-19 pandemic caused economic uncertainty for many parents and was cited as the main reason for 45 students leaving TCIS at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. While there had been a decline in student enrollment in

recent years, marketing efforts were undertaken to attract more students, especially at the early childhood and elementary levels. As of September 2020, the enrollment was 621 students: 233 students in the elementary school (PreK-Grade 4), 191 students in the middle school (Grades 5-8), and 197 students in the high school (Grades 9-12); the population was approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. From 2010 to 2020, enrollment fluctuated, reaching a high of 803 in 2013.

### **Teaching Staff**

With 73 certificated teachers for the 2020-21 school year, TCIS enjoyed a favorable teacher-to-student ratio of approximately 1:8. The average TCIS teacher is a North American certified teacher with 4 to 5 years of teaching experience. The school recruits most of the teaching staff directly from the US or Canada except for ROC and Thai teachers who are recruited from the ROC and Thailand. International agencies for teacher recruitment are the main source of teaching candidates, and the head of schools hires most of its teachers through fairs at Queen's University in Canada and the University of Northern Iowa in the US.

Although teachers are the key drivers of improvement at TCIS, school principals have to be included in any discussion of long-term changes. Culbertson (2018) states, "The single largest school-based determinant is the effectiveness of the teacher. Next, and just as important, is the effectiveness of the building principals who influence teacher retention and school climate" (Culbertson, 2018, p. 1).

### **Support Personnel**

The elementary school is staffed with 17 teaching assistants who are Thai nationals, many of whom have earned at least a 4-year Thai university degree. Eight Thai personnel manage the areas of finance, human resources, government relations, and immigration. A staff of

27 maintenance, cleaning, and transport personnel provide services to the school complex. Since August 2017, Dr. John McGrath has been the head of schools and was previously the high school principal. The elementary principal, Dr. Betsy Fitch, served from August 2017 until June 2020 after six years as an elementary principal in San Francisco, California. Dr. Michael Purser taught middle school English and served his third year as Curriculum Coordinator before he assumed the role of the middle school principal in January 2019. I serve as the high school principal after one year as the Curriculum Coordinator. Before that, I retired from 25 years in public education in the State of Michigan. The Athletic Director, Samantha Burrows, joined the team in August 2018 on sabbatical from her Canadian teaching assignment and departed at the end of her two-year contract to return to Canada.

### **Organizational Structure and Political Environment**

The governance model and the political landscape of TCIS influence the proposed project of teacher retention in areas of policy and decision-making.

#### **Governance**

The school is governed by the TCIS Foundation Board, which elects a Chair to serve two three-year terms. The governing body, nine Taiwanese men and two women, paid about fifteen thousand dollars to acquire their positions on the board. The board chair is the direct supervisor of the Head of Schools. The board sets policy, approves the budget, and hires the Head of Schools. The board is an asset at TCIS and was supportive of our efforts to improve teacher induction.

The elementary, middle, and high school principals, along with the Curriculum Coordinator, Athletic Director, Director of Instructional Technology, Coordinator of Marketing, and the Business Manager all report to the Head of Schools. Effective with the 2020-21 school

year, the board eliminated the positions of Athletic Director and Director of Instructional Technology, and the remaining administrative team assumed these responsibilities. Teachers and teaching assistants, including heads of departments, report to their respective grade-level principals. Non-teaching support personnel (custodians, maintenance personnel, and drivers) are the responsibility of the General Affairs Supervisor who reports to the Business Manager. The board allocates money for the instructional needs as identified by the administration; however, the board chair is often involved in day-to-day operational decisions with limited input from school administrators.

### **Political Landscape**

The political landscape of TCIS transformed over the last several years at the organizational and classroom levels. Western school administrators had no influence with the Thai and ROC governmental ministries because of their foreign status; however, the Thai and Chinese Department Directors maintained relationships with the respective ministries. TCIS, through the board, actively nurtured relations with the ROC government by increasing its connections with the Ambassador, Chen-Yuan Tung. Several board members, through their professional associations in the Taiwanese Business Association of Bangkok, built a relationship with Tung, who had been a university professor before arriving in Thailand as ambassador in 2017. Tung's tenure included a renewed focus on education as well as business development in Thailand. For example, at a meeting with the administrative team on October 10, 2018, Ambassador Tung stated, "As of the last year, we are attempting to connect Thai students with scholarship opportunities, not just among TCIS students but all Thai students, to study in Taiwan" (T. English, personal communication, October 10, 2018). Ambassador Tung's explicit

inclusion of Thai students as beneficiaries was a change from the embassy's previous Taiwanese-centric focus.

Meanwhile, TCIS administrators faced pressure from the competitive, market-driven environment to increase enrollment. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded economic pressures and resulted in the relaxation of admissions standards concerning English language skills. The result was a shift to educating students with greater emphasis on English language development as opposed to advancement in the U.S.-based Advanced Placement curriculum. The focus remained on providing a tri-lingual educational program for all students to ensure graduates are accepted into the top universities of the United States and around the world; however, teachers needed additional skills to work with the English language learners. To accomplish the placement of students at highly ranked universities, the assembly of a team of excellent educators was key.

The practice of school leadership at TCIS is a delicate balancing act involving marketing, entrepreneurialism, and academics. Our purpose was to attract more students while delivering an Advanced Placement, College Board instructional program in which all students were expected to master Thai, Chinese, and English. Other than being accredited through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), there were no external accountability systems in place. Until a 2015 WASC recommendation, there was no concern for the high rate of teacher turnover, which was a mechanism to contain salary costs because wages increase the longer a teacher stays. I aimed to facilitate a group of co-practitioner researchers to develop and implement a teacher induction program to build community, relational trust, increase teacher retention, and improve instructional consistency and fidelity to the curriculum. Our response to these issues was to improve teacher induction.

My focus of practice at TCIS was to determine how school leaders at international schools could create a thoughtful and effective teacher induction program to promote relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of teachers new to the school. The lack of regular and systematic organizational policies and practices at TCIS sometimes impeded the hiring and retention of good teachers. Annually, 34% of the teaching staff leave. TCIS needed to retain good teachers and, through a teacher induction program, we could better address the diverse needs of all teachers, and school leaders.

The annual process of recruiting new teachers continued without question. There was ongoing yet nominal investment in new teachers to the extent that the school provided airfare, a settling-in allowance, and a 5-day orientation at the start of their tenure. However, the existing policies, resulted in disparate treatment among teachers, often based on national origin. Thus, the purpose of the project and study was to equitably provide an induction to all new teachers and ensure that they experience support from the date of hire, through arriving in Bangkok, the orientation, and their full first year of teaching. We cannot predict teacher choice to move to a different school as that is common in international teaching. However, we could provide experiences that enhance relationships, knowledge about the school and country, and support for their professional and personal needs. A co-practitioner research group and I developed an induction program over iterative cycles of inquiry about how best to achieve those goals. Next, I introduce the co-practitioner research (CPR) group and identify the 2018, 2019, 2020 new teacher cohorts. The new teachers from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts were the PAR participants.

### **People of the PAR**

I identified five individuals as co-practitioner researchers (CPR) to “celebrate the power of place and wisdom of people” and “listen to the persons closest to the issue to engage their

ideas”, two key axioms of the community learning exchange philosophy and methodology (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 3). Over 19 months we identified the strengths and challenges of the current new teacher orientation week and co-created a viable teacher induction program for TCIS. Despite the frequent attrition among staffing, these five individuals were reasonably sure they would remain at TCIS through the 2020-21 school year. More importantly, the CPR group members consistently demonstrated professionalism and a willingness to improve their practice. They worked to increase equity for all students and teachers at TCIS. As leaders, they were well situated to join the participatory action research team. Next, I introduce the CPR group of two principals, the Thai and Chinese Directors, and a teacher/curriculum coordinator. Then I describe how the collective voice of the 2018 new teacher cohort was instrumental in raising my level of awareness about the need for an improved teacher induction program (see Appendix H).

### **Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) Team**

Michael Purser joined TCIS as a middle school English teacher in 2016 and was promoted to Curriculum Coordinator as of the 2018 school year. After one semester in that role, he also took over as middle school principal in January 2019. Trained and certified as a teacher from the United States, he is a life-long learner who earned his doctorate through East Carolina University in 2019. He is passionate about equity, continuous improvement, building relationships, and enjoying life. Because he volunteered to assist with the 2018 new teacher summer orientation, new teachers were able to establish connections with him while participating in the orientation processes. Dr. Purser co-facilitated multiple sessions that originated from “the shared belief and conception that the learning process is first and foremost social” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 21). I learned a tremendous amount from Dr. Purser through his

examples about engaging and empowering the voice of our teachers as collaborators in our collective improvement efforts at TCIS.

Dr. Betsy Fitch arrived in 2017 and served as the elementary principal until her departure in June of 2020, three months before the end of PAR Cycle Three, which took place during the 2020-21 school year. Dr. Fitch was an educator in California for 15 years before joining the TCIS team. She received her teaching credential, master's, and doctorate degrees from San Jose State University. A champion for student-centered practices in education and endeavored to help students develop the skills to address future challenges and opportunities, Dr. Fitch was the only CPR member who did not remain at TCIS for the duration of the PAR.

Penporn Kaewmark completed her master's degree in Educational Administration from Bansomdej Chaopraya Ratjabhat University (Thailand) in 2019 and has over 20 years of experience in education. She has two daughters, both attended TCIS. Ms. Kaewmark joined the TCIS team in 2007 as a librarian and later moved into a teaching role within the Thai Department before being promoted to director. She supervises a team of eight Thai teachers and is the liaison between TCIS and the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE). She also serves as a translator for the school board due to her fluency in English. Ms. Kaewmark is highly regarded at TCIS because she is clear with her expectations, fair, and consistent.

Chung-An Hseih has served TCIS as Head of the Chinese Department since 2011. Mr. Hseih earned a master's degree from the Institute of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language at National Kaohsiung Normal University in Taiwan. With over 28 years' experience in education as a high school teacher, middle school teacher, elementary school teacher, and administrator, Mr. Hseih was Chief of Curriculum at Yuanlin High School in Changhua, Taiwan. He has been a keynote speaker and presenter for many Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL)

conferences and is a lecturer for Overseas Chinese Teacher Training of the Overseas Community Affairs Council (OCAC).

Ted Persinger, one of the 2018 new teachers, was a retired United States Air Force lieutenant colonel. He had seven years of teaching experience, two master's degrees, and was working toward a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern Mississippi. For the 2018-19 year, Mr. Persinger taught high school English, AP English Language and Composition, and Sociology. Beginning with the 2019-20 year, he taught one course and served as the curriculum coordinator while also co-facilitating the 2019 and 2020 teacher induction programs.

These individuals engaged in using innovative protocols that I facilitated based on my work with Lynda Tredway and Matthew Militello, who support the core of the Community Learning Exchange value system (Guajardo et al., 2016); they introduced the protocols throughout the doctoral program with East Carolina University. The CPR team members were closest to the issue of teacher retention and induction expressed delight in connecting socially to learn and develop leadership and began to engage in critical conversations about supporting teachers at TCIS.

### **Participants—Teacher Cohorts**

Initially, twelve of the 2018 cohort of teachers were new to TCIS. One departed after a brief start, and a second left at the end of the school year. All had prior experience with an average of 10.5 years of teaching; therefore, the teachers were not new to teaching, only to Thailand and our school. The head of school hired 2019 and 2020 teacher cohorts over seven months from November to May during the preceding school years (see Table 5). TCIS teachers, in their final year of a contract, declare their intention to continue at TCIS the following year and

Table 5

*Participants—2019-20 and 2020-21 Teacher Cohorts*

Cohort	Name	Position	Total Experience	International Experience	Education
19-20	Alexander Fettner	PE/Counseling	3 years	0	US
19-20	Erin Fettner	Grade 3	1 year	0	US
19-20	Brittany Elstroth	Middle School Science	15 years	5 years	US
19-20	David Stillman	Physical Education	14 years	10 years	US
19-20	Gregory Wathy	Grade 2	12 years	12 years	Canada
19-20	Juanita Wilson	Grade 3	6 years	6 years	US
19-20	Tanya Sepela	High School English	8 years	1 year	US
19-20	Frankie Lu	Chinese	8 years	4 years	ROC
19-20	Winna Cheng	Chinese	8 years	4 years	ROC
19-20	Wansida Kumrit (Nongsong)	Elementary, Thai	New	0	Thai
19-20	Vitchuda Kalapoch (Pat)	Elementary, Thai	1 year	1 year	Thai
20-21	James Cooke	Elementary Principal	13 years	10 years	US
20-21	Jim Curtis	Physical Education	6 years	6 years	Canada

Table 5 (continued)

*Participants—2019-20 and 2020-21 Teacher Cohorts*

Cohort	Name	Position	Total Experience	International Experience	Education
20-21	Cameron Kalua	Grade 4	19 years	7 years	US
20-21	Kevin Kalua	College Counselor	9 years	7 years	US
20-21	Barbara Kass	HS Social Science	15 years	1 year	US
20-21	Adrian Martinez	Physical Education	10 years	3 years	Spain
20-21	delmetria millener	High School English	8 years	New	US
20-21	Tim Morgan	HS Social Science	2 years	1 year	US
20-21	Jasmine Orellana	High School English	9 years	2 years	US
20-21	Olivia Rizzo	Middle School English	7 years	New	US
20-21	Severino Sedeya	High School Science	14 years	12 years	South Africa
20-21	Cary Stewart	Music	20 years	16 years	US
20-21	Yu-Han Chang	Chinese	12 years	8 years	ROC
20-21	Kao tung Tang	Chinese	3 years	3 years	ROC

request a new contract or submit their resignation. TCIS did not require this declaration to be submitted by any definite date; therefore, vacancies are not always known at the time of the annual recruiting fairs. TCIS used SEARCH Associates, International School Services, University of Northern Iowa Overseas Teaching Services, True Teaching, and Tie Online for the recruitment and hiring of teachers. The Head of Schools attended the recruiting fairs, interviewed prospective candidates, and hired the teachers.

The 2019 cohort experienced teacher orientation activities in July 2019 and consisted of 11 teachers representing all three school divisions and, for the first time in the history of teacher orientation at TCIS, included new teachers from the Thai and Chinese Department. Overall, the cohort had an average of 6.9 years of teaching experience; only one of the 11 was new to teaching. The 14 teachers of the 2020 teacher cohort all had prior teaching experience with an average of 9.8 years. The group included one school principal, teachers from all three school divisions, and two teachers from the Chinese Department. They experienced the Covid-19 modified, re-imagined teacher induction program in July 2020 as it was co-created by the previous cohort of teachers and the CPR team as a product of PAR Cycles One and Two. All agreed to participate in the PAR

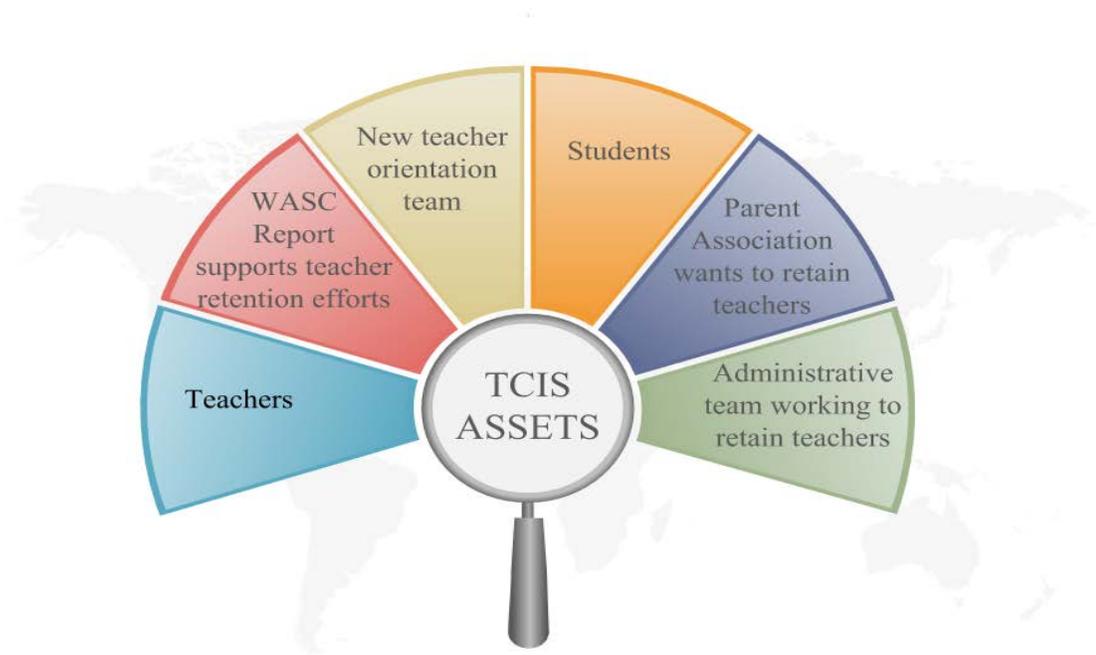
During PAR Cycle One, the 2019 teachers, along with the CPR team, generated and co-created support activities as explained in Chapter Five. In Chapter Six, I discuss the culminating activity of PAR Cycle Two in which the participants and CPR team co-created the new teacher induction program we launched for PAR Cycle Three. Next, I address the assets, resources, and challenges for TCIS.

## **Circle of Equity**

The primary asset of TCIS is people: teachers, parents, administrators, the Board, support staff, and students. Teachers are the heart of the educational program as well as the resources to support the programming. We included Thai and Chinese teachers and Western teachers in the 2019 orientation activities, and this marked the beginning of the three departments purposely working together.

In addition to supporting new teachers, the CPR team identified the PAR project as an opportunity to build relational trust across departments through the teacher induction program. Also, as the main outside accountability, the WASC team represented the focus as a critical piece in improving educational opportunities for all students (see Figure 11). Seeing the system that was producing our outcomes from a larger perspective was instrumental in the process of collaboratively identifying improvement plans to address inefficiencies and inequities that we identified (Bryk et al., 2015).

TCIS faced challenges that included transparency, trust, and communication and was in a state of change. The 2018-19 school year was the second year under the leadership of Dr. John McGrath, the head of schools (HOS). We were interested in systematizing the experience of all new teacher hires. These matters of equity continued to present opportunities to increase equity among the teachers in terms of compensation, workloads, an increased focus on all students achieving at high levels and improving the support for new teachers (Anderson et al., 2013). A major challenge was to efficiently connect appropriate resources with teachers. As a result of the project, TCIS administrators were able to lead more strongly for greater equity by acting on our “beliefs and understandings intentionally, regularly, and systematically” at the school and organizational level (Rigby & Tredway, 2015, p. 6).



*Figure 11. The TCIS Assets*

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## **My Role**

In this section, I share past experiences that shaped my leadership style, explain when and how I transitioned into leadership, and reflect on my assets as the facilitator of the CPR group. Building a community based on relational trust was central to my leadership journey. The leadership roles I held throughout my adult life led me to the conclusion that leadership was more about finding the balance between maximizing learning opportunities and balancing efficiencies for financial and other business reasons. While my skill set was solid on the management side by containing costs, I desired to support others in their leadership growth, accentuate their strengths, and have fun at work

At the start of my teaching career in the early 90s, I served as the school improvement chair because the seasoned teachers were not willing to do it. After 5 years of teaching, I became an assistant principal for one year and enjoyed the interactions with students, teachers, and parents before moving into the role of principal. Looking back, the 5 years I spent as a principal were the most rewarding of my career. On many levels, I utilized the Community Learning Exchange methodologies although I was not familiar with these at the time while the teachers and I attempted to make the junior high school more responsive to the unique needs of students in the middle years. Concurrent with the transformational process, I was earning an Educational Specialist degree and engaged my school as the site of an action research project in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements.

Through the process of transforming a junior high into a middle school, I began addressing how to unite the power of place and the wisdom of people (Guajardo et al., 2016). Collectively, the teachers and I identified systems and program changes necessary to best meet the needs of our students. The change was expensive for the district because the formation of

interdisciplinary teaching teams required two additional teaching positions. From a management perspective, I needed to optimize staffing efficiency. From the leadership vantage, I determined the right thing for our students was to reduce class sizes, create smaller communities (teams) within the school, and empower teachers to have a significant voice in how to utilize instructional time most effectively.

Before long, I moved into a central office administrative role at the county intermediate school district, primarily focusing on supporting teachers within the county. I was introduced to a new, 2-year teacher induction program for each new teacher in the county. Finally, I assumed the role of school superintendent for a school district serving 2,400 K-12 students, which meant I spent a substantial amount of my time dealing with financial matters. However, supporting teachers was one of the most rewarding aspects of the superintendency and contributed to my realization of the importance of excellent school-level leadership.

Upon retiring from public school service in Michigan, I moved to Bangkok and joined the TCIS team as curriculum coordinator in July 2016. One year later, I assumed the high school principalship. Because of my past experiences, I envisioned myself building a community at TCIS. I was responsible for the new teacher orientation each summer; rather than continue the same basic plan every summer, which continued to result in significant teacher turn-over, I was determined to support teachers as they entered TCIS and well after the summer orientation was over. Personal leadership development, along with my willingness and interest to foster growth and leadership skills in others, were key factors in what propelled me to engage the group of dedicated and talented people to co-create processes to improve TCIS for students and teachers as well as to identify and address issues of equity.

## **Conclusion**

In setting the context for the PAR project and study, the history of TCIS and its political environment provide the meso context. At the micro-level are those involved directly in the project, and I introduced the CPR team, identified the new teacher cohorts who were the participants of the PAR, and explained my dual role as a school administrator and lead practitioner-researcher. We are committed through the project to “put the best TCIS foot forward” and provide a teacher induction program that supports our new teachers and provides a model for international schools to better support new teachers. Also, and as discussed, the PAR project and study helps us with longstanding issues of equity. We want to ensure that experienced teachers like Elle, whose story I used to start the chapter, are better supported to adjust to the country and our school and feel emotionally and professionally supported. In the next chapter, I present the methodology of the PAR study used to guide PAR Cycles One, Two, and Three, each of which I explain in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven respectively.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS**

Many teachers leave the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS) each year. As is the case with most international schools, teacher retention is an ongoing problem and necessitates an effective teacher induction program. While the nature of international teaching means that teachers move frequently, we can build coherence at the school by better preparing and inducting the teachers so they feel a part of our community and fully ready to teach. At our school, 1-week orientation sessions were insufficient for assisting new teachers' full adjustment to the urban landscape and culture of Bangkok, the school community, and teaching responsibilities. The teachers, primarily from Western backgrounds, need to acculturate to a new country and an international school that provides an American-based education for Thai and Chinese students. We needed to better support new teachers in feeling connected to the school and people so that they will want to stay. The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) project was to co-construct an effective teacher induction program that met these needs (Britton et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Howe, 2006, 2008; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Shanker, 1987; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). In addition, the study provides guidance to other international schools interested in strengthening induction programs for new teachers (Andrews et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ganser, 2001; Olebe et al., 1999; Stansbury, 2001).

The studies that address new teacher induction programs recommend structured, multi-year professional learning models integrated with support from mentor teachers and principals knowledgeable about the developmental needs of teachers new to a school (Jensen, 2010; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). Through the work with a co-practitioner research (CPR) team, we implemented teacher supports over three cycles of inquiry that resulted in the

implementation of a co-constructed teacher induction program (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Flores et al., 2011; Moir, 2009; Moir et al., 2009). In addition, the project findings underscored the critical role of principals in the acculturation process of a teacher induction program (Brock & Grady, 1998; Gschwend & Moir, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004).

The findings of the PAR study impacted policy at TCIS and led school leaders to reallocate financial resources to professional development. We fostered a learner-centered community and facilitated the shift to a community of practice using the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) theory of change (Guajardo et al., 2016). There are approximately 150 international schools in Thailand, and findings from the study may inform international schools throughout Asia that could benefit from adapting the structure of a replicable model of teacher induction.

As I provide the framework for the PAR project, I summarize the research design and outline three cycles of inquiry, introduce the participants, including the co-practitioner research (CPR) team, and explain the process for data collection and analysis. I conclude the chapter with the role of reflection and limitations of the study. In my role as the district administrator responsible for planning the annual new teacher orientation week's activities, and with the guidance and collaboration of five co-practitioner researchers, we documented and analyzed the experiences of new teachers.

### **Research Design**

The project is an action research study conducted in partnership with the willing participation of a co-practitioner research team and teachers as participants. Our focus was redesigning the experience for teachers new to TCIS. Initially, I was assigned the responsibility to coordinate the 5-day summer 2017 and 2018 teacher orientations, which served to enlighten

me on the need for a different and more extensive teacher induction program.

I used the participatory action research processes to guide the three cycles of inquiry in the study using improvement science principles and tools (Bryk et al., 2015) and answered the research questions that guided the study. We integrated the CLE theory of change (Guajardo et al., 2016) to the Bryk et al. (2015) principles in the project. The study is action research because I use evidence from iterative cycles of inquiry to develop generative themes based on analysis of qualitative evidence (Herr & Anderson, 2014). In addition, the study is an activist form of action research because we had an equity focus; we intentionally included the people closest to the focus of practice and those persons who can best support teachers to understand the culture of Thailand (Hunter et al., 2013).

The overarching research question that guided the study was: To what extent can school leaders in collaboration with teachers co-create and implement a teacher induction program that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of teachers new to the school? The three PAR sub-questions were:

1. To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction program establish relational trust between and among school leaders and teachers new to the school?
2. To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes that fully support the professional and personal lives of teachers new to an international school?
3. How do I grow as a leader to be an agent of change in my school through the implementation of a teacher induction program?

Through the course of the three cycles of inquiry, we used iterative evidence to inform our decisions and finalize a process for teacher induction. We have formalized that process in policy at the school.

## **Cycles of Inquiry**

Action research includes iterative cycles of inquiry that gradually build the capacity of the lead researcher and CPR team to analyze evidence and use that evidence to make decisions about next steps. Through three cycles of inquiry, I collected and analyzed data from the PAR project participants (see Table 6). The data were “embedded in day-to-day work” (Bryk et al., 2015, p. 102) and focused “on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we had a strong handle on what ‘real life’ is like” (Miles et al., 2013, p. 11). I coded the qualitative raw data to identify categories and then themes to inform the PAR project. As Saldaña (2016) suggests, early coding reveals categories, and as the coding process continues, the researcher develops emergent themes, final themes, and finally findings. We analyzed the perceptions and feedback of the participants to provide recommendations for improvement of the teacher induction program. We collected qualitative data from community learning exchanges (CLEs) artifacts, focus groups, meetings, and reflective memos (see Appendix E and F).

### **PAR Cycle One**

PAR Cycle One began July 18, 2019, the day I introduced new teachers to TCIS and to their roles as participants in this study. We developed daily activities and plans for the 2019 new teacher orientation from feedback received from the 2018 cohort. I collected email correspondence with the new teachers prior to their arrival along with Journey Lines (Tredway, n.d.a) depicting transitions in their lives and analyzed the data to customize the orientation activities to best meet their self-reported needs. In addition, I collected photos and drawings to understand their emotional state during the transitional period, which was an aspect I added to the orientation program. I solicited feedback after the weeklong orientation program to consider any connection to the emotional phases of first-year teachers at TCIS, as discussed in Chapter

Table 6

*Data Collection Activities*

PAR Cycle One			
Activities	Protocol	Key Personnel	Timeline
Exchange Observations of New Teacher reflections	Appendix F	2019 new teachers CPR Team: 1. Penporn Kaewmark (Thai Director) 2. ChungAn Hsieh (Chinese Director) 3. Betsy Fitch/Principal 4. Michael Purser/Principal 5. Ted Persinger/Curriculum Coordinator Thomas English/Principal	July 18 – Nov 1, 2019
CLE Artifacts – New Teacher Journey Lines		2019 new teachers Thomas English	July 22 – 26, 2019
Focus Group	Appendix E	2019 new teachers Thomas English	July 22 – 26, 2019
CLE Artifacts – New Teacher Pictures & Drawings		2019 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	July 18 – Nov 1, 2019
Reflective Memos		Thomas English	July 18 – Nov 1, 2019
PAR Cycle Two			
Activities	Protocol	Key Personnel	Timeline
CLE Artifacts Observations	Appendix F	2019 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	Jan 7 – Mar 31, 2020
Meeting Agendas & Notes		2019 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	Jan 7 – Mar 31, 2020

Table 6 (continued)

PAR Cycle Two			
Activities	Protocol	Key Personnel	Timeline
Reflective Memos		Thomas English	Jan 7 – Mar 31, 2020
PAR Cycle Three			
Activities	Protocol	Key Personnel	Timeline
CLE Observations of New Teacher reflections	Appendix F	2020 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	July – Nov 1, 2020
CLE Artifacts – New Teacher Journey Lines		2020 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	July – Nov 1, 2020
Focus Group	Appendix E	2020 new teachers Thomas English	July 23 – 27, 2020
Exchange Artifacts – New Teacher Pictures & Drawings		2020 new teachers CPR Team Thomas English	July – Nov 1, 2020
Reflective Memos		Thomas English	July – Nov 1, 2020

Two. I conducted pre- and post-interviews with each new teacher from the 2019 new teacher cohort to understand their story of the transition process to TCIS and maintained individual records to document my observations of individual change over time. Periodically, I met with the new teacher group and engaged in CLEs to document trends and emerging needs through writing memos.

### **PAR Cycle Two**

January 2020 marked the initiation of the formal co-construction process for support of the 2020 new teacher cohort. The CPR team and the 2019 new teachers, through the facilitation of multiple CLEs, designed the teacher induction program. Based on the analysis of the data from PAR Cycle One, the CPR team recommended structural changes to the teacher induction program (to extend the orientation process throughout the entire school year, add mentor teachers, and provide time to meet). I generated reflective memos and summaries of conversations and meetings that provided qualitative data throughout the development of PAR Cycle Two.

### **PAR Cycle Three**

The redesigned, co-created teacher induction program launched March 2020 with the 2020 cohort and included three phases. Phase One commenced on the date of hire and continued until teachers arrived in July; it included communication and conversations via email and through virtual meetings. We formed a new teacher cohort by introducing them to members of the school community, informing them of school expectations, and ensuring that they knew each other. In Phase Two, prior to the start of school with students, we organized a week-long experience to ensure teachers were ready to start their teaching assignment and were familiar with the school and country culture. Phase Three encompassed the entire school year and

involved supporting teachers in their professional learning. As the high school principal, I continued to memo my experiences and journal my observations of the 2019 and 2020 new teachers individually and in groups. We archived data from CLEs with pictures, summaries, Journey Lines, and memos that provided information for the CPR team to interpret and formed the basis of recommendations for program improvement.

### **Study Participants**

The co-practitioner research team was a group of persons who worked closely with me to facilitate the processes, co-analyze the evidence, and make decisions about subsequent actions. The CPR team is the same as the networked improvement community in the Bryk et al. (2015) improvement science model, and, because this is a formal study, the CPR team takes on the member-check role meaning they participate in the analysis of the data “as a way to validate findings” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 38). The co-practitioner researcher team included the curriculum coordinator, Thai and Chinese Department Directors, two principals, and me. Because I wanted to increase cultural knowledge-building of new teachers and more fully represent the entire school, I asked the Thai and Chinese directors to join the group. In August 2018, I invited the CPR members to participate in this study based on their positions, skills, and perspectives.

The other participants in the study were three cohorts of new teachers. The 2018-2019 cohort (see Appendix H) was instrumental in accurately describing the new teacher experience, which established a baseline of the new teacher orientation process at TCIS prior to the study. The 2019-20 new teacher cohort (see Table 5, Chapter Three) experienced modifications and adaptations to the existing 1-week summer new teacher orientation model based on the feedback of the prior cohort. In addition, the 2019-20 cohort participated in the co-creation of a

reimagined new teacher program for the 2020-21 new teacher cohort in collaboration with the CPR team and me.

We collected and analyzed qualitative data throughout the process from these participants, and the CPR team reviewed evidence and participated in member checks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Herr & Anderson, 2014).

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Prior to the formal study, we analyzed diagnostic feedback about the TCIS new teacher orientation week at the conclusion of the summer 2017 and 2018 orientation programs (T. English, reflective memo, August 10, 2018). Prior to that time, no formal record of teacher feedback existed for the purpose of improving the process. Freire (1970) tells us that “the starting point of organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people” (p. 95), and activist action research and CLE methodology requires that we get information from the people closest to the issue. The feedback was integral to the process and helped to “enact an approach to inquiry that includes all relevant stakeholders in the process of the investigation” (Stringer, 2014, p. 31).

### **Data Sources**

Throughout the 2018-2019 school year, prior to initiation of the PAR project, I kept notes of conversations and observations with teachers about what worked and what needed improvement as they reflected on their new teacher orientation experience at TCIS. I followed up with the new teachers from the 2018 cohort and posed questions regarding their ideas about an ideal teacher induction program for TCIS.

### ***Focus Groups***

Interviewing is a meaning-making process and is “most consistent with people’s ability to make meaning through language. It affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration” (Seidman, 2006, p. 14). I utilized a Socratic Seminar process for discussions about their orientation experiences with the group to provide structure to amplify teachers’ voices and co-generate learning. All middle and high school teachers received professional learning in the seminar format during the summer 2019 teacher orientation. I summarized and coded the interviews to identify patterns and themes.

### ***Meeting Notes***

My personal journal of conversations, interactions, and observations informed my leadership development. As a Google School, I relied on the use of Google Forms to collect feedback on meetings, new teacher orientation activities, professional development activities, and overall perceptions of teachers. We also collected feedback during all three PAR cycles through opening and closing circles and other CLE protocols, and the CPR members analyzed the results that were used to inform the project through an iterative process.

### ***Community Learning Exchange (CLE) Artifacts***

Community learning exchanges offer a methodology for collecting evidence. The artifacts from the community learning exchanges provide qualitative evidence such as visual representations of personal stories, objects, and participant notes. During the initial planning phase for PAR Cycle One and PAR Cycle Three, I asked teachers to construct journey lines to gain an understanding of what brought them hope during their experiences with transitions in their professional lives. This helped to articulate the level of learner-centeredness of the community and was utilized by the CPR team to generate site-specific opportunities for the

teacher induction program. During the CLEs, we engaged as a group in multiple protocols that provided opportunities for building trust and evidence for coding. These included journey lines, storytelling, and drawings. The artifacts fostered a sense of belonging while providing data about individual and collective ways in which we ‘come to know’ ourselves and others. We chronicled the stories through pictures, drawings, and videos.

### ***Reflective Memos***

Action researchers write memos “due to the action orientation and the fast-paced nature of action research” (Herr & Anderson, 2014, p. 91). My aim was to capture all relevant data both within planned activities as well as the unplanned situations that surfaced through the generative process of the PAR. I kept notes of my observations through both a wide and a narrow lens to gain an understanding of the effects of the teacher induction program on (1) the new teachers as a group, (2) the new teachers individually, and (3) the entire teacher community. I summarized meetings with the CPR team, building administrators, board members, and parents, and through the memos I provided a record of the conversations and documented my personal growth as a leader. I maintained a running record of memos on secure Cloud space, coded them, and analyzed the data to address the research questions.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative methods, improvement science principles, and the CLE theory of change drove the ongoing analysis of the data. Qualitative methodology is fundamental to the “traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture; analyzes works; reports a detailed view of informants; and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell, 2003, p. 15). I triangulated data through multiple sources to provide a thorough representation of the TCIS teacher induction program and to answer the research sub-

questions represented in Table 7. I used evaluation and descriptive coding to examine “shifts in participant skills, attitudes, feelings, behaviors, knowledge, program ideology, policy and procedures” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 143). Next, I present the role of reflection in this process, address confidentiality and ethical considerations, and discuss limitations to the study.

### **Role of Reflection/Praxis**

A critical part of action and activist research is attending to a recursive process of reflection to decide on actions; Freire (1970) calls this *praxis*. While Bryk et al.’s (2015) “plan, do, study, and act” (PDSA) process clearly infers that we should reflect, Hunter et al. (2013) are more specific about the importance of including reflection: their cycles of inquiry include plan, act, observe, *and reflect* before deciding on future action. The purpose of the data collecting is to generate an ongoing conversation and collection of artifacts to uncover facts, opinions, and insights (Yin, 2009). I facilitated a reflection process with the CPR members through multiple learning exchange protocols utilizing circles, Journey Lines, pictures, and artifacts to make meaning of the data, which in turn informed our work with new teachers. My daily personal introspection played a significant role in the evolution of the PAR project, my own growth and development as a leader, and the transformation of the TCIS professional community into a sustainable, professional learning community (Militello et al., 2009).

Reflection propelled the cycle of inquiry through an iterative process. I expected the collection and use of qualitative data would be instrumental in the transformation of the school into a professional, culturally aware learning community. I anticipated a shift from professional development on a first-come, first-served basis to a more coordinated, purposeful, and embedded approach. According to Militello et al. (2009), “Reflection is more than just thinking about something: it requires experimentation, observations, and critique. The learning lies in the

Table 7

*Linking Research Questions to Data Collection*

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Emerging Theme	Research Sub Question	Data Sources
Community	To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction program establish relational trust between and among school leaders and teachers new to the school?	Exchange Observations, Artifacts - New Teacher reflections, artifacts, pictures, and drawings  Focus Group  Reflective Memos
Professional Development	To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes that fully support the professional and personal lives of teachers new to an international school?	Exchange Artifacts - New Teacher Journey Lines  Reflective Memos
Change Agent	How do I grow as a leader to be an agent of change in my school through the implementation of a teacher induction program?	Exchange Observations  Reflective Memos

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interaction of concrete experience, a critique of that experience, and revised actions” (Militello et al., 2009, p. 41). I hoped the PAR would provide actionable policy recommendations to improve teacher retention and overall satisfaction. The regular use of memos of my observations, interactions, thoughts, and opinions served to maintain the cycle of inquiry and played a significant part in the revision of planned actions through the process.

### **Confidentiality, Ethical Considerations, and Limitations**

I protected all data collected for this study to the greatest extent possible. I used the data to generate new knowledge and achieve action-oriented outcomes. Our analysis of the data served to educate the researcher and participants, provide results relevant to TCIS and were based on sound and appropriate research methodology (Herr & Anderson, 2014). All participants signed a letter of consent (see Appendix D) indicating their understanding of the risks and benefits of the research and that their participation was entirely voluntary. I modified participant names using pseudonyms when requested, and confidentiality was honored through secure storage of all data.

The data support confidence in the ‘truth’ of the findings and confirmability because the co-researchers and participants informed the findings, which neutralized my own researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As the high school principal, I balanced my position of authority and power through the collaborative, co-practitioner approach and remained cognizant of my role so as not to create bias or unduly influence the study. I accomplished this through continual self-reflection, member checks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saldaña, 2016), and strict adherence to the axioms of the CLE theory of change (Guajardo et al., 2016) as well as relying on the counsel and recommendations of the lead researcher, Dr. Militello.

This study was approved by the Internal Review Board of (IRB) East Carolina University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (see Appendix A) and the TCIS head of schools (see Appendix B). In addition, the study received Collaborative Institutional Certification Initiative certification (see Appendix C).

I shared a report of the findings and recommendations with the TCIS Foundation Board and administration. Findings of this study based on one international school in Bangkok, Thailand should be interpreted with caution. Transfer of ideas to other school communities and contexts should be conducted after careful analysis in relation to local context.

### **Summary**

I addressed the research process for participatory action research on international teacher induction. During each of the three cycles of research, the CPR members and I collected and analyzed data to identify patterns and themes relevant to the research questions. At the conclusion of the study, I presented our findings and recommendations, which served as the impetus for the transformation of the week-long, new teacher orientation week to an ongoing and embedded process of professional learning to support all teachers. In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, through explaining the processes of successive data analysis in PAR Cycles One, Two and Three, I build the case for our findings presented in Chapter Seven.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PAR CYCLE ONE**

### **SUPPORTING TEACHERS—ORIENTATION AND BEYOND**

The aim of the participatory action research (PAR) project and study was to determine how school leaders could create and implement a teacher induction program that promoted relational trust and effective support for a diverse group of new teachers in an international school. In PAR Cycle One, participants included 11 new teachers and the Co-Practitioner Research (CPR) team of five staff persons, including the three principals of the elementary, middle, and high schools. The CPR team engaged the new teachers throughout PAR Cycle One both during a 5-day orientation week and throughout the fall semester. In the 5-day orientation initially designed to meet the onboarding needs of the school, we addressed the individual needs of the new teachers establishing residency in a new country. The CPR team assisted in the planning of the week-long orientation activities that focused on building relationships, learning about the culture of the school and community, and providing introductions to the school policies and practices. After the orientation program, ongoing supports consisted of classroom observation and the teacher goal-setting process.

Below, I describe the participants, activities, and new teacher supports of PAR Cycle One and analyze the evidence from PAR Cycle One, including the categories derived from the coding process. In the final section, I summarize PAR Cycle One, describe the implications of our findings for the research questions, and introduce PAR Cycle Two.

#### **PAR Cycle One Process**

In this section, I introduce the participants, explain the activities of PAR Cycle One, and describe the coding process. Eleven teachers engaged in activities during the July 2019 orientation program, which sought to build relational trust, introduce teachers to their teaching

responsibilities, and inform them of the policies and procedures of TCIS. Providing experiences to learn about Thai culture was a new element in the week-long orientation process. We intentionally incorporated a focus on building relationships through Community Learning Exchange protocols (Guajardo et al., 2016). The orientation program concluded with a focus group in which the newcomers responded to questions about the orientation experience (see Appendix I).

## **Participants**

Two types of participants were integral to the PAR process: the CPR team and the teachers new to TCIS. As described in Chapter Three, the CPR team included five persons: two principals, two directors, and one curriculum coordinator. The new teachers were part of the research process but did not serve in the CPR. Next, I introduce the persons in both groups and explain their roles.

### ***CPR Team Members***

My first leadership action was to identify and initiate the CPR team members. I extended an invitation to four individuals who played integral roles in the existing new teacher orientation program. I asked the elementary principal, Dr. Betsy Fitch, to join the team because she was already involved in the planning of the events and had expressed specific needs she had identified for the new elementary teachers. Similarly, the middle school principal, Dr. Michael Purser, also had participated in the planning for new middle school teachers. I invited Mr. Theodore Persinger because of his role as the curriculum coordinator and his involvement in the new teacher orientation. To ensure an equitable process and full cultural inclusion as well as provide support for the new Thai and Chinese teachers, I asked the Directors of the Thai and

Chinese Departments, Ms. Penporn Kaewmark (Kru Rung) and Mr. Chung-An Hseih (Mr. Tony) to serve on the CPR team.

The CPR members expressed interest in discovering answers to the overall research question: To what extent can school leaders create and implement a teacher induction process that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of new teachers? CPR team members were in TCIS leadership positions and readily accepted the opportunity to co-plan the teacher orientation program and to assist with the implementation of the program as well as participate in the process of gathering and analyzing the data throughout PAR Cycle One.

### ***Teachers***

Eleven newly recruited teachers for the 2019-20 school year were the first participants. Kru Rung hired two Thai teachers, and Mr. Tony recruited and hired the two Chinese teachers. Through recruiting fairs in Massachusetts, Iowa, and California, the head of schools, Dr. John McGrath, hired five of the seven remaining new teachers. Dr. Purser interviewed and hired a middle school science teacher via Skype, and I did the same for one high school English teacher because the positions had not been filled through the typical recruiting fair venues. I met with the teachers during the orientation week, explained the PAR process, and invited them to participate. All 11 teachers accepted the invitation (see Chapter Three, Table 5).

### **PAR Cycle One Research Activities**

The CPR members and I identified a problem with the one-week orientation, tweaked the process, evaluated it, drew conclusions, and reworked it. Our PAR Cycle One activities included five group meetings, 11 individual teacher meetings, two focus groups, and three meetings with the CPR; also, I wrote five reflective memos to document my observations, conversations, and

learning (see Table 8). I scheduled regular meetings and conversations with the CPR team because they frequently interacted with the new teachers assigned to their division or department. I designed PAR Cycle One as an analysis of the (1) week-long new teacher orientation program; (2) ongoing interactions among the new teachers, veteran teachers, and CPR team consisting of meetings, observations, and conversations during the first 13 weeks of the 2019-20 school year.

### ***Teacher Meetings***

We held meetings with teachers during the orientation week and the fall semester to build relational trust and to welcome new teachers. I explored the needs of the PAR participants through the voices of previous new teacher cohorts and from three research sources: (1) adult learning (Drago-Severson, 2009); (2) teacher career cycles (Fessler & Christensen, 1992); and (3) attitudes and phases new teachers typically experience (Moir, 2009). The interactions consisted of circles, team building activities, journey lines, collaborations with veteran teachers, and focus groups.

Building a teacher network is critical to teacher success in schools and fundamental to achieving success with students (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk et al., 2010; Grubb, 2009). I used teacher orientation activities to build relational trust among the new teachers, veteran teachers, and administrators: (1) An opening circle encouraged new teachers to relate a personal story. (2) A design-thinking activity encouraged collaboration and communication. (3) A Journey Line of transitions provided new teachers an opportunity to creatively depict key events in their lives and share their personal stories. (4) Social outings, including a condo crawl, were held to introduce them to Thai culture.

**Opening Circles.** In the first opening circle, we used the endowed object protocol. “Choosing an endowed personal object to tell the story is a way to connect the storyteller to

Table 8

*PAR Cycle One Key Activities and Data Collection (July–November 2019)*

	July	August	September	October	November
Meetings with Teachers	•		•	•	•
Focus Groups	•				•
Meetings with CPR Members	•	•			•
Reflective Memos	•	•	•	•	•

something tangible and tell a part of a personal narrative through talking about the object” (Tredway, n.d.a). Ten of the 11 new teachers were present with Mr. Persinger, Dr. Purser, and me. Seated in a circle, we shared stories about the objects. Some persons spoke primarily about their teaching journeys; as the circle proceeded, however, more personal topics emerged. Dr. Purser shared: “Understanding the significance of the items people shared really helped me to know these new teachers” (T. English, reflective memo, July 20, 2019). Utilizing the opening circle protocol was an effective process to begin the community building process with new teachers by allowing them a safe space to share personal stories (see Figure 12).

The teachers participated in a second circle with two members of the parent association during the July orientation week. According to Guajardo et al. (2016), “Community is where we make meaning, transform meaning, and work together for the common good” (p. 5). The elementary principal, Dr. Fitch, the middle school principal, Dr. Purser, Mr. Persinger, Ms. Kaewmark, and Dr. McGrath also attended and were joined by parent association representatives Mr. Thongchai Wongkachonkitti (Mr. Thongchai) and Ms. Wanwarang Janechokpinyo (Kuhn Bee). I facilitated the circle to allow individual stories to be shared and to establish a connection between parents and teachers. Parents shared thoughts and articulated the high expectations they have for teachers. The circle was another opportunity for the teachers to hear about the cultural differences of parents and students as well as the role the parent association members play to help other parents overcome language barriers. The new teacher orientation included the opportunity to meet and interact with parents.

**Teambuilding through Design Thinking.** I introduced a design thinking activity, the marshmallow challenge, to provide an opportunity for collaboration and team building and to



*Figure 12.* Opening circle endowed objects of teachers and administrators.

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emphasize the value of prototyping and iterations (Whybrow, 2015). After conferring with Drs. Purser and Fitch, I decided new teachers would facilitate the same challenge with all teachers on July 30 to provide “teacher leadership” and “teaming” opportunities (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). I was curious about how the teachers would interact and engage, especially the new Thai and Chinese teachers because this was the first time they had been included in teacher orientation. The occasion revealed things we had not been aware of. For example, Ms. Kalapoch (Kru Pat) was quiet and appeared shy. According to Thai Director, Ms. Kaewmark, “She may be a little reserved because she used to work at TCIS as a teaching assistant while working toward her teacher credentials and now has returned as a teacher” (T. English, reflective memo, July 23, 2019). For Kru Pat, the activity was about emerging in her new role as a teacher, which in Thai culture is a highly respected position.

**Journey Lines.** After a day to prepare classrooms, new teachers met again and engaged in a Journey Line protocol to tell their stories about the transitions in their lives. A Journey Line, in which participants document and tell personal stories, represents experience as a moving force of change (Dewey, 1938); the individual and collective experiences constitute a story. I used Journey Lines to gain an understanding of what brought them hope during their experiences with transitions in their professional lives. Dr. Purser shared, “Journey Lines were not just a tool for my classroom; they were essential to building relationships with students, faculty, and my CPR” (M. Purser, personal communication, November 14, 2019). In mid-November, the teachers completed another Journey Line protocol designed to illustrate the emotional highs and lows experienced by new teachers during the first 5 months since their arrival in mid-July.

**Condo Crawl: Connections with Veteran Teachers.** Building community is critical at TCIS because the 11 teachers came from five cultures and countries (Thailand, the Republic of

China (ROC), Canada, United States, and Mexico). According to Brandt (1992), at the core of community building in schools is the need to nourish a community focused on learning. Learning about each other's lives outside of school is one way to interact and build a community outside the school and served as a starting point to build community inside the school. At the end of the orientation week, we participated in a "Condo-Crawl", a protocol I designed. Four veteran TCIS teachers hosted tours of their apartments and addressed questions from new teachers looking for apartments. After the Condo-Crawl, I hosted a dinner attended by the new teachers, principals, head of school, and the curriculum coordinator. The social activity provided additional opportunities for new teachers to get to know each other and other members of our school community. Dr. Purser stated, "The party was a big success. Creating this opportunity for the new teachers laid the foundation for building community in our school" (M. Purser, personal communication, July 23, 2019).

One month into the school year, we had a dinner for new teachers with principals, the curriculum coordinator, and the head of school also present. I planned the dinner to loosely intersect with the "survival" phase of new teachers as referenced in Chapter Two, which comes after moving through the anticipation phase (Moir, 2009). After the excitement of the first days of school and several weeks into the school year, the survival phase is the time when new teachers begin to second guess their abilities and contemplate their career choice. As we described in Chapter Three, one teacher did not feel connected to the community and suddenly left. Planned activities to connect new teachers with veteran teachers contributed to the community building and were the first steps we took to plan a mentoring program.

**Thai Culture through Experiences.** Ms. Kaewmark helped organize two field trips that addressed the requirements set forth by the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) to provide

specific training in Thai culture. We designed new teacher orientation activities about Thai culture as engaging experiences based on adult learning needs. In the past, the requirement was met through a 6-hour, classroom-based session led by teachers from the Thai department in which the Thai teachers used hands-on activities, lecture, and recitation-based instruction.

The shift to activity-based learning engaged teachers as they visited Wat Arun, rode the Bangkok Mass Transit System (BTS), ordered food, practiced basic Thai manners, and became familiar with the local currency, the baht. The idea was to teach Thai vocabulary through experiences in the context of real situations. The Thai Director, her husband, and their two high-school-aged daughters facilitated the two days of excursions and provided contextual explanations. Nine teachers participated. (The two new Thai teachers did not.) Ms. Kaewmark hosted the second field trip to her home village of Nakornprathom, which provided an opportunity to learn about Thai historical and religious sites, customs, and basic greetings in a rural environment in contrast to the modern city landscape of Bangkok.

### ***Focus Groups***

The last activity of the teacher orientation week was a one-hour focus group. Teachers responded to five questions designed to learn about their experience during the weeklong orientation. At a second focus group 3 months later, teachers responded to questions about their experiences and feelings since the beginning of the school year. I recorded, transcribed, and coded the focus group evidence and engaged the CPR team with the transcripts throughout the cycle to add to the codes.

### ***CPR Team Meetings***

In addition to the new teacher activities, the CPR team participated in meetings and conversations during the PAR Cycle One to discuss and make sense of the data collected to

establish an effective teacher induction program for TCIS. I documented these interactions through observation notes and, in the case of the final CPR meeting of the cycle, prepared a transcript of the meeting to ensure multiple perspectives we included. I used memos to document my understanding. These activities provided ample sources for analyzing what elements were successful. Next, I discuss the evidence, the process of coding, and summarize the emerging categories from PAR Cycle One.

### **An Analysis of Evidence: TCIS Teacher Supports**

We developed the 2019 new teacher summer orientation program through careful alignment of the orientation activities to the actual needs of the new teachers as identified by previous new teachers. We designed the 2019 teacher orientation program to be an experiential examination of our existing orientation program and to that end included the key components of experience: reciprocity, interaction, and continuity (Dewey, 1938). We wanted to learn about what worked and what needed to improve. As it had the key components, the new teacher program provided the opportunity to examine methods to increase teacher collaboration. I started the data analysis with the development of codes through an iterative process to “investigate subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgments)” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 124). Through multiple iterations, I analyzed and further consolidated the codes and developed nine categories (see Table 9). Next, I describe the PAR Cycle One activities, present the codes, and provide categories based on the codes. I divided the nine categories into personal supportive experiences and professional supportive experiences to align with the two areas of support the teachers identified. Finally, I describe the implications for the research questions, summarize PAR Cycle One, and describe PAR Cycle Two.

Table 9

*Summary of Categories and Codes: PAR Cycle One*

Categories	Codes	Personal Supportive Experiences			
		Focus Group	CPR Meetings	Memos	Observations
Emotional Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anxiety</li> <li>2. Shifts in feelings</li> <li>3. Stress</li> </ol>	22	3	6	18
Settling-In	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Admin availability</li> <li>2. Cell phone access</li> <li>3. Housing</li> <li>4. Choice</li> </ol>	44	7	5	6
Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Dinners</li> <li>2. Thai tours</li> <li>3. Learning exchanges</li> <li>4. Suggestions: other teachers, students, and teaching aides</li> </ol>	29	2	9	4
Curriculum and Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promptness of access</li> <li>2. Share closer to date of hire</li> <li>3. Team with a veteran to unpack</li> </ol>	9	2	0	3
Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frequency of support</li> <li>2. Google Suite</li> <li>3. Plus Portal</li> </ol>	8	5	3	12
School Culture and Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concern about resources</li> <li>2. Share earlier</li> </ol>	25	4	3	0

Table 9 (continued)

Professional Supportive Experiences					
Categories	Codes	Focus Group	CPR Meetings	Memos	Observations
Mentoring	1. Formal—clear expectations	39	9	6	0
	2. Informal—answer questions				
	3. Peer partners in Thai teachers				
	4. Program development				
Access to Classroom	1. Anxiety quelling	28	5	3	0
	2. Spend time in the classroom				
	3. A balance between orientation and classroom				
Administrative Support	1. Early contact	27	4	0	1
	2. Regular contact				
	3. Appreciative of contact				
	4. Website: How to create				

## **Personal Supportive Experiences**

Next, I identify new teacher personal supports based on a review of the data from PAR Cycle One. After analyzing the data with the CPR team, I identified three areas of personal support for the new teachers: Emotional Support, Settling-In, and Relationships.

### ***Emotional Support***

In the focus groups, new teachers reported feeling anxious before arriving at TCIS. According to a new teacher, Ms. Elstroth, “Being an international teacher is scary because you never know what you’re going to go into” (B. Elstroth, personal communication, July 26, 2019). A new Chinese teacher, Mr. Lu, shared that he was “...quite nervous—because every school is a totally different situation, so each school has their own stories and their own policies” (F. Lu, personal communication, July 26, 2019). We also considered the emotional state of the teachers new to TCIS on November 18, 2019, when new teachers created Journey Lines of their emotional highs and lows since joining TCIS in July 2019 (see Appendix J). After 3½ months of school, the experience of the 11 new teachers at TCIS mirrored Moir’s attitudes for new teachers as they entered the disillusionment phase, a time when new teachers question their career choice (Moir, 2009).

At the November meeting, nine of 11 new teachers reported that after the week-long July orientation, they felt positive about their prospective roles and eager to get started with students. Based on my observations, all teachers appeared energized and ready to meet the returning teachers and students to begin the school year (T. English, reflective memo, July 26, 2019). However, some of the teachers’ feelings changed; five reported feeling exhausted or stressed by mid-November (see Table 10). Paying attention to the emotional state of new teachers provided

Table 10

*New Teacher Attitudes/Emotions Pre and Post—PAR Cycle One*


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Name	July 26, 2019	November 18, 2019
Alexander Fettner	Excited	Stressed
Erin Fettner	Excited and happy	Happy
Brittany Elstroth	Confident and happy	Overwhelmed and exhausted
David Stillman	Anxious	Happy but exhausted
Gregory Wathy	Confident	Content
Juanita Wilson	Comfortable	Tired
Tanya Sepela	Comfortable	Overwhelmed
Frankie Lu	Excited and nervous	Normalizing
Winna Cheng	Nervous	Improving
Wansida Kumrit (Nongsong)	Excited	Stressed
Vitchuda Kalapoch (Pat)	Happy	Happy

actionable information to inform the co-construction of the reimagined, year-long, new teacher program.

### ***Settling-In***

New teachers at TCIS initially were concerned about situating themselves in a new home in a new city and country but quickly expressed the desire to focus on their new teaching responsibilities and to gain an understanding of the culture of the school. Mr. Wathy shared, “I think all new teachers—the foremost thing on their mind is where they’re going to live” (G. Wathy, personal communication, July 26, 2019). We designed the 2019 New Teacher Orientation program to address the immediate personal needs of new teachers such as adjusting to Thailand, securing a mobile phone, finding a place to live, learning about how to adjust to Thai foods, and navigating the urban metropolis of Bangkok. New teachers shared their personal needs during the week-long orientation program and reported that the settling-in process was effective, Ms. Sepela shared that she “really appreciated the orientation week and felt really supported and that there was always someone to go to if there were questions or concerns” (T. Sepela, personal communication, July 25, 2019). In response to how the new teacher program can be improved, teachers offered constructive feedback about settling-in more quickly by allowing more time to take care of their immediate personal needs.

### ***Relationships***

We also encouraged socializing among the new teachers and provided learning experiences about the culture and policies of TCIS. We intentionally designed experiences aimed at developing relationships and ensuring that new teachers learned about the culture of TCIS and utilized critical-dynamic pedagogies (Circles and Journey Lines) to this end. Guajardo et al. (2016) share that the CLE experience “ignites the imagination of participants and pushes them to

engage in teaching, learning, leadership, and community development in ways that are historically appropriate and culturally respectful” (p. xv). While the 2019 program of trips and learning exchanges did immerse new teachers into Thai culture and the school’s culture, they did not have the opportunity to meet and interact with current teachers, teaching assistants, and students during orientation. We took note that we should add that to the orientation experiences for future years.

### **Professional Supports**

Based on a review of the data, the CPR team suggested an emphasis on building a community. Also, however, we found new teachers had professional needs that needed attention. The data were replete with requests for professional support in the areas of curriculum resources, technology, mentoring, school culture and policies, access to classrooms, and administrative support (see Table 9, previously presented). Teachers requested that we provide more support for these areas both during the orientation program as well as during the school year (T. English, reflective memo, November 15, 2019).

### ***Curriculum and Resources***

Four of the 11 new teachers specifically asked for access to the curriculum and classroom supplies before arrival (T. English, reflective memo, July 26, 2019). Upon review of the July 26 Focus Group transcript, the CPR team acknowledged the need to share the curriculum information closer to the new teachers’ date of hire to allow time to investigate the material as well as to team with a veteran teacher to review the curriculum (T. English, reflective memo, November 14, 2019).

## ***Technology***

Teachers need early and ongoing technology support. During a November 8, 2019, check-in with new teachers, Mr. Stillman shared that work with Google Drive was one of the most beneficial parts of the new teacher orientation program (D. Stillman, personal communication, November 8, 2019). For student grades and attendance, TCIS uses a student management system, Plus Portal, through which teachers record their classes, grades, and attendance and generate their reports. We could offer opportunities to learn about the technology systems before arrival, during orientation, and throughout the school year.

## ***Mentoring***

We found evidence of the potential benefits of partnering new teachers with current teachers. When new teachers were asked how to improve new teacher orientation, Ms. Sepela endorsed having a mentor "...like a teacher who speaks Thai and English or who can help us with lease signing or kind of some of those questions that we might have" (T. Sepela, personal communication, July 26, 2019). Dr. Fitch suggested establishing formal mentor teachers or peer partners should be considered. However, Dr. Fitch was concerned that connecting the new teachers with more seasoned TCIS teachers who are rigid and less than willing to develop and grow professionally might paint the wrong picture of the desired TCIS culture for new teachers (B. Fitch, personal communication, November 14, 2019). Ms. Kaewmark seconded this idea and shared: "The Thai teachers are conducting peer-to-peer observations voluntarily. Could this be a type of mentoring approach that would work?" (P. Kaewmark, personal communication, November 14, 2019) The CPR team discussed the need to provide clear expectations and support for mentor teachers for an entire school year if mentoring did take place in the future. The CPR team recommended sharing TCIS policies, procedures, and expectations in advance of new

teacher arrival as well as more systematically and strategically developing a cadre of mentor teachers to assist with policy implementation and understanding.

### ***School Culture and Policies***

New teachers expressed the desire to know and understand the culture of the school as well as the policies and processes necessary that they are expected to follow (T. English, reflective memo, July 26, 2019). During the orientation week, new teachers explained their primary professional need was to have earlier access to classrooms, school policies, and procedures.

### ***Access to the Classroom***

Feedback from the 2019 new teachers supported the value of the experiences during orientation and more classroom time (T. English, reflective memo, July 26, 2019). Access to TCIS classrooms was delayed every July for the last four school years due to facilities issues. The CPR team posed ideas about how to gain access to classrooms at the start of new teacher orientation in mid-July (T. English, reflective memo, November 15, 2019). One teacher suggested we send a short video of their classroom in advance of the orientation week so they could see the furniture and classroom resources and begin planning how they would teach in that space. Combined with a partner or mentor teacher, we learned that allowing teachers access to their classroom earlier needed to take priority in future orientations.

### ***Administrative Support***

As occurred with the mentoring support, multiple comments from teachers indicated that access to and the support of the principal or supervisor was important. Also, teachers requested early and regular contact and interaction with the building principal or director before arrival. Mr. Lu shared how valuable it would be to have either the director or one of the current teachers

in the Chinese Department attend the summer orientation. “I would love to spend my time with my other colleagues to tell me what to do or what will be going on the whole year” (F. Lu, personal communication, July 26, 2019). Mr. Persinger, the Curriculum Coordinator, and a CPR member, indicated that he needed to have the curriculum ready to share with new teachers (T. English, reflective memo, November 14, 2019). From a practical perspective, Google Drive was sufficient and should allow for curriculum materials to be easily shared (M. Purser, personal communication, November 14, 2019).

The CPR team suggested that we develop curriculum, policy, and procedure “how to” pages; these easily could be posted on the school website earlier and ensure access for all new teachers. We acknowledged that orientation should begin from the point of hire to the first day on the job for new teachers. We needed to consider how to gradually release curriculum, policy, and procedure information so as not to overwhelm them (T. English, reflective memo, November 14, 2019). As principals, we needed to provide more intentional and regular contact and interaction and ongoing administrative supports from the date of hire and throughout the school year.

In the previous section, I presented the teacher supports that emerged from PAR Cycle One. All participants agreed that personal supportive experiences and professional supportive experiences are integral to assist the teachers new to TCIS. We identified the importance of emotional support, assistance settling in, and relationship-building. On the professional side, we identified a need for systematic assistance with the curriculum and teaching resources, technology, mentoring, school culture, policies, access to the classroom, and administrative support. The goal of the project remains a strong and replicable teacher induction model that could become a part of our school and be used by other international schools.

## **Implications: Connections to the PAR Research Questions**

Next, I examine how a focus on teacher supports aligns with the PAR research questions. Then I discuss what I learned about my leadership and how the cycle of inquiry influenced plans for PAR Cycle Two. I describe how information, relationships, and supports in personal and professional areas intersected with the research questions and the theory of action. Then, I discuss the assets and challenges I identified in Chapter One (see Figure 1) as areas I needed to address in the upcoming cycle of inquiry.

### **Teacher Supports**

The PAR theory of action was: If the administrators implement a useful teacher induction program, teachers new to TCIS will form stronger relationships with new colleagues and feel supported in their roles as new teachers. The categories of personal and professional supports that emerged from the data intersect with the overarching research question: To what extent can school leaders create and implement a teacher induction process that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of new teachers? We learned that intentional use of co-created personal and professional supports integrated into the year-long TCIS professional development plan could expand a new teacher orientation from a one-week experience to an embedded system of professional learning experiences for all new teachers.

In addition to the overarching research question, the personal and professional supports we co-created during PAR Cycle Two provided additional data we analyzed to address two research sub-questions:

1. To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction process establish relational trust between school leaders and new teachers?

2. To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes to fully support the professional and personal lives of new teachers at an international school?

In PAR Cycle One, I designed the teacher orientation with a deliberate focus on Thai culture and the personal needs of new teachers during the week-long new teacher orientation. However, the data indicate that teachers had both personal and professional needs. More balanced attention to the professional needs before arrival in Thailand and during the orientation could quell anxieties and orient the teachers to each other, the school, and the context of Bangkok. Also, orientation week activities were strong, but we needed to attend to personal and professional supports for all teachers. Ongoing support that builds on contact before arriving in Thailand, a strong orientation week, and regular contact with administrators and veteran teachers are fundamental to our desire to model a learner-centered environment.

An initial goal of the project was addressing teacher retention, but at this juncture, it was too early to determine if the supports would have any impact on teacher retention at TCIS given the complexities of this issue in international schools. Based on research and the first cycle experience, I shifted the theory of action to focus on making the experience for new teachers a positive professional learning and growth model to benefit all who live in transitional communities. Finally, I realized the backbone of the school community are the Thai and Chinese teachers who are more permanent; honoring their wisdom is a key aspect of the induction program.

### ***Organizational Realignment***

For the new teacher induction program to provide leverage for TCIS as a learning community that fully invests in teachers new to the school, we needed additional and ongoing structures and supports. The realignment of current processes and practices to benefit the entire

school showed potential for change in the entire school community, but we realized that we needed to review the existing organizational structures more thoroughly. Because the CPR team was composed of divisional principals, department directors, and the curriculum coordinator, we collectively were optimistic about the PAR cycles of inquiry as a pathway to building a stronger school culture across all three levels of the school. As a start, we merged our three divisional professional development plans into a common TCIS professional development plan in 2019; we integrated school-wide professional development for all teachers at the beginning of the school year. This was a change from past practice as the three levels of the elementary, middle, and high school had historically worked in isolation.

### ***Host Country Teachers***

A key factor that I did not fully understand at the outset of the project was the value of the Chinese, Thai, and Western Departments' participation in planning and implementation of the activities for PAR Cycle One, a distinct change from previous years. I listed these departments as assets in the fishbone analysis of the FoP (see Figure 1) because of the strong, focused, and consistent leadership of the Thai and Chinese departments. Their participation was a catalyst for our first successes. Expanding the teacher induction program beyond the typical 5-day orientation week to support teachers addressed sub-question 2 by utilizing processes to support the personal and professional lives of new teachers. The idea of integrating supports throughout the school year into previously scheduled meeting times at the three divisions permeated conversations, resulted in increased collaboration, and transferred knowledge to all teachers.

## **Reflective Leadership**

Through PAR Cycle One and collaborations with the CPR group and teacher participants, I realized I needed to view my work at TCIS more intentionally through an “equity frame” and focus on creating equitable opportunities for all teachers, students, and parents. Within a system based to some degree on hierarchy and status, my daily role was to serve as an equity warrior; I needed to “understand self, school community, and the intersection in-between” (Rigby & Tredway, 2015, p. 331). I needed to provide leadership opportunities for teachers as well as work to amplify the voice and status of the Thai Director, which were often minimized and proved to be a key asset to the teacher induction work.

My work with the PAR project and study propelled a change in my leadership practices and caused me to focus on relationships and processes. Seeking to understand why people do what they do rather than only what they did became instrumental in effectively addressing individuals about areas in need of improvement. I needed to focus on relationships and building trust. In terms of my leadership growth, I realized a gradual release of ideas and information is more conducive to continuing the dialogue of individual and divisional reflection toward improvement and change; that meant that we needed to start relationships at the date of hire and have a stronger schedule for orienting them to the policy and practices at the school, including curriculum, which we can do both online and in person. Changing this to a more gradual release of that information would permit us to use the orientation week to focus on team building.

Throughout the process, my leadership gradually transitioned to that of a facilitator and advocate. I posed questions to teachers during interactions rather than giving my opinion or suggestions. “Teachers learn through reflection; they learn through you modeling; they learn through the questions you ask” (E. McFarland, personal communication, November 6, 2019). I

hoped to lead in such a way as to foster teacher introspection and reflection about their practice and continuous improvement, which was a focus in our school system.

Finding the balance between my administrative responsibility for observing teachers and providing feedback while increasing teacher voice regarding instructional matters was a continual challenge. My eye was on a larger goal of changing the culture of the school system, starting with the new teachers through embedded opportunities to engage with peers about student learning more reflectively. However, I realized that if the teacher induction process were successful, we had the kernels of valuable insight for addressing larger concerns. Through the conversations I had with teachers and CPR members, I learned that peer observations, instructional rounds, and establishing time for team meetings were three key kernels—all a shift from the principal leading the school to a more collaborative approach. In reviewing memos and notes about my leadership growth throughout PAR Cycle One, Dr. McFarland shared, “It takes 3 to 5 years of sustained work with fidelity to begin to see the change and then create mechanisms to maintain the change” (E. McFarland, personal communication, November 6, 2019).

After PAR Cycle One, I shifted plans to engage the participants and CPRs more fully concurrently in reflections, experiences, and a collaborative design of the 2020-21 new teacher orientation program during PAR Cycle Two. At the same time, the administrative team created and embedded professional learning for the participants.

### **Implications for PAR Cycle Two**

The analysis of codes led us to the conclusion that the new teacher orientation should be changed from a 1-week workshop to a year-long process to focus on supporting teachers both personally and professionally. I continued to engage the new teachers regarding their emotions and attitudes through conversations, observations, and meetings. Based on PAR Cycle One data,

I engaged the new teachers and the CPRs in the design of a reimagined teacher orientation and induction program for PAR Cycle Three and co-created structures, processes, and supports to address their student-centered, professional learning during PAR Cycle Two. I continued to memo my personal leadership experiences with a focus on equity, utilized protocols with learning exchanges, and built relationships through engaging and creative experiences.

In PAR Cycle Two, I included activities that supported the group to co-construct a year-long teacher induction program planned for a July 2020 launch. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched the co-created new teacher program for teachers joining the school for the 2020-21 school year in April with the addition of virtual supports for professional growth and teacher learning through collaborative processes, which I documented through observations, artifacts, and notes.

## **CHAPTER SIX: PAR CYCLE TWO**

### **BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH CONVERSATIONS AND COMMUNICATION**

In this chapter, I describe the activities used to engage teachers and the CPR group in co-creating a teacher induction program. After presenting the evidence from PAR Cycle Two, I introduce emerging themes from the evidence and interrogate the themes through further analysis using Weick's (1984) organizational theory of small wins. Finally, I analyze implications for the teacher induction design, discuss the connection to the PAR research questions, and explain the framework of PAR Cycle Three activities.

#### **PAR Cycle Two Process: Co-Creating an Induction Program**

Based on the categories of personal and professional support from PAR Cycle One, I engaged teachers and CPR members during PAR Cycle Two in conversations, meetings, and learning exchanges (LEs) to co-create a teacher induction program to better support TCIS teachers. In this section, I provide an overview of research activities for 12 weeks in Spring 2020. I collected four types of evidence: (1) informal one-on-one conversations documented through notes; (2) meetings with the teachers and CPR members; (3) LEs; and (4) reflective memos. I transcribed and coded the evidence and engaged the CPR group in the analysis. Finally, I present the aggregate evidence from the activities.

#### **Activities**

The research activities consisted of meetings with the CPR members, meetings with groups of teachers, individual teacher conversations, three LEs, and memos (see Table 11). During the third week of PAR Cycle Two, I transitioned to online communications and interactions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I used Zoom and Flipgrid because of the mandated social distancing.

Table 11

*PAR Cycle Two Key Activities and Data Collection (January–March 2020)*

	Week											
	1	2	3*	4*	5*	6*	7*	8*	9*	10*	11*	12*
Meetings with CPR Members (n=5)	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Meetings with Teachers (n=11)	•	•		•		•	•	•				
Learning Exchanges					•	•						•
Reflective Memos	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

*Note.* \*Activities during weeks 3–12 were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I began PAR Cycle Two through one-on-one meetings with teachers and posed three questions about how they were feeling throughout their first year at TCIS, to discover what they needed to fulfill their teaching assignment after navigating the first semester, and to seek their ideas about the best way to support teachers for the 2020-21 school year. During one week at the beginning of the second semester in January 2020, I met with ten of the teachers individually and the CPR team with a similar protocol of three questions. I designed the CPR guiding questions to learn how the CPR members supported teachers, what supports should be provided during the second semester, and how we could support future teachers. CPR members identified common ideas based on a summary of the one-on-one meetings with teachers and CPR members between January 6 and January 16, 2020 (see Table 12).

The CPR meetings and conversations provided insight and clarity about the personal and professional supports that benefit teachers. I transcribed the first interaction, a one-on-one meeting in early January with CPR members, in which I posed three questions:

1. How have you supported the new teachers?
2. What supports should be provided for the new teachers during the second semester?
3. What could we do to best support next year's new teachers?

Many respondents recommended frequent visits from principals with the teachers; at the next CPR activity, I inquired about the amount of time CPR members spent with each teacher for one week. After 4 weeks into the research cycle and the onset of COVID-19, I used Flipgrid to share the data from the research activities with CPR members, all of whom were working from their homes due to the campus closure. I transcribed the CPR feedback and utilized it in the February 14 LE with the CPR team.

Specifically, CPR members suggested we needed to communicate identified with

Table 12

*Summary of Common Ideas (January 6–16)*

Common Ideas/Focus Areas/Needs	Tally (%) CPR (n = 5)	Tally (%) Teachers (n = 11)
Build community	15 (20%)	24 (22%)
Curriculum and classroom resources	5 (7%)	19 (17%)
Individualized support (mentoring)	16 (21%)	18 (16%)
Information - communication	8 (11%)	18 (16%)
Check-ins	16 (21%)	17 (15%)
Process of communication	5 (7%)	5 (5%)
Cultural learning	1 (1%)	5 (5%)
Relationships	4 (5%)	4 (4%)
Technology support	4 (5%)	0
Pedagogy	1 (1%)	0
Employment assistance (HR)	1 (1%)	0

teachers through conversations and community building regularly. In addition to ongoing online conversations and interactions with the CPR members, the final research activity of PAR Cycle Two was a Design Thinking Community LE (Nash, 2019) conducted via Zoom, with all teachers and the CPR members to co-create a teacher induction program for implementation with the group of 2020-21 new teachers scheduled to arrive in July 2020. The co-created induction program served as the framework for PAR Cycle Three activities.

We designed research activities with the participants during PAR Cycle Two to learn about the personal and professional supports needed at TCIS for teachers. First, I conducted one-on-one meetings and asked teachers to respond to the following questions:

1. Please share how you are feeling at this time about your role as a teacher at TCIS.
2. What do you need to fulfill your teaching responsibilities? What would you like?
3. Please describe what you consider to be the best way(s) to support new teachers joining the TCIS team.

I recorded, transcribed, and coded responses. Throughout PAR Cycle Two, I observed the teachers and documented my observations in notes and reflective memos. Like the CPR activity, I used Flipgrid to interact virtually because of the transition to online learning. Through the online platform, I asked teachers to respond to prompts about their feelings and communicate their needs; the virtual interactions provided critical support during a time when face-to-face conversations and observations were not possible. A group meeting with teachers held just before the mandate to socially isolate, produced additional data about the personal and professional supports needed for teachers. My notes about my observations, conversations, and interactions with teachers during the time of social distancing served as another source of data. After the Cycle Two LE with the CPR members and teachers, I coded my notes and artifacts

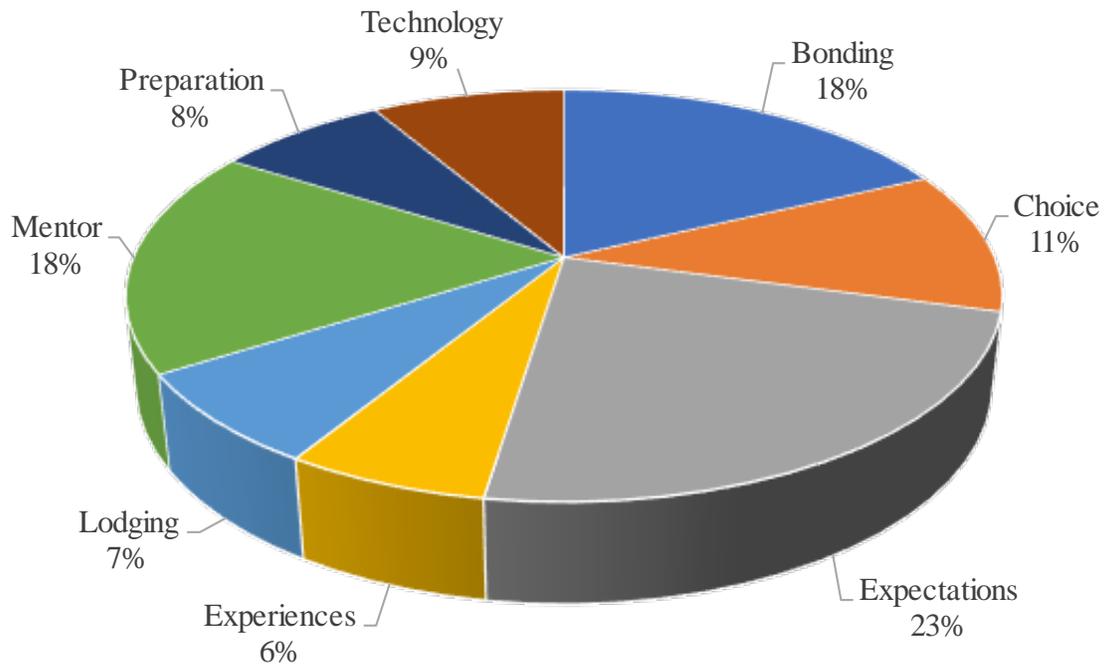
from the meetings dedicated to the PAR. I documented individual conversations about the support of teachers throughout PAR Cycle Two.

In conclusion, I summarized the research activities of PAR Cycle Two conducted over the 12 weeks from January through March 2020, triangulated multiple sets of data, and arrived at three emergent themes. Next, I present an overview of the data collected and coded from PAR Cycle Two.

### **Evidence**

I identified and sorted 12 personal and professional support codes into eight categories (see Figure 13). I used verbatim coding because I wanted to focus on the subtle hints from how teachers and CPR members talked about things to give me added insights. Some of the desired actions emerged as categories from the activities documented through PAR Cycle Two and included expectations, bonding activities, mentoring, choice, technology support, time, assistance with housing, and experiences. I noted common terms such as “buddy,” “settling in,” “choice,” “communication,” and “expectations,” which are contained within the subcodes (see Appendix K). Then I added descriptive material and analyzed the codes by starting with the most frequent to identify the meaning.

Of the 740 total codes, teachers and CPR members shared communicating expectations 23% of the time, bonding activities combined with experiences 24%, providing a mentor 18%, giving teachers choice about what and when they learn 11%, support with technology 9%, time for preparation 8%, assistance with housing or lodging 7%, and offering experiences to learn about the school and Thai culture 6% (see Appendix L). From the eight categories, three themes emerged from the analysis: communication, relationships, and adult learning; I used the evidence from the themes to inform the co-creation and subsequent implementation of a teacher induction



*Figure 13.* Categories from codes indicate a range of activities that aided teacher induction.

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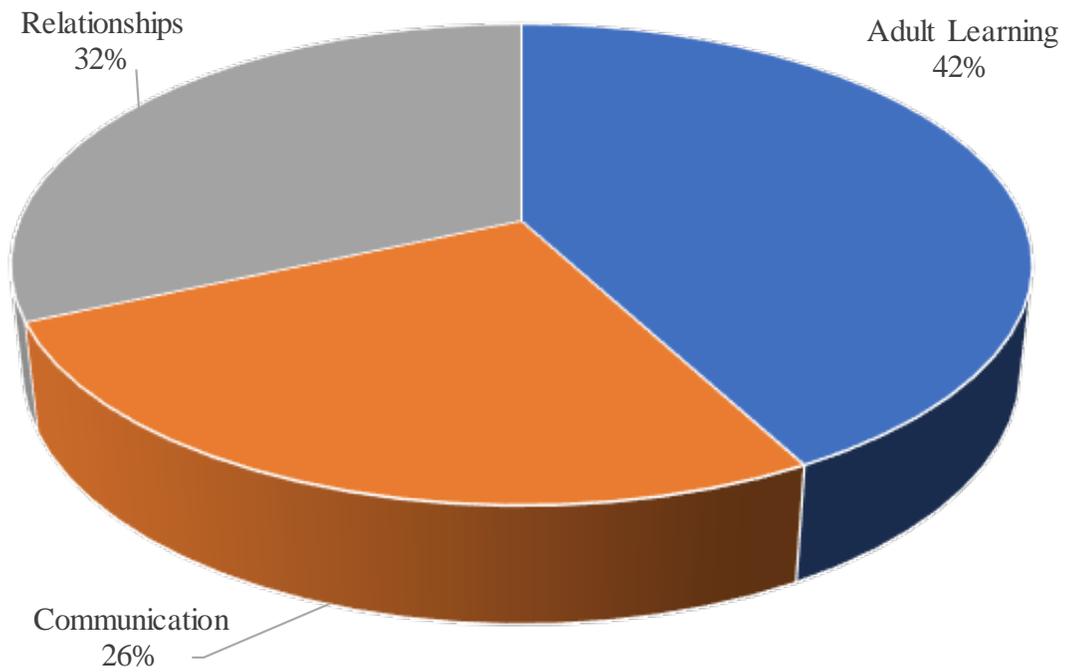
program at TCIS. The themes comport with and extend the understanding of the PAR Cycle One categories of personal and professional support.

### **Communication, Relationships, and Adult Learning**

We reviewed the evidence in PAR Cycle Two and determined a teacher induction program at TCIS should consist of regular communication, planned opportunities for relationship building, and personalized options for professional learning. CPR members analyzed the data and identified that teachers want communication on curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices as shown by 26% of the 740 responses (see Figure 14). Also, opportunities to establish relational trust with other teachers and school leaders through social experiences in and out of school were a key element based on the 32% of the responses. Relationships include the categories of “experiences” defined as opportunities in and out of school to bond with other teachers through social activities and assistance with basic needs to settle into Bangkok.

Teachers and CPR members identified they want a mentor and also the freedom to select their training options as shown by 42% of the responses attributed to the theme of adult learning. I concluded the evidence confirmed communication and relationships are important to participants, but an emphasis on adult learning (42% of the responses) was the most important. Adult learning presented in six categories: mentor, choice, technology, preparation, expectations, and experiences.

The communication of expectations, integrated with building relationships, and offering adult learning should form the basis for the reimagined teacher induction program. Next, I present further elaboration of data that supports the inclusion of communication throughout the teacher induction process. Then, I focus on the importance of cultivating and sustaining



*Figure 14.* Emerging themes: Teacher learning, building relationships, and communication.

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relational trust. Finally, I present the integration of learning opportunities based on adult learning principles and individual choice.

## **Communication**

CPR members identified two areas of effective communication that are vital for teachers: they want to know the divisional and schoolwide expectations and they want more communication of policies, procedures, and information about the preparation for teaching, including how to access resources for teaching (see Figure 15). Teachers told us that conversations and time for collaboration were needed to communicate information about instructional resources and their overall preparedness for classroom instruction.

### ***Divisional and Schoolwide Expectations***

Teachers wanted to know the school-wide expectations before arriving at TCIS and regularly during the school year. There were 161 instances of expectations (85%) in the data from notes, transcripts from meetings, conversations with teachers and CPR members, and LEs. Throughout the activities with teachers and CPR members, communication of expectations surfaced as the number one priority. CPR members incorporated this into the teacher induction program. Teachers wanted more information about the school and divisional recreational activities. Also, they requested communications about the process of settling into classrooms, divisional and school-specific processes and procedures, and peer support. Finally, teachers cited the need to understand administrative expectations for teaching and learning. Thus, we learned that expectations and procedural information should be communicated immediately after the date of hire and continue up to the teachers' arrival times in Thailand.

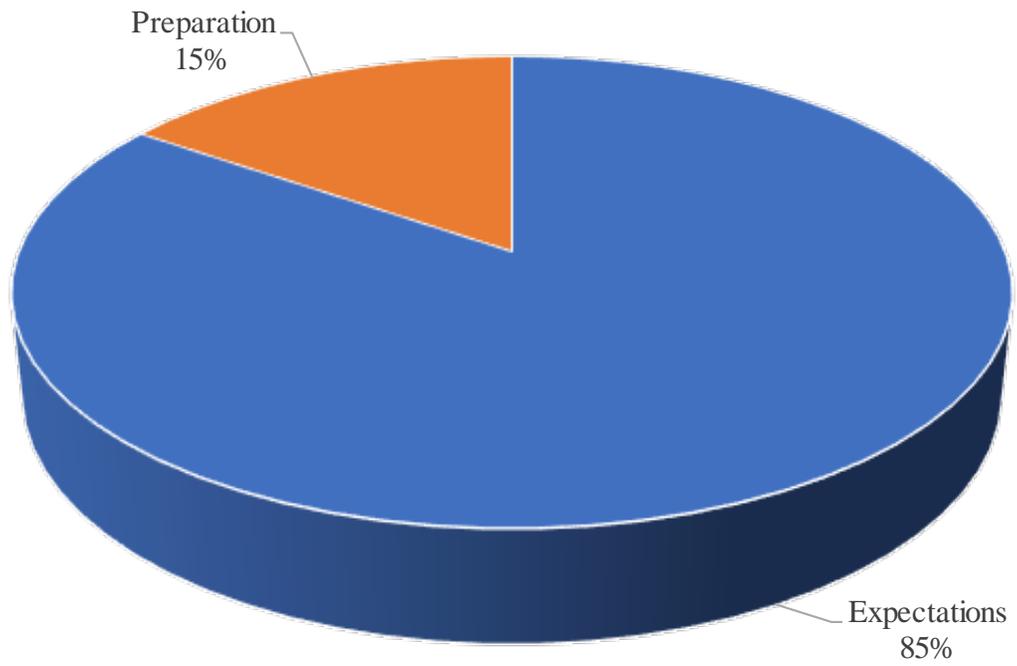


Figure 15. Communication theme emerged from the categories of expectations and preparation.

**Check-Ins.** Teachers and CPR members identified communication of school-wide expectations about policies and procedures through individual check-ins and group meetings as a primary need. Communication through regular meetings should foster relationships and guide teachers with school, division, and department expectations. Teachers revealed the importance of better articulating school-wide and divisional expectations through personal conversations. Specifically, we coded 21% of CPR references and 15% of teacher references to check-ins. Ms. Kumrit summed up the collective thought from teachers: “As a new teacher here, I want somebody to be like a helper, just someone to be there for me so I can ask questions and talk to them” (W. Kumrit, personal communication, January 13, 2020). Dr. Purser agreed that new teachers need regular check-ins. He stated the principals, curriculum coordinator, and heads of department “need to be going into their classrooms regularly and check-in to see if they need anything” (M. Purser, personal communication, February 8, 2020). Dr. Fitch offered the idea of creating a month-at-a-glance checklist for teachers to provide a clear set of expectations for each month (T. English, reflective memo, February 14, 2020).

**Community Building.** Teachers and CPR members cited the importance of “building community” 24 (22%) and 15 (20%) times, respectively. One way to offer support for teachers is to provide time for them to meet regularly with the principal and other teachers individually and as a group. Regular meetings should be implemented as a process of communication to introduce and guide teachers with school, division, and department expectations. Teachers desire time with principals but also request support from a partner teacher or mentor. The heads of the Thai and Chinese departments and the curriculum coordinator could provide personal and professional support in addition to monitoring the emotional well-being of teachers (T. English, reflective memo, January 18, 2020). Mr. Persinger opined that the community building is critical and that

teachers “would be helped by just getting together and having monthly meetings” (T. Persinger, personal communication, February 8, 2020).

### ***Preparation and Resources***

Principals need to ensure that teachers are prepared and have access to needed teaching resources by regular check-ins. Through informal check-ins with teachers, I informally connected with teachers. I hoped the unstructured visits would provide an opportunity to identify ways to better support teachers. I documented the meetings using the observation protocol (see Appendix F). Two areas surfaced in my reflection on this activity: (1) helping teachers acquire needed instructional resources; and (2) more intentionally scheduling time in my calendar to prioritize the informal meetings to increase the likelihood that regular conversations would occur and not left to chance (T. English, reflective memo, January 18, 2020). I realized I needed to make a conscious effort to check-in with the teachers to monitor how they were feeling and their needs.

Many of the conversations related to the acquisition of needed instructional resources. The need for this assistance was supported by data from the January 16, 2020, teacher interviews in which the PrE code, defined as helping teachers get what they need for class occurred 19 times (17%). In some cases, teachers identified logistical problems about the difficulty in securing resources. Mr. Wathy shared that having someone help with finding materials would make life easier on teachers “instead of us spending the weekend going out trying to hunt things down” (G. Wathy, personal communication, January 10, 2020). Communication with teachers about instructional resources, supplies, and the procurement process should be incorporated into the teacher induction program and continue throughout the school year.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I moved to virtual check-ins. After the Chinese New Year break and an additional week of no school, I utilized Flipgrid as a tool for an asynchronous check-in with teachers. I asked about the teacher's experiences with the online learning forced upon the school. I utilized Screencastify and Flipgrid to connect with the CPR members because the platform allowed me to attach the table of the common ideas from one-on-one meetings (see previously displayed Table 12), a table of the teacher's attitudes (see Appendix N) and a video to explain the purpose of the asynchronous CPR meeting: to identify supports needed for teachers.

School resumed for a brief time before transitioning to the online learning platform for the balance of the school year. Teachers met after school in a LE as part of the co-creation of the teacher induction program to discuss what they wished they had known before coming to TCIS, how they could be better supported during the second semester, and what they would communicate to future teachers.

**Conversations and Community.** CPR members learned that regular conversations with teachers are critical to maintain communication about resources and to build community and should be incorporated into the TCIS teacher induction program. At the February 17 LE, Mr. Persinger asked teachers how they could be better supported during the second semester, what they would have liked to know about teaching our Thai and Chinese students and to share one thing they would tell teachers before they arrive in July 2020. Teacher responses to the one piece of advice prompt included, "be patient, be prepared to be flexible, and reach out to current staff members as soon as possible." Based on data from the LEs and memos, communication was an essential element of a teacher induction program.

The CPR team identified conversations and community as fundamental elements of the types of support needed for teachers. At the February CPR meeting, members generated two lists on chart paper that served to guide the creation of a list of teacher supports for implementation for the balance of the second semester. What started as a continuation of the weekly check-ins, identified by the CPR members and teachers after the mid-January research activities, was expanded to “Conversations” to ensure we remained focused on increasing relational trust and deepen the sense of belonging to the community. CPR members generated a list of ideas to define the conversations of the weekly check-ins. Topics included employee attendance, information about field trips, safety processes for the coronavirus, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) related information, and teacher evaluation and goal setting. The CPR titled the second chart of supports as “Community” that contained ideas to provide organizational structures in addition to relationships that I address in the next section. They suggested monthly group conversations with teachers based on the informal weekly check-ins by principals and heads of department would be useful to build community in addition to luncheons, and trips (see Figure 16).

**Time for Collaboration.** Teachers identified time for teacher collaboration as a second-semester support at the February 17 LE. They indicated the need for time to collaborate about instructional planning and articulated how communications about processes, resources, and expectations could support them during the second semester. They identified the process to acquire teaching resources, supplies, and equipment as the primary support needed and suggested the acquisition of resources be incorporated into the weekly check-ins or monthly meetings. This information was important for teachers during the first semester and should be incorporated into

Conversations  
**WEEKLY CHECK-INS**

for CPRs

- 1) Protocols → coronavirus; field trips; scan in/out
- 2) WASC questions + process
- 3) Resources needed → access to materials  
What do you need? How do we get it for them?
- 4) END OF YEAR Goal setting → prep for reflection  
→ how to prepare for obs #2  
→ could TED conduct session Feb 17 w/ NTS?  
→ CPRs need to v in after TED's talk
- 5) follow up w/ Goals progress
- 6) End of YEAR processes; activities  
↳ competitions, talent shows → detailed calendar of events
- 7) No SPRING PTCs
- 8) Summer School options + opportunities
- 9) Buddy w/ 20/21 NTS (commission w/ teachers.)

~

- Which NTS are Google certified?

- Ways to use technology... from a previous PD session.

• Weekly v in should be broken down by month → ultimately create a year long, month by month v list.

• Google forms?

FEB - MAY → 1st; then build out for the entire year for 20/21  
Based on feedback from

**Community Building**

- Monthly meetings based on weekly v ins. (1st Meeting mid to March)
- Organized events to allow NTS to interact w/ veteran teachers
- Ask NTS to plan for the 20/21 group
- Aug 2020 - TCIS should provide (from admin) early on; then Admin step away
- Monthly Luncheons? (Admin provided/organized) or events
- Koh Samud trip (not good idea) → previous issues.
- day trips → could Thai Dept plan trips  
" Chins " " " } Cultural
- each principal plan - run TCIS sponsored - event to invite any community member (teachers)
- ⊗ Another dinner → Pavilion Street - Mexican Buffet

\* Give this to the admin  
\* Need to be planned by

Figure 16. Communication—conversations and community.

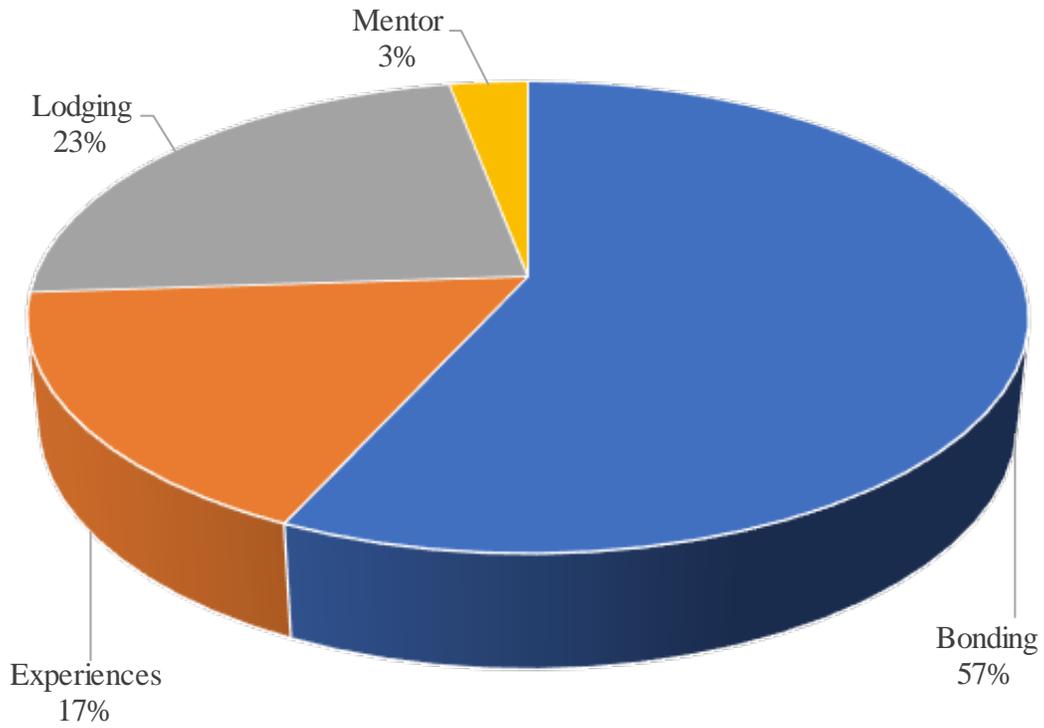
the overall support of teachers through an articulated plan of communication (T. English, reflective memo, February 17, 2020).

To this point, I presented the data in support of the theme of communication that emerged from two categories: expectations and preparation. Teachers and CPR members identified communication as a way to introduce expectations specific to TCIS and their teaching assignments. Additionally, they shared that teachers could prepare for their assignment with ample communication about the instructional program and the resources provided by the school. Next, I present relationships as a second theme that emerged from PAR Cycle Two data and is an integral component of the re-imagined teacher induction program at TCIS.

### **Relationships**

An effective teacher orientation process at TCIS should foster relationships through bonding activities, assistance with lodging, getting around the city, where to eat, and personal support (see Figure 17). Based on the data from PAR Cycle Two, teachers, and CPR members identified bonding activities (57%) and bonding experiences (17%) as critical both during the summer teacher orientation and regularly throughout the school year. Comments in the second category, lodging (23%), centered on teachers' need for assistance to secure a suitable place to live upon arrival in Bangkok.

The CPRs and I realized that we needed to be aware of how teachers were feeling because it is critical to provide individualized support. According to Moir (2009), the time around the December holiday break is a time of significant self-reflection for teachers who contemplate their level of contentment about their teaching experiences. Through the one-on-one conversations with teachers during PAR Cycle Two, I identified key words they used to describe how they were feeling. Of the 10 responses to an initial prompt about how teachers felt about



*Figure 17.* Relationship theme emerged from the categories of bonding, experiences, lodging, and mentor.

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their role at TCIS, nine expressed feelings of ease, comfort, and happiness. I summarized feelings reported by teachers and linked their responses to their reported feelings from the July 26, 2019, Focus Group and November 18, 2019, Journey Line of Emotions activity (see Appendix N). During a January 8, 2020, meeting, a teacher from the Chinese department, Ms. Cheng, expressed she was “50/50 happy/not happy.” She stated, “These activities created different memories, and this really helped me feel better because they were very exciting for me.” She indicated the reason she was not happy some of the time was because of “my English skills—I struggle to have good conversations with others” (W. Cheng, personal communication, January 8, 2020).

Teachers had different expectations based on their situations and the department—Western, Thai, or Chinese—as well as the division they were assigned at TCIS. For teachers from the Thai and Chinese departments, both the division principal and the head of the department were communicating expectations to them. Thai teachers reported positive feelings as did the Western teachers. Through my interactions with Chinese teachers, I learned they felt overwhelmed because of the additional responsibility of preparing for the Chinese special events. As communication between the principals and heads of department increased and relationships formed, we understood the stresses unique to the departments focused on how we could increase support for teachers. This was accomplished through bonding activities.

### ***Bonding***

Because teachers need regular time to bond with other teachers, incorporating activities and experiences for them to form relationships should be a high-priority component of the teacher induction process. Planned events provided an opportunity to connect with teachers from other divisions. As evidenced by the responses, bonding activities are integral to building

professional relationships among teachers, and activities outside of TCIS should also be considered to address personal interests. Teachers and CPR members emphasized the importance of fun activities that include food and are designed to assist in learning about Thai culture. In his Flipgrid response to the data from the January individual interviews with teachers and CPR members, Dr. Purser said, “We could make some concerted efforts to plan or co-plan some activities with either the Social Committee or other groups that would build community” (T. English, reflective memo, February 8, 2020). At an individual meeting, Ms. Cheng clarified the importance of relationships: “Friendships at the school are important to teachers. I want to chat with the other teachers. I feel they are my friends as well as colleagues” (W. Cheng, personal communication, January 8, 2020). Another teacher, Mr. Stillman, opined, “The new teachers know each other well but are not fully integrated with the veteran staff. This team-building activity would build bridges, partnerships, and friendships in the school and help promote a better school community” (D. Stillman, personal communication, March 30, 2020). School leaders should plan enjoyable monthly experiences for teachers and school leaders to build relational trust.

At the February 14 CPR meeting, the team generated a framework from which to foster both communication and relationships (see previously presented Figure 16). In addition to the previously mentioned monthly meetings and weekly check-ins, CPR members shared that principals should organize events to allow new teachers to interact with veteran teachers. Dr. Purser suggested the 2019-20 teachers could be asked to plan bonding activities for the incoming teachers. We discussed other strategies, including trips, monthly luncheons, and events to bring teachers together to have fun.



*Figure 18.* Teacher bonding involved food.

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Rather than just plan for the future, the group decided to organize a social bonding activity for the teachers by hosting a “happy hour” at my apartment and then dinner at a local restaurant (see Figure 18). It proved timely because of the elevated concerns with the COVID-19 situation and the social distancing rules imposed shortly afterward. Ms. Sepela, the sole teacher from the high school, sent an email message the next day to praise the opportunity for teachers to spend time together. She said, “I just wanted to thank you for opening up your home to us last night. For me especially, I rarely get to see the elementary teachers regularly, so it was nice to have a chance to catch up with them” (T. Sepela, personal communication, February 26, 2020). Ms. Elstroth offered that “bonding is first priority” and should include “bonding games for the entire staff” with “options to do this all year long with a bowling night, potlucks, birthday celebrations” (B. Elstroth, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

### ***Partner or Buddy Teacher***

Support by a partner teacher should be a component of the TCIS teacher induction program. Throughout PAR Cycle Two, teachers and CPR members identified a mentor 132 times (18%), referred to by the new teachers as a “buddy,” as an important additional support for personal and professional matters (see Appendix L). We distinguished a buddy from a mentor as someone who supports a teacher in personal matters rather than professional ones. This form of personal support, a one-to-one relationship, is distinct from efforts to promote group bonding. CPR members supported the idea of establishing buddy teachers (T. English, reflective memo, February 14, 2020). Therefore, I launched the TCIS New Teacher Buddy program in March 2020 by adapting a program used at the Chiang Mai International School for the 2020-2021 teachers (see Appendix M).

Current teachers, including some of the participants of this PAR, joined the New Teacher Buddy Program. Buddies answered questions via email and, in some cases, Zoom meetings about

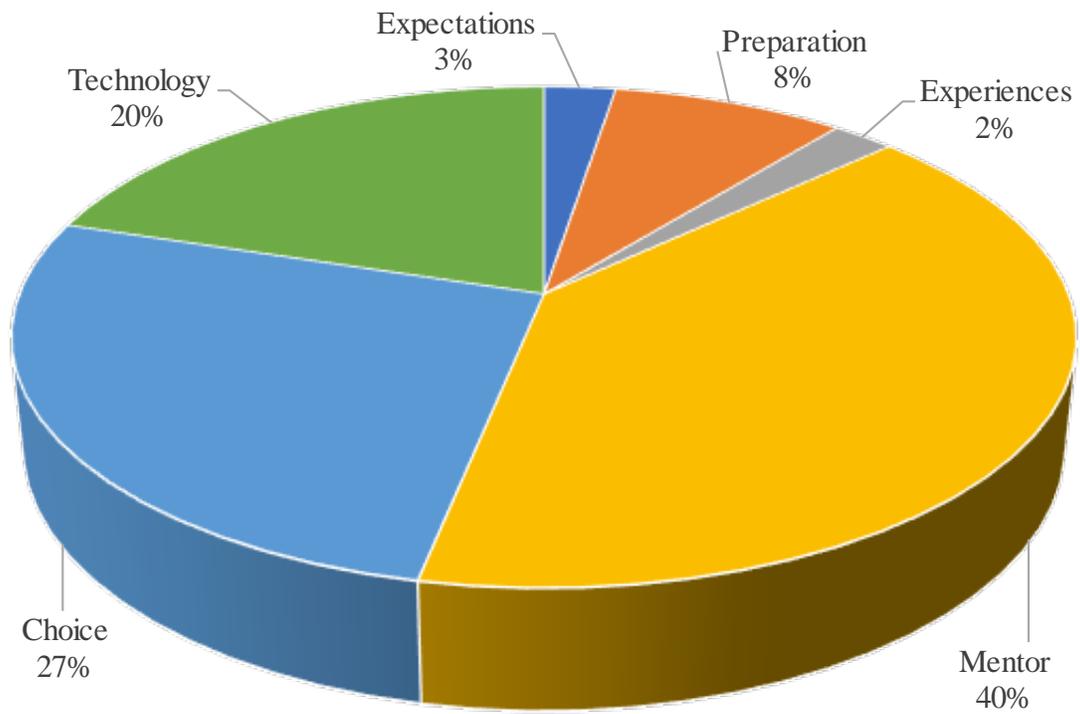
where to live, eat, shop, and other questions about moving to Thailand. Buddies provided support from the date of hire to the first few weeks upon arrival to TCIS. Buddy teachers did not answer curriculum questions, or anything about TCIS policies and procedures and forwarded any school-related questions to the administrator. Ms. Elstroth summed up the purpose of the TCIS Buddy Program: “I think setting them up with a buddy at the beginning of the year, just one person, and having them just show them around and be their first semi-friend is a good idea” (B. Elstroth, personal communication, January 13, 2020). The program started after teachers were hired and before their arrival.

Upon arrival, teachers wanted support to find and settle into a new apartment. During the March 30, 2020, design thinking activity, teachers cited lodging 54 times (32% of the codes) throughout the two-hour exchange. They identified lodging 48 times (28%) and assistance with services connected to settling into a new country such as banking and phones six times (4%) (see Appendix L). According to Mr. Wathy, “The top priority is getting teachers settled” (G. Wathy, personal communication, March 30, 2020). Once teachers find their new home, they should be able to concentrate on school-related matters with the assistance of a buddy.

In summary, the theme of relationships emerged from the categories of bonding, experiences, lodging, and mentor/buddy. CPR members saw from reviewing the data that teacher bonding should include personal attention to support teachers settling into new apartments as another critical element. We identified adult learning as the third theme to emerge during PAR Cycle Two which is buttressed by the themes of communication and relationships.

### **Adult Learning**

The CPR concluded that teachers desire mentoring support (40%), the ability to choose their professional learning opportunities (27%), technology support (20%), time for preparation (8%), clear communication about expectations (3%), and experiential learning opportunities (2%) (see Figure 19).



*Figure 19. Components of adult learning*

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These should be integral elements for TCIS. Next, I explain how these categories constitute the building blocks of a teacher induction program built upon adult learning principles.

### ***Mentoring and Expectations***

Mentoring is necessary for the professional support and growth of teachers. In addition to the buddy concept, which focuses on personal support in advance of arrival, mentoring is a process of professional support by a teacher that spans the entire school year and involves lesson planning, instructional practices, and feedback. Teachers desire time with principals but also request time with a partner teacher or mentor to discuss classroom practices and ask questions about school policies and practices. Teachers and CPR members identified individual support and referred to a mentor teacher to accomplish the task.

Of the 132 tallies of codes for mentoring, 94% (125) originated from the theme of adult learning (see Appendix L). Teachers preferred individualized supports based on their self-identified needs. We should address this request through a mentoring program and clarify the principal's expectations. In response to the question of what supports should be provided to teachers, Dr. Fitch offered a prior experience: "Back in the States, we would partner somebody formally with somebody that's a veteran that can answer questions" and added that identifying "who might be good mentors and creating specific meeting dates, field trips, or certain teaching points so, in addition to their grade-level peers, new teachers would have the mentorship piece as support" (B. Fitch, personal communication, January 13, 2020). According to Ms. Fettner, mentoring would serve as a venue for colleagues to talk about their practice (E. Fettner, personal communication, January 8, 2020). Establishing a mentor program within the teacher induction program should provide an added layer of individualized professional support throughout the

school year. Working with a mentor teacher is one way to address choice throughout the school year.

### ***Choice of Learning Areas***

Teachers shared that a key factor of their adult learning experiences is the opportunity for choice. Teachers desire to identify the supports about mentoring, professional learning, and housing that they most need. During the orientation week and to a lesser extent throughout the school year, teachers requested the opportunity to select the areas in which they desired to advance their professional skills rather than attend training they deem unnecessary. Of the teachers' and CPR members' references, 27% concerned choice for professional learning (see Appendix L), the second-highest category of adult learning. They suggested that the week-long orientation be built on a flexible platform because, as Ms. Fettner shared, the importance of "having a menu, a choice, what your priorities are because once you get there, your priorities shift. Having a choice would've been really nice" (E. Fettner, personal communication, March 30, 2020). Ms. Wilson captured the idea of choice and shared, "We would be able to have training if we needed training" (J. Wilson, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

### ***Technology Training***

We must include learning opportunities about technology systems within the TCIS teacher induction program given that teachers are expected to utilize specific software programs. Twenty percent of codes related to adult learning referred to technology support (see Figure 19). According to teachers, their needs should be addressed through a curated group of videos that cover the specific technology tasks required such as generating progress reports, attendance procedures, and weighting of grades. The videos could be shared with future teachers in advance of their arrival. Dr. Fitch proposed technology mini-sessions throughout the school year (B.

Fitch, personal communication, March 30, 2020) while Mr. Fettner suggested the creation of “school-specific technology courses” (A. Fettner, personal communication, March 30, 2020). A menu-driven approach to professional learning opportunities is consistent with adult learning principles and should be incorporated for all teachers and school leaders throughout the school year.

### ***Time to Prepare***

Teachers need time to prepare for the new teaching assignment and to prepare their classrooms during the orientation week. Also, they desired regular time to interact with peers, mentors, and principals throughout the school year as well as time to plan lessons and communicate with parents about the progress of the students. Providing time for preparation and is essential to support teachers, build relationships, and foster communication. We intend to repurpose meeting times to provide the time and space for teachers to plan and prepare.

In this section, I summarized the emerging themes of communication, relationships, and adult learning based on PAR Cycle Two activities. Next, I introduce three examples of small wins to demonstrate how the TCIS Community has changed through communication, relationships, and adult learning practices.

### **Small Wins through Conversations and Communications**

In this section, I analyze the findings of organizational theory. I identify and describe the importance of building on small wins as a process of incremental change because teachers expressed the desired to participate in conversations about school improvement (Gawande, 2017; Weick, 1984). According to Weick (1984), “Small wins provide information that facilitates learning and adaptation” (p. 44). Through the PAR, I observed three “small wins”: (1) amplifying Thai teachers’ voices; (2) improving collaboration among the Chinese, Thai, and

Western departments; and (3) raising awareness about the disparity in employment benefits among the three groups of teachers (Chinese, Thai, and Western). When analyzed through an organizational theory of incrementalism, these small wins served as fundamental building blocks to facilitate gradual change to our teacher induction process. The small wins impacted the conversations and communications, which led to adult learning opportunities and improved relationships through the empowerment of teachers to make decisions about the learning community. Weick (1984) states that a “deliberate cultivation of a strategy of small wins infuses situations with comprehensible and specific meaning (commitment), reinforces the perception that people can exert some influence over what happens to them (control), and produces changes of manageable size that serve as incentives to expand the repertory of skills (challenge)” (p. 46). According to Gawande (2017), small wins are “about the longer view of incremental steps that produce sustained progress.” The small wins also challenged the leadership of TCIS to confront inequities in organizational systems and processes. This section describes how some of the bureaucratic norms of TCIS are at odds with the instructionally focused, learner-centered community and how the implementation of a teacher induction program served as a framework for changes in policy, procedures, and organizational growth because of the renewed focus on relationships (see Figure 20).

### **Small Win #1: Amplifying Thai Teachers’ Voices**

Through the work of my PAR, I documented conversations and communications of teachers that amplified Thai teachers’ voice and stimulated advocacy on their behalf as well support from others on two areas of concern: medical insurance benefits and Faculty Association (FA) participation by Thai teachers (T. English, reflective memo, January 11, 2020). These conversations raised awareness of differential treatment based on a teacher’s county of origin.

**Win #1 Amplifying Thai teachers' voices**

"deliberate cultivation of a strategy of small wins infuses situations with comprehensible and specific meaning (commitment), reinforces the perception that people can exert some influence over what happens to them (control), and produces changes of manageable size that serve as incentives to expand the repertory of skills (challenge)" (p. 46).

**Win #2 Interdepartmental collaboration**

According to Bernstein (1983), "A dialogue or conversations among individuals . . . must be based on mutual respect, equality, a willingness to listen and to risk one's prejudices and opinions" (pp. 219-220).



**Win #3 Awareness of differences**

"Small wins provide information that facilitates learning and adaptation" (p.44).

**Small Wins**

"A small win is a concrete, complete, implemented outcome of moderate importance. By itself, one small win may seem unimportant. A series of wins at small but significant tasks, however, reveals a pattern that may attract allies, deter opponents, and lower resistance to subsequent proposals. Small wins are controllable opportunities that produce visible results" (Weick, p. 43).

Weick, K. E. (1984). *Small wins: Redefining the scale of social problems*. *American Psychologist*, 39(1), 40

*Figure 20. Small wins at TCIS.*

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### ***Medical Insurance Benefits***

The case of a Thai teacher's diagnosis of cancer and out-of-pocket medical expenses clarified the differences in medical insurance benefits among the Thai, Chinese, and western teachers. After a diagnosis and subsequent treatment of cancer, the Thai teacher was obligated to pay \$4,700 in medical costs not covered by the Thai health insurance plan provided as a benefit of employment. By contrast, Chinese and western teachers at TCIS pay a maximum of \$400 as a deductible each year based on their international medical insurance plan. I submitted two requests to cover the disparity to provide similar coverage and to ease the financial burden on the Thai teacher. The requests were denied (T. English, reflective memo, September 26, 2019). This example illustrates a cultural barrier to build community inherent in the hierarchical levels of TCIS (Morgan, 2006). The voice of Thai teachers was amplified even though no relief for the disparity in medical insurance benefits resulted. The discussion played a part in the promotion of increased self-advocacy and engagement of the Thai teachers in the TCIS learning community.

### ***Faculty Association (FA) Participation***

The medical insurance benefit dialogue fueled a renewed sense of hope among the Thai teachers and led to increased involvement by three of them in the TCIS FA. According to the Thai Director, "Thai teachers stopped attending FA meetings a long time ago because they were not heard and grew frustrated with the continued lack of engagement and support" (P. Kaewmark, personal communication, January 11, 2020). As Freire (1970) suggests, such disengagement caused by the Thai teachers' experience at TCIS is unsurprising because "dialogue cannot be carried on in a climate of hopelessness. If the dialoguers expect nothing to come from their efforts, their encounters will be empty, sterile, bureaucratic, and tedious" (p. 80). The small win realized with the medical insurance benefit matter was the impetus to a

feeling of empowerment. Weick (1984) states, “When people think too much or feel too powerless, issues become depersonalized. This lowers arousal, leading to inactivity or apathetic performance. The prospect of a small win has an immediacy, tangibility, and controllability that could reverse these effects” (p. 41). The re-engagement with the FA resulted in part from my conversations as a researcher with teachers through PAR Cycles One and Two in addition to the leadership of the Thai Director who was a member of the CPR. Most important, it occurred because the insurance-related conversations and communication fostered trust and facilitated the small change in context, leading to increased dialogue among the Thai, Chinese, and Western teachers and between the teachers and TCIS leadership.

### **Small Win #2: Improving Collaboration**

Through the PAR, we increased collaboration at the leadership level of the school and among the CPR members. School leaders implemented new structures, including weekly meetings with dynamic, co-created agendas; shared collaborative, communication processes through weekly memos; and organized social activities with an intentional focus on adult learning. The result of these structural changes was improved listening, greater trust, increased sensitivity to social dynamics because of cultural differences, shared beliefs, and a deeper understanding of each person’s strengths and talents (Weick, 1996). I deliberately designed the composition of the CPR group to include principals and the curriculum director, all western, and the Thai and Chinese Heads of Department.

Based on the existing culture of the school, the three departments—Western, Thai, and Chinese—operated separately; communications were fragmented, and conversations infrequent. According to Bernstein (1983), “A dialogue or conversations among individuals . . . must be based on mutual respect, equality, a willingness to listen and to risk one’s prejudices and

opinions” (pp. 219-220). The relationships formed through the various activities of the PAR paved the way for ongoing dialogue and collaboration around supporting teachers as they acculturate to TCIS. Teachers engaged in activities that included student-centered conversations and a focus on professional growth. In addition to improved collaboration, the CPR members developed greater esprit de corps and changed the process of communication with the Head of Schools (HOS) and the Foundation Chairman. The HOS’s weekly administrative meetings began to include the Thai and Chinese Heads of Department, which was a shift from the historical practice of western only meetings. This small win served as another opportunity to amplify the voice of all teachers.

### **Small Win #3: Raising Awareness of the Disparities among Departments**

The TCIS community was, to some degree, fragmented along departmental lines. As we confronted differences among the departments, relationships flourished, and communication improved. The disparity among the Thai, Chinese, and Western departments of TCIS was a source of regular tension throughout the organization because the groups were compensated differently. Also, cultural and language barriers impeded communication and understanding. The Chinese culture was dominant because the Foundation Board members were from the Republic of China (ROC). As the collective voice of the Thai teachers was amplified and collaboration throughout the community increased, awareness of the disparities in employment benefits increased. Teachers and administrators experienced a renewed sense of partnership. From the PAR activities, we observed personal and professional supports through documented conversations, communication, and community-building and incrementally resulted in a climate of hopefulness, mutual respect, and collaboration within and across the departments.

Senge (2006) wrote that when people embrace dialogue, “collectively, we can be more

insightful, more intelligent than we can possibly be individually. The IQ of the team can potentially be greater than the IQ of the individuals” (p. 239). This context provides an opportunity to understand, educate, and foster relational trust among a diverse international group of teachers at TCIS.

### **Implications for TCIS**

We were instrumental in using the PAR process in creating a reimagined teacher induction program at TCIS based on input and ideas from teachers and school leaders. The FoP goal was to improve the 5-day orientation and support program by engaging teachers through their orientation and personal and professional experiences during the entire school year. The study led to changes in organizational practices to foster relationships through communication and adult learning processes and, by focusing on teacher needs, facilitated a shift to a more collaborative approach to professional learning at TCIS. Based on my work as a researcher as well as my responsibilities as a principal, my leadership transformed into a collaborative approach by engaging teachers through conversations and learning exchanges. I used the analysis of the PAR Cycle Two activities to develop research activities for PAR Cycle Three.

### **Effective, Context-Based Teacher Induction**

The CPR group modified the current TCIS teacher orientation week as part of the overall teacher induction program for teachers and school leaders. We fostered relationships through adult learning experiences and communication. Table 13 displays the intersection of categories by theme with the sub-questions. Also, I analyze how the assets of TCIS were integral to the teacher induction process. Specifically, the Board expected high-quality teachers and, therefore, supported professional learning activities. There was a renewed focus on student achievement that led to the need to provide professional learning to assist teachers in their work

Table 13

*Research Questions Connected to the Categories and Themes*

Theme	Category	Sub-Question 1	Sub-Question 2	Sub-Question 3
Communication	Expectations	•	•	•
Communication	Preparation	•	•	•
Relationships	Bonding	•	•	•
Relationships	Lodging			•
Relationships	Experiences	•	•	•
Relationships	Mentor	•	•	•
Adult Learning	Mentor	•	•	
Adult Learning	Choice	•	•	•
Adult Learning	Technology		•	
Adult Learning	Preparation	•	•	•
Adult Learning	Expectations	•	•	•
Adult Learning	Experiences	•	•	•

with the English Language Learners (ELLs) during the 2019-20 school year because the WASC accreditation site visit was scheduled to occur. This brought the Western, Thai, and Chinese Departments together throughout the semester and provided a basis to focus teacher learning on student needs based on student achievement data.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions and attendant uncertainties about what education would look like in the 2020-21 school year, the school leadership was concerned about the economic strain due to a possible decline in student enrollment. The challenges I highlighted in the fishbone analysis of Chapter Two remained, but the CPR interpreted them as opportunities for improvement.

I determined that an area in need of additional study is how best to coordinate the induction program from the date of hire through the end of the second year of teaching. We need to look more closely at the induction process from pre-arrival through the first year. We learned the communication of expectations and the need to assist teachers as they settle in upon arrival were areas to incorporate into PAR Cycle Three. We added a system to share expectations, information about lodging, and address the employment aspects in advance of arrival. Additionally, with the onset of virtual meetings because of the COVID-19 situation, we engaged the 2020-21 teachers through virtual activities in advance of arrival as the impetus to begin the relationship-building process earlier. Now we will go deeper and figure out what a second year should look like based on what we learned after PAR Cycle Three.

By focusing on the adult learning needs of teachers and through the active involvement of principals in the teacher induction program, we were able to show how shifting toward building relational trust in the community is an important component of induction as well as a support for the entire school. As the principals collaborate and plan systems to support teachers, they will

plan professional development activities that are better aligned to the needs of the school and teachers.

### **Vulnerability and Transparency in Leadership**

The entire process of co-creating a teacher induction program for TCIS challenged me as a practitioner and a researcher because I had to release control and share the responsibility for the teacher induction program. As a practitioner, I realized through the PAR research project that I had to operate collaboratively; I was less the expert and more a learner. I changed the structure of meetings and decreased my voice. I began to ask questions rather than provide answers. I changed divisional meetings from an agenda with specific information items that I presented to conversations based on a central question or idea about pending issues or needs. In the new format, teachers had the opportunity to share their experiences; it encouraged building relationships, improved communication, and led to a more enjoyable learning experience. I discovered ways to continually offer choice to teachers. Teacher interactions and conversations flourished. As a member of a circle, teachers viewed me less as the disseminator of information and more as a facilitator of ideas. As I intentionally designed structures and processes to learn together in a fun, creative ways, I could see the shifts across the school.

Leading the PAR process helped me realize the importance of relationships and a more flexible approach. Engaging with teachers and CPR members led me to launch more interactive, collaborative practices with the entire high school staff. The theme of relationships that emerged in the PAR was the most important dimension of my practice and required my constant, deliberate attention. As we implemented the TCIS teacher induction program based on communication, relationships, and adult learning practices, I relied more on building relationships with all teachers. I did this through the integration of the Community Exchange

Learning axioms into established school processes (Guajardo et al., 2016). Meetings started with an opportunity for “surprise and delight” sharing and then merged into a circle activity with an opening question about topics relevant to or offered by teachers.

### **Reimagined Teacher Induction at TCIS**

The final activity of PAR Cycle Two was the virtual Design Thinking Learning Exchange with all 2019-2020 teachers and the CPR members, which I conducted via a Zoom meeting due to COVID-19. This was the only activity to include all teachers and the members of the CPR team during PAR Cycle Two. Our objective of the activity was to create the ideal teacher induction program for the 2020-21 teachers (see Appendix O for the protocol). We determined that the program should facilitate communication, relationships, and adult learning in three phases. Phase One is the period between the date of hire and arrival in Thailand; Phase Two consists of the five teacher orientation days in addition to all-staff orientation; Phase Three is the full school year. The CPR members planned activities for all three phases.

#### ***Phase One***

Phase One should be replete with communications about school and classroom expectations as well as information about setting up classrooms and preparing for classes at TCIS. Under the new scheme, principals establish initial relationships and connect new teachers with a “Buddy” through the Buddy Program. Principals virtually introduce teachers to current staff and provide personalized support for the transition to Thailand. Also, during Phase One, teachers may be offered opportunities to learn about technology and instructional practices through a curated library of videos and learning exchanges. CPR members provided input on technology and instructional videos. Dr. Fitch added: “On-line resources that can be reviewed on their own...Rediker, PlusPortals, Google, Other Integrated Tech, all the IT stuff, some cultural

stuff, and some curriculum basics” (B. Fitch, personal communication, March 30, 2020) should be created. As the date of arrival to Thailand approaches, teachers enter Phase Two.

### ***Phase Two***

CPR members determined that Phase Two should be constructed to allow teachers an opportunity to identify their priorities and select from a menu of options to address their needs. Formerly, this phase was our general teacher orientation with modifications to address the needs for lodging, bonding, and preparation based on teacher choice. Now, the primary focus of this phase is to assist teachers to secure and settle into apartments, bond, acclimate to the school and their classroom, and prepare for the first days of school with students. According to Mr. Wathy, the phase should be designed to “get teachers in classrooms ASAP” (G. Wathy, personal communication March 30, 2020). Dr. Purser added this would be an ideal time to introduce a mentor teacher and instructional expectations such as signature practices (M. Purser, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

### ***Phase Three***

We identified check-ins by principals and mentors, regular meetings with teachers, and monthly planned, fun activities as essential to support teachers at TCIS once they are settled and have begun the school year. Phase Three should commence with continued communication of expectations and ongoing opportunities for building relationships and learning. Specific times should be set aside for teachers to meet with their mentors consistently. Learning opportunities based on individual choice should be available for all teachers and school leaders.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I reported PAR Cycle Two research activities and analyses that yielded communication, relationships, and adult learning as emerging themes for PAR Cycle Three. PAR

Cycle Two was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated the engagement of teachers and CPR members through virtual channels. While teachers preferred in-person conversations, I found that the introduction of virtual meetings was integral to supporting teachers during the time of social isolation. The hiring timeline of the 2020-2021 teachers overlapped PAR Cycle Two activities and provided opportunities for communication, initial stages of relationship building, and adult learning opportunities.

The renewed focus on relationships, communication, and adult learning continued through the collaborative work of the CPR team members. Communication about common expectations for teachers, deliberate planning for differentiated adult learning opportunities, and a consistent focus on building and maintaining relationships with all teachers was embedded into planning for the coming school year. Check-ins and virtual meetings with teachers continued.

During PAR Cycle Three, we engaged the 2020-21 teachers along with continued support for the 2019-20 teachers. As the administrator responsible for teacher orientation week activities, I launched a three-phase teacher induction program that commenced from the date of hire. We based PAR Cycle Three activities with 2020-21 teachers on choice to the extent possible; encompassed communications, including data from the New Teacher Buddy Program, initiated during PAR Cycle Two; and incorporated virtual introductory interactions as well as advanced learning opportunities.

In the next chapter, I explain the implementation of the ideal teacher induction program co-created from the March 30, 2020, Design Thinking Learning Exchange, which served as the framework for the activities of PAR Cycle Three. I collected data from the 2020-21 teachers and CPR team from April 2020 through September 2020 during PAR Cycle Two because I began communication with incoming teachers. In addition to reflective memos, I archived emails,

recorded virtual meetings, utilized Flipgrid, and launched a teacher website with information about TCIS to assist in preparing for the transition to Bangkok. I analyzed notes, memos, artifacts, transcripts of meetings, and LEs through the end of September.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: PHASED TEACHER INDUCTION**

### **CULTIVATING RELATIONAL TRUST AND ATTENDING TO ADULT LEARNING**

The CPR team and I changed the teacher orientation from a week-long series of activities to a more comprehensive induction process that began at the time of hire and extended throughout the school year. As a result of the final learning exchange of Participatory Action Research (PAR) Cycle Two, the co-practitioner research (CPR) team and 2019 teachers planned the 2020 program as three phases using three principles of an expanded teacher induction in mind: communication, choice, and culture to cultivate relational trust and address the professional learning needs of teachers.

At the beginning of Phase One (the period from date of hire to arrival at TCIS), the other administrators and I immediately opened communication with the incoming 2020 teachers. We engaged them in one-on-one conversations, maintained notes of individual communications, and hosted eight learning exchanges with the entire group. During Phase Two, consisting of a formal orientation week, teachers participated in two learning exchanges conducted online because of COVID-19 safety protocols requiring all teachers to quarantine during their first 15 days in Bangkok.

The start of the school year marked beginning of the yearlong Phase Three. Because of COVID, we extended the online induction model as only one of the 14 new teachers was able to report for work on the first day of school. CPR team members provided ongoing professional learning supports for all teachers throughout the school year. To further develop and explore the key themes of relationships and adult learning, we designed PAR Cycle Three activities (April-September 2020) with a focus on continued communication with teachers, offering choices for individualized support, and adding to their understanding of the host country culture.

Based on the evolving evidence from three cycles of inquiry, induction programs require at least a year-long program with frequent and meaningful *communication* between principals and new teachers about personal and professional opportunities for building trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Moir, 2009). Second, by offering learning *choices*, teachers received individualized support based on their identified needs to prepare for the new teaching assignment (Drago-Severson, 2012; Knowles, 1980). Third, by fully and equitably integrating the host country staff, the new teachers became more aware of *cultural* norms, history, and host country customs, and the host country staff (teachers and directors who are Thai) felt more a part of the entire school (Killoran, 2019; Li, 2012; Richardson Garcia, 2019). By carefully examining how to ensure that teachers new to international schools can quickly become a part of the school and the larger culture of the host country, the PAR project and study contributes to the knowledge about effective induction and support processes that other schools could use.

We analyzed data collected from a series of individual meetings, group meetings, learning exchanges, and reflective memos to determine the extent of transfer into current systems, policies, and practices of TCIS. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during PAR Cycle Three I engaged teachers through virtual platforms rather than face-to-face interactions for the meetings and learning exchanges. The multiple meetings and learning exchanges and the evidence from these activities comprise the major activities of the PAR cycle (see Table 14).

### **PAR Cycle Three Activities**

PAR Cycle Three commenced in April 2020 as soon as we hired the 2020 cohort of teachers new to TCIS; we focused interactions on building relational trust and supporting teachers to make personal and professional transitions to Bangkok and our school. For the PAR, assignment. Of the 42 group emails I documented, 43% involved sharing expectations or

Table 14

*PAR Cycle Three Key Activities and Data Collection (April–September 2020)*

Activities	April	May	June	July	August	September
Meetings with CPR members (n=5)	-	2	-	1	2	1
Meetings/Learning Exchanges with 2020 Teachers (n=14)	1	1	3	5	4	2
Reflective Memos	-	-	2	1	2	4

*Note.* Activities during PAR Cycle Three were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

relational trust differs from trust because it goes beyond the trust we have that people will do what they said. Relational trust refers to a level of trust between and among teachers and school leaders that they will be supported and listened to regardless of their emotional state (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

I facilitated learning exchanges and meetings between teachers and CPR members while also maintaining a research journal of reflective memos during PAR Cycle Three. I met with the CPR members five times, engaged the cohort via Zoom through eight learning exchanges, interacted by Zoom one-on-one with teachers, and analyzed 426 email communications with the teachers (384 individual and 42 group emails).

The first phase of this cycle commenced for teachers at the signing of the employment contract and continued through arrival in Bangkok. The second phase was an official orientation period. We initiated the third and final phase when the remaining 58 returning teachers reported. CPR members designed the meetings and learning exchanges for Phase Three, which lasted for the duration of the school year.

Based on the analysis of the data from prior cycles of inquiry, I confirmed the importance of cultivating relationships and attending to adult learning. Table 15 displays the percentage of codes connected to eight categories which led me to identify two themes from PAR Cycle Three—relationships and adult learning. I attributed 73% of the relationship codes to the categories of bonding, 22% to the buddy relationship, and 5% to lodging. In terms of attending to adult learning, I linked 64% of the codes to the categories of expectations and preparation (32% each), choice (15%), mentor (11%), and technology (10%).

I documented 384 individual emails with teachers during PAR Cycle Three; 89% of the emails linked to communicating expectations or information about preparing for the teaching

Table 15

*PAR Cycle Three—Themes: Categories from Codes*

Theme	Category	CPR Meetings	Teacher Meetings	Reflective Memos	Category Total (%)	Theme Total (%)
Adult Learning	Expectations	15	66	16	97 (32%)	
Adult Learning	Preparation	14	49	34	97 (32%)	
Adult Learning	Choice	11	26	9	46 (15%)	
Adult Learning	Mentor	11	12	12	35 (11%)	
Adult Learning	Technology	2	29	1	32 (10%)	307 (42%)
Relationships	Bonding	36	237	38	311 (73%)	
Relationships	Buddy	0	80	13	93 (22%)	
Relationships	Lodging	5	17	0	22 (5%)	426 (58%)
Total (%)		94 (13%)	516 (70%)	123 (17%)	733	733

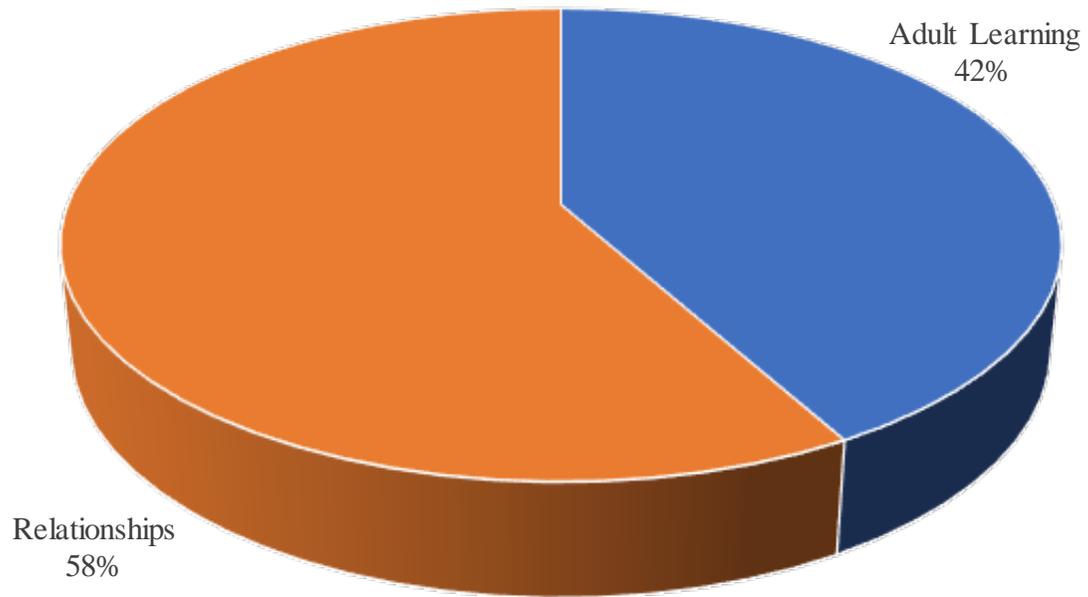
information about preparedness, and 48% of the group emails were coded to the bonding category. The remaining 9% involved communication about technology.

During PAR Cycle Two, CPR team members and 2019 teachers had co-created a year-long framework for a phased teacher induction program to promote relational trust and effective support for all teachers. Through the design thinking protocol (see Appendix O), we identified distinct phases to provide support from the date of hire to arrival (Phase One), at arrival (orientation—Phase Two), and throughout the school year (Phase Three).

From our collaboration with the CPR team and interactions with teachers new to TCIS, several elements emerged as cornerstones of an effective induction program. First, by being more intentional about communications from the moment of hire and through the entire first year of their work, we created and sustained stronger relational trust among the cohort of teachers new to TCIS and with us as school leaders. Secondly, we learned that teachers wanted choice about identifying professional learning needs. Finally, because we included the Thai and Chinese directors and teachers more systematically to the induction program, these directors and teachers have more agency in the entire school. (I discuss more in the findings how their involvement is a key part of our change process.) As a result of intentional communication, choice, and more cultural knowledge, teachers new to our school feel more prepared to join the TCIS community and to do their work as teachers.

### **The Building Blocks of Relational Trust and Adult Learning**

TCIS school leaders implemented a phased teacher induction program that promoted relational trust and provided support for teachers new to the school through virtual, online modes of communication during PAR Cycle Three, offering choices to teachers, and fully introducing new teachers to the cultural aspects of the school and community. As shown in Figure 21, we



*Figure 21.* Themes: Building relationships and adult learning.

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paid attention to evidence from PAR Cycles One and Two and emphasized these aspects of adult learning corresponding to expectations, choice, and use of technology. In the discussion of each theme, I indicate how relational trust and adult choice benefited the new teachers.

### **Cultivating Relational Trust**

Through a series of intentional communications, the CPR team launched a teacher induction program that provided a common platform for the support of all teachers to address their personal and professional needs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our engagement with the teachers started near the date of hire and continued through their arrival and quarantining in Bangkok and into the school year. Principals and directors of the Thai and Chinese departments were the primary organizers of the induction. We established relational trust through communications and by engaging teachers in bonding activities and connecting them with a buddy teacher.

#### ***Phase One: Communication***

We engaged new teachers near their date of hire through email communication, individual meetings, and group meetings—all designed to build relational trust and convey information about TCIS. Individual communications were similar to the check-ins I conducted with the 2019 teachers during PAR Cycle Two except that they were virtual. The CPR team determined what information to share, and a CPR member, Mr. Persinger, communicated individually with teachers to provide information and access to curriculum resources. We based the need for those interactions on feedback from the 2019 new teachers. Throughout Phase One, CPR members conducted check-ins via Zoom meetings, communicated through email, and connected through eight learning exchanges that utilized protocols to foster relational trust, build community, and convey information about their transition to Bangkok and TCIS.

### *Phase Two: Virtual Orientation—Communication and Culture*

We had designed teacher orientation to engage teachers after arrival to TCIS and before the start of the 2020-21 school year on August 3. At the May and July CPR meetings, principals, heads of department, and the curriculum coordinator planned the teacher orientation activities. Mr. Persinger and I coordinated and facilitated the TCIS teacher orientation. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we redesigned the week of activities to accommodate virtual participation. Two CPR members, Ms. Kaewmark and Mr. Persinger, collaborated with me to plan modified activities for teachers to prepare for the school year, learn about Thai culture, and continue to build relationships. In addition, the CPR team and I designed activities for all teachers during the week prior to the start of school with students. As in Phase One, the CPR team engaged new teachers via Zoom meetings to communicate information about school policies, expectations, and curriculum matters. We concentrated on activities that bonded teachers to us as administrators and to each other.

**Bonding.** Given the importance of bonding as reflected in Table 15 (73% of 406 relationship codes were connected to bonding), we designed activities via technology such as Zoom and Flipgrid to cultivate relational trust during the first phase. Upon arrival in Thailand, we continued bonding activities virtually and transitioned to face-to-face engagements. CPR members planned additional activities throughout the school year to maintain the focus on sustaining relational trust with all teachers. Principals and directors bonded with teachers in advance of their arrival by participating in virtual activities, which marked a departure from prior practice in which leaders did not meet new teachers until orientation.

The virtual activities were effective in building a close bond among the 14 new teachers. CPR members scheduled events throughout the school year to include all teachers in recognition

of the need to be cognizant of their wellness due to the many uncertainties and additional responsibilities many had to assume at the start of the school year to cover for teachers not able to be physically present because of COVID-related precautions.

Because teachers from PAR Cycle Two had expressed that they wanted to get to know each other and their principal during Phase One, I planned virtual learning exchanges to allow for a gradual introduction process. We shared Journey Lines to extend the introductions. These exchanges served to introduce the CPR members and teachers much earlier than in the past. Personal communications from new teachers increased as they got more acquainted with me, as evidenced by the 426 personal communications I documented with new teachers.

**Opening Circles.** We designed meetings to deepen relational trust, starting with a virtual opening circle protocol during which teachers shared personal stories. For example, I learned from the teachers of their hopes to establish relationships with their new colleagues prior to arrival (T. English, reflective memo, May 13, 2020). Ms. Kalua shared, “It has been nice to meet the other new teachers (virtually) and to have weekly communication with the school. It helps not to feel like I’m on an island going through this process alone” (C. Kalua, personal communication, June 20, 2020). After three weeks of school, Dr. McGrath, the Head of Schools, commented he had never seen a group of new teachers so connected and bonded and stated, “It’s evident they established relationships before they got here” (J. McGrath, personal communication, August 20, 2020).

**Social Events.** We engaged all teachers through social activities that deepened relational trust in other ways. We had planned three unique experiences for teachers to explore Bangkok and Thai culture during the orientation week, but they were eliminated because teachers were not able to arrive on time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After the start of the school year on

August 3, however, CPR members expressed the need to facilitate monthly social events or activities. I was surprised to hear a colleague request an August 7 Teacher/Staff Appreciation day (the first Friday of the school year) including a morning treat of coffee and pastry for all staff (see Figure 22). Other bonding experiences planned by the CPR team included a New Crew Chat and Chew, a relaxed dinner gathering at my home for all the teachers new to TCIS, a birthday celebration for the Head of Schools at a local restaurant attended by over 40 teachers, several morning coffees, and multiple half-day trips to explore the greater Bangkok area and experience Thai culture.

**Buddy Teacher.** We introduced buddy teachers to the new teachers to provide a personal connection between an experienced teacher and a newcomer. The buddy teacher concept originated from PAR Cycle Two feedback, and I was pleased to learn that one of the buddy teachers, beyond her role with one teacher, established conversations and interactions with several of the teachers joining TCIS during Phase One. The teacher extended a friendly welcome, reassurance, and encouragement on the personal side in addition to the professional aspects of working at TCIS. She was eager to share her desire to help these new teachers find apartments and indicated she hoped they would locate near her so they could be neighbors (T. English, reflective memo, August 20, 2020).

Based on the collective understanding between teachers and CPR members, we utilized a structured series of communications and the Buddy teacher system to establish relational trust beginning at the time of hire. We identified numerous topics teachers would need to understand to fulfill the communicated expectations. Therefore, we considered their learning needs as adults and launched structures to support them as we transitioned to Phase Three.

**APPRECIATION  
& GRATITUDE**

*"The root of joy is gratefulness...  
It is not joy that makes us grateful;  
it is gratitude that makes us joyful."*  
David Steindl-Rast



**Friday morning  
from 6:30 to 7:10,  
please visit the Cafe  
(in the parking  
garage) and enjoy a  
beverage and a  
snack of your  
choice.**

Your efforts are  
noticed and  
appreciated.  
From: Ms. Patcharin,  
Mr. Tony, Kru Rung,  
Dr. John, Dr.  
Michael, Dr. James,  
and Mr. Tom

*Figure 22. Social events planned by the CPR team fostered relational trust.*

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### ***Phase Three: School Year—Continuing Communication, Choice, and Culture***

We designed Phase Three to provide personal and professional supports for teachers based on individual choice and to build relationships through communication and opportunities to select the areas for their own professional learning as well as to learn about the host country culture. School leaders established relationships with teachers through virtual meetings upon their date of hire. Through virtual meetings and building of relational trust, we transitioned to the address the adult learning needs of teachers by helping them communicate expectations, prepare for their new teaching assignments, and transition to living in Bangkok amid the COVID-19 pandemic. I relied on virtual meetings throughout PAR Cycle Three because teachers arrived sporadically with the final teacher arriving October 19, 2020, after data collection ended.

Based on categories that emerged from PAR Cycle One and the Cycle Two themes of communication, relationships, and adult learning, CPR members added training on the teacher observations and the evaluation process to the system of teacher supports. Through PAR Cycle Three, we implemented our phased teacher induction program that established relational trust and allowed for teacher choice to address their professional learning needs through an intentional system of communication, supports, and opportunities to experience the host country culture. We specifically developed Phase Three activities to address the adult learning needs of teachers and provided options for their learning; we modified the activities to online learning platforms and provided time for individual conversations, group meetings, and administrative support. The adult learning included these categories: responding to expectations, preparing teachers for the transition, mentoring, and orienting teachers to our technology systems (see Table 15, previously presented).

## **Adult Learning: Expectations via Technology and Choice**

In addition to the choices we offered adults for building and sustaining relational trust, we gave teachers options for their training and technology needs. The technology tools served a dual purpose in building relational trust and fostering equitable interactions among teachers and school leaders. The CPR team facilitated Zoom calls, Flipgrids, and I launched a website in addition to emails and Screencastify videos; these served as essential conduits for the virtual interactions. We incorporated communications about expectations into Phase One as well as information about preparing for their new teaching assignments. Some of the conversations involved questions and concerns about getting into Thailand because of the travel restrictions that were implemented. From developing relational trust, we pivoted our collective focus to the challenges of teaching in a virtual classroom while also disseminating school-specific policies and procedures based on the needs identified by the teachers.

### ***Flipgrid***

I introduced teachers to Flipgrid as a tool for use with their classes. Flipgrid is a free video discussion tool in which a discussion topic, called a grid, is shared with a community of learners. The learners record and share short videos in response to the grid. I launched the first grid with teachers so they could say hello and share a fun fact about themselves. In total, the activity generated 12.3 hours of engagement among the 14 teachers. I used Flipgrid five times throughout PAR Cycle Three for 31.8 hours of engagement. Both teachers and students liked using Flipgrid.

### ***Email***

Communications through email served as a primary mode of informing teachers about expectations and preparations for the new teaching assignment. We established official TCIS

email accounts April 3, 2020. I logged 426 emails to new teachers throughout PAR Cycle Three. Of the emails, 89% were individual communications to address specific questions or concerns, and 11% were sent to all new teachers with information about new travel requirements as a result of COVID. Upon analysis of the content of the email communications, I identified an underlying focus on bonding to build relational trust between and among teachers and school leaders while communicating information with new teachers to prepare for the transition to TCIS. I coded all of the group emails to the theme of relationships, which we determined were essential for effective adult learning to occur with the teachers.

### ***Website***

The CPR team and I created a website as a central repository for information based on feedback from both the CPR and participants during PAR Cycle Two. Teachers appreciated the centralized location for information about school policy, procedures, curriculum, and living in Bangkok. Because they were still teaching in their previous schools during Phase One, they had to balance those responsibilities with the added work of our communications and meetings. I included a New Teacher page to provide links to the 18 Zoom meetings from February through July and included recordings of the meetings for future reference.

### ***Virtual Meetings***

We engaged teachers through Zoom meetings to communicate expectations and assist them in preparing for the new teaching assignment during Phases One and Two. Phase Three also used Zoom meetings initially until we transitioned to face-to-face meetings as teachers arrived and went through the required 14-day quarantine. We held the first virtual meeting April 16 to allow the new teachers to meet for the first time. On May 13, we held the second meeting to introduce key individuals at TCIS with whom teachers needed to work as they transitioned to

Bangkok. At the meeting, teachers used an endowed object to share an important personal story related to the object.

We designed the third meeting, June 4, to foster more sharing of personal stories. However, due to increasing concerns about international travel because of COVID-19, it evolved into a session to reassure teachers about the transition to TCIS.

### ***Travel Updates***

Teachers and CPR members identified the topics for the meetings based on emerging needs. Teachers requested frequent updates and reassurance about the evolving travel processes, which resulted in another meeting June 11. In addition to COVID updates, I introduced teachers to information about taxes, financial planning options, and medical insurance. The focus shifted to communicating about travel and securing visas rather than the planned topic of curriculum. As a result, we scheduled weekly meetings and dedicated the June 26, meeting to the travel process. On July 1, we conducted another meeting via Zoom to share travel and visa updates. We used the July 7 meeting to communicate the travel procedures that had been clarified by the Royal Thai Government.

At the July 13 meeting, we presented the Thai government's COVID-related guidelines for requesting a visa and a Certificate of Entry (COE) into the country. I asked the teachers to prepare a personal introduction slide to present to the TCIS community because there was so little time to get acquainted and school was scheduled to begin three weeks later. We also dedicated the July 16 meeting to the complex process of securing official repatriation flights, COEs, Alternative State Quarantine hotels, and Non-Immigrant B Visas. I made a YouTube video using Screencastify with information about travel into Thailand for teachers to consult as needed. We dedicated our July 20 meeting to learning from the first teacher to successfully

navigate the complex visa and COE process. At the July 23 meeting, I introduced the Teacher Observation and Evaluation process, and finally at the July 27 meeting new teachers introduced themselves to the entire TCIS teaching team at the Welcome Back to School breakfast.

We designed the teacher induction program to offer teachers choice for how they desire to be supported both professionally and personally. Participants and CPR members generated a list of topics of pre-recorded lessons teachers could access for their individual learning as needed. Mr. Persinger created video tutorials on the student management system, Google Classroom, and online meeting platforms.

### **Effective Teacher Induction: Inclusive and Equitable Communication and Culture**

We have two critical findings from the phased teacher induction program that can help international schools to fully integrate new teachers into a school and host country culture. First, regular communication boosted teacher readiness and feelings of belonging (Bryk et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016; Richardson Garcia, 2019). Secondly, focusing on cultural awareness had a two-pronged result: (a) teachers were more familiar with the school culture and host country culture; and (b) because the Thai and Chinese instructors and directors were more equitably included in the phased induction processes, they became a stronger part of the school as a whole. Thus, what we learned about intentionally and equitably focusing on the host country culture in inducting new teachers to an international school could shift practices in other international school settings (Killoran, 2019).

### **New Teachers Belong to the TCIS Family**

A crucial factor for new teacher induction practices is establishing relational trust among new teachers from the start as a cohort who could depend on each other. We started the process to build relational trust at the moment of hire (Phase One) and continued through the orientation

period (Phase Two) and throughout the school year (Phase Three). We relied on the research of Bryk et al. (2015) to develop a networked community through a more intentional communication structure to include: (a) contact that addressed personal and professional needs and choices begun immediately after new teachers signed contracts; (b) regular opportunities for learning about the host country culture; and (c) collaboration about instructional matters with teachers and school leaders. Principals and HR officers communicated with teachers to assist with preparations for the assignment, articulated expectations, and explained personnel requirements. CPR members fostered relationships through opportunities to bond with teachers through the support of a buddy teacher. Upon arrival, we implemented monthly meetings with new teachers in addition to all-teacher meetings that cultivated relational trust.

We know that effective teacher induction models have common elements, including evaluation of the program by the teachers who experienced it (Kearney, 2017). To understand teachers' feelings about their experiences with the TCIS induction program, we asked the new teachers to rate the extent to which they agreed with seven statements about it (see Appendix P). In Table 16, I share the results from eight teachers who very much or moderately agreed that the induction program was effective in the areas of communication, community building, and support. Overall, the teachers generally concurred that the teacher induction program was beneficial although they rated the areas of curriculum and human resource support slightly lower. According to Ms. Millener, "The process of getting new teachers to know each other and integrating them into TCIS was fantastic" (D. Millener, personal communication, June 23, 2020).

### ***Teacher Readiness***

As a result of our teacher induction program, teachers felt ready upon arrival. In PAR Cycle One, we found that teachers needed personal as well as professional support. Therefore,

Table 16

*Summary of New Teacher Feedback (June 2020)*

	Disagree			Agree		
	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much	Slightly	Moderately	Very Much
Communication					3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)
Community Building					4 (50%)	4 (50%)
Curriculum				1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)
Direct Human Resource Support				2 (25%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)
New Crew Zoom Meetings	1 (12.5%)				1 (12.5%)	6 (75%)
Support					2 (25%)	6 (75%)
Overall					3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)

our induction program sought to provide teachers emotional support, assistance settling in, and opportunities to build relationships. Professionally, we learned that teachers hoped for access to curriculum, information about school culture and policy, administrative support, and a mentor teacher. Working with the 2019 New Teachers for 14 weeks in the middle of the 2019-20 school year for PAR Cycle Two, we understood the importance of regular communication, opportunities for relationship building, and individualized professional learning options. To accomplish this, we redesigned teacher meetings to provide time for collaboration because effective teacher induction models emphasize collaboration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). We also implemented a Buddy Teacher system as our first step toward a teacher mentor program.

**Repurposed Meetings.** Adults learn best when they have structures and choice. Teachers have unique learning needs, and because using meeting structures provided that choice, we were successful in individualizing professional learning. Using established meeting times for equitable participation and dialogue allowed teachers to identify their personal and professional needs and determine how to address them. Teachers requested that we incorporate learning opportunities into the ongoing professional development structure throughout the school year by repurposing established meeting times. CPR members aligned weekly teacher meeting topics to intersect with the needs identified by the teachers, placed special focus on teacher well-being because of the increased stress due to COVID-19 and offered several field trips for teachers to experience Thai culture. Administrators established regular one-on-one meetings with teachers to provide individualized assistance.

**Opportunities for Collaboration.** We found an essential component of teacher induction at TCIS is offering teachers choice for their professional learning in a collaborative environment. To better meet their professional learning needs, we realized teachers should have a choice about

what they learn and that we needed to provide them time to do so with their peers. We know that effective induction models emphasize collaboration and can benefit all teachers (Britton et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Wong et al., 2005). Because teacher agency increases when they have a choice in what to collaborate about, constructing space to allow teachers to dialogue about their practice is essential. The principal's role in cultivating a collaborative culture is key and should be integrated into existing meeting times that focus on professional development and not merely the dissemination of information.

***Mentor.*** A mentor teacher is an essential component of an induction program and provides opportunities for collaboration (Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). We noticed teachers mentioned the support of a mentor in all three PAR Cycles. To address matters related to settling in, we implemented a Buddy Teacher program. We then identified mentors to support teachers with their instructional assignment during PAR Cycle Three. The CPR team pointed out that teachers had varying levels of knowledge and skills in specific instructional matters and that an intentional matching with a mentor with strengths would be ideal.

***Choice.*** We designed the teacher induction program to offer teachers' choice for how they desire to be supported both professionally and personally. During PAR Cycles Two and Three, we shifted to online student learning because of COVID-19, which helped us to realize the value of adult learning through technology platforms and the added benefit of allowing teachers to engage in their learning when it was most convenient for them. Teachers generated a list of topics of pre-recorded lessons they could access for their individual learning as needed. CPR members developed a curated library of specific online learning modules (Google Classroom, Flipgrid, Plus Portal) for teachers. Mr. Persinger created video tutorials on the

student management system, Google Classroom, and online meeting platforms. We understood that our existing processes and structures needed to change to allow more time for professional learning and to provide teachers a choice about their individual learning needs.

***Principal's Role.*** Principals should be involved in all aspects of the teacher induction program and promptly establish personal relationships with new teachers as part of their responsibility for the acculturation of new teachers to the school (Andrews et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ganser, 2001; Olebe et al., 1999; Stansbury, 2001). In addition, principals need to ensure that new teachers are paired with effective mentor teachers (Fultz & Gimbert, 2009) and that mentor teachers are equipped to provide new teachers guidance and feedback. We learned from PAR Cycle Three that teachers also requested time with their new principal. The result was that school principals now have a role in the teacher induction program and should utilize time during Phase One to gradually introduce new teachers to their staff. To this point, Ms. Orellana shared, “I would like to know more about the other teachers because once we get here, we will be hitting the ground running” (J. Orellana, personal communication, June 25, 2020). We relied on intentional communications and structures focused on “relationships, assets, stories, place, politic, and action (RASPPA)” to accomplish this (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 4).

### ***Feelings of Belonging***

We learned that when teachers felt ready for their teaching responsibilities, they developed feelings of belonging to the TCIS community. We designed the teacher induction program to promote a sense of belonging to the TCIS community of practice (Lave & Wegner, 1998). New teachers said that communication and opportunities to share through virtual meetings were instrumental in strengthening their sense of belonging. A teacher shared, “It is

abundantly clear that TCIS board, admin, and staff want the new hires to be well supported and to feel welcome in the community” (C. Stewart, personal communication, June 22, 2020).

### **Cultural Awareness**

Through the inclusion of host country teachers in our teacher induction program, we were more responsive to the needs of teachers. We created activities to develop cultural awareness with new teachers by utilizing the Thai teachers. At TCIS, we experienced increased equitable participation of teachers from the Western, Chinese, and Thai departments and built a community of care and practice before teachers arrived (Lave & Wenger, 1998). For example, under the leadership of CPR member, Ms. Kaewmark, the entire Thai Department developed a five-module series for the first weeks after the new teachers’ arrival to introduce teachers to Thai culture while also meeting the Thai Ministry of Education’s requirement for all teachers to be educated about child safety and other legal requirements. The Thai department launched the five-part series during a June virtual meeting for self-directed learning. Teachers could choose when to take the modules since 12 of the 14 teachers were located in different time zones around the world. As a result, we generated, asynchronous equitable dialogue across all departments of the school. We taught teachers about Thai culture and our school culture so they could rapidly integrate into our community of practice.

The CPR team developed a culture of collaborative, shared leadership across the Thai, Chinese, and Western departments in the interest of building trust through the three PAR cycles (T. English, reflective memo, September 3, 2020). Prior to the PAR, there was a clear Western-dominated hierarchy in the school leadership. As a result of the PAR, we incorporated all departments in weekly senior leadership meetings that were previously attended only by the Western principals. Because teachers learned about the culture of TCIS by representatives from

all departments, they looked to the Thai and Chinese directors and teachers for guidance (González et al., 2005). Our focus on greater equity served as the impetus to several small wins in teacher benefits and participation that resulted in the amplification of Thai teachers' voices and increased teacher agency throughout the school (see Chapter Six). All CPR members, through their participation in the PAR, were instrumental in changing the leadership culture throughout the school from separate and isolated divisions and departments to a collaborative, cohesive, unified team. In addition, we experienced increased collaboration between the teachers and school leaders because of the shared leadership mindset that evolved among the CPR team.

Learning about the host country culture is best achieved through direct experience rather than cognitive learning. According to Cushner and Mahon (2009), cultural learning is accomplished “through impactful experiences, where people are challenged to make sense of their new environment and accommodate to the difference, where they ultimately gain more sophisticated knowledge about other people and a feeling of being at home in a new context” (p. 316). International schools hire teachers who are qualified to teach specific disciplines and focus on test scores and university acceptance rates but who may have no prior experience with the host culture and will need ongoing support to attain higher levels of cultural competency (Carter, 2020). Through an equity-focused teacher induction program implemented with host country educators, teachers new to an international school will feel prepared, supported, and integrated with the new learning community.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher induction at international schools involves integrating teachers to the new school culture as well as the host country culture. By establishing an intentional program of communications starting at the time of hire, we improved teacher readiness and acclimated them

more effectively to the school community. The inclusion of host country staff throughout the phased induction processes promoted a more equitable representation on the school leadership team and increased their agency. Relationships are the heart of a teacher induction program, and the principal is responsible for establishing and nurturing an adult-learner-centered environment that provides time and space for the needs of all teachers. By intentionally and equitably focusing on the host country culture and the needs of adult learners from the moment of hire and throughout the school year, we can better support teachers at international schools.

## **CHAPTER 8: CULTURAL VISION THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION**

*Most of the learning of a lifetime, including much that is learned in school, never shows up in a curriculum. – Mary Catherine Bateson*

In the participatory action research (PAR) project and study, the co-practitioner researchers and I as the lead researcher co-constructed a meaningful teacher induction program for teachers new to the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS) in Bangkok, Thailand. The theory of action: If school leaders implemented a useful induction program, teachers new to TCIS would form stronger relationships with new colleagues and feel supported as teachers. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the project, examine the findings through the extant literature and alignment with the research questions, including an analysis of the findings based on the Community Learning Exchange (CLE) axioms, and share conclusions and a new framework for international teacher induction. In discussing the implications of the project on practice, school policy, and research, I reflect on my growth as a leader. Finally, I conclude with what the results mean for teacher induction at TCIS and more generally for international teachers and schools.

### **Project Overview**

Through three 14-week PAR cycles of inquiry, I worked with a Co-Practitioner Researcher (CPR) team and two cohorts of teachers new to TCIS to re-imagine the teacher induction process. Through iterative use of evidence from cycles of inquiry, we concluded that an effective teacher induction program needed to commence soon after teachers were hired and that the teachers new to TCIS needed regular communications with school leaders and each other. As a result of establishing relational trust early on with the school leaders and among the new teachers, the teachers felt a sense of belonging and readiness to start work at the school.

Also, through our team's focus on cultural awareness, teachers became more familiar with the school and host country culture, and host country staff had a greater influence on the school than had previously been the case. Finally, because we continued the process from the point of hire, during the summer orientation, and throughout the entire first year, we now have a robust and thoughtful teacher induction process to share with international colleagues.

The PAR project setting was an international school located in a suburb of Bangkok, Thailand, where I serve as the high school principal and administrator and had responsibility for new teacher orientation. As an independent school in which approximately two-thirds of the students are from Thailand and one-third from Taiwan, the western teaching faculty represents the majority of the teaching staff. The school has 73 teachers; 70% are from the United States and Canada, and the rest from Taiwan or the host country, Thailand. Annually, about 14% of the western teaching faculty leave for other international schools, but turnover is virtually non-existent from the host country faculty. The school is well-financed and prides itself on its trilingual curriculum and its guarantee that all graduates attend university after high school. The gold star for graduates is acceptance at a university in the US or Canada.

The PAR participants (n=25) were the 2019 and 2020 cohorts of new teachers and the five-member CPR team, which included me, two principals, and directors of the Thai and Chinese departments. The CPR team co-planned and implemented the teacher induction program. I was primarily responsible for data collection and analysis throughout the PAR, and the CPR team conducted member checks on evidence that I had analyzed (Saldaña, 2013).

Teacher turnover is common in international schools; however, better induction could orient teachers more effectively. If they felt a part of the school early on and were prepared to teach from the start of the school year, that would be advantageous to them as teachers, to us as

administrators, and to the students. After observations and conversations with new teachers, I relied on the CLE axiom that “the people closest to the issues are best situated to discover answers to local questions and problems” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 4) to co-construct a more meaningful induction program to better support teachers. The PAR project included a series of conversations, activities, and observations purposely designed to re-imagine a better way to support all teachers through a stronger induction program.

During PAR Cycle One, the CPR members and I analyzed data based on the teacher orientation practices before the study. We identified personal and professional supports to prepare teachers and help them feel connected to the community. The CPR team and I engaged the participants to design the ideal teacher induction program during PAR Cycle Two. Those supports helped to develop relational trust between school leaders and teachers and among the teachers in advance of starting their work in the school.

Our understanding of the data analyzed from PAR Cycles One and Two resulted in the implementation of a re-imagined, co-constructed teacher induction plan for PAR Cycle Three with three phases: hire (Phase One), arrival (Phase Two), and the school year (Phase Three). We initiated engagement with the new teachers in April 2020 once they were officially hired. During phases one and two, we facilitated numerous virtual meetings, communications, and community-building activities. Phase Three began August 3, at the start of the 2020-21 school year to provide continued personal and professional support through conversations, activities, meetings, and observations. School leaders established relational trust with teachers new to TCIS and designed an effective teacher induction program. Finally, we experienced an induction program with an intentional focus on culture as a result of including host country teachers in the process. The innovative program model supported teachers new to an international school in ways that no

one had experienced in any previous assignments, and the cohort of new teachers supported each other throughout their induction year.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

We identified two findings through the PAR project. First, regular communication boosted teacher readiness and feelings of belonging. Secondly, by focusing on cultural awareness, teachers were more familiar with the school culture and host country culture and as Thai and Taiwanese instructors and directors were included more equitably in the phased induction processes, they became a stronger part of the school community. The implementation of this induction program model improved teacher readiness, feelings of belonging, and awareness of the school and host country's culture. The findings should be useful to other international schools for rethinking induction. Using the adaptive scaling model, they could propose similar changes in their schools (Morel et al., 2019).

Teacher induction models should be collaborative, responsive to adult learners, and have structures that attend to professional and personal needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Drago-Severson, 2009; Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018). As I intersect these findings with the three areas in the literature, I then discuss how the PAR findings add to our understandings of effective induction and support and add to the research.

### **Communication Leads to Readiness and Feelings of Belonging**

Regular communication boosted teacher readiness and enhanced feelings of belonging (Drago-Severson, 2012). With a new structure for communicating pertinent information and providing opportunities for collaboration, the teacher induction process involved peer interactions, mentoring from the principal with whom the teacher would work, and specific professional and personal support structures that made teachers' arrival in Thailand safe and

hospitable. At the core of the re-imagined teacher induction program are specific and purposeful communications throughout all three phases.

### ***Collaborative Structures***

The structures for collaboration included contact with principals and contact with each other. Since CPR members had identified evidence that teachers wanted to collaborate with peers to prepare for the teaching assignment, we developed a cohort and set up communication processes before they arrived. Communications from principals provided the necessary interpersonal and professional supports to the teachers before and after they arrived (Baker-Gardner, 2015; Britton et al., 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Wong et al., 2005).

### ***Mentoring***

Mentoring is vital to effective teacher induction programs because the teachers have someone to turn to with questions; that relationship provides a sense of belonging with experienced peers (Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Jensen, 2010; Kearney, 2017; Mangione & Pettenati, 2018; Serpell, 2000; Wojnowski et al., 2003). According to Moir (2009), effective teacher induction programs employ a mentor model that offers “support for novice teachers with expertise from veteran teachers, creating collegial groups that benefit all teachers and all students” (p. 15). Through the PAR process, we learned that teachers found the mentoring helped them to become attuned to the rules and norms of our learning community and to fully participate in it. During PAR Cycle Three, we introduced the Buddy Teacher as a starting place for mentoring. Establishing a time to meet and reflect on feedback is vital (Flores et al., 2011; Kearney, 2017; Moir, 2009). The provision of a mentor teacher is a fundamental way to support

teacher learning and is one of the pillar practices of adult learning (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018).

### ***Personal and Professional Needs***

Principals utilized established faculty meeting times to engage teachers, support their professional needs, and focus on teachers' overall well-being. Since teachers go through phases and stages of learning and require collaborative, situational, and ongoing professional development that fosters reflective practice (Berliner, 2001; Dolmage, 1996; Moir, 2009), we designed videos that addressed specific and time-sensitive topics. We used technology as a bridge to maintain a virtual connection with all teachers as personal and professional needs surfaced. The meetings, either in-person or virtual, proved to be essential in relational trust-building and in supporting teachers in their professional learning while also tending to their emotional well-being.

On personal levels, the CPR team designed a communication plan that addressed the teachers' need to be ready and to feel a sense of belonging to the new school. In addition, their interactions with other new teachers were critical steppingstones to feeling welcomed and ready. The head of school noticed that this cohort of new teachers knew each other, knew about the school, settled in, and supported each other more than he had ever seen. And while individual and cohort support was the focus of our work, in the end preparing and supporting teachers is an equity concern for the students. Better prepared and supported teachers who feel a part of a community from the first day of their hires can "hit the ground running" in classrooms and design more coherent learning experiences for students.

### **Cultural Knowledge**

Our focus on teachers' cultural awareness of the host county and the school led to two

important results. First, the PAR findings suggest teachers wanted to know and understand the community they joined. Teaching, after all, is fundamentally interactional, and knowledge is generated by people working together in the learning community (Russ et al., 2016). Secondly, adult learning shifted from teacher readiness for the classroom assignment to cultural awareness about the norms of the learning community. Understanding Eastern ideas that frame the student's school experience and contrasting those to the Western beliefs the new teachers possess is an area in need of additional study (Li, 2012) and could inform future induction programs. Throughout the PAR project, our goal was to establish relationships with teachers new to the school so that they felt ready and prepared to start teaching and prepared to be in the host country. We believe our findings confirm that the goal was attained.

Reflecting on the findings through the three areas of literature reviewed, there are several takeaways from the PAR that are key to creating an international teacher induction program that supports teacher readiness, feelings of belonging, and cultural awareness. As a result of the project, we learned that the teacher orientation week needed to expand into a three-phase program of supports starting at the time of hire; principals should participate in the planning and implementation of the program, and host country staff should be included to share about Eastern cultures. The theory of action (see Figure 2) as described in chapter two served as a framework for the new approach to teacher induction which was implemented through the three cycles of inquiry and based on improvement science principles. Next, I examine how the PAR project transferred to practice and aligned to the research questions.

### **Research Questions**

Through the PAR project, the data supported the importance of the role of school leaders to build relational trust from the time of hire. We need to organize teacher induction at TCIS

through a collaborative effort, including all school leaders, mentor teachers, and teachers from the host country; the support of all teachers should be integrated into existing adult learning structures. The PAR project helped us to embed teacher induction in the fabric of TCIS, and the results align with the three research questions:

1. Community—To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction program engender relational trust between school leaders and teachers?
2. Adult Learning—To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes that fully support the professional and personal lives of new teachers at an international school?
3. Agent of Change—To what extent can I grow as a leader to be an agent of change in my school through the implementation of a teacher induction program?

### ***Community***

Our teacher induction program engendered relational trust between school leaders and teachers, among the new teachers, and with the TCIS teaching staff, building a strong sense of community. Before the PAR, communications prior to arrival were from the human resources department and solely about employment documentation. Because of the earlier connection with teachers and because the human resource department had limited English skills, I launched a new website as a single source of information. Phases two and three consisted of communications related to employment matters but also shifted to topics about teaching and establishing relationships. As the high school principal, I experienced firsthand the value in connecting with new teachers as I saw how principals and Thai and Chinese directors actively establishing community from the date of hire. This marked a change in policy and practice at TCIS from one

principal facilitating the teacher induction program to a group of school leaders and teachers participating in it.

**Principals Play a Key Role.** Principals need to be involved in the teacher induction process (Andrews et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Ganser, 2001; Olebe et al., 1999; Stansbury, 2001), and our findings were congruent with the research. The third aspect of my literature review examined the role of the principal in teacher induction. Because principals are the instructional leaders of the school, I intentionally selected principals and other key school leaders to serve as CPR members for the PAR because they were situated to directly impact practice and to a lesser extent school policy. We observed evidence in the PAR findings of the role of the principal, and the directors of the Thai and Chinese departments as well. The literature I reviewed supports the school principal's role as integral to teacher induction (Brock & Grady, 1998; Gschwend & Moir, 2007; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002). The CLE theory of change discussed in Chapter Two underscores the importance of the role of the principal in the teacher induction program by focusing on “relationships, assets, stories, place, politic and action (RASPPA)” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 4). The principal needs to facilitate teaming processes, provide opportunities for leadership roles, promote collegial inquiry, and assign a mentor to provide ongoing support to the new teacher.

By design, I selected principals and department leaders to serve as the CPR team because they work most closely with the teachers. Previously, the school required new teachers to attend a 1-week orientation immediately before the start of student instruction, which was designed by one non-native person with the primary purpose of acclimating teachers to the new school. As a result of a collaborative approach that included principals and department leaders and was based on the ideas of teacher participants in the PAR, we expanded the orientation week and launched

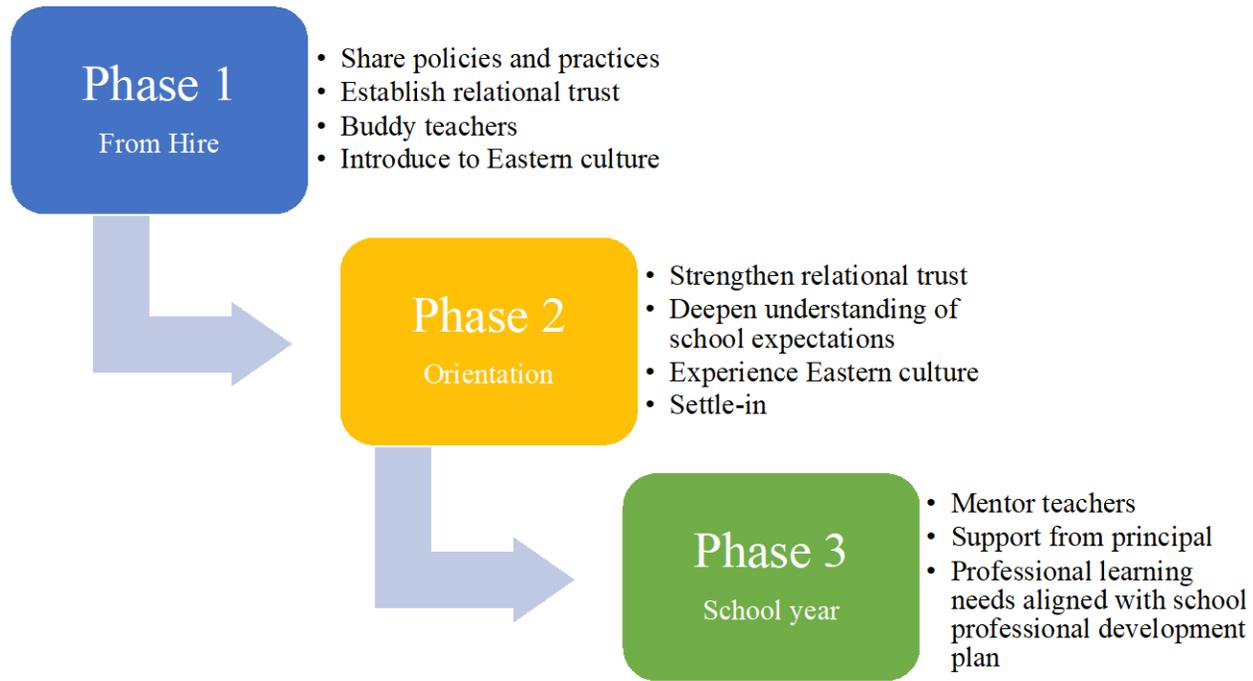
a three-phase system of supports as seen in Figure 23. The three phases shared a common focus on the Thai culture, so we sought the assistance of experts in the TCIS community—our host country teachers.

**Host Country Teachers are Integral to Induction.** The second takeaway for the PAR is to include host country teachers in the induction program to help new teachers become more familiar with the school and Eastern culture. As mentioned in Chapter One, implementing a more effective teacher induction model was originally aimed to increase teacher retention. Due to the unique context of international schools and TCIS specifically, we determined that while retaining teachers was important, our target should be teacher readiness, feelings of belonging, and a deeper understanding of the differences between Eastern and Western cultures.

For the most part, host country teachers at TCIS stay for many years in contrast to the briefer tenure of non-native teachers, who generally stay 2 or 3 years before transitioning to a different international school. This observation resonated with the CPR members and, when coupled with the desire to introduce new teachers to the Eastern culture, resulted in every host country teacher's active participation in phases one and two. Now, we have a teacher induction program that is collaboratively planned by the new teachers, principals, and for the first time, includes host country teachers.

### ***Professional Development in Phases***

We supported teachers both professionally and personally through an effective teacher induction program. Teachers requested the ability to have a choice about the topic and time they needed to learn and to choose the technology communication that best fits their needs. Although the series of activities related to travel to Thailand and securing visas before the teacher's arrival was necessary because of the COVID pandemic, we laid the foundation for future teacher



*Figure 23.* The TCIS teacher induction program.

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induction programs to include professional learning opportunities curated by teachers and school leaders. A continuing challenge for us is to embed professional learning opportunities throughout the school year for all teachers.

The final takeaway is that the teacher induction program consists of three phases, begins at or near the time of hire, offers teachers a choice in what and when to learn, and contains intentional communications to increase teacher readiness and their sense of belonging. Under the old approach to teacher orientation, one individual sent five email messages to new teachers about the steps necessary to arrive in Thailand for the 1-week orientation after the date of hire and before their arrival. The individual, along with one or two other teachers, facilitated the orientation activities, and once school started, there were no additional teacher supports offered.

**Phase One.** Teachers expressed the desire to learn about the school and its expectations and to meet the other new teachers as soon as possible. A series of communications and virtual meetings marked the initiation of Phase One soon after the hiring was completed in April to address these needs.

**Phase Two.** As the school year approached, we transitioned to Phase Two, the collaboratively developed orientation week and included activities to extend the bonding among new teachers, deepen understanding about school expectations as well as the Eastern culture, and provide opportunities for teachers to settle into their new homes.

**Phase Three.** The first day of the school year marked the beginning of Phase Three and continued throughout the entire year. In Phase Three we added additional supports, mentor teachers, and continued administrative assistance and merged the re-imagined teacher induction program with the school-wide professional development plan.

## *Agents of Change*

While I discuss my growth as a leader later in this chapter, the elementary and middle school principal and I, along with the Thai and Taiwanese colleagues, served as collective agents of change. As a CPR we promoted changes in the entire school system in the areas of leadership development, collaborative leadership, and advocating for equity. As we analyzed qualitative data throughout three cycles of inquiry to document growth, we collaboratively participated in using qualitative evidence to make decisions about the next steps. That process bolstered our skills as leaders and had an impact on the whole school system. Relationships and adult learning principles were central to the PAR, both of which were underscored by the value of our effective communication, planning, and implementation.

School leaders can implement a teacher induction program that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of teachers new to the school. With a focus on “relationships, assets, stories, place, politic, and action (RASPPA)” (Guardardo et al., 2016, p. 4), based on the Community Learning Exchange RASPPA Theory of Action, teachers and CPR members developed relational trust and utilized virtual channels throughout the teacher induction program. Through the PAR, we used an intentional system of communications to engage teachers in conversations, provide opportunities to build community, offer teachers choice about their professional learning, and ensure that new teachers know the host culture.

We implemented processes to support the professional learning of teachers aligned to their needs while providing support for their personal dimensions. As a principal and researcher, I documented how the voice of previously underrepresented individuals and groups within the school was amplified. The result was a change in organization dynamics on a small scale

whereby the voice of Thai teachers was recognized, and the Thai director now serves as an integral member of the TCIS leadership team.

In summary, the findings of the PAR confirmed what I found in the literature and resulted in a three-phase teacher induction program co-constructed using collaborative processes and based on adult learning principles. Through regular communication, we boosted teacher readiness and feelings of belonging (Bryk et al., 2015; Guajardo et al., 2016; Richardson Garcia, 2019). By focusing on cultural awareness, we observed that teachers were more familiar with the school culture and host country culture, and because the Thai and Taiwanese instructors and directors were more equitably included in the phased induction processes, they became a stronger part of the school as a whole. Thus, what we learned about intentionally and equitably focusing on the host country culture in inducting new teachers shifted our practice to be more inclusive and resulted in a viable new process for the TCIS teacher induction program.

### **Implications for Practice, Policy, and Research**

The findings and subsequent conclusions are specific to the context of TCIS, an international school in Bangkok, Thailand; yet there are implications for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers in other international contexts. I offer implications in three areas: (1) teacher induction practices in the local context; (2) local and international school policy; and (3) participatory action research in school contexts.

#### **Practice**

Based on the results of the PAR, we discovered several structures and strategies that improved teacher induction at TCIS in areas of increased teacher readiness, feelings of belonging, and cultural awareness. By engaging school leaders and new teachers, we were able to understand the needs as they were directly identified by the teachers, and in the process

developed a cohesive leadership team with increased collaboration that resulted in more effective professional development for all teachers. The most significant change in practice was the involvement of all principals and directors in the support of new teachers, which led to modifications in how and when we supported teachers new to TCIS. Finally, we learned about the value of intentional communications in preparing the teachers before arrival and the benefits of deepening new teachers' cultural awareness by including host country teachers in the induction process.

The findings imply that other international schools that engage new teachers through a structured teacher induction program soon after their date of hire can have similar results if they use our design processes to adapt to their local contexts (Morel et al., 2019). To accomplish this, principals at international schools need to regularly communicate with new teachers 3 to 4 months before their official start date. In these exchanges before and after arrival and during the school year, school leaders need to focus on relational trust, listen to teacher expectations, introduce new teachers to the new community—both the school and the host country—set up mentoring relationships, and provide professional learning. In other words, paying attention before and during the first year not only prepares teachers but also supports students more equitably because teachers are better prepared to teach.

Finally, by leveraging local knowledge and actors more systematically in the efforts, we highlight an equity goal that was a critical outcome even though we did not aim for it explicitly. By involving and authorizing the voices of the Thai and Taiwanese directors and teachers, incoming teachers had more coherent knowledge about the school and the country. Further efforts in our practice at TCIS should involve engaging the voices of those who are not only

close to the issue but have a historical and cultural perspective that western school leaders could not have.

## **Policy**

We relied on the CLE theory of change as a theoretical framework to foster relationships and modified the school's policy on teacher orientation to reflect a more comprehensive induction program to prepare teachers before arrival. Additionally, the human resource department collaborated with principals regarding employment-related matters, and the inclusion of the Thai and Chinese directors resulted in a new focus on equity matters, especially for the host country teachers. As an organization, TCIS should more deliberately focus on the pillar practices of adult learning and review its teacher leadership structure, professional development processes, and teacher timetables to implement a mentor teacher component of the teacher induction program (Drago-Severson & Blum-Destefano, 2018; Knowles, 1980). The school could provide professional learning and teacher leadership opportunities by establishing a working relationship with a local public school whereby international teachers collaborate with host country teachers. The school should update job descriptions to include the principal's responsibility in the hiring and induction of teachers new to TCIS and the professional learning of all teachers. A critical first step is to institutionalize expectations as both administrators and teachers move frequently. Thus, having a guide to teacher induction might be useful to transfer these induction models to other schools. Finally, the school should implement a structured feedback component so that the program is continually reviewed for improvement.

International schools should collaborate with other schools in the region to develop mentor guidelines for international teachers and learning modules that incorporate opportunities for Western teachers to deepen their understanding of Eastern cultures (Li, 2012).

“[I]nternational schools should be models of multilingual and multicultural understandings (Carder & Merlin, 2018, p. 226). Also, the East Asia Regional Council of Schools (EARCOS) and the International Schools Association of Thailand (ISAT) should consider adopting policy statements about the importance of mentor support for teachers new to international schools and the significance of an understanding of Eastern cultures through a Western perspective. Utilizing the EARCOS or ISAT network, both mentor guidelines and Eastern culture learning modules could be produced through a collaborative approach and adapted to the unique local context of any international school. Through the refinement of school policy on teacher induction and a collaborative regional approach, international teacher induction programs could be improved to better prepare teachers for international teaching assignments.

## **Research**

The PAR consisted of three 14-week cycles of inquiry at one international school in Southeast Asia and relied on the insights and understanding of teachers through multiple interactions, meetings, feedback, and analysis of qualitative evidence. Through these interactions, the CPR team relied on input directly from teachers to target the supports they requested. Established based on the community learning exchange theory of change (RASPPA), the PAR project resulted in deepened **Relationships**, relied on the **Assets** (see Figure 2), incorporated personal **Stories**, co-constructed a safe **Place** for supports, acknowledged the **Politic** of the school and led to **Action** as evidenced in the re-imagined teacher induction program (Guajardo et al., 2016). This adds to the improvement sciences framework of Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles of inquiry in important ways: focusing on relationships, examining the issue from an asset point of view, incorporating stories, and providing a place of belonging. Then and only then can a researcher or in this case a team of co-researchers start to plan and

implement in more meaningful ways (Bryk et al., 2015). The research process is action and activist research because the goal is relationships that “respond to place-based problems through processes of collective learning and community capacity building” (Hunter et al., 2013, p. 26). We recognized that our work was place-based, and that context mattered; we also recognized that our work was political in a way that included a philosophical and moral imperative about humanizing the work of change with others (Freire, 1970).

At TCIS, we could engage in a further investigation about the impact of different cultural backgrounds and the needed supports for teacher readiness. An additional aspect to consider could be teacher retention and overall satisfaction, which would necessitate a multiple-year analysis. Beyond TCIS, additional, longer-term studies in other international contexts might include an investigation into the specific supports needed according to the career stage of the teacher (Fessler, 1985) and the connection, if any, between Moir’s (2009) phases of new teacher feelings during their first year and the emotional needs of teachers new to an international teaching assignment. Finally, we should develop a teacher induction field book based on the three-phased model for use with all teachers new to a teaching assignment.

### **Leadership Development**

Through the PAR, I identified opportunities for personal growth in leadership and my practice as an administrator in the areas of mentoring prospective leaders, advocating for equity for all teachers, and co-creating institutional processes. As the high school principal, I had the opportunity to engage students, parents, teachers, and administrators. As a researcher, I was privileged to work closely with the Directors of the Thai and Chinese Departments, which allowed me to better understand the individual and collective voice of these two integral groups of the TCIS team. Also, I deepened my understanding of Eastern culture. Through the PAR, I

embraced the opportunity to work with these individuals and encouraged them to use their positions of influence to amplify the needs of their respective areas of responsibility.

### **Mentoring Prospective Leaders**

I realized that leadership development extends beyond adults; my role in fostering leadership opportunities for students is directly linked to my relationships with them as well as the modeling of new processes I conduct with teachers. For example, I observed the student council leadership team emulate many of the processes I used with the student body to facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and establish relationships. In a Zoom conversation with the student council leadership team and the teacher advisor during the summer, I shared about the buddy teacher concept initiated as part of the PAR. During the next conversation, I learned about the student council's plan to establish a similar program for the incoming ninth-graders to help them adjust to high school. During the September Student Council Planning seminar, I witnessed the council develop the plan for the freshmen orientation that included activities throughout the school year, another instance of others in the school adapting what we modeled with incoming teachers (T. English, reflective memo, September 7, 2020).

I believe in the importance of supporting leadership development from within the organization; through the PAR I worked as a mentor to our curriculum coordinator, who aspires to become a principal. In his role as the curriculum coordinator and CPR member, he participated in many of the PAR Cycle Two and Three teacher induction meetings. We held planning meetings to co-create the activities based on an online delivery platform necessitated by the pandemic. Also, his involvement in the teacher induction meetings evolved into specialized instructional meetings with the 2020-21 new teachers as part of the new induction program.

### ***Collaborative Leadership***

I modeled a collaborative approach to leadership and documented these activities throughout the PAR. Before the PAR, there were five distinct silos within the TCIS organization: the three divisions—high, middle, and elementary schools—and the Thai and Chinese departments. As a team of leaders, our relationships between and among each other strengthened, which served to unite the entire school. Our internal motto became, “one school.” Leading during the time of COVID allowed me the opportunity to draw upon my experiences and rely on the collective wisdom of the members of the leadership team to continue our work with the new teachers.

At the onset of the pandemic, I was designated as the administrator in charge of the district while the Head of Schools traveled to the United States to recruit new teachers. I began communicating with the leadership team about concerns for teacher and student safety. A series of emails, Zoom meetings, and a face-to-face meeting led to the conclusion that our school would close. No other school took this action at the time, but we now see from immediate and long-term feedback from parents and teachers that it was the right decision for our community. According to the Head of Schools, parents expressed immediate appreciation because they perceived our decisive action as putting the safety of their children first (T. English, reflective memo, August 4, 2020). The pandemic created challenges for the PAR because it caused me to quickly initiate new or altered activities to engage the participants and underscored the CLE axiom that learning and leading are dynamic social practices.

### ***Relationships and Communication***

Developing leadership in others requires relationships and communication. In the area of communication, COVID-19 served as a springboard for internal communications

schoolwide and helped to establish a new standard that teachers and parents now expect—being informed regularly about the school’s proactive plan and our response to safety matters. Through increased and improved communications, we minimized anxiety even though the decisions that were communicated were not universally applauded. In a break from past practice, we arrived at our decisions after the collaborative efforts of the three principals and two directors.

The approach I took was to engage in conversations and collaborating as a team of leaders (principals) to generate target-specific communications with the hope that all issues were proactively addressed and adequately explained. While time-consuming, the result was increased cohesion and cooperation amongst the leadership team. Also, parents, teachers, and board members expressed appreciation for the direct and clear decision-making and communication. We communicated with teachers through numerous staff meetings via Zoom and provided a venue to collaborate on a redesigned, on-line learning plan.

### **Equity Advocacy**

I documented evidence of advocating for equity during PAR Cycles One and Three. During PAR Cycle Three, I advocated on behalf of 14 new teachers who were struggling to secure the necessary paperwork to leave the US and enter Thailand. The majority of my work involved communicating on behalf of the school business office with the new teachers on their behalf. As the business office provided information to share about the costs covered by the school, I soon understood the school did not factor in the added expenses due to the pandemic such as increased flight costs, mandated Alternative State Quarantine hotel stays, and additional medical tests. In short, the school was operating on the understanding that all added expenses were born solely by the new teacher. I conferred with the Head of Schools and negotiated

reimbursement for the added expenses. The process lasted throughout most of PAR Cycle Three and was documented in the Zoom meeting transcripts and personal correspondence.

### **Process-Driven Change**

Through the PAR, we implemented processes that helped school leaders gradually facilitate change and served to establish practices that continue regardless of the people involved. We integrated leadership development and equity advocacy into the weekly senior administrative meetings by including host country staff and the inclusion of the curriculum coordinator. As of the 2020-21 school year, both directors, the curriculum coordinator, and the business manager are active participants, which is different from the principal-only meetings of the past. Increased collaboration between the principals and directors resulted in sharing and deep dialogue about what works in supporting teachers and improved coordination of professional learning opportunities. As a result of the PAR, we developed enhanced professional relationships between the administrative team and all members of the CPR. Also, the close working relationship made professional learning central to the CPR as evidenced by conversations about providing time for teachers to meet, plan, and collaborate about student learning.

Organizationally, I implemented processes to foster collaboration and opportunities to build relationships and align professional learning for all teachers through the PAR. As a result, I took risks to model new processes that encouraged dialogue and to provide opportunities for teachers to co-create solutions to our identified needs. An example was a design thinking activity I facilitated with teachers in which I asked them to design the ideal high school staff meeting. The process fostered collaboration, relied on relationships, and served to amplify the individual and collective voice of teachers. As a result, high school staff meetings focus on teacher engagement rather than the distribution of information. I will continue to lead by providing

leadership opportunities, advocating for equity for all, and implementing processes that increase the likelihood that needed changes will last.

### **Zig Zag Leadership Growth and the ECU EdD Framework**

My learning as a leader through this process resembled a “sailboat tacking into the wind” (Bateson, 1994, p. 82). I discovered my learning came from experiences and interactions with other people rather than a curriculum. Through the ECU EdD journey, I both realized and acknowledged the privileges I enjoy simply because of the color of my skin and my nationality. I crossed several boundaries, some obvious ones like moving to Thailand and others not so obvious. Residing in Asia and working with such a wonderfully diverse, multicultural group of educators during this PAR was the wind in my sails that propelled my crossing the cultural boundary between the East and the West. The more I interacted with my peers from the Eastern culture, I realized the narrowness in my vision. I was raised by loving parents in a homogeneous community, but my experiences with diverse cultures were limited to texts and other media sources. I believe the best way to settle into a new culture is to embrace and seek to understand it. Fundamentally, I re-learned what I already knew, but in a more meaningful way: relationships with people who come from different backgrounds, cultures, religions, and ethnicities are the best curriculum.

I realized my role as a leader was to learn from others and to advocate for the under-represented groups at my school. The first step for me was to acknowledge there were matters of equity that need to be addressed. At many international schools, there are disparities between the host country and Western teachers. Within my sphere of influence, I tacked into the wind and, because of the relationships I developed, engaged in personal conversations with individuals from under-represented groups about the disparities. In time, certain members felt empowered

and expressed hope that previously did not exist. I learned that helping others advocate for themselves is a way to bring about gradual, incremental change in the culture of the school.

I designed the PAR to interact with teachers new to TCIS and the school principals because they were closest to the issue and therefore best equipped to co-create a teacher induction program. The cycles of inquiry enabled me to deepen my understanding about more than the original goal of implementing a new teacher induction program. They represent, as Bateson (1994) eloquently states, “repeated new beginnings and new learning” (p. 82) that relied on people to identify and solve their issues. I came to Asia with the belief that I was a citizen of the greatest country in the world. Now, I no longer rank countries because I learned to see with a broader cultural vision.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout this study, I attempted to see the world through the eyes of others. In my pursuit of creating a teacher induction program, I met people from all over the world. My ECU cohort members and professors influenced my thinking and provided enormous support. In interacting with teachers from Spain, South Africa, South Korea, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Ireland, Great Britain, Canada, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC), and from the United States of America, I learned about their cultures and backgrounds; the learning fueled my desired to understand their world from their perspectives. In *Peripheral Visions*, Bateson (1994) asks, “What would it be like to have not only color vision but culture vision, the ability to see the multiple worlds of others?” (p. 52). These experiences and friendships changed my life and deepened my understanding of other cultures and belief systems. If there is a surprise nugget from my study, it is the renewed passion I have for understanding other cultures and the realization that I have much to learn.

The new teachers who participated in this study inspired me to keep going even when things did not go as planned. I learned flexibility and new ways of working and doing. Their input and feedback were instrumental to our work. I worked with five brilliant individuals, the CPR team who carried out this work alongside me and gave me support and encouragement along my journey. I believe having two of the CPR members from Asia added clarity to my cultural vision. Ms. Kaewmark and Mr. Hseih taught me much about the Thai and Chinese culture in addition to their valuable insights about working with our teachers. I found myself asking how teachers would do something in their country rather than start from the U.S.-centric perspective.

Together, we constructed a teacher induction program that utilized regular communication to boost teacher readiness and feelings of belonging. The outcomes necessitate the active participation of the principals and should begin as soon as teachers are hired. Because we included host country staff, teachers were more familiar with the school and host country culture. The PAR project and study demonstrated what we can learn from full cultural inclusion—including the Thai and Chinese teachers and directors who became a stronger part of the school as a whole and solidified our adult learning community in ways that I hope will outlast my tenure at the school. As I let go of learned ways of being a leader and practiced new dance steps, I experienced the value of what Nachmanovitch (1990) says in *Free Play*: “Education must teach, reach, and vibrate the whole person rather than merely transfer knowledge” (p. 177). I see life, as the song says, from both sides now and I “hold these two ways of doing, seeing, and being in [my] two hands; [I] make and sense with both of them” (p. 178). I now see the deep value of a term I have used often—multiculturalism—in its wholeness. My work is to prepare teachers for the joy of learning in a new culture with students from different

cultures and emulating what Freire (1970) says we must do—be teachers and students always simultaneously and fully.

To summarize, when this PAR project started, I wanted to address teacher retention through a meaningful induction program. I soon understood the nature of an international school and shifted to developing a program to prepare teachers to hit the ground running. As the cycles progressed, I realized that “learning to transfer experience from one cycle to the next, we only progress like a sailboat tacking into the wind” (Bateson, 1994, p. 82). I continued to learn and developed a flexible approach to navigate the journey. I planned, implemented, reflected, and grew through this process that was rooted in the “power of place and the wisdom of people” (Guajardo et al., 2016, p. 3). During three cycles of PAR research, we interacted with new teachers to discover how to best support them as they transitioned to an international school. We learned that including host country teachers in the induction program served to deepen our understanding of Eastern cultures and therefore assisted teachers as they established relational trust with students. By including host country teachers, we observed strengthening of their position in the organization and changed to a collaborative model of leadership for decision-making, which is essential to our main goal of supporting all teachers. As an agent of change, I led a team of dedicated school leaders and developed a model for international teacher induction where teacher readiness, belonging, and cultural awareness increased.

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# APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
4N-64 ΒρόδυΜεδιγολΣηενγεςΒυιδινγ • ΜολΣτοπ 682  
600 Μοψε Βουλεπιδ • Γ ρενπλε, NX 27834  
Οφφχ 252-744-2914 • Φωξ 252-744-2284 •  
[www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

□

## Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB  
To: [Thomas English](#)  
CC: [Matthew Militello](#)  
Date: 8/8/2019  
Re: [UMCIRB 19-001608](#)  
Fostering a Community of Professional Learning through Teacher Induction

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) occurred on 8/7/2019. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 6&7. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a Final Report application to the UMCIRB prior to the Expected End Date provided in the IRB application. If the study is not completed by this date, an Amendment will need to be submitted to extend the Expected End Date. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Appendix C IRB TCIS InformedConsentAdult.doc	Consent Forms
Dissertation Proposal_Thomas English	Additional Items
Focus Group Protocol	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions
Fostering a Community of Professional Learning through Teacher Induction dissertation proposal	Study Protocol or Grant Application
Observation Protocol	Interview/Focus Group Scripts/Questions

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

## APPENDIX B: SCHOOL LETTER OF SUPPORT



THAI-CHINESE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

101/177 Moo 7 Soi Mooban Bangpleenives,  
Prasertsin Road, Bangplee Yai,  
Samutprakarn 10540 Thailand

+66 2 751-1201 info@tcis.ac.th

July 18, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS) recognizes the benefits of participating in relevant, well-designed research studies proposed by qualified individuals. Approval for conducting such studies is based primarily on the extent to which substantial benefits can be shown for the TCIS and its mission of educating students. The purpose of this letter is to notify you of the **approval** for Thomas A. English to conduct his dissertation study titled, "Building community through new teacher orientation" with participants in our school. We also give permission to utilize space at the TCIS to collect data and conduct interviews for his dissertation project.

The project meets all of our district guidelines, procedures, and safeguards for conducting research on our campus. Moreover, there is ample space for Mr. English to conduct his study and his project will not interfere with any functions of the TCIS. Finally, the following conditions must be met, as agreed upon by the researchers and the TCIS:

- Participant data only includes information captured from the state data collection strategies.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Participants can choose to leave the study without penalty at any time.
- Any issues with participation in the study are reported to the school administration in a timely manner.
- An executive summary of your findings is shared with the school administration once the study is complete.

In addition to these conditions, the study must follow all of the East Carolina University IRB guidelines.

We are excited to support this important work.

Respectfully,

Dr. John McGrath

## APPENDIX C: CITI PROGRAM TRAINING CERTIFICATION



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## APPENDIX D: ADULT CONSENT FORM

Study ID:UMCIRB 19-001608 Date Approved: 8/7/2019 Does Not Expire.

*Title of Study: Building community through new teacher orientation*



### **Informed Consent to Participate in Research** Information to consider before taking part in research that has no more than minimal risk.

Title of Research Study: Building community through new teacher orientation  
Principal Investigator: Thomas A. English  
Institution, Department or Division: East Carolina University, Department of Educational Leadership  
Address: 101/177 Moo 7 Soi Mooban Bangpleenives, Prasertsin Road, Bangplee Yai, Samutprakam 10540  
Thailand  
Telephone #: +66-091-742-1428  
Study Coordinator: Dr. Matthew Militello  
Telephone #: 252-328-6131

---

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU) study issues related to society, health problems, environmental problems, behavior problems and the human condition. To do this, we need the help of volunteers who are willing to take part in research.

#### **Why am I being invited to take part in this research?**

The purpose of this participatory action research (PAR) project is to inform the construction of a new teacher orientation program that facilitates the co-creation of a dynamic, learner-centered community where students from the East are prepared to accomplish their goal to study at any of the world's best universities. You are being invited to take part in this research because you are a new teacher at TCIS. The decision to take part in this research is yours to make. By doing this research, we hope to learn to how a school can create and implement a teacher induction program that promotes equity among a diverse international setting for new and experienced teachers.

If you volunteer to take part in this research, you will be one of about thirty people to do so.

#### **Are there reasons I should not take part in this research?**

There are no known reasons for why you should not participate in this research study.

#### **What other choices do I have if I do not take part in this research?**

You can choose not to participate.

#### **Where is the research going to take place and how long will it last?**

The research will be conducted at the Thai-Chinese International School (TCIS), Bangkok, Thailand. You will need to come to the high school, room 3-43, approximately ten times during the study. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is approximately ten hours over the next eighteen months.

*Title of Study: Building community through new teacher orientation*

**What will I be asked to do?**

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to participate in an interview and/or an observation during or after new teacher orientation activities. The interviews or observation may be recorded in addition to handwritten notes by the research team members. All of the interview questions will focus on your orientation experience to improve the new teacher orientation program at TCIS.

**What might I experience if I take part in the research?**

We don't know of any risks (the chance of harm) associated with this research. Any risks that may occur with this research are no more than what you would experience in everyday life. We don't know if you will benefit from taking part in this study. There may not be any personal benefit to you, but the information gained by doing this research may help others in the future.

**Will I be paid for taking part in this research?**

We will not be able to pay you for the time you volunteer while being in this study

**Will it cost me to take part in this research?**

It will not cost you any money to be part of the research.

**Who will know that I took part in this research and learn personal information about me?**

ECU and the people and organizations listed below may know that you took part in this research and may see information about you that is normally kept private. With your permission, these people may use your private information to do this research:

- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates human research. This includes the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the North Carolina Department of Health, and the Office for Human Research Protections.
- The University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board (UMCIRB) and its staff have responsibility for overseeing your welfare during this research and may need to see research records that identify you.

**How will you keep the information you collect about me secure? How long will you keep it?**

The information in the study will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data collection and data analysis process. Consent forms and data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups will be maintained in a secure, locked location and will be stored for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

**What if I decide I don't want to continue in this research?**

You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You will not lose any benefits that you normally receive.



## APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

### Building community through new teacher orientation

#### Introduction

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to meet with me today. I appreciate your willingness to participate in this focus group interview and will limit the time to one hour.

My name is Thomas A. English. I will serve as the moderator for the interview with assistance from Dr. Michael Purser who will record notes. I am conducting research as a graduate student at East Carolina University. The interview is part of a study to learn about the experiences of the new teachers at TCIS and how their experiences can help co-construct a new teacher induction program.

The purpose of this participatory action research project is to build a community of professional learners and increase teacher retention through the implementation of a teacher induction program to address the orientation, support and professional growth of new teachers.

Disclosures:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary. It is your decision whether or not to participate and you may elect to stop participating in the interview at any time.
- The interview will be digitally recorded in order to capture a comprehensive record of our conversation. All information collected will be kept confidential. Any information collected during the session that may identify any participant will only be disclosed with your prior permission. A coding system will be used in the management and analysis of the focus group data with no names or school identifiers associated with any of the recorded discussion.
- The interview will be conducted using a semi-structured and informal format. Several questions will be asked about both the individual knowledge and skills gained and the organization practices used. It is our hope that everyone will contribute to the conversation.
- The interview will last approximately one hour.

#### Interview Questions

**TURN RECORDER ON AND STATE THE FOLLOWING:**

**“This is Thomas A. English, interviewing Thai-Chinese International School on *(Date)* for Building community through new teacher orientation Study.”**

Focus Group:

To begin the conversation, please introduce yourself. Start with first person to the right and continue left till all participants have introduced themselves.

**First series of questions (mid-July 2019, 2020):**

Question #1 – Please describe how you are feeling at this time about your new role as a teacher at TCIS.

Question #2 – What do you hope to gain from the new teacher orientation experience?

Question #3 – Please share a brief summary of your educational experience such as your years in teaching, number of years teaching in your home country as well as the number of years in an international setting and any college degree(s) you have.

**Second series of questions (early August 2019, 2020):**

Question #1 – Please share how you are feeling at this time about your role as a teacher at TCIS.

Question #2 – Please explain how the new teacher orientation program can be improved?

Questions #3 – Please share what you believe was beneficial about the new teacher orientation program?

**Third series of questions (late October 2020):**

Question #1 – Please share how you are feeling at this time about your role as a teacher at TCIS.

Question #2 – What do you need to fulfill your teaching responsibilities? What would you like?

Question #3 – Please describe what you consider to be the best way(s) to support new teachers joining the TCIS team.

## APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Building community through new teacher orientation

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Observation Notes

Date	
Thai-Chinese International School	
Time	
Observation (Exchange or Meeting) [CODE]	

Demographics	
Context of Setting	

Time	Selective Verbatim Notes of Observation	Annotations and Codes

## APPENDIX G: INTERNATIONAL TEACHER INDUCTION MODELS

### *Structural Components of Effective International Teacher Induction Models*

Country	Researchers	Structural components	Summary
Switzerland	Britton et al., 2000; Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Pain & Schwille, 2010; Wong et al., 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Starts preservice</li> <li>2. Collaborative</li> <li>3. Peer support</li> <li>4. Self-reflection</li> <li>5. Coursework</li> </ol>	The whole person is considered, not just the teacher. A professional team of educators is responsible for the activities of the induction process.
China	Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fulton et al., 2005; Pain & Schwille, 2010; Wong et al., 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collaborative</li> <li>2. Competitive</li> <li>3. Professional and personal support</li> </ol>	Reflective practices join new and experienced teachers in the analysis of lessons. Discussions of teaching techniques based on lesson observations and competitions are used to motivate teachers and archive model lessons for future learning. Teaching is a community endeavor.
New Zealand	Britton et al., 2003; Howe, 2006; Langdon, 2011; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Pain & Schwille, 2010; Wong et al., 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peer Support</li> <li>2. Reduced teaching load</li> <li>3. Documentation of support and growth</li> </ol>	Support is provided by multiple people at the school site and usually includes the administrator, department heads, and other teachers, similar to the facilitated peer support approach utilized by the Swiss.
France	Britton et al., 2003; Fulton et al., 2005; Pain & Schwille, 2010; Wong et al., 2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Competitive exam</li> <li>2. Mentor</li> <li>3. Peer observations</li> </ol>	New teachers observe other new teachers' instruction and attend classes at teacher education centers where they work with an experienced teacher. All new teachers must submit a written memoir to document work relating to teaching or academics.

*Structural Components of Effective International Teacher Induction Models, cont.*

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Country	Researchers	Structural components	Summary
Japan	Fulton et al., 2005; Howe, 2006; Moskowitz & Stephens, 1997; Pain & Schwille, 2010; Wong et al., 2005)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Reduced teaching load</li><li>2. Guiding teacher</li><li>3. Study teaching lessons</li><li>4. Action research</li></ol>	New teachers are partnered with a guiding teacher and participate in a study teaching lesson, which is observed by the principal, guiding teacher and other teachers. The lesson is criticized, not the teacher. Teaching is a public activity, so it is common for teachers to observe other teachers and engage in dialogue about the lesson.

## APPENDIX H: 2018 TEACHER COHORT

I provide this list of teachers because my work with this group and the feedback provided during the summer of 2018 is largely responsible for my continued interest and passion to develop the appropriate supports for teachers as they join the TCIS. Their individual and collective voice inspired me to improve my leadership, build strong relationships, enhance communication, and empower others to grow, learn, and lead.

### *2018-19 Teacher Cohort*

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<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Experience</b>	<b>Education</b>
Colleen Johnson	Grade 5 Math	17 years	US
Dean Geggie	High School English	25 years	Canada
Samantha Burrows	Athletic Director	14 years	Canada
Ted Persinger	High School English	9 years	US
Shaun LeConte	High School Math	8 years	Canada
Sean Allen	Middle School English	2 years	US
Andrew Brenzel	Grade 3	1 year	US
Deirdre Leonard	High School Math	14 years	US
Emma Osborn	Grade 2	2 years	US
Paul Davis	High School English	3 years	US
Kathy Johnson	Pre-Kindergarten	10 years	US
Elizabeth Richards	Grade 4	22 years	US

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## **APPENDIX I: PAR CYCLE ONE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

The CPR team developed the following five questions for the first focus group:

1. Please describe how you are feeling about your new role as a teacher at TCIS.
2. Coming into the New Teacher Orientation, what were you hoping to get out of the New Teacher Orientation program?
3. To what extent were your hopes for new teacher orientation met?
4. What recommendations do you have to improve new teacher orientation?
5. How can we best support you as you begin your teaching responsibilities at the TCIS?

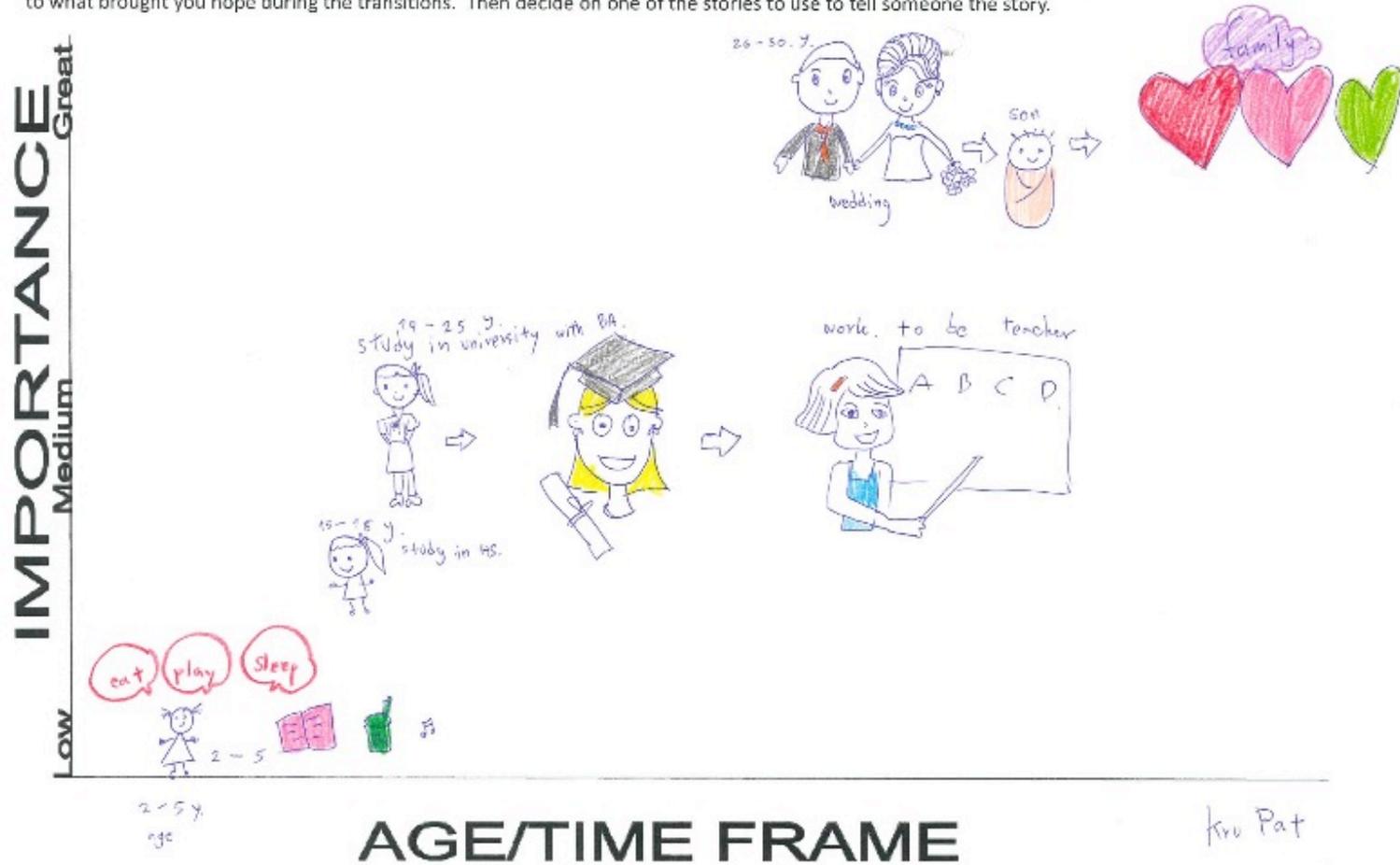
Three months into the school year, new teachers shared their experiences at the TCIS in a second focus group. Responses were noted in these four areas:

1. Please share how you are feeling at this time about your role as a teacher at the TCIS.
2. Please explain how the new teacher orientation program can be improved and what supports would help you now.
3. Looking back, what were the most beneficial parts of the new teacher orientation program?
4. Feel free to share anything you feel would help improve your experience here at TCIS.

## APPENDIX J: JOURNEY LINE OF TRANSITIONS

### Journey Line of Transitions (July 25, 2019)

Think about times in your life you experienced transitions...from your earliest moments as a child...to the times of transition throughout college as well as in your professional/career path. Chart as many experiences as you are able that are of medium importance or great importance in regard to what brought you hope during the transitions. Then decide on one of the stories to use to tell someone the story.



## APPENDIX K: PAR CYCLE TWO SUMMARY OF CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS

### PAR Cycle Two Summary of Codes and Descriptions

Abbreviation	Code	Sub Code	Tally
BaB	Bonding - all teachers	Buddy/Friendship	47
BnB	Bonding - new teachers	Buddy/Friendship	13
BaF	Bonding - all teachers	Food/Games/Fun	83
PE	Personal support:	Settling-in: trips/experiences (cultural)	17
PL	Personal support	Settling-in: lodging/phones/banking	61
Pr-tech	Professional support	Technology assistance	63
PrC	Professional support	learning opportunities - (individual choice)	168
PrE	Professional settling in	Classroom Expectations	52
PrM	Professional settling in	mentoring, communication of expectations	102
PrP	Professional settling in	Classroom Preparation	33
PrSE	Professional settling in	Communication of school expectations	144
PrSM	Professional settling in	mentoring, school expectations	41

**APPENDIX L: PAR CYCLE TWO: COUNT OF CODES BY CATEGORY AND THEME**

PAR Cycle Two: Count of Codes by Category and Theme

Theme	Category	6 Jan	16 Jan	4 Feb	8 Feb	14 Feb	17 Feb	30 Mar	Grand Total
Communication	Expectations	0	0	0	1	0	0	29	30 (15%)
Communication	Preparation	36	0	3	10	7	8	100	164 (85%)
Communication	Totals	36	0	3	11	7	8	129	194 (26%)
Relationships	Bonding	8	1	6	10	7	0	101	133 (57%)
Relationships	Experiences	0	12	4	4	0	5	15	40 (17%)
Relationships	Lodging	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	54 (23%)
Relationships	Mentor	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	7 (3%)
Relationships	Totals	8	13	10	14	8	11	170	234 (32%)
Adult Learning	Choice	20	5	11	3	3	0	41	83 (27%)
Adult Learning	Expectations	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	8 (3%)
Adult Learning	Experiences	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	7 (2%)
Adult Learning	Mentor	72	8	0	7	1	0	37	125 (40%)
Adult Learning	Preparation	21	2	1	0	0	2	0	26 (8%)
Adult Learning	Technology	4	0	9	0	0	3	47	63 (20%)

PAR Cycle Two: Count of Codes by Category and Theme

Theme	Category	6 Jan	16 Jan	4 Feb	8 Feb	14 Feb	17 Feb	30 Mar	Grand Total
Adult Learning Totals		128	16	21	13	4	5	125	312 (42%)
Grand Totals		172	29	34	38	19	24	424	740

## APPENDIX M: TCIS NEW TEACHER BUDDY PROGRAM

Adapted from the Chiang Mai International School (Chiang Mai, Thailand)



### TCIS New Teacher Buddy Program-March 5, 2020

The new TCIS Buddy Program is designed to help new teachers settle into Bangkok and TCIS. Participants are partnered with new hire teachers and act as a guide to all things Bangkok. You can answer questions the new teachers have about where to live, eat, shop, or any other question they have about their upcoming move to Thailand. Participants will be asked to provide support from the hire date to the first few weeks upon arrival to TCIS. The primary function of a Buddy is to give advice and support, to be their boots on the ground, and help to ensure their relocation is smooth and friendly.

You do not need to answer curriculum questions or anything pertaining to TCIS, you can forward their questions to the administrator.

#### How it works:

1. Email Tom your interest in becoming a “Buddy”.
2. You will then be paired with a new hire and Tom will send you an email with their contact information.
3. Make contact with your new “Buddy” as soon as you receive their contact info to introduce yourself and offer your one of a kind service.
4. Maintain regular contact and help answer or direct the new hire to people in the community who can help.

#### List of Duties:

- Make contact via email as needed
- Be positive & friendly
- Answer any question you feel comfortable or confident in answering - send all other questions or issues to a principal
- Help your new Buddy feel welcomed

**APPENDIX N: NEW TEACHER ATTITUDES/EMOTIONS PRE AND POST**

*PAR Cycles One and Two*

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Name	July 26, 2019	November 18, 2019	January 16, 2020
Alexander Fettner	Excited	Stressed	Happy/Content
Erin Fettner	Excited and happy	Happy	Settled
Brittany Elstroth	Confident and happy	Overwhelmed and exhausted	Positive
David Stillman	Anxious	Happy but exhausted	Comfortable
Gregory Wathy	Confident	Content	At ease
Juanita Wilson	Comfortable	Tired	Comfortable
Tanya Sepela	Comfortable	Overwhelmed	N/A
Frankie Lu	Excited and nervous	Normalizing	Busy
Winna Cheng	Nervous	Improving	Happy ½ the time; Nervous due to low English skills
Wansida Kumrit (Nongsong)	Excited	Stressed	Happy
Vitchuda Kalapoch (Pat)	Happy	Happy	Good

---

## APPENDIX O: DESIGN THINKING PROTOCOL

# Design Thinking: Teacher Induction Program

The overarching research question guiding my study is:

**To what extent can school leaders create and implement a teacher induction process that promotes relational trust and effective support for a diverse international group of new teachers?**

Additional sub-questions of the participatory action research (PAR) are:

1. **Community.** To what extent can the implementation of a teacher induction program engender relational trust between school leaders and new teachers?
2. **Professional Development.** To what extent can an effective teacher induction program use processes that fully support the professional and personal lives on new teachers at an international school?

---

Activity adapted from: Nash, J. B. (2019). *Design thinking in schools: A leader's guide to collaborating for improvement.*





The task:

**Design a two-year,  
teacher induction program for the  
Thai-Chinese International School**



2

## Design the **IDEAL**, two-year, teacher induction program for TCIS

### 1) Create an outline of what the TCIS induction program should consist of...

(what do you think should be accomplished? Year 1? Year 2?)

What is the best way to utilize the five summer orientation days this July for new teachers?

What is the best way to utilize the four or five days for all teachers prior to the start of school?

What supports do you think should be incorporated throughout the 20-21 school year? The 21-22 school year?

10 minutes

3



**That was a  
Problem Solving  
approach to Innovation.**

**Let's try a  
Design Thinking  
approach to Innovation...**



**Your Mission:** Design a **USEFUL** and **MEANINGFUL** two-year Teacher Induction Program for teachers at the TCIS. Start by **GAINING EMPATHY**:

**1) Interview a partner**

**2) Switch**

Ask your partner about their ideal teacher induction program. Ask questions: What was most beneficial in the program? What are the things you didn't get that you needed? What do you wish would have been provided? When?

Notes/Sketches: #1 (5 minutes)

Notes/Sketches: #2 (5 minutes)

<b>INSIGHTS:</b>	<b>INSIGHTS:</b>
1 minute per person	1 minute per person

5



## Reframe the problem. (Group)

### 3 Capture findings (3 minutes)

Needs: Things we are trying to do (use verbs)

Insights: New learnings from the interviews to leverage in your design  
(make inferences from what you heard)

### 4 Define (problem) FOCUS statement (3 minutes)

Need a Teacher Induction Program that:

In a way that fulfills the needs of the teachers by:

6



**Ideate: generate alternatives to test. (Individual)**

**5 Create 3 to 5 outlines that meet your users' needs.** Objective-outcome; Activities: Scope with timeline (5 minutes)

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**6 Share your solutions & capture feedback. (Pairs)** (6 minutes - two sessions x 3 minutes each)

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## Iterate based on feedback. (Individual)

### 7 Reflect & generate a new solution. (5 minutes)

Create your big, two-year Teacher Induction Program idea, note details if necessary! Feel free to sketch your idea and upload a pic into this box.

8



## Build & Test. (Groups of four)

## (Large Group)

**8 Build your solution.** (5 to 15 minutes)

**9 Share your solution and get feedback.** (5 minutes)

Construct a <b>two-year Teacher Induction Program</b> together!	What worked?	△ What could be improved?
	? Questions...	! Ideas...
Small to Large Group 5 min - 5 min	Large Group	

9



## Be MINDFUL of your innovation process: REFLECT

### REFLECT on your design thinking process:

1. Was your final design the same or different than your ideal design?
2. Where did you get stuck?
3. When did you get your a'ha's?
4. How did EMPATHY contribute to your design?
5. How did PROTOTYPING alternatives contribute to your overall design?
6. How did FEEDBACK contribute to your design?
7. How would you improve your process?

*How will this work transfer into your practice?*

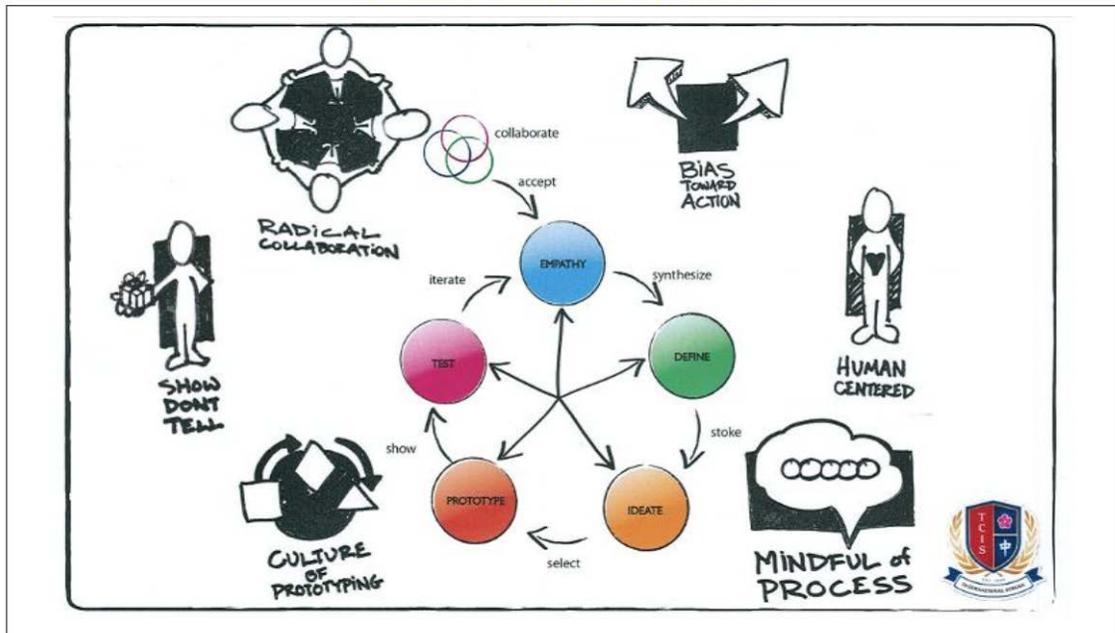
*Process and knowledge?*

**How will you share this?**

10



## DESIGN IS A PROCESS:



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## **APPENDIX P: JUNE 2020 NEW TEACHER FEEDBACK QUESTIONS**

- A. Communication: Communication was consistent, detailed, highly focused, and provided updated information.
- B. Community Building: A strong sense of community was built between new hires and existing administration, staff, and the human resource team.
- C. Curriculum: Access to curriculum documentation and resources was provided, the curriculum was explained, and I feel prepared to begin teaching.
- D. Direct Human Resource Support: Communication from the human resources department was timely, consistent, actionable, and always provided clear guidance in the visa and documentation process.
- E. New Crew Zoom Meetings: The New Crew Meetings were well organized, provided a good overview of life at TCIS, assisted in settling any concerns, provided resources to assist in moving to Thailand, were timed as conveniently as possible given the global time differences, provided access to relevant information, kept within time limits, and offered opportunities to share.
- F. Support: The TCIS orientation process and human resource department provided me with a feeling of being supported, especially during this challenging time.
- G. Overall: I am pleased with the TCIS orientation process.

