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The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First-Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo Elicitation Study

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THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF TEACHING IN A HIGH POVERTY SCHOOL ON FIRST-YEAR, EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA: A PHOTO ELICITATION STUDY

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Curriculum and Instruction

by
Kimberly O. Jedlicka
December 2014

Accepted by:
Dr. Dolores Stegelin, Committee Chair
Dr. Susan Limber
Dr. Jonda McNair
Dr. Cassie Quigley
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to understand the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina. The research also explored the extent to which these emotions either empowered or constrained the teachers in their work. The study used photo-elicitation with interviews to generate data. Participants in this study took photographs that represented emotional experiences, wrote captions and discussed their images in an interview session. The data analysis focused on honoring the participants’ voices and included first and second cycle coding strategies. In Vivo coding and Emotion coding were used during first cycle coding. Axial coding was used during the second cycle of coding.

The findings of the study revealed five major themes. Theme # 1: The Responsibility for Child Well-being indicated that the teachers were often sad, worried and concerned about the well-being of their students, and felt an overwhelming need to meet the students’ basic needs for food, clothing, personal hygiene and school supplies. The second theme, Realization of Sociocultural Differences revealed that teachers grappled with the differences in their backgrounds and upbringings versus the backgrounds and upbringings of the students. As the teachers reflected upon their first-year experiences, they helped the researcher discover three important pathways. The three pathways included: Pathway #1: Connections to Empowerment (Theme 3), Pathway #2: Disconnections to Constraint (Theme 4), Pathway # 3: Overcoming Obstacles- Moving from Constraint to Empowerment (Theme 5). In order to cope with
taking on many of the responsibilities for child well-being and their realizations of sociocultural differences, teachers began to look for connections that would support them in their efforts to become empowered as a teacher. As the teachers found the connections and the sources of support that they needed, they would travel along the first pathway—the one that led them from connections to empowerment. Likewise, some teachers were unable to make connections or find sources of support. As a result, they traveled along the pathway that led from disconnections to constraint. Additionally, some of the teachers who experienced disconnections used their creativity and resiliency and found ways to overcome obstacles.

Implications for further research and implications for practice were described.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father, Billy Owens who passed away on May 21, 2013. He was always my biggest fan and cheerleader! Dad- I miss you so much and I know that you will be looking down from heaven as I walk across that stage at graduation. I know that you would be so proud of me!
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Dolores Stegelin, for her encouragement, support and listening ear. I really appreciated our talks and visits at all the local restaurants and coffee shops. I would not be where I am today without all of your guidance. Thank you for all of the opportunities that you gave me to teach, write and present. Thanks also for sharing your wisdom, sharing your knowledge about early childhood teachers, and your knowledge about poverty in the schools with me. I am forever grateful to you!

Additionally, I would like to thank my wonderful committee members for your feedback and suggestions as I have drafted this dissertation. I have learned from each one of you. Dr. Susan Limber, thank you for teaching me about the study of cross-cultural child development. Dr. Jonda McNair, thank you for your suggestions about literature to include regarding multicultural education. Special thanks to Dr. Cassie Quigley for introducing me to photo-elicitation in her emerging methods class. It was a perfect fit for this study!

Special recognition goes to my husband, Jeff Jedlicka. Without his support and shoulder to cry on, I would never have made it to this point. Thank you for taking on many of my household duties and allowing me time to research and write. Thank you for constantly encouraging me so I could achieve this life goal. You are an awesome partner for me! God definitely had a plan when he brought us together. We make a great team! I love you to the moon and back!
Thank you to Amber Simpson and Rhonda Miller for collaborating with me and
serving as peer reviewers for this work. I appreciate your honesty and your willingness to
serve as critical friends during the data analysis and theme building process.

Without the wonderful induction teachers who shared their stories with me, this
study would not have been possible. Thanks for sharing the reflections of your first-year
of teaching with me. I learned so much from you.

Finally, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Without my faith,
this journey would have been impossible. “I can do all things through Christ who
strengthens me”- Philippians 4:13(New King James Version).
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

“There is no such thing as the voiceless; there are only the silenced and the deliberately misheard” (Roy, 2004). These powerful words by Arundhati Roy signify the purpose of this study in many ways. As a teacher educator and a human resource professional, it is important to make sure that we hear and understand the voices of our early childhood teachers as they enter the workforce in the rural, high poverty schools of South Carolina. Current research on induction teachers indicates that new teachers often experience feelings of loneliness and isolation (Hargreaves, 1998; Jakhelln, 2011; Portelli et al., 2010; Zembylas, 2005). The new teacher is often hesitant to ask questions, or ask for help for fear that this will reveal they don’t have a strategy in their repertoire to deal with a particular situation. Because they are afraid to ask questions, this often leads to feelings of inadequacy and incompetence. New teachers have also shared that they did not feel that those who served in the roles of administrators, researchers or theorists could help them with the real life situations that occur every day in the classroom (Bergeron 2008; Portelli et al., 2010; Zembylas, 2005).

Teaching in a high poverty school may present unique challenges. This is a topic that is not often addressed in depth within the context of teacher education, or induction programs, which becomes an added problem for induction level teachers. Teachers may feel unprepared for work in a high poverty setting, especially if they were not afforded any experiences in their pre-service programs. Teachers who have not had adequate preparation in their pre-service programs may struggle and waiver in their commitment to
teaching in a high-poverty setting, and it may even cause them to leave the field of teaching. Teacher attrition is a problem in the United States, particularly among new teachers (Ingersoll & Perda, 2011). Some studies report that between 40%-50% of new teachers leave within the first five years of their entry into the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003).

The focus of teacher education and induction programs is often more on theory, teaching standards and strategies, and classroom management rather than on the context of teaching (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Nieto, 2000; Portelli et al., 2010; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Nieto (2000) and Sleeter (2001) found more research is needed in this area about exactly what teacher educators should do that works in pre-service programs. Ten years later, researchers such as Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) are still calling for improvements in the area of preparing pre-service teachers for teaching in diverse, high-poverty schools. If we do not improve our pre-service programs, the cultural gap between teachers and children will continue to widen.

High-quality induction programs may be necessary in order to reduce the attrition rate among beginning teachers. Currently, some induction programs do include a focus on diversity, equity and social justice. There is a small body of research that is beginning to emerge with regard to these programs, which focus on the importance of context. These programs help identify the knowledge base that mentors need to help novice teachers focus on diversity and equity, identify some possible conditions that contribute to the success of the novice teacher and outline practical strategies that the novice teacher

The daily work of a teacher is not merely the delivery of content based on the teacher’s knowledge and skills. Teaching is an emotionally charged profession. Emotions are central to teaching and learning, and teaching and learning can be impacted by the teacher’s passion and enthusiasm (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003).

There is little research about emotions and the acknowledgement of the role of emotions in the field of teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2005). Emotions are not usually studied in and systematic fashion in pre-service or in-service programs for teachers (Nias, 1996). Many teachers are taught to believe that acknowledging and expressing emotions is unprofessional (Hargreaves, 1998; Hoschild, 1979; Zembylas, 2005). In the world of educational reform movements, there is an emphasis on standardized test results that measure student growth and achievement. There are many variables that ultimately impact student achievement, and one of those variables is teacher emotion. There is rarely a research focus on teacher emotions (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003) and the role that these emotions may play in instructional decisions and the development of interpersonal relationships with students; both of which may impact student achievement.

Could it be that the induction level teachers serving in these rural areas are being silenced because they are afraid to discuss the impact that poverty has on them emotionally? This study provided a way for us to learn more about the emotions of first-
year teachers in high-poverty schools when they were given a safe space to discuss and reflect upon their emotions.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to listen to and honor the voices of first-year, early childhood teachers who work in high-poverty schools in rural South Carolina. Through the use of visual methodology, specifically photo elicitation with interviews, new teachers in rural South Carolina schools were able to articulate visually and verbally, the emotional realities of working in a high-poverty school. The new teachers created a dialogue about the connections and disconnections between their teacher preparation programs and induction programs and the realities of the classroom. The findings of the study helped the researcher learn about ways to improve teacher education programs. This study gave the researcher more information about supporting these teachers through stronger, more contextualized and substantive induction and mentoring programs.

**Background of the Problem**

New teachers entering the field of early childhood are most often from white, middle-class backgrounds (Howard, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz, 2003). Approximately 90% of the teachers in the United States are white, and this reflects the pre-service pool from which these teachers were selected (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Swartz, 2003). The demographics of the students enrolling in most teacher education programs are staying the same, yet the diversity of American public schools is increasing.
Although this study is not about race, it is important to understand school demographics. Students of color are often overrepresented in high poverty schools. There has been a huge shift in the demographics in the population of the United States, and the pattern of immigration has changed. Most of the immigrants came from Europe in previous decades, but in the last decade, most of the immigrants now come from Latin America and Asia (Nieto, 2000; Orfield & Lee, 2005). From 1993 to 2003, minorities increased as a percentage of the total public school enrollment from 34% to 41%. Hispanic students had the largest increase of six percentage points (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013).

Schools have also become segregated once again (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Nieto 2000). The largest step backwards in segregation for African-American students happened between 1991 and 1995 (Nieto, 2000). Latinos are currently the most segregated group and attend some of the highest poverty schools in the nation (Nieto, 2000). Darling-Hammond (2010) found that in 2000, 40% of African–American and Latino students attended schools with a 90-100% minority enrollment. As we entered the new millennium, America was almost unchanged as to where it was 30 years ago with regard to segregation.

Similarly, Orfield and Lee (2005) found that there has been an increasing pattern in segregation for Black and Latino students since the 1980’s. The authors argue that segregation is multidimensional and is not just about being segregated by race. There is also segregation by poverty and unequal opportunity. The report by Orfield and Lee (2005) examines the rapidly changing nature of segregation of schools and students by
poverty, the ways that schools are systematically contributing to inequalities in education and the devastating racial consequences segregation by poverty has on Black and Latino students.

It is also important to understand the demographics of high-poverty schools in the South. Orfield and Lee (2005) studied the racial composition of high poverty and extreme poverty schools by region. Black and Latino students make up more than 90% of the student population in extreme poverty Southern schools. Black students in extreme poverty schools in the South are the second most isolated group in the United States.

High poverty schools often struggle with recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff members. High poverty schools often have an inexperienced, underprepared, and less qualified teaching staff. The turnover in staff is much higher (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Orfield & Lee, 2005). Teachers who work in high-poverty schools are 50% more likely to leave the teaching profession than those who are employed in low poverty (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Haycock, 2002). The lack of teacher quality in high-poverty schools has a huge impact on student achievement. A teacher’s academic background, teacher preparation, certification and experience level have a large effect on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Haycock, 2002).

With the recent economic downturn in the United States, poverty rates in the nation and in South Carolina have continued to increase over the last ten years (Kids Count Data Center, 2013; National Poverty Center, 2013). As of 2010, 15.1% of all persons were living in poverty, and this was the highest poverty rate since 1993. The
poverty rate between 1993 and 2000 decreased each year reaching 11.3% in 2000, then increased each year thereafter. (National Poverty Center, 2013). Nationally, the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families below the federal poverty level has increased from 18% in 2007 to 23% in 2011. In South Carolina, the percentage of children living in poverty increased from 21% in 2007 to 28% in 2011 (Kids Count Data Center, 2013).

There is cause for concern for teacher educators when the demographics of the students in teacher education programs are stagnant, and the diversity of classrooms is increasing. Teachers need to enter the field equipped to educate and support all learners. It is a difficult job to change the beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices of those who have had limited interactions with culturally diverse populations (Barnes, 2006). Teacher education programs have made attempts to include multicultural education and diversity training, but with varying degrees of success.

When new teachers accept their first jobs and begin work, they are likely to experience a wide range of emotions. Emotions play a large role in shaping a teacher and his or her instructional decisions in the classroom. Emotions are central to teaching and learning and can be impacted by the teacher’s level of passion and enthusiasm (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003). Hargreaves (1998) writes about emotional aspects of teaching and he discusses four important points that tell us how emotions are exemplified in their relationships with students: “Teaching is an emotional practice. The process of teaching and learning involve emotional understanding. Teaching is a form of emotional labor. The teacher’s emotions are inseparable from their
moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838). Hargreaves (1998) asserts that education reform efforts often ignore the emotional aspects of change. Policymakers should give attention to emotions because if they are not acknowledged, these efforts may damage what teachers do at the most basic level. We cannot help teachers develop professionally if we don’t help them examine their beliefs, attitudes and emotional responses that underlie many of their classroom practices (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996).

With regard to novice teachers, emotions play a role in whether or not they decide to remain in the profession (Jakhelln, 2011; Jones & Youngs, 2012). The emotions of the teacher also have an impact upon students. A study conducted by Jones and Youngs (2012) of 42 general and special education teachers in Michigan and Indiana revealed that daily emotions are associated with the commitment level and burnout of beginning teachers. Specifically, mean levels of positive affect and skill are positively associated with commitment. Additionally, negative affect and tiredness are predictors of teacher burnout. The results of this study suggest that researchers, policymakers, and district administrators should attend to the teacher’s emotional response to their work especially when it comes to supporting those in their beginning years of teaching (Jones & Youngs, 2012).

The pedagogy of teachers is impacted by their beliefs, emotions and by teaching in high poverty settings. Martin Haberman (1992) has written extensively about the “pedagogy of poverty.” Most of Haberman’s writings are based on research conducted in urban school settings. He maintains that teachers in high poverty settings engage in a
more authoritarian style of teaching. They are making assignments, reviewing assignments, grading assignments, and punishing non-compliance. At a glance, these seem to be pretty common teacher behaviors, but Haberman (1992) also goes deeper to look at what kinds of teachers find these teacher behaviors most appealing and he also identifies alternative teaching strategies that are being excluded in these more authoritarian classrooms.

Haberman (1982) suggests that these authoritarian strategies appeal most to teachers who did not do well in school themselves. They often find it easier to believe that they might have been more successful if someone had forced them to learn. They are also attractive to those who rely on common sense alone instead of reflective analysis. These teachers often view developmentally appropriate teaching as being too permissive. Haberman (1992) asserts that these strategies are also appealing to those who fear minority students and have low expectations for their minority students. These teachers are often obsessed with power and control and believe that at-risk students learn best through directive controlling pedagogy. Haberman (1982) suggests many alternatives to this type of pedagogy that foster student engagement in an authentic manner.

Research by Delpit (2006) also supports the work of Haberman (1992). Delpit (2006) argues that if we can change the attitudes and actions of novice teachers; we can radically change urban schools and the lives of those students who attend them. Delpit (2006) offers ten practical guidelines based on her work with new teachers that will help them succeed in their new roles in urban schools. Delpit’s (2006) ten precepts include:
teach more, not less content to poor, urban children; ensure all students gain access to conventions/strategies essential to success in American society; demand critical thinking; provide the emotional ego strength to challenge racist societal views of the competence and worthiness of children and their families; recognize and build on children’s strengths; use familiar metaphors, analogies and experiences from the children’s world to connect what they already know with school knowledge; create a sense of family and caring in the service of academic achievement; monitor/assess children’s needs and address them with a wealth of diverse strategies; honor and respect the children’s home culture; and foster a sense of the child’s connection to the community. (p. 220)

Teacher education programs have made attempts to include multicultural education and diversity training, but with varying degrees of success. Teacher education programs address multicultural education in a variety of ways such as recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education courses, and program restructuring (Haberman, 1995; Hughes, 2010; Kim, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006; McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson, & Robinson, 2008; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz, 2003). Hughes (2010) calls for action within teacher education programs and asserts that the issues of poverty should not be excluded in the educational arena, and if teacher preparation programs continue to do so, the poor will continue to be marginalized and inequalities will continue to exist. She calls for further dialogue and research about how to include discourse on educating students of poverty in a non-stereotypical manner.
Likewise, the current body of research on induction and mentoring programs shows that some induction programs are beginning to focus on diversity, equity and social justice (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Bergeron, 2008; Delpit, 2006; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Johnson, 2011). New teachers often show a shallow understanding of these concepts (Portelli et al., 2010). There are many studies related to the characteristics of successful induction programs in general (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Portelli et al., 2010; Wood & Stanulis, 2009) and fewer studies on characteristics of induction programs within the context of urban settings (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Bergeron, 2008; Delpit, 2006; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Johnson, 2011). Fewer still are studies related to successful induction programs in rural areas (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012; Kono, 2011).

**Statement of the Problem**

The case can easily be made through volumes of literature that teacher beliefs, emotions, and pedagogical strategies can impact job satisfaction and success in high-poverty settings, and that teacher preparation programs can assist new teachers. A review of the current literature revealed that there are limited studies on teacher emotion. The major studies which currently exist examine the role of emotion upon teaching and learning in more general terms (Akinbode, 2013; Hargreaves, 1998; Jakhelln, 2011; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003, 2007). There are two published studies that focus upon the role of using emotional experiences to engage with diverse populations (Akinbode, 2013; White, 2009). Both of these studies (Akinbode, 2013; White, 2009) were self–studies.
The focus of these self-studies was on using self-reflection to examine prejudices and issues of equity and diversity in the classroom.

Currently there are studies that examine how to prepare pre-service teachers for work in high poverty schools (Haberman, 1995; Kim, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006; McKinney et al., 2008; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz, 2003) and studies that examine induction programs that provide support for first-year teachers in high poverty schools (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Bergeron, 2008; Delpit, 2006; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Johnson, 2011). Although these studies support the importance of contextualized teacher education programs and induction programs, all of these studies are situated within the context of urban, high poverty settings. There appears to be a lack of major studies that examine pre-service or induction programs in rural, high poverty settings.

This study contributed to the body of knowledge by examining the emotional responses to poverty as perceived by first-year teachers in rural areas of South Carolina. Through the use of photographs and narratives, the teachers who participated in this study were able to help the researcher understand the emotional impact that poverty had on them. It led us to consider ways of improving teacher education programs and supporting these teachers through stronger, more contextualized and substantive induction and mentoring programs.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study was based on the concept of the emotional geographies of teaching that is found in the work of Canadian researcher,
Andy Hargreaves. Hargreaves (1998) studied teaching and how it is an emotional practice. This early study focused on four aspects of emotion and how they are related to how emotions are evidenced in their relationships with students. The aspects are:

1. Teaching is an emotional practice.
2. Teaching and learning involve emotional understanding.
3. Teaching is a form of emotional labor.
4. Teacher emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838)

The act of teaching is an emotional practice. Emotions activate the teacher’s feelings, permeate his/her actions in the classroom, and are embedded within the teacher’s inner experiences. Likewise, the act of teaching affects the actions and feelings of others, such as the feelings of the students, parents and colleagues. The teacher can inspire and excite, or bore her students. The teacher can alienate parents or welcome them. They can create a sense of trust and collegiality with colleagues or create tension and feelings of mistrust (Hargreaves, 1998).

Hargreaves (1998) posits that teaching and learning also requires an extensive amount of emotional understanding. Emotional understanding is the ability to see and identify emotions and to determine if they are appropriate within a certain context and be able to respond accordingly. Usually, emotional understanding comes when we are able to share feelings that are in common (Hargreaves, 1998). The problem with teaching is that there are many emotional misunderstandings for various reasons. Some of the reasons for emotional misunderstandings can be large classes, which often prohibit the
development of close relationships. Many teachers are preoccupied with standards and content delivery and that leaves very little time for thinking about ways to encourage students and for a deeper level of emotional understanding to occur. Hargreaves (1998) also points out that when teachers come from different ethnic and social backgrounds, emotional misunderstandings are more likely to occur (Hargreaves, 1998).

Hargreaves (1998) discusses the concept of emotional labor. This concept is interesting in the fact that teachers are often expected to suppress emotions and to sacrifice a part of them. Teachers are vulnerable to the conditions and demands of their work environments. This is generally a negative phenomenon. However, teaching can also be a labor of love.

The fourth aspect which Hargreaves (1998) examines is moral purpose. A teacher’s moral judgments are based upon both cognitive and emotional understanding. Teachers often feel a sense of loss and a lowered sense of self–efficacy in environments that have an imposed curriculum that detracts from the educational purposes that the teacher feels is important. Happiness results when teachers feel that their purposes are fulfilled. Feelings of frustration, anxiety result when teachers are prohibited from achieving their goals.

In 2001, Hargreaves expanded upon his ideas of teaching as an emotional practice with the concept of emotional geographies. Emotional geographies consist of “the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and /or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (Hargreaves, 2001, p.1061).
Emotional geographies help us to understand more about supports and threats to the formation of emotional bonds and the understanding of schooling (Hargreaves, 2001). Hargreaves (2001) describes various forms of emotional distance that can have a detrimental effect on the emotional understanding among teachers, students, colleagues and parents. The five key emotional geographies are sociocultural, moral, professional, political and physical distance.

Sociocultural distance occurs when teachers find themselves teaching children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from their own. Teachers are often physically, socially and culturally removed from the communities in which they serve (Hargreaves, 2001). Because of this, teachers often stereotype the communities in which they serve and they are also subject to being stereotyped by the community. Hargreaves (2001) found that sociocultural distances were evidenced in the teacher’s assumptions about parents. Teachers may view the parent’s failure to attend meetings as a lack of caring and a lack of support for the school. Teachers and others in “caring” professions may blame their clients. This blame leads to feelings of frustration and to feeling overwhelmed by the neediness of their students and their parents.

Moral distance is another type of emotional geography identified by Hargreaves (2001). Moral distance occurs when teachers experience negative emotions due to the inability to achieve their goals or their purposes are being threatened. This may happen when a new curriculum is imposed. Teachers may feel a sense of loss and demoralization. Moral distance may also occur when teachers feel at cross purposes with those around them. They may experience this when they are questioned by parents about curriculum
and instructional decisions. When teachers experience these negative emotions, they withdraw and lose momentum and energy for doing their work. Moral distance does not have to pose a threat if organizations have mechanisms in place where it is acknowledged that we can learn from others who are different than us and to learn more about the goals we share in common with each other (Hargreaves, 2001).

A third type of emotional geography described by Hargreaves (2001) is professional distance. Teaching is a largely female dominated profession that has been institutionalized. Teachers are expected to care for their students, but often the care is expected to be in a detached manner such as in the medical or legal professions. Teachers are encouraged to be more clinical in their expressions and emotions. Also, the teacher is an authority figure in the teacher-student and the teacher-parent relationships. Again, professional distance can bring about negative emotions when the teacher feels like her or she is being criticized or questioned. Teachers may distance themselves from parent interactions in order to avoid criticism.

Hargreaves (2001) describes physical distance is probably the most obvious type of emotional geography that is found in the teaching profession. It is hard to get to know and come to understand others when face to face contact and interaction happens on an infrequent basis. Teacher-parent interactions are often sporadic and vary in their intensity.

Finally, Hargreaves (2001) describes political distances. Political distances are closely tied to our experiences of feeling powerful and powerless. Feelings of power tend to make people feel secure and protected and this leads to positive emotions including
feelings of satisfaction and protection. The perception of being powerless increases feelings of stress, anxiety, anger and depression. In teaching, teachers may experience these feelings if they work for an authoritarian principal.

The manifestation of these emotional geographies represented the work of Andy Hargreaves are worthy of exploration among first year teachers in high poverty schools. Exploring emotions with novice teachers will give them a chance to reflect upon the feelings that they have experienced and will help them critically reflect upon those moments in time to become more socially just educators.

**Perspectives on the Study of Emotions/Stance of the Researcher**

The study of emotions is multi-faceted, and there are ongoing debates about the extent which emotions involve the mind and body, or meaning and feeling and if these can be transcended (Zembylas, 2007). The ways in which emotions are studied can influence methodology. In Chapter 2, I explore Denzin’s (1983) work on studying emotions from the symbolic interactionist approach and his (1985) work, which focuses on emotions as lived experiences. I also explore Zembylas’ (2007) perspectives on how various theories influence methodology. All of these works inform my perspectives on the study of emotions and influenced my choice to use photo elicitation.

Denzin (1983) suggests studying emotions from the symbolic interactionist point of view. Emotions cannot be studied from the neurological of physiological perspective alone. He also suggests that we must suspend the typical social, cultural, relational and rule embodied interpretations of emotion and that emotion should be defined and studied within as a live interactional process. Denzin (1983) defines emotions as “self-feelings”
According to Denzin (1983), “More specifically, emotions are temporally embodied self-feelings which arise from emotional social acts persons direct to self or have directed toward them by others” (p. 404). Emotions are interactive processes that are “best studied as social acts involving self and other interactions” (Denzin, 1983, p. 408). The study of emotions as self-feelings is important because it returns the study to lived interactional experiences.

Denzin expanded on his ideas of the study of emotions as lived experiences in his 1985 work. In this work, he explores the place of the “lived body” in emotional experiences and this adds a phenomenological dimension to the study of emotions. He identifies four layers of lived emotion. They included sensible feelings, feelings of the lived body, intentional value feelings, and feelings of the self or the moral person (Denzin, 1985).

Zembylas (2007) discusses the complexities of studying emotion and how researchers should be very clear about their theoretical assumptions while engaging in research that deals with the study of emotions. In his 2007 article, Zembylas explores various theoretical approaches to the study of emotions and how these theoretical lenses have an impact upon the methodological choices of the researcher. Zembylas (2007) discusses three theoretical approaches to the study of emotions, which include the psychodynamic, the social constructionist and the interactionist approaches.

Of these theoretical assumptions, I chose to conduct this study from an interactionist approach. The interactionist approach, targets a convergence of the social constructivist and psychodynamic approaches. This approach attempts to rejoin the
aspects of meaning and feeling within the study of emotion (Zembylas, 2007). From this perspective, emotions are not considered to be purely psychological and social. Instead, this approach suggests that emotions are integral to the processes where the psychological and the social are produced. Emotions produce the boundaries that allow the individual and the group to interact (Zembylas, 2007). This approach takes into account a wide range of emotions that different people experience and the bodily and socialization practices that are important in the presence or absence of certain emotions. The psychodynamic theory and the social interactionist theory come together around the idea that we are socialized human bodies. We are interacting with others in groups rather than in isolation. We find ourselves in recurrent situations that call forth meaning and feelings (Leavitt as cited in Zembylas, 2007, p. 67).

According to Zembylas (2007), “Researchers’ recent works in poststructuralist theory and ethnography have taken into account how emotions, bodily sensations, beliefs, values, and judgments are interrelated” (p. 65). Zembylas (2007) discusses that it is important with regard to educational research to investigate how emotions play a role in the reproduction of power relations in the classroom. Power relations influence what can and cannot be said or done within the classroom. Educational researchers need “ways to theorize relations between power and emotion, culture and body, social formations and individual identities” (Zembylas, 2007, p.65).

With regard to research methodologies that are suitable for the interactionist approach, Zembylas (2007) suggests the use of in-depth ethnographic investigations. The voices of the subjects may be represented through photographs, documents, transcribed
interviews, and video tapes. All of these show multiple facets of emotional experiences. Most of the interactionist studies in education have been inspired by critical theory and post-structuralist perspectives. These studies examine “the role of culture, body, power, subjectivity, and ideology in creating particular discourses in education that privileging some teaching and learning practices while preventing others” (Zembylas, 2007, p.66).

This article by Zembylas (2007) was particularly helpful in helping me as a researcher to understand and identify the appropriate theoretical lens from which to approach this study of emotional responses of first-year teachers in rural, high poverty schools.

Additionally, I used symbolic interactionism as a lens to inform this research study. By using symbolic interactionism as a philosophical lens, it assisted me in defining reality from each participant’s point of view. Symbolic interactionism is a unique perspective that comes from the field of sociological social psychology, which focuses on the ongoing social interactions between individuals and groups. George Mead, an early twentieth century philosopher, heavily influenced the development of symbolic interactionism, but one of his students, Herbert Blumer is credited with the invention of symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 2002).

Blumer (1969) defines symbolic interactionism as the process of interaction in the formation of meanings for individuals. This theory consists of three core principles: meaning, language and thought. Meaning is central to human behavior. Humans interact with people and things according to the meanings they assign to those particular people or things. Language gives human beings means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols. Naming assigns meaning and naming serves as the basis for society and
knowledge. When we engage speech with others, we identify meaning and develop discourse. Thought modifies the individual’s interpretation of symbols. Thought is based on language and it is a mental conversation that requires imagining different points of view.

Symbolic interactionism was an appropriate lens for studying the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school because it a perspective that seeks to understand the social world of others as they perceive it. The use of symbolic interactionism was an appropriate choice because it supported the naturalistic inquiry into the world of teachers who work in high poverty settings. Data collection methods such as the use of photo elicitation and interviews were appropriate for the stance derived from symbolic interactionism.

The philosophical lens for this study was also deeply rooted in critical pedagogy and giving voice to those who are marginalized (Freire, 1970). The students of poverty are recognized as a marginalized group. The marginalization of students of poverty may continue to be exacerbated unless we learn more about the impact of teaching in a high poverty area upon the emotional state of the teacher and upon their instructional techniques. We also need to consider the implications that the findings may have on teacher education programs and induction support programs. This study was important in learning more about how these novice teachers perceive the everyday realities of teaching in a high poverty school.

The emotional responses that teachers have to poverty can have a direct impact on how instruction is delivered in the classroom as well as an impact on the teacher-student
relationships. Empowering teachers to engage in dialogue about their emotional responses to poverty may empower to think more critically about themselves as a teacher and their instruction.

By exploring the emotions of induction teachers through the use of photo elicitation interviews, the teachers in this study were be able to take a critical look at themselves and to examine the impact of their emotions on their teaching. Freire (1970) encourages us to consider the banking concept of education and how it differs from the problem-posing concept of education and how each of these concepts can influence the teacher- student relationship. The banking concept of education is when a teacher takes a more authoritarian approach to teaching. There is little involvement from the student and the students have no choice about the curriculum. The pupils are viewed more as objects or receptacles ready for deposits of knowledge from the teacher. This type of instruction often exists in high poverty situations. Teachers are often trying to “fix” the students and integrate them into the healthy society (Freire, 1970, p.74). Conversely, the concept of problem-posing of education is a practice of freedom. The students engage in authentic dialogue with the teacher, challenge themselves, reflect and uncover reality (Freire, 1970). Students become critical thinkers and are an integral part of the learning process.

Transformational learning theory and the use of critical reflection was also used to inform this study. Mezirow (2000) describes the core concepts of transformation theory and he asserts that “adult learning should focus on contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions and validating meaning by assessing reasons” (p. 3).
Transformative Theory suggests that transformative learning inherently creates understandings for participatory democracy by developing capacities of critical reflection on taken-for-granted assumptions that support contested points of view and participation in discourse that reduces factional threats to rights and pluralism, conflict, and the use of power, and foster autonomy, self-development, and self-governance- the values that rights and freedoms are presumably designed to protect. (Mezirow, 2000, p.28)

**Research Questions**

1. What is the emotional impact of teaching in a high-poverty school upon first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina?

2. In what ways do these emotions empower or constrain these teachers?

**Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that all of these rural induction teachers are taking part in a formal induction/mentoring program provided through the school district.

2. It is assumed that the teachers answered the interview questions honestly.

3. It is assumed that the teachers will follow ethical guidelines when photographing images for this study.

**Operational Definitions**

1. Emotional Geographies- the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and
color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other (Hargreaves, 2001, p.1061).

2. Early Childhood Induction Teacher- A teacher who is teaching within the first year of their teaching career in grades PK-Grade 3.

3. Induction & Mentoring Program- a program for all beginning classroom-based teachers and professional support specialists (i.e., library media specialists, school guidance counselors, and speech-language therapists) designed to increase the effectiveness and promote the retention of novice educators.

4. Title I/ Title I Schools- Title I is the largest federally funded educational program in the United States. It provides additional funds to eligible school districts to assist public and private schools with the highest student poverty concentration to meet school educational goals. Title 1 regulations require school districts to provide services to all schools where at least 75% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. (United States Department of Education, 2013a).

5. Rural School- Rural school locales are defined and subdivided into three categories fringe, distant and remote. Fringe locales are census defined as a rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area or a rural territory that is more that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster. Distant locales are census defined as a rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 mile from an urban territory, as well as a rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster. Remote locales are census defined as a rural territory that is more than 25
miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster (United States Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2013b).

6. Photo Elicitation- the insertion of photographs into a research interview and is based upon the concept that images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than using words alone (Harper, 2002, p. 3).

**Delimitations**

The scope of this study included only twelve first year teachers employed in Title I Schools in the upstate and midlands of South Carolina who were enrolled in a formal induction program provided by their school district. The criteria for participation were to be a first year teacher working in within the PK-Grade 3 classroom setting and the willingness to consent to participate in the study and to take photographs.

**Limitations**

This research study was limited to the study of induction teachers in two geographical areas, the rural, upstate of South Carolina, and the rural midlands of South Carolina. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other induction teachers working in other locations or cultures. Recruiting reliable key informants maximized participant reliability. There is a risk associated with naturalistic studies that the researcher by become too involved in the culture and compromise the validity of the results. The researcher used triangulation, a reflexive journal, peer debriefings and member checking to ensure the accuracy of the results.
Chapter Summary

There are a limited number of studies on the emotional aspects of teaching, and most of those studies do not deal with responses to poverty in particular. This study was designed to gain clarity about the emotional responses to poverty that early childhood teachers employed in rural schools in upstate and midlands of South Carolina may have. These emotional responses to poverty were brought to life through photo elicitation interviews and they provided valuable information about the realities of teaching in a high poverty school. The teachers created a dialog with the researcher about what we can do to prepare our novice teachers before they get to the classroom, as well as, support them during that crucial first year of teaching.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review examines the current research regarding the ways in which we prepare pre-service teachers for work in high poverty settings and how we support these novice teachers through induction and mentoring programs after they enter the field of teaching. It also surveys the literature regarding emotions as lived experiences, theories and methodologies used in studying emotions, and how we may use critical reflection to support the transformation of teachers. Gaps in the literature are also identified.

Preparation Teachers for Work in Culturally Diverse, High Poverty Settings

New teachers entering the field of early childhood are most often from white, middle class backgrounds (Howard, 1999; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz, 2003). Approximately 90% of the teachers in the United States are white and this reflects the pre-service pool from which these teachers are selected (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Swartz, 2003). The demographics of most teacher education programs are staying the same, yet the diversity of American public schools is increasing. There has been a huge shift in the demographics in the population of the United States and the pattern of immigration has changed. Most of the immigrants came from Europe in previous decades, but in the last decade, most of the immigrants now come from Latin America and Asia (Nieto, 2000; Orfield & Lee, 2005). From 1993 to 2003, minorities increased as a percentage of the total public school enrollment from 34%
to 41% with Hispanic students having the largest increase of six percentage points (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013).

Schools have also become segregated once again (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Nieto 2000). The largest step backwards with regard to segregation for African-American students happened between 1991 and 1995 (Nieto, 2000). Latinos are currently the most segregated group and attend some of the highest poverty schools in the nation (Nieto, 2000). Darling-Hammond (2010) found that in 2000, 40% of African–American and Latino students attended schools with a 90-100% minority enrollment, and as we entered the new millennium, America was almost unchanged as to where it was 30 years ago with regard to segregation.

Similarly, Orfield and Lee (2005) found that there has been an increasing pattern in segregation for Black and Latino students since the 1980’s. The authors argue that segregation is multidimensional and is not just about being segregated by race. There is also segregation by poverty and unequal opportunity. The report by Orfield and Lee (2005) examines the rapidly changing nature of segregation of schools and students by poverty, the ways that schools are systematically contributing to inequalities in education and the devastating racial consequences segregation by poverty has on Black and Latino students.

High poverty schools often struggle with recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff members. High poverty schools often have an inexperienced, underprepared, and less qualified teaching staff and the turnover in staff is much higher (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Freedman & Appleman, 2009; Ingersoll, 2003; Orfield & Lee, 2005). Teachers
who work in high poverty schools are 50% more likely to leave the teaching profession than those who are employed in low poverty schools. The lack of teacher quality in high poverty schools has a huge impact on student achievement. A teacher’s academic background, teacher preparation, certification and experience level have a large effect on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

With the recent economic downturn in the United States, poverty rates in the nation and in South Carolina have continued to increase over the last ten years (Kids Count Data Center, 2013; National Poverty Center, 2013). As of 2010, 15.1% of all persons were living in poverty and this was the highest poverty rate since 1993. The poverty rate between 1993 and 2000 actually decreased each year reaching 11.3% in 2000 (National Poverty Center, 2013). Nationally, the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families below the federal poverty level has increased from 18% in 2007 to 23% in 2011. In South Carolina, the percentage of children living in poverty increased from 21% in 2007 to 28% in 2011 (Kids Count Data Center, 2013).

With regard to this study, it is important to understand the demographics of high poverty schools in the South. Orfield and Lee (2005) studied the racial composition of high poverty and extreme poverty schools by region. Black and Latino students make up more than 90% of the student population in extreme poverty Southern schools. Black students in extreme poverty schools in the South are the second most isolated group in the United States.

There is cause for concern for teacher educators when the demographics of the students in teacher education programs are stagnant and the diversity of classrooms is
increasing. Teachers need to enter the field equipped to educate and support all learners. It is a difficult job to change the beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices of those who have had limited interactions with culturally diverse populations (Barnes, 2006). Teacher education programs have made attempts to include multicultural education and diversity training but with varying degrees of success.

Teacher education programs address multicultural education in a variety of ways. Sleeter (2001) reviewed 80 studies of pre-service teacher strategies such as recruiting and selecting students, cross-cultural immersion experiences, multicultural education courses, and program restructuring. Both white students and students of color deserve programs that are well designed, but often that is not the case. Many predominately white institutions continue with their “business as usual” (Sleeter, 2001, p. 95). They may address multicultural education in a cursory, disjointed manner. When these teachers were placed in urban schools, they were completely unprepared for the school setting and the students who inhabited that setting and had great difficulty. Students of color who attended these predominately white universities were also critical of the superficiality of the diversity programs. The students of color felt like these programs did not extend what they already knew or prepare their white colleagues for work in diverse schools.

In this review of studies, Sleeter (2001) found that pre-service education programs generally address the cultural gap between teachers and students in one of two ways. Some teacher education programs attempt to recruit more teachers who are from culturally diverse backgrounds and communities. Other programs focus on developing the attitudes and multicultural knowledge base of White pre-service students. Sleeter
(2001) found 11 studies that described successful recruitment programs and that it is possible to recruit teachers of color, but the studies did not describe program effectiveness.

Another recruitment strategy is to only select those who bring experiences, knowledge and dispositions that will enable them to be successful in urban schools. Sleeter (2001) describes the work of Martin Haberman (1995) who argues that teachers succeed or fail in teaching in an urban environment based upon what they bring to teaching rather than what they learn in a pre-service teacher education program. Haberman (as cited in Sleeter, 2001, p.96) “identified attributes of successful teachers such as being older (30-50 years of age); are a person of color are from urban areas; have raised children; have held other jobs; and learned to live in a somewhat violent context.”

Nieto (2000) calls for teacher education programs to place equity and diversity at the heart of teacher education programs. She suggests three ways for teacher education programs to accomplish this: by taking a stand on social justice and diversity; making social justice ubiquitous in teacher education and promoting teaching as transformational journey. Nieto (2000) encourages schools of education to give prospective teachers the opportunities to face and accept their own identities. Teachers who are monolingual and White often have limited experiences and don’t question their race, class or social privilege. Ladson-Billings (2006) also echoed these thoughts and suggests that prospective and novice teachers often believe that they are without culture. Prospective teachers need to recognize themselves as cultural beings and examine the cultural foundations of their own beliefs and attitudes. This has relevance to my study because I
am encouraging novice teachers to examine themselves and their emotional responses to
the impact of teaching in a high poverty school.

An example of a study related to the suggestions of Nieto (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2006) is Souto-Manning’s (2011) work with using theater games in teacher education to help prospective teachers to understand themselves as cultural beings. In this study, the participants participated in theater games that helped them understand the concepts of power and privilege. She found that the games helped the pre-service teachers understand social realities and through the games, they could access the values, beliefs and realities that shaped their world-view. Souto-Manning (2011) found that the games gave the pre-service teachers an authentic way to wrestle with the concepts of privilege and power in a more meaningful way than a lecture authored by a professor. The games allowed for the future teachers to take ownership and agency in authoring their own understandings. By constructing their own understandings, these pre-service teachers became better equipped to promote change and to educate their students in a more equitable way (Souto-Manning, 2011).

In a related study, Swartz (2003) modeled the use of emancipatory pedagogies and multiple epistemologies. In this self-study, she found that “consistently using the multiple epistemologies such as caring, empathy, reason and authority strengthened the effect of emancipatory pedagogies such as question driven pedagogy, mediating thought processes, and using student voices to create the curriculum” (Swartz, 2003, p. 272). Using these strategies within the context of the teacher education program stimulated
student engagement and allowed for opportunities for the education students to rethink their assumptions about children and adults who live in communities of color.

Nieto (2000) also encourages prospective and novice teachers to develop a community of critical friends and this supports my premise that creating a dialogue among teachers, teacher educators, public school personnel and community members is important. Nieto (2000) suggests that teachers need peers who will not only support them, but challenge them. A community of critical friends will encourage teachers to “debate, critique and challenge educators to go beyond their current ideas and practices” (Nieto, 2000, p. 185).

Sleeter (2001) also reviewed studies on community-based cross-cultural immersion experiences. These are programs in which pre-service teachers actually live in communities that are culturally different from their own. She found that these programs often had a powerful impact on the participants. The educators who were a part of cross cultural immersion experiences reported that these experiences were extremely important to them and often more important to them than their teacher education classes. Sleeter (2001) reported that a limitation of these studies is that they are based on very small scale projects.

An example of a community-based immersion experience related to my study on early childhood teachers in a high poverty schools is research conducted by Jinhee Kim (2012). Kim (2012) studied the change in beliefs over time of early childhood teachers who participated in community-based program with homeless children. Findings of this study indicated that students initially feared interacting with the homeless and the
unfamiliar setting of the homeless shelter. Students also engaged in deficit thinking regarding the homeless children. After the experience, the data revealed that the students were able to reexamine their perceptions and deficit thinking.

Internship experiences such as student teaching are often the culminating experience of a teacher preparation program. McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson and Robinson (2008) examined the role of the internship experience in the development of teachers for high poverty schools. In this study, they compared the traditional internship experience with the internship experience in a professional development school. This study found that neither the traditional internship, nor the internship associated with the professional development school enhanced their preparation. Even though the students were provided with the necessary tools and strategies for working in an urban setting, there was no link or carry over into the teachers’ practice in the classroom (McKinney et al., 2008). They also found that both types of internship experiences can actually dampen the teachers’ enthusiasm and commitment to work in urban, high poverty schools. The data suggested that more experiences that occur earlier in the teacher education program are needed.

Nieto (2000) and Sleeter (2001) found that there is a need for more research in this area about exactly what teacher educators should do that actually works in pre-service programs. If we don’t, the cultural gap between teachers and children may continue to widen. Ten years later, researchers such as Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) are still calling for improvements in the area of preparing pre-service teachers for teaching in diverse, high poverty schools.
**Induction and Mentoring Programs**

Teacher education programs have their share of issues with regard to preparing teachers for work in high poverty schools. What happens to these novice teachers when they enter the workforce and how do induction and mentoring programs support them? In this strand of the literature review, I will explore the history and effectiveness of induction and mentoring programs in general, followed by a review of studies that stress the importance of providing induction programs that are more highly contextualized.

In the United States, formal induction and mentoring programs have developed in waves that are characterized by time period and the social, political and economic factors that shaped that time period (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Currently, five waves of induction programs have been identified in the literature (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). First-wave programs were established prior to 1986. Second-wave programs were implemented between 1986 and 1989. Third-wave programs occurred between 1990 and 1996. Fourth wave programs were implemented between 1997 and 2006. In an essay and review of fourth-wave induction programs by Wood and Stanulis (2009), characteristics of each wave are delineated.

The first state-wide induction program was established in Florida in 1978. Shortly, thereafter, seven other states developed induction programs. A few school-district and university sponsored programs also appeared around this time. Most of the programs were very informally organized and not funded. The focus of these first-wave programs was on the needs and the well-being of the new teacher. The basic aims of
these programs were on reducing teacher attrition, increasing teacher job satisfaction and increasing teacher competence (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Second-wave induction programs came into existence between 1986 and 1989. During this time period, the focus of induction programs was mentoring and the structure of programs varied greatly. During this time, thirty states reported that they had induction programs. Some of these programs were totally site-based and others were state mandated. Of note for this time period was that these induction programs began to include an observational component and professional development. The terms mentoring and induction began to be used interchangeably (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Between 1990 and 1996, third-wave induction programs emerged. This time period included induction programs that were more developmental and structured. Also, formative assessments began to be included in the programs (Wood & Stanulis, 2009). Teacher observations of performance became more standards-based. Research by Fideler and Haselkorn (as cited in Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 3) indicated, “75% of induction programs at this time had a formative assessment system; 100% had a mentoring component; and 50% included professional development activities as a part of the program.”

Quality fourth-wave induction programs (1997-2006) are exemplified by their comprehensive, organized systems of assistance and multiple formative-assessment strategies. The goals are to increase novice teacher retention, promote overall well-being, increase competence, improve student achievement and to meet any mandates regarding
certification. Fourth-wave induction programs generally include the following nine components (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 5):

1. Mentor preparation and mentoring of novice teachers
2. Reflective inquiry and teaching practices
3. Systematic and structured observations
4. Developmentally appropriate professional development
5. Formative teacher assessment
6. Administrators’ involvement in induction
7. A school culture supportive of novice teachers
8. Program evaluation and/or research on induction
9. A shared vision of knowledge, teaching and learning

Currently, we are in the midst of the fifth-wave of induction programs, which began in 2007. There is more pressure to focus on teacher accountability and the effect of the teacher’s effectiveness on student learning. These fifth-wave programs are just beginning to include more of a focus on the context of teaching, such as a focus on urban schooling and the need for differentiation of instruction to address the needs of diverse learners (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

Ingersoll and Strong (2011) conducted a critical review of 15 empirical studies on the effects of induction and mentoring programs that had been conducted over the last thirty years. Findings of their review supported claims that induction and mentoring programs have a positive impact on teacher commitment and retention, classroom instructional practices, and student achievement.
Teacher attrition can be a problem in the United States, particularly among new teachers (Ingersoll & Perda, 2011). Some studies report that between 40% - 50% of new teachers leave within the first five years of their entry into the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003). The main objective of many induction programs is to improve the performance and retention of novice teachers (Howe, 2006; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wood & Stanulis, 2009). The studies reviewed by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) revealed that all teachers who participated in some type of induction program had higher job satisfaction, a higher level of commitment or retention. An international review of exemplary teacher induction programs (Howe, 2006) showed similar findings and that teacher induction programs are worth the financial investment because of the return of reduced teacher attrition and improved learning.

The review of studies by Ingersoll and Strong (2011) also showed a positive impact on the classroom instructional practices of the novice teacher and on student achievement. Teachers who participated in induction programs showed improvement in some aspects of teaching such as the ability to keep students engaged, to develop useful lesson plans, to use effective questioning techniques, and to develop successful and positive classroom management techniques (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). With regard to student achievement, teachers who participated in induction programs had students who had higher achievement scores and they showed growth on achievement tests (Ingersoll & Strong, 2009).

This critical review on induction and mentoring studies also pointed out that there were exceptions to some of these overall findings in a large study regarding induction
teachers in large, urban low-income schools. In this study, there were findings to support a significant impact on student achievement, but no effects on teacher retention or effective classroom practices (Ingersoll & Strong, 2009). This helps support my premise that the context of teaching matters and that we need further research on the effectiveness of induction programs in high poverty settings.

Stakeholder perceptions of induction programs are also of importance to this study. What are the new teachers’ perceptions of induction programs? A critical analysis study conducted by Portelli and colleagues (2010) gives some important insight into new teacher perceptions regarding induction, mentorship and teacher testing. According to this study, new teachers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and hesitant to ask questions for fear that their competency would be called into question. The novice teachers felt like they were in a survival mode- a “sink or swim” type of situation (Portelli et al., 2010, p. 3).

As a part of this study, 37 new teachers were interviewed and 100% of the participants agreed that mentoring should be an integral part of the induction process. They found it helpful to make a personal connection with a person who they could trust for practical advice. The participants stressed the importance of the mentor being a successful, experienced classroom teacher that could offer real strategies that would work when put into practice in the classroom. The participants did not feel that researchers or their school administrators could help them with the day-to-day realities of the classroom (Portelli et al., 2010).
The new teachers in this study also identified a gap between the theoretical information that they learned as a part of their teacher education programs and their practices in the classroom. They wanted mentors who could help them with practical teaching strategies, learn how to do administrative tasks, solve problems, work more efficiently and eliminate the waste of time (Portelli et al., 2010). They also hoped for a mentor who would help them learn about the school culture and politics, and in turn help them develop a sense of belonging in the school setting.

New teachers who participated in the study reported that they felt that teacher induction programs should not be tied to evaluation. Rather, they needed support and guidance during their first year of teaching. They desired a multi-faceted approach to the induction program, and that in addition to mentoring, professional development was needed. Their vision for professional development included constructive workshops to bridge the gap between theory and practice and time to meet with expert teachers (Portelli et al., 2010).

Interestingly, when these 37 teachers were asked about their perceptions of the role of social justice and equity should play in an induction program, responses reflected a very shallow knowledge of these concepts. Social justice and equity were not perceived to be a high priority in the content of induction programs. Some respondents indicated that they had a class or two in college about social just and equity. The participants had varying degrees of theoretical knowledge about social justice and equity, but most felt that they did not enter the workforce with sufficient knowledge to integrate social justice into their own classrooms (Portelli et al., 2010). This is of grave concern, because without
practical knowledge of how to incorporate social justice and equity in the classroom, the status quo of the dominant culture will continue to exist and social inequities will continue to be reproduced.

Currently, some induction programs do include a focus on diversity, equity and social justice. There is a small body of research that is beginning to emerge with regard to these programs. I will focus on five studies that focus on the importance of context, help identify the knowledge base that mentors need to help novice teachers focus on diversity and equity, some possible conditions that contribute to the success of the novice teacher and practical strategies that the novice teacher can employ.

One study of the importance of the context of an induction program is Hammerness and Matsko (2012) study of the University of Chicago’s Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP). This case study highlights the induction program, which is an extension of the teacher education program. All UTEP graduates are paired with an induction coach who follows them in the classrooms of the Chicago Public School System. The induction coaches provide classroom support and apply formative-based assessment coaching strategies for a three year period.

The authors suggest that there are multiple layers of context to consider such as the educational policy context, urban public school context, local geographical context, local socio-cultural context, district context, and the children, classroom and school context. The authors found that it is imperative to include the concept of “context” as a part of the explicit content of the induction program (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012).
In this study, Hammerness & Matsko (2012) found that the induction coaches employed various strategies to help the novice teachers examine their relationships with their students and encourage them to build on the strengths of even their most challenging students. The coaches encouraged the teachers to engage in self-examination and reflection with regard to their racial, cultural, and class-based perceptions and the perceptions of their students. By encouraging teachers to consider how the issues of culture, race and class influence instruction, they can develop successful instructional practices based on that knowledge.

The UTEP program also emphasizes the importance of having a mentor who is knowledgeable about the students, curriculum, community and faculty. In addition to having a high degree of knowledge, the mentor must be able to use that knowledge in an appropriate manner in his/her work with the novice teacher. The mentor must also be culturally sensitive and culturally competent. He or she must be committed to the pursuit of social justice and equity (Hammerness & Matsko, 2012). By including these layers of context as content within an induction program, teachers are able to develop and maintain a sense of commitment to the urban schools in which they work. In a similar study, Johnson (2011) found that targeted induction support to meet the needs of urban teachers and support from colleagues and administrators could help give the novice teachers a sense of agency and motivate them to stay committed to their jobs in urban high poverty and high minority schools.

Also supporting the work of Hammerness and Matsko (2012) is the research of Achinstein and Athanases (2005). This study explores the knowledge base needed for the
mentor in order to help novice teachers focus on diversity and equity. Based on a case study and the expertise of leading mentors, the authors suggest a framework for what mentors need to know and be able to do to direct their mentees toward a focus on diversity and equity.

The framework suggested by the authors (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005) is a bi-level framework that targets teacher and targets students across several knowledge domains. The knowledge domains include pedagogy, contexts, learners, and self. The mentor must possess the ability to see the big picture. The mentor focuses on the new teacher and what he/she knows and needs while keeping in mind the learning and the needs of the students.

Bergeron’s (2008) study identifies some important conditions for success that need to exist when novice teachers enter work environments in which their background experiences are vastly different from those of their students. These teachers often find themselves in a situation of cultural disequilibrium. In order for a novice teacher to enact and carryout a culturally responsive curriculum, this cultural disequilibrium must be counteracted. Bergeron’s (2008) data suggests that four components are important to create conditions of success, which include: a layered support system, a school administrator who supports innovation, and a teacher who is willing to take risks.

Delpit (2006) argues that if we change the attitudes and actions of novice teachers, we can radically change urban schools and the lives of those students who attend them. Delpit (2006) offers ten practical guidelines based on her work with new
teachers that will help them succeed in their new roles in urban schools. Delpit’s (2006) ten precepts include:

- teach more, not less content to poor, urban children; ensure all students gain access to conventions/strategies essential to success in American society;
- demand critical thinking; provide the emotional ego strength to challenge racist societal views of the competence and worthiness of children and their families;
- recognize and build on children’s strengths; use familiar metaphors, analogies and experiences from the children’s world to connect what they already know with school knowledge;
- create a sense of family and caring in the service of academic achievement; monitor/assess children’s needs and address them with a wealth of diverse strategies;
- honor and respect the children’s home culture; and foster a sense of the child’s connection to the community. (p. 220)

There are many studies related to the characteristics successful induction programs in general and fewer studies on characteristics of induction programs within the context of urban settings. Fewer still are studies related to successful induction programs in rural areas. In keeping with the concept that context is important, I reviewed two studies related to new teachers entering the workforce in rural areas.

Gagnon & Mattingly (2012) report that schools in remote towns and rural areas often have a significantly higher percentage of beginning teachers. It is important to also consider the needs of teachers in rural areas and the characteristics of induction programs that might support them best.
What school traits are important to teachers who choose to work in rural areas?

Kono (2011) identifies the characteristics of rural schools that new teachers choose first. The context of his research is rural South Dakota. New teachers are seeking schools that are clean, safe, have a balanced workload and reasonable class size. The new teachers also identified several school professional traits that were important to them which included having “strong academic values, respectful students, and support and professional development for new teachers.” (Kono, 2011, p. 5). Additionally, new teachers identified preferences for schools located near shopping and services that did not require a long commute to school each day. Keeping these traits in mind may help us identify characteristics of induction programs that will help new teachers in rural areas succeed, but they provide little insight into the emotional aspects of teaching in a rural, high poverty area.

High quality induction programs are necessary in order to reduce the attrition rate among beginning teachers. Research is beginning to emerge that supports that the idea of the importance of context in developing the curricula for induction programs. The research also indicates a lack of focus on issues of social justice, diversity and equity, and that teachers have only a surface level understanding of these issues.

**The Significance of Emotions in Teaching**

In the world of educational reform movements, there is an emphasis on standardized test results that measure student growth and achievement. There are many variables that ultimately impact student achievement, and one of those variables is teacher emotion. There is rarely a research focus on teacher emotions (Hargreaves, 1998;
Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003) and the role that these emotions may play in instructional decisions and the development of interpersonal relationships with students, both of which may impact student achievement. Emotions are rarely studied in and systematic fashion in pre-service or in-service programs for teachers (Nias, 1996).

Teaching is an emotionally charged profession. The daily work of a teacher is not merely the delivery of content based on the teacher’s knowledge and skills. Emotions are an integral part of teaching and learning and teaching and learning are impacted by the teacher’s passion and enthusiasm (Day, 2004; Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003).

Nias (1996) outlined three reasons why emotions are significant to the field of teaching. The first reason is passion. Teachers interact with parents, students and colleagues on a daily basis. They feel passionately towards their students, parents, and colleagues. They also feel passionately about their profession and the impact of educational policies upon the field of teaching. Secondly, emotions are rooted in cognition and we cannot help teachers develop professionally if we don’t help them examine their beliefs, attitudes and emotional responses that underlie many of their classroom practices. Thirdly, Nias (1996) states that the emotional responses of teachers are tied to how they view themselves and others and these are shaped by a variety of historical, social, cultural, and contextual experiences.

**Theory and Methodology in Researching Emotions in Education**

The study of emotions is multi-faceted, and there are ongoing debates about the extent which emotions involve the mind and body, or meaning and feeling and if these
can be transcended (Zembylas, 2007). The ways in which emotions are studied can influence methodology. In this section, I will examine the work of Denzin (1983) regarding the study of emotions from the symbolic interactionist perspective as well as his work on the study of emotions as lived experiences (Denzin, 1985). I will also explore Zembylas’ (2007) perspectives on how various theories influence methodology.

Denzin (1983) suggests studying emotions from the symbolic interactionist point of view. Emotions cannot be studied from the neurological or physiological perspective alone. He also suggests that we must suspend the typical social, cultural, relational and rule embodied interpretations of emotion and that emotion should be defined and studied within as a live interactional process. Denzin (1983) defines emotions as “self-feelings” (p. 404). According to Denzin (1983), “More specifically, emotions are temporally embodied self-feelings which arise from emotional social acts persons direct to self or have directed toward them by others” (p. 404). Emotions are interactive processes that are “best studied as social acts involving self and other interactions” (Denzin, 1983 p.408). The study of emotions as self-feelings is important because it returns the study to lived interactional experiences.

Denzin expanded on his ideas of the study of emotions as lived experiences in his 1985 work. In this work, he explores the place of the “lived body” in emotional experiences and this adds a phenomenological dimension to the study of emotions. He identifies four layers of lived emotion. They included sensible feelings, feelings of the lived body, intentional value feelings, and feelings of the self or the moral person (Denzin, 1985).
Sensible feelings are sensations that are felt in the lived body and “others cannot not share them or know how they are felt by a person” (Denzin, 1985, p. 228). They are both private and public. They are private in the sense that another person cannot know and experience the same sensations as another person in exactly the same way. They are public in the sense that an individual can give voice to these feelings through cries such as “Ouch!” Sensible feeling cannot be re-felt and that are newly experienced each time. Sensible feelings are not the emotion being felt, but they are a part of the embodied emotional experience.

Denzin (1985) described feelings of the lived body. Feelings of the lived body should not be confused with the sensible feelings. Feelings of the lived body include sensible feelings, but they are the feelings of the lived body in totality. Feelings of the lived body can be shared with others. Examples of these feelings are sorrow, sadness, despair, happiness and intense anger (Denzin, 1985).

Denzin defines intentional value feelings as “feelings about feelings” (Denzin, 1985, p. 230). These are cognitive and emotional reflections about feelings after passing through an emotional experience. The individual seeks to explain the essential meaning of an emotional experience. These feelings are separate from the concrete emotional experience. They become an emotional abstract. They are outside the experience and in the cultural and interpretative framework of the individual subject.

Feelings of the self and the moral person originate within the self and are housed in the inner stream of consciousness. “Self-feelings make the self-hood of the subject an object of emotional consciousness” (Denzin, 1985, p. 232). “The person draws his focus
of attention in and onto himself as a distant object” (Denzin, 1985, p. 232). Denzin (1985) describes this as a process. The self involves moral feelings that the person directs towards himself or herself as moral object. Feelings of self collect around these moral feelings, and this is how the self is revealed to the subject through feeling these feelings. The self is not in consciousness. These feelings haunt the person in the world and in experiences yet to be taken.

According to Denzin (1985), there a two levels of self that can be delineated, the surface and the deep. The surface can be thought of as public. It is what is revealed to others through our ways of communication and is managed through emotional management rules. Denzin (1985) defines the deep, inner moral self as being “revealed through the self and moral feelings which involve a feeling for the self as a distinct moral object and subject in the world” (p. 232). “The self of a moral person is the self that is characterized by dignity, self-respect, self-responsibility, and an inner sense of moral worth” (p. 232). These two levels of self are connected by a circuit of selfness and self-feelings. In this circuit, feelings felt at the surface level are experienced as masks that disqualify the deep inner feelings. A person in deep inner turmoil “seeks to feel and express the deep feelings of self” (Denzin, 1985, p. 232).

Sociological investigations of these lived experiences are often lost. Denzin (1985) calls for an interpretative perspective that includes the rich world of the inner self. Although some question the authenticity of these experiences, he believes that the self cannot be reduced to social rules, rituals and acts. If this inner world of lived experiences-passion feeling and engagement- is not accessible to the sociologist, we are confined to
describing life from the outside. Denzin (1985) stresses the importance of being able to have an interpretative grasp of the self, emotionality, and social experience as we seek to understand everyday life.

Zembylas (2007) discusses the complexities of studying emotion and how researchers should be very clear about their theoretical assumptions while engaging in research that deals with the study of emotions. In his 2007 article, Zembylas explores various theoretical approaches to the study of emotions and how these theoretical lenses have an impact upon the methodological choices of the researcher. Zembylas (2007) discusses three theoretical approaches to the study of emotions which include the psychodynamic, the social constructionist and the interactionist approaches.

Zembylas (2007) explores the psychodynamic approach to the study of emotions, some of its limitations as well as some methodological implications. The psychodynamic approach views emotions as primarily an individual, internal, and physiological. Another theory that is based on the psychodynamic approach is the cognitivist view, which still views emotions as an individual experience, but places a little less emphasis on biological factors. In the cognitivist view, emotions involve appraisals and judgments. Something may feel good or bad based on the way an individual may evaluate the experience (Zembylas, 2007). The cognitivist approach has been criticized for having an artificial line between the private world of the individual and the external world.

When researchers use the psychodynamic approach to the study of emotions, they examine and provide details about the impact the emotion has on the individual and pay scant attention to the impact of these emotions on other people. Historically, researchers
using this approach are working from the assumption that there is a finite set of basic emotions that biologically determined. Further, these researchers also conclude that these emotions are biologically determined, are transcultural and universal. With regard to research in the area of teaching and learning, emotions are the reactions of individual subjects. There is very little interest into the sociocultural context in which the meanings of emotions are constructed (Zembylas, 2007).

Researchers who ascribe to this theoretical approach may use methods such as self-reports or survey instruments to collect data about the way emotions are experienced or expressed. Information may be collected about the way a student or teacher felt, the causes of the emotion, physical reactions, verbal and nonverbal responses, and the consequences of those responses (Zembylas, 2007).

The boundaries of this theoretical approach are threefold. First, this approach only considers emotions to be instantaneous rather than unfolding or developing over time. Secondly, they are not studied contextually as they occur in interactions with others. Thirdly, this approach assumes that emotions happen to passive individuals who cannot control how they feel despite much evidence from sociocultural studies that people often engage in emotional management based on social and cultural norms. Zembylas (2007) acknowledges that there have been important contributions to the field through the use of this approach, but we must move beyond the study of emotions in isolation.

Zembylas (2007) also explores the history and contributions of the social constructionist approaches to the study of emotions. This approach began to become more popular during the 1980’s and 1990’s as researchers in the fields of anthropology,
sociology and communications began to place importance on the idea that emotions are situated within a particular cultural as cultural artifacts and that emotions relay sociocultural messages to others. Researchers who work from this approach can include a wide range of perspectives including the perspective of emotions as being primarily social experiences to the perspective of where emotions have no physiological basis at all. However, central to all social constructivist approaches is the idea that the expression of emotions is based on learned rules and convictions that will vary with different cultures. Also, the term “constructivist” holds a double meaning. It means that emotions are constructed rather than being biologically determined and that emotions are improvisations based on an individual’s interpretation of a situation (Averill as cited in Zembylas, 2007).

Social constructivist researchers are more process focused as opposed to structure focused. Emotions are viewed as a process in the sense that they have a beginning, middle, and end. Emotional experiences are dynamic and constantly fluctuating set of meaningful experiences (Zembylas, 2007). Because of this process focused perspective, a narrative approach to the study of emotions is suggested. The use of the narrative approach is suggested because emotions are the major components of storytelling and that narrative and interpretative are important in navigating the world of the meanings of emotional experiences.

In the field of education, researchers have used the social constructivist approach to study social and emotional relationships within the classroom context (Zembylas, 2007). These researchers work upon the assumption that emotions are grounded in the
social context of a classroom that is composed of the teachers, the students and their actions in a particular classroom. Students and teachers construct interpretations and make evaluations based upon the knowledge that they have. In order to study emotions from the social constructivist approach, researchers may employ the use of many different qualitative methodologies and methods. Some of these may include the use of diaries, interviews, observations, or artifacts (Zembylas, 2007).

There are some limitations to using the social constructivist approach to study emotions in education. Zembylas (2007) lists two limitations of the social constructivist framework. The social constructivist perspective focuses more on the “we” to the exclusion of the individual. Secondly, the role in which the body plays in the interactions between the psychological and social aspects are not given sufficient attention.

A third approach to the study of emotion, the interactionist approach, targets a convergence of the social constructivist and psychodynamic approaches. This approach attempts to rejoin the aspects of meaning and feeling within the study of emotion (Zembylas, 2007). From this perspective emotions are not considered to be purely psychological and social. Instead, this approach suggests that emotions are integral to the processes where the psychological and the social are produced. Emotions produce the boundaries that allow the individual and the group to interact (Zembylas, 2007). This approach takes into account a wide range of emotions that different people experience and the bodily and socialization practices that are important in the presence or absence of certain emotions. The psychodynamic theory and the social interactionist theory come together around the idea that we are socialized human bodies. We are interacting with
others in groups rather than in isolation. We find ourselves in recurrent situations that call forth meaning and feelings (Leavitt as cited in Zembylas, 2007, p. 67).

According to Zembylas (2007), “Researchers’ recent work in poststructuralist theory and ethnography have taken into account how emotions, bodily sensations, beliefs, values, and judgments are interrelated” (p. 65). Zembylas (2007) discusses that it is important with regard to educational research to investigate how emotions play a role in the reproduction of power relations in the classroom. Power relations influence what can and cannot be said or done within the classroom. Educational researchers need ways to “theorize relations between power and emotion, culture and body, social formations and individual identities” (Zembylas, 2007, p. 65).

With regard to research methodologies that are suitable for the interactionist, approach, Zembylas (2007) suggests the use of in-depth ethnographic investigations. The voices of the subjects may be represented through photographs, documents, transcribed interviews, and video tapes. All of these show multiple facets of emotional experiences. Most of the interactionist studies in education have been inspired by critical theory and post-structuralist perspectives. “These studies examine the role of culture, body, power, subjectivity, and ideology in creating particular discourses in education that privileging some teaching and learning practices while preventing others” (Zembylas, 2007, p. 66).

This article by Zembylas (2007) was particularly helpful in helping me as a researcher to understand and identify the appropriate theoretical lens from which to approach this study of emotional responses of first-year teachers in rural, high poverty schools.
Additionally, I used symbolic interactionism as a lens to inform this research study. By using symbolic interactionism as philosophical lens, it will assist me in defining reality from each participant’s point of view. Symbolic interactionism is a unique perspective that comes from the field of sociological social psychology, which focuses on the ongoing social interactions between individuals and groups. George Mead, an early twentieth century philosopher, heavily influenced the development of symbolic interactionism, but one of his students, Herbert Blumer is credited with the invention of symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 2002).

Blumer (1969) defines symbolic interactionism as the process of interaction in the formation of meanings for individuals. This theory consists of three core principles: meaning, language and thought. Meaning is central to human behavior. Humans interact with people and things according to the meanings they assign to those particular people or things. Language gives human beings means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols. Naming assigns meaning and naming serves as the basis for society and knowledge. When we engage in speech with others, we identify meaning and develop discourse. Thought modifies the individual’s interpretation of symbols. Thought is based on language and it is a mental conversation that requires imagining different points of view.

Symbolic interactionism is an appropriate lens for studying the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school because it a perspective that seeks to understand the social world of others as they perceive it. The use of symbolic interactionism is an appropriate choice because it supports naturalistic inquiry into the world of teachers who
work in high poverty settings. Data collection methods such as the use of photo elicitation and interviews are appropriate for the stance derived from symbolic interactionism.

**Studies of Emotion Relative to Teaching and Education**

Sociologist Arlie Hoschchild (1979) coined the term of emotional labor. Emotional labor, in the context of teaching, is a process in which teachers generate, inhibit and manage their feelings and the expression of those feelings according to expectations and normative beliefs relative to the teaching profession.

The smoothly warm airline hostess, the ever-cheerful secretary, the unirritated complaint clerk, the undigusted proctologist, the teacher who likes every student equally, and Goffman's unflappable poker player may all have to engage in deep acting, an acting that goes well beyond the mere ordering of display. Work to make feeling and frame consistent with situation is work in which individuals continually and privately engage. But they do so in obeisance to rules not completely of their own making. (Hochschild, 1979, p. 563)

The emotional rules for teachers are based upon the normative expectations and beliefs that are constructed collectively and organizationally (Hochschild, 1979). With regard to this study it is important for teachers to dig deeper and to deconstruct their emotions so that they can become teachers who serve all students better. Emotions cannot simply be managed or ignored, we must deal with the emotions that really exist and that are not always expressed in order to transform our teaching.
A theoretical framework, which informs this study, is based on the concept of the emotional geographies of teaching that is found in the work of Canadian researcher, Andy Hargreaves. Hargreaves (1998) studied teaching and how it is an emotional practice. This early study focused on four aspects of emotion and how they are related to how emotions are evidenced in their relationships with students. The aspects are:

1. Teaching is an emotional practice.
2. Teaching and learning involve emotional understanding.
3. Teaching is a form of emotional labor.
4. Teacher emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes. (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838)

The act of teaching is an emotional practice. Emotions activate the teacher’s feelings, permeate his/ her actions in the classroom, and are embedded within the teacher’s inner experiences. Likewise, the act of teaching affects the actions and feelings of others, such as the feelings of the students, parents and colleagues. The teacher can inspire and excite or bore her students. The teacher can alienate parents or welcome them. They can create a sense of trust and collegiality with colleagues or create tension and feelings of mistrust.

According to Hargreaves (1998), teaching and learning also requires an extensive amount of emotional understanding. Emotional understanding is the ability to see and identify emotions and to determine if they are appropriate within a certain context and be able to respond accordingly. Usually, emotional understanding comes when we are able to share feelings that are in common. The problem with teaching is that there are many
emotional misunderstandings for various reasons. Some of the reasons for emotional misunderstandings can be large classes, which often prohibit the development of close relationships. Many teachers are preoccupied with standards and content delivery and that leaves very little time for thinking about ways to encourage students and for a deeper level of emotional understanding to occur. Hargreaves (1998) also points out that when teachers come from different ethnic and social backgrounds, emotional misunderstandings are more likely to occur (Hargreaves, 1998).

Hargreaves (1998) discusses the concept of emotional labor. This concept is interesting in the fact that teachers are often expected to suppress emotions and to sacrifice a part of them. Teachers are vulnerable to the conditions and demands of their work environments. This is generally a negative phenomenon. However, teaching can also be a labor of love.

The fourth aspect which Hargreaves (1998) examines is moral purposes. A teacher’s moral judgments are based upon both cognitive and emotional understanding. Teachers often feel a sense of loss and a lowered sense of self-efficacy in environments that have an imposed curriculum that detracts from the educational purposes that the teacher feels is important. Happiness results when teachers feel that their purposes are fulfilled. Feelings of frustration, anxiety result when teachers are prohibited from achieving their goals.

In 2001, Hargreaves expanded upon his ideas of teaching as an emotional practice with concept of emotional geographies. Emotional geographies consist of “the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and
relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 1061).

Emotional geographies help us to understand more about supports and threats to the formation of emotional bonds and the understanding of schooling. Hargreaves (2001) describes various forms of emotional distance that can have a detrimental effect on the emotional understanding among teachers, students, colleagues and parents. The five key emotional geographies are sociocultural, moral, professional, political and physical distance.

Sociocultural distance occurs when teachers find themselves teaching children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from their own (Hargreaves, 2001). Teachers are often physically, socially and culturally removed from the communities in which they serve. Because of this, teachers often stereotype the communities in which they serve and they are also subject to being stereotyped by the community. Hargreaves (2001) found that sociocultural distances were evidenced in the teacher’s assumptions about parents. Teachers may view the parent’s failure to attend meetings as a lack of caring and a lack of support for the school. Teachers and others in “caring” professions may blame their clients. This blame leads to feelings of frustration and to feeling overwhelmed by the neediness of their students and their parents.

Moral distance is another type of emotional geography identified by Hargreaves (2001). Moral distance occurs when teachers experience negative emotions due to the inability to achieve their goals or their purposes are being threatened. This may happen when a new curriculum is imposed. Teachers may feel a sense of loss and demoralization.
Moral distance may also occur when teachers feel at cross purposes with those around them. They may experience this when they are questioned by parents about curriculum and instructional decisions. When teachers experience these negative emotions, they withdraw and lose momentum and energy for doing their work. Moral distance does not have to pose a threat is organizations have mechanisms in place where it is acknowledged that we can learn from others who are different than us and to learn more about the goals we share in common with each other.

A third type of emotional geography described by Hargreaves (2001) is professional distance. Teaching is a largely female dominated profession that has been institutionalized. Teachers are expected to care for their students, but often the care is expected to be in a detached manner such as in the medical or legal professions. Teachers are encouraged to be more clinical in their expressions and emotions. Also, the teacher is an authority figure in the teacher-student and the teacher-parent relationships. Again, professional distance can bring about negative emotions when the teacher feels like her or she is being criticized or questioned. Teachers may distance themselves from parent interactions in order to avoid criticism.

Hargreaves (2001) identifies physical distance is probably the most obvious type of emotional geography that is found in the teaching profession. It is hard to get to know and come to understand others when face-to-face contact and interaction happens on an infrequent basis. Teacher-parent interactions are often sporadic and vary in their intensity.
Political distances are closely tied to our experiences of feeling powerful and powerless. Feelings or power tend to make people feel secure and protected and this leads to positive emotions including feelings of satisfaction and protection (Hargreaves, 2001). The perception of being powerless increases feelings of stress, anxiety, anger and depression. In teaching, teachers may experience these feelings if they work for an authoritarian principal.

The manifestation of these emotional geographies represented the work of Andy Hargreaves are worthy of exploration among first year teachers in high poverty schools. Exploring emotions with novice teachers will give them a chance to reflect upon the feelings that they have experienced and will help them critically reflect upon those moments in time to become more socially just educators.

**Studies Related to Emotional Experiences of Pre-service and Early Career Teachers**

Some recent studies have examined using the emotional experiences of pre-service and early career teachers to help them grow and transform themselves as teachers. One such study is a study conducted by Akinbode (2013). This researcher used a self-study approach that employed the use of reflective narratives. In this study, the researcher focused on the lived experience of teaching and engaged in self-inquiry using Johns’ six dialogical movements. This study is a dialogue with self and the creation of reflective narratives that were based on insights gain through this process. The researcher gained some important insights into the pertinence of a teacher focusing on a subjective response in order to gain self-awareness in teaching practice. For the Akinbode (2013), this process also revealed some hidden aspects of the teaching experience such as prejudices.
as a teacher. This research contributed to the study of emotions in the field of education because it illustrates the value of self-reflection and examining classroom interactions because it leads to more effective and ethical practice.

Jakhelln (2011) noted that emotional experiences are an important part of becoming a teacher, yet emotions have not been sufficiently explored in the current body of literature. Jakhelln (2011) conducted a collective case-study of three new teachers in a Norwegian upper secondary school using a socio-cultural theoretical framework. In this study, the researcher focused the study upon emotions arising in the classroom and in interactions with colleagues, as well as, how those emotions are communicated. This study revealed that emotions are a neglected part of a teacher’s work and their emotions are not used for professional growth and learning.

This study (Jakhelln, 2011) revealed that the relationship between new and established teachers made the new teachers feel vulnerable and this created an obstacle for their development as teachers. The emotional rules of the school hampered communication and negatively impacted the new teachers’ emotional welfare, self-assessment, and resulted in a destructive form of emotional labor for all three teachers in the study. This lack of communication and inclusion resulted in detachment, disillusionment and burn-out. There was a very weak dialogue about teaching practices and about emotions and this prevented the early career teachers from being able to use their emotions constructively and to help them develop as teachers.

White (2009) conducted a self-study regarding using pre-service teacher emotion to encourage critical engagement with diverse populations. White is a teacher educator
and she wanted to know what supports she could provide in order to encourage her pre-service teachers to examine issues of equity and diversity with regard to teaching in elementary classrooms. White (2009) found that in order for teacher preparation to be transformative, it must be engaging both intellectually and emotionally and there must be certain supports in place in order to allow emotions to surface. This study found four key practices to be important in order to for a teacher preparation program to be emotionally and intellectually engaging. These practices include “building classroom community, structuring experiences to connect theory into practice, using methods to make diversity and inequity visible and role-playing situations that enable students to take a stand on an issue” (White, 2009, p. 16). The author also acknowledges at times that these practices can also inhibit emotional engagement.

**Critical Pedagogy, Critical Reflection and Transformation**

The philosophical lens for this study is deeply rooted in critical pedagogy and giving voice to those who are marginalized. In this study, the students of poverty are recognized as a marginalized group. The marginalization of students of poverty may continue to be exacerbated unless we learn more about the impact of teaching in a high poverty area upon the emotional state of the teacher and upon their instructional techniques. We also need to consider the implications that the findings may have on teacher education programs and induction support programs. This study was important in learning more about how these novice teachers perceive the everyday realities of teaching in a high poverty school. Their perceived realities may be very different from what we as teacher educators and educational administrators think to be true.
The emotional responses that teachers have to poverty can also have direct impact on how instruction is delivered in the classroom as well as an impact on the teacher-student relationships. Empowering teachers to engage in dialogue about their emotional responses to poverty will also empower to think more critically about themselves as a teacher and their instruction.

By exploring the emotions of induction teachers through the use of photo-elicitation interviews, teachers were able to take a critical look at themselves as teachers and to examine the impact of their emotions on their teaching. Freire (1970) encourages us to consider the banking concept of education and how it differs from the problem-posing concept of education and how each of these concepts can influence the teacher-student relationship. The banking concept of education is when a teacher takes a more authoritarian approach to teaching. There is little involvement from the student and the students have no choice about the curriculum. The pupils are viewed more as objects or receptacles ready for deposits of knowledge from the teacher (Freire, 1970).

This type of instruction often exists in high poverty situations. Teachers are often trying to “fix” the students and integrate them into the “healthy society” (Freire, 1970). Conversely, the concept of problem posing of education is a practice of freedom. The students engage in authentic dialogue with the teacher, challenge themselves, reflect and uncover reality (Freire, 1970). Students become critical thinkers and are an integral part of the learning process.

Transformational learning theory and the use of critical reflection was also used to inform this study. Mezirow (2000) describes the core concepts of transformation theory
and he asserts, “Adult learning should focus on contextual understanding, critical reflection on assumptions and validating meaning by assessing reasons” (p. 3). According to Mezirow (2000),

Transformative Theory suggests that transformative learning inherently creates understandings for participatory democracy by developing capacities of critical reflection on taken-for-granted assumptions that support contested points of view and participation in discourse that reduces factional threats to rights and pluralism, conflict, and the use of power, and foster autonomy, self-development, and self-governance-the values that rights and freedoms are presumably designed to protect. (p.28)

Critical reflection has been recommended as a means of getting teachers to think about the issues of social justice and equity in their practice. The use of photographs in my study served as a tool and a springboard to help first year teachers critically reflect upon the experiences that they have had with poverty. Howard (2003) offers some suggestions about to use critical reflection optimally with pre-service and in-service teachers. He suggests that all faculty members should be able to address adequately the complex nature of race, ethnicity and culture. In order to do this, faculty members must engage in critical reflection themselves and teacher education programs should concern themselves with issues of equity and access.

Secondly, Howard (2003) suggests that educators should be aware that reflection never ends. It is an ongoing process. Pre-service teachers should understand that the practice of teaching is centered upon revisiting the curriculum, teaching strategies and
assessments. The pre-service teacher also needs to understand that even seasoned, veteran teachers who use culturally relevant pedagogy make mistakes. The important concept to develop is to acknowledge your mistakes and improve your teaching!

A third consideration which Howard (2003) offers in using critical reflection to its optimal potential, is to be specific about what reflect upon and to have a list of questions to guide reflection. Teachers should examine class data on an ongoing basis and ask themselves deep questions about equity in the classroom.

Fourth, Howard (2003) suggests that teachers should recognize and understand that teaching is not a neutral act. Teachers need to be aware of how their actions impart a political consciousness in their students. This political consciousness can be one that is liberating and has social and cultural relevance, or it can be one that creates resistance on the part of students.

Finally, Howard (2003) notes teachers should strive to avoid “reductive notions about culture” (p.201). Teachers should avoid stereotypical thinking and realize that immense differences can exist within groups. Teachers should focus more on individual students and their thoughts and beliefs.

The use of photographs served as a tool and a catalyst to help first year teachers critically reflect upon the experiences that they have had with poverty. The use of visual methodology helped to break the ice and give teachers a safe starting point in which to begin their reflective journey.
Gaps in the Literature

In the current body of research, there are limited studies on teacher emotion. The major studies that currently exist deal with examining the role of emotion upon teaching and learning in more general terms (Akinbode, 2013; Hargreaves, 1998; Jakhelln, 2011; Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2003, 2007). There are even fewer studies that focus upon the role of using emotional experiences to engage with diverse populations (Akinbode, 2013; White, 2009). Both of these studies (Akinbode, 2013; White, 2009) were self-studies.

Currently there are studies that examine how to prepare pre-service teachers for work in high poverty schools (Haberman, 1995; Kim, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2006; McKinney et al., 2008; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz, 2003) and studies that examine induction programs that provide support for first-year teachers in high poverty schools (Achinstein & Athanases, 2005; Bergeron, 2008; Delpit, 2006; Hammerness & Matsko, 2012; Johnson, 2011). Although these studies support the importance of contextualized teacher education programs and induction programs, all of these studies are situated within the context of urban, high poverty settings. There appears to be a lack of major studies that examine pre-service or induction programs in rural, high poverty settings.

Chapter Summary

My study contributed to the body of knowledge by examining the emotional responses to working in a high-poverty school as perceived by first-year teachers in rural areas of South Carolina. The voices of these induction teachers came to life through the use of photographs and narratives, and helped us to understand the emotional impact of
teaching in a high poverty school on these professionals. Through the use of visual methodology, specifically photo elicitation with interviews, new teachers in rural South Carolina schools were able to articulate visually and verbally, the emotional realities of working in a high poverty school. The new teachers created a dialogue about the connections and the disconnections between their teacher preparation programs and induction programs and the realities of the classroom. This allowed the researcher to consider ways of improving teacher education programs and supporting these teachers through stronger, more contextualized and substantive induction and mentoring programs.
CHAPTER THREE
STUDY METHOD

The purpose of this qualitative study was to honor the voices of the first year, early childhood teachers in rural, high poverty schools in order to understand the emotional impact that teaching in a high poverty school has on these beginning professionals. Understanding the emotional impact of working in a high-poverty school on these induction teachers led the researcher to the end goal of considering ways of improving teacher education programs and induction programs. As stated in Chapter I, the theoretical lens for studying teacher emotions was from the interactionist perspective, specifically, symbolic interactionism served as the lens for this study. For the study design, I used the methodology of qualitative description as described by the work of Sandelowski (2000). In this chapter, I will present my rationale for selecting a qualitative design for this study and for using auto-driven photo elicitation and interviews as a means of data collection. This chapter will also include a description of the study procedures, which include sample selection, context, data collection, data analysis and assurance of rigor and validity.

Design

A qualitative design was selected for this study because little is known about the emotional responses early childhood teachers have to poverty, particularly in rural areas of South Carolina. In order to explore this topic and to answer my research questions, I was in search of a naturalistic form of inquiry. Naturalistic inquiry seeks to study a
phenomenon in its natural state (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative description was selected as my design of choice because I wanted to honor the participants’ voices in this study. This design would allow me to provide a description based on the participants’ own words.

Sandelowski (2000) indicates that qualitative description is the design of choice when a straightforward description of a phenomenon is desired. The researcher is seeking to discover the who, what, when and where of events, or their basic nature (Sandelowksi, 2000). Qualitative description is a method that seeks to obtain a rich description of an experience. It allows the researcher to collect data from multiple sources and allows for purposeful sampling so that the researcher may obtain information-rich cases pertaining to the phenomena under study.

Qualitative description also allows for the researcher to stay close to the data and makes use of low inference interpretation (Sandelowski, 2000). This was particularly desirable in this study since, I wanted to honor the voices of the participants and use their language to describe the emotional impact of working in a high-poverty school. The use of qualitative description allows the researcher to present the facts of an experience and the meaning that the research participants attach to the facts in everyday language (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative description is also useful because of its eclectic nature. Qualitative descriptive studies are textured and can take on hues or overtones of different types of studies such as narrative studies, ethnographies, phenomenological studies or grounded theory studies. Although research studies may contain individual elements of these types of studies, many researchers wrongly designate their works as such when they
are actually qualitative descriptions. Sandelowski (2000) suggests that researchers use the term qualitative description to name their studies and describe any other overtones from other methodologies that exist within the study design.

I selected qualitative description as my methodology of choice because I described the emotional experiences of induction level, early childhood teachers in rural, high poverty settings. This allowed me to select first year teachers that currently work in rural, high poverty schools so that I could make use of information rich cases regarding emotional responses to poverty. This methodology allowed for the active participation of the teachers in the research through the use of auto-driven photo-elicitation. Although this study had phenomenological overtones such as, using semi-structured interviews to gain insight to the emotional lived experiences of teachers, looking at moments of experience, and examining words and phrases for themes, it is not phenomenological study in its purest sense.

**History of Photographic Methods**

Photography and sociology were both born in the same era in Europe- during the industrial revolution. Photography provided a new way of seeing. Prior to this time, the visual world was often limited to the wealthy that could experience the visual world through paintings and other works of art. The photograph became mass-produced and soon, knowledge based on visual images was available to all (Harper, 1988).

Much like photography provided a new way of seeing and experiencing the world visually, sociology provided a new lens for interpretation. Early sociologists did not use photographs as a part of their work. Photographic images from about 1840-1860
consisted of portraiture. In the early nineteenth century, photography became an art in its
own right and there was a rise in realist schools of art. Photographers began to document
social settings and natural landscapes. Later in the Victorian era, P. H. Emerson began to
document rural life in England and was one of the first photographers to photograph in
society rather than in the studio. Eugene Atget, photographed street life in Paris during
the early twentieth century (Harper, 1988).

Visual sociology found its beginnings in the documentary tradition of
photography. Visual sociology is the use of photographs, film and videos to study society
(Harper, 1988). From the 1920’s to the 1960’s there was no visual sociology. However,
in the field of anthropology, Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson did groundbreaking
work and were the first to use photography as the basis for a large research project,
*Balinese Character* (1942). This study still remains a model today for photographic
analysis. The social unrest of the 1960’s- turmoil over issues of war, race class and
gender led to the development of research programs built on photography. Many
researchers were drawn to the field of sociology during this time period because they
found the images of society so compelling. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s journals
began to publish photo essays (Harper, 1988).

The mid 1980’s brought a time where postmodern sociologists began to redefine
the relationship between the participant and the researcher (Harper, 1998). Gathering data
began to be a collaboration between the researcher and participants. Researchers began
allowing their subjects to photograph their environments. Harper (1998, p. 32) states that
“postmodern documentary photography supports the idea that the meaning of a
photograph is constructed by the maker and the viewer, both of whom carry social positions and interests to the photographic act.”

Grady (2008) argues that today the use of visual methods is at the crossroads. He maintains that visual research is flourishing and many students and young instructors are eager to use visual methods to investigate new sites. However, the disciplines in which these researchers work are often not very accepting of the entrance of visual methodologies into the field. Grady (2008) states that there are often concerns about whether or not visual data can produce valid information, a distrust that researchers can carry out a detached examination of relationships and the world they are supposed to represent. Pink (2007, p. 9) also stated, “Opponents of visual methodology argued that the photographic images lacked objectivity and scientific rigor and the specificity of the photographed moment rendered it scientifically invalid.”

Grady (2008) argues that those who use visual methods in their research should confront the resistance they face, and he states the importance of visual data and outlines how using visual methods will benefit sociology. According to Grady (2008),

Visual data are a record of spatial and temporal relationships. Secondly, visual data can record how someone responds to an object or event. Visual research can benefit the social sciences by describing and accounting for how pattern, variation and change are organized socially and culturally; integrating levels of social organization; how social processes are organized; how we respond emotionally to events, and how research findings should be reported clearly and effectively. (p. 49)
Today, a range of visual methods are being used in education, sociology, health studies, and anthropology (Rose, 2012). Rose (2012) discusses a variety of approaches that are currently being used by researchers that use images that are created as a part of the research project. The images can be created by the researcher or by the subjects they are researching. The images are an active part of the research and are often used along with data generated from interviews or ethnographic work. The images that are generated are not limited to photographs, but can also include film, videos, maps, diagrams, drawings, paintings, models, diaries and collages. Rose (2012) highlights three methods: photo-documentation, photo-elicitation and photo-essays. Rose (2012) briefly defines each of these methods.

In photo-documentation, a researcher takes a carefully planned series of photographs to document and analyze a particular visual phenomenon; photo-elicitation asks research participants to take photographs which are discussed in an interview with the researcher; and photo essays are a series of photographs put together, usually with some text, to make an interpretation of a social situation or problem. (p. 298)

**Photographic Method Used in this Study**

In this section, I will discuss photo-elicitation in more detail, including its history and my rationale for selecting it as the method of choice for this study. Photo-elicitation is defined by Harper (2002, p.13) as the “simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview.” Photo-elicitation was first named by John Collier, a photographer and researcher from Cornell University in 1957. Collier found that the use of the
photographs elicited longer and more comprehensive interviews. He also found that the photographs were useful in stimulating the memory and helping the participants release emotional statements about themselves. Likewise, Harper (2002) explains the difference between using interviews alone and using interviews with images and text by looking at the way we respond to these two forms of symbolic representation. The way in which they respond has a physical basis in the brain. Harper (2002) states that

The areas of the brain which process visual information are evolutionary older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words; exchanges based words alone utilize less of the brain’s capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words. (p.13)

Rose (2012) identifies several key strengths of using photo-elicitation. The first key strength echoes Collier and Harper in that the use of photographs can prompt a participant to talk about things in different ways. For example, it can tap into the more emotional and affective registers of a participant. The photo-elicitation interview not only allows for the researcher to gain more information, but it can give more insight into a social phenomenon.

Secondly, it can help researchers explore the often taken for granted mundane experiences of a participants’ daily life. When participants are asked to take photographs that depict their life, they are able to reflect on these activities in a much different way. The photographs provide a means for looking at these activities from a distance and
allows for a different type of reflection. They are able to articulate thoughts and feelings that usually remain silent (Rose, 2012).

A third strength identified by Rose (2012) is that photo-elicitation empowers the participant. When a participant is asked to generate images, they are actively involved and play a central role in the research process. They become the expert when it comes to explaining their images in an interview. This type of research requires a greater collaboration between the researcher and the participant than other methods.

Photo-elicitation was the method of choice for a variety of reasons. I was searching for a method that would honor the voices of teachers who work in rural, high poverty schools. I was also looking for a method that would be useful in studying emotions. By giving the teachers an opportunity to generate photographs that symbolized the impact of poverty on their lives, they were able become active participants in the research process. Additionally, the teachers were empowered to serve as interpreters of their world for me, the researcher. By generating photographs, the teachers in this study were able to portray emotional experiences that might have been difficult to describe in words alone (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006, p. 84) describe the use of visual methodologies as “enabling.” Likewise, for this study the photographs generated by the teachers in this study served as a catalyst to a rich explanation and discussion of the impact of poverty on the lives of induction level teachers in rural areas of South Carolina. The use of visual data can produce unique data sets and assist in data analysis, which may tell the researcher more than about the phenomena under study than the analysis of textual, verbal or observational data alone. Visual data does not carry
more importance or weight than other data sources, but it serves as a complement, confirming and expanding upon other methods (Bolton, Pole & Mizen, 2001).

**Participant Demographics**

Thirteen participants enrolled in the study and twelve participants completed the study. The reason for non-participation is unknown and the participant did not respond to reminder phone calls or e-mail messages. Of the 18 eligible candidates in the induction programs, twelve fully participated, which was 67% of the eligible candidates. All participants were white females. They ranged in age from 22 to 44. The teachers were early childhood teachers, and for the purposes of this study, the definition of an early childhood teacher included teachers in grades PK-Grade 3. The breakdown for this study included 1 Pre-K teacher (8.3%), 3 kindergarten teachers (25%), 7 first grade teachers (58.3%), 0 second grade teachers (0%), and 1 third grade teacher (8.3%). Each teacher was assigned a pseudonym to protect their identities.
Table 3.1.

Participant Demographics

<table>
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<th>Participant Number</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Number of Photographs</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nina</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hannah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brianna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leigh</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lila</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photographs

A total of 73 photographs were taken for this study (Table 3.1). The least number of photographs taken by a participant was four and the most pictures submitted by a participant was nine, with the average being six pictures per participant. All pictures that were submitted were included in the data analysis for the study.

School Demographics

The participants in this study were recruited from four counties and six different elementary schools. The six elementary schools were designated as Title I Schools and were located in rural areas of South Carolina. Three of the counties represented are
located in the upstate of South Carolina. One county represented is in the Midlands of South Carolina. Five of the elementary schools are located in the Upstate of South Carolina and one school is located in the Midlands of South Carolina. Each school represented in the study was assigned a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Each year the South Carolina State Department of Education calculates a poverty index for each school. The poverty index is a percentage based on free and reduced-price lunch data and Medicaid eligibility data. The poverty index for the schools listed in this study ranged from 79.00% to 96.33%.

Table 3.2.

**School Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Total Number of Students</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>White, Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>2 or More Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View Elementary</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescent Moon</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Rock Elementary</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grove Elementary</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Elementary</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmdale</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures

Sampling

Rose (2012) discusses planning the practicalities of a photo-elicitation study and she states that the size of a study can range from small to large. In the studies cited in her book, which were studies of children’s experiences in urban areas, the sample size ranged from 8 to 88 and the number of photographs ranged from 57 to nearly a thousand. Rose (2012) stated that the length of time you have for the study and the equipment needed for the study can impact the sample size of the study. Erlandson (1993) states regarding sample size, “there are no rules for sample size” (p.83). In qualitative research, the researcher is in search of the quality of participants rather than the quantity. In other words, the researcher is seeking information rich cases rather than being concerned with volume. For this study, I chose to use purposeful sampling. Patton (as cited in Erlandson, 1993) states:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169)

The inclusion and exclusion criteria are delineated in the next section. I recruited 13 teachers for this study, with the hopes that I would have 10 participants who would remain as full participants in the study. The teachers were recruited through visits to induction class/programs that are located in the upstate and midlands of South Carolina.
By selecting teachers who were located in these geographical areas of South Carolina, I was able to have better access to my participants so that I could build rapport with them.

**Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria**

The following are the inclusion and exclusion criteria used for this study:

Inclusion criteria:

1. The participant must be a first-year teacher at the time of enrollment in the study.
2. The participant must be currently teaching in grades PK-3.
3. The participant must be teaching in a school that is designated as a Title I School.
4. The teacher must work in a rural area.
5. The teacher must be willing to use his/her own smart phone or digital camera to take photographs.
6. The participant must provide informed consent.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Teachers who are beyond their first year of teaching experience at the time of enrollment will be excluded from the study.
2. Teachers who are not early childhood teachers- teachers who teach grade 4 and up will be excluded.
3. Teachers who teach in schools that are not designated as Title I Schools will be excluded from this study.
4. Teachers who work in urban, inner city schools will be excluded.
5. Teachers who are unwilling to use their own devices to take photographs will be excluded.

6. Teachers unwilling to participate in the interview with the researcher will be excluded.

7. Teachers who fail to give informed consent will be excluded from the study.

**Recruitment**

After receiving IRB approval (Appendix B), I contacted the appropriate district personnel in four school districts in order to obtain verbal and written permission to conduct my research project. I asked for the contact information for the induction class instructors so that I could set up a time to visit the induction class and briefly meet with the early childhood teachers that were currently participating in the induction program. I introduced myself and explained the study, provided instructions for recruitment and answer any questions. I provided a recruitment flyer (Appendix C) to the potential participants, which included information about the study, along with my contact information. I also provided Participant Information forms (Appendix D) to the potential participants. If they had interest, they could complete the form and give it to me while I was at the site. The recruitment period lasted for two weeks.

**Screening**

The screening of participants was completed in person or over the phone. This session lasted approximately 20 minutes. During this session, I explained the details of the study including the inclusion/exclusion criteria, methods, procedures, potential risks and benefits, human protection measures, and rights to photographs for professional and
educational purposes. I answered any questions that the participants had. I completed the participant information sheet if the participant screening was held over the phone, or the research subject completed the participant information sheet if the meeting was held in person. After this session, I assessed the participant information to make sure they met the inclusion criteria for the study. If so, I contacted the potential participants to set up Visit 1.

Visit 1: Enrollment and Instruction

The purpose of this visit was to reiterate the details of the study, obtain signatures for informed consent (Appendix E) and to give instructions for what the participants were to do. This visit lasted for approximately one hour. During this visit, I welcomed the participants, told them a little about myself and reminded them about the details of the study. I verbally explained the Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) and the Photo Release Statement (Appendix F). The Photo Release Statement (Appendix F) is a form that gives the researcher permission to use the participants’ photographs for educational and professional purposes. Once the Informed Consent Form and the Photo Release Statement were signed, I moved on to the instructional part of this session. I gave a brief definition of photo-elicitation. I provided the participants instructions (Appendix G) about taking the photographs for this research project in verbal and written form. I showed each participant a few exemplar photographs from my own work, which were unrelated to the topic of this study so that they could see what the expectation was in concrete form. Since participants used their own smart phones or digital cameras, no instruction about how to use photographic equipment was necessary. I asked the
participants if they were confident in their ability to open PowerPoint, insert a photograph, and to add a caption. All of the participants indicated that they had the skills necessary to do this. I used the following list of bulleted points as I explained the directions to the participants:

- Over the course of the next two weeks, you will take five to ten photographs that *symbolize* the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school.
- You will use your own smart phones or other photographic device to take photographs for this study. The device needs to be able to produce images that may be downloaded.
- In order to take photographs that are suitable for this study, reflect upon ways that working in a high poverty school has impacted you as a teacher emotionally this year.
- You may want to use the attached table to help you reflect and plan what you want to photograph and what the photograph represents. Be creative!
- Take photographs of five-ten objects, materials, facilities, community surroundings, etc. that symbolize the emotional impact that working in a high poverty school has had upon you. You may take photographs that extend beyond the walls of your school. These objects can symbolize the good, bad and the ugly-*all* the ways in which working in a high poverty school has impacted you.
- No human subjects are allowed in the photographs.
- You will have two weeks to take your photographs.
• When you take the photograph, write down informal or anecdotal notes about how this object made you feel or why it influenced you to choose it as part of this project. You may use the attached chart for your notes.

• Insert your photographs into PowerPoint slides. You will need one slide for each photograph. If you need assistance with PowerPoint, I will provide instructions for you.

• Add a brief caption to each photograph explaining what this photo means to you.

• Submit the slides to Kim Jedlicka via email to this address: nichol5@clemson.edu by (deadline date two weeks from initial briefing and instruction).

**Picture Return**

The participants were instructed to return the photographs via email to Kim Jedlicka at the following email address nichol5@clemson.edu. Once I received the photographs, I saved them in a folder on my PC as well as on an external hard drive that is secure and password protected. I also printed the pictures and cataloged them so that I would be able match the photographs to the correct participant when it came time for the photo-elicitation interviews. As the participants returned the photos, I made immediate contact with them to set up the photo-elicitation interview session. I scheduled the interview session to occur within 1-2 weeks of the photo return.

**Visit 2: Photo-elicitation Interview**

Visit 2 was scheduled to occur within 1-2 weeks of the photo-return. This visit lasted approximately 1 hour. This was a face-to-face interview that was recorded using a digital voice recorder. Six of the interviews were conducted in the teachers’ classrooms
after school. The remaining six interviews were conducted at either restaurants or coffee shops. At the beginning of the interview, I spent time talking with the teacher in order to build rapport and to make them feel welcome and as comfortable as possible. Then, I brought out the photographs that the participant took and placed them on the table. I asked the participant to look at all the photographs and then, try to group them together into a few categories. Then I asked them the following questions as listed on the interview protocol (Appendix H):

1. Here are the photographs that you collected over the past two weeks. Please take a few minutes to look through your photographs and think about how they may be grouped. Place them into categories. What would you label each of these categories?

2. We are going to talk about the photographs that you took. Take a few moments to select the photographs that you wish to talk about and pull them to the side. If you wish to talk about all of the photographs you took, that is acceptable as well. Which photograph would you like to talk about first?

3. Please tell me about this picture.

4. What does this picture make you think about?

5. What does this picture mean to you?

6. Does this picture evoke certain emotions/feelings in you? If so, please describe them.

7. Is there anything that you wished that you could have photographed, but couldn’t? If yes, tell me about what that would have been and why.
8. To what extent did you find these photographs connected with your experiences in your pre-service education program?

9. To what extent did your pre-service education program prepare you for, or support your work in a high poverty school?

10. Do you perceive any disconnects between what you were taught in your teacher education program and the everyday realities of working in a high poverty school? If so, please tell me about them.

11. To what extent do these photographs connect with your experiences in your current induction program?

12. To what extent does your induction program support you in your work in a high poverty school?

13. Do you perceive any disconnects between what you are learning in your induction class and what you face each day in your classroom? If so, please describe them.

14. What ideas do you have that may help teacher educators and induction program instructors strengthen their programs with regards to preparing and supporting teachers for work in a high poverty setting?

At the end of the interview, I thanked the participant for taking part in the study and I presented them with a gift card as a small token of appreciation for giving their time for this research project. I also told them that I would share the findings of the study with them via email in order make sure the findings accurately reflected their experiences.
Before each participant left, I answered any questions that the participant may have had for me.

**Member Checking**

In order to make sure that the experiences of the participants were accurately reflected in this study, I shared, via e-mail, a graphic with the participants that illustrated the five major themes of the study along with a written explanation of each of the themes. I created a member checking protocol (Appendix I) and asked them to respond to the questions on the protocol. The participants were given a week to respond. There were four of the twelve participants who responded to the questions on the interview protocol. All four of these participants agreed that I had placed their photographs in the correct theme. All four participants were able to identify one or more of the three pathways that they found themselves on during their first year of teaching.

**Data Sources and Analysis**

For the purposes of this study, the interviews and the photographs served as the primary data sources to help me answer both of the research questions. In order to conduct data analysis for this study, I employed First Cycle and Second Cycle Coding strategies that were selected from *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldaña, 2013) During First Cycle coding, I coded and recoded and then moved from codes to categories. During First Cycle Coding, codes became more refined, subsumed into other codes, or dropped altogether (Saldaña, 2013). As the researcher progressed into Second Cycle Coding, there was rearrangement and reclassification of data into new categories (Saldaña, 2013). Abbott (as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 11) likens the coding
process to decorating a room; “you try it, step back, move a few things, step back again, try a serious reorganization and so on.” “Themeing the Data occurs as an outcome of coding, categorization and analytic reflection” (Saldaña, 2013, p.175). Data-analysis required many passes through the data. I coded manually in smaller segments and then used computer assisted data analysis to keep track of my code book and help me find the relationships between codes.

**First Cycle Coding**

The photo-elicitation interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysis commenced. In order to analyze the interviews, I placed the photographs taken by each participant on the table and listened to the interviews. I made analytic memos about what I was hearing in the interview as each picture was described.

Next, I printed copies of the transcripts and did an initial read through of the interview text and made jottings regarding ideas for codes, topics, or any patterns that I saw. On the printed copies of the interview I worked with coding the text. I segmented each interview based on the discussion of a particular photograph by manually drawing a line to separate the discussions of individual photographs. I analyzed these segments using a type of First Cycle Coding technique called Emotional Coding. Saldaña (2013) categorizes Emotional Coding as an affective coding method, which is defined as a method that investigates participant emotions, values, conflicts, or other subjective qualities of the human experience. “Emotional Codes are used to label emotions that are recalled and/or experienced by the participant or inferred by the researcher about the participant” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 105). I coded each section and looked for a journey or
emotional storyline within the codes. I also completed the emotional coding process while listening to the audio recordings of the interviews. During this process, I listened for nuances and vocal inflections that indicated emotion.

As a part of First Cycle Coding, I also worked with coding the visual data, which in this case were the photographs taken and selected by the participants for discussion in this study. Instead of doing a content analysis of the photographs, my analysis of the photographs relied heavily on the participants’ reflection and meaning of their own work. Guillemin and Drew (2010) suggest that “participants as producers of the image are the most relevant and appropriate persons to give meaning to the image they have generated” (p. 184). Saldaña (2013) suggests making use of the language-based data that accompany the visual data.

In order to analyze the photographs, I used the In Vivo coding method. In Vivo coding uses short words or phrases from the participants’ own language in the data to record as codes. By doing so, this honored the participant’s voice. This was essential for this study because I was seeking to listen to the voices of first year teachers in rural, high-poverty schools. Using this method helped me make the voice of the participant a priority in the analysis of the data. Saldaña (2013) considers In Vivo coding a type of elemental coding which provides a focused filter for reviewing the body of data they build a foundation for future coding cycles. I viewed each of the participants’ photographs and listened to the interview. I paid close attention to words and phrases that called for bolding, italicizing, vocal emphasis etc. I jotted down the In Vivo codes on a photograph coding sheet that I created (Appendix J).
As a part of the photo-elicitation interview, I asked each participant to categorize their own photographs. I used In Vivo coding to analyze the categories generated by the participants in order to preserve their voice. Charmaz (as cited in Saldaña, 2013) states that using In Vivo codes “help us to preserve the participants’ meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself” (p. 94).

I continued to work with the photographs using eclectic coding to label them in several different ways. First, I labeled each photograph to denote whether the photograph confirmed, contradicted, or expanded upon what the participant said in the interview (Brown, 2005). Secondly, I labeled them as to which type of emotional geography the photograph represented. Finally, I used Versus Coding to label the picture as to whether the emotion represented either empowers or constrains the teacher in his/her work.

The captions written on the photographs served as a secondary source for data analysis. Captions were used to explain and support the meaning the photographer intended. Rose (2012) posits that the process of writing captions prior to the interview session will allow the participant to reflect on the process of taking the photograph and this will enhance the quality of the interview. Harper (1998) indicate the need for captions to convey the photographer’s meaning because photographs are socially constructed and interpreted. I coded the captions line by line using open coding and then developed meaning unit categories. I compared the codes and categories that emerged from the captions to those generated by the codes and categories generated by the analysis of the interviews and the photographs.
Transitioning to Second Cycle Coding

Analyzing data is a constant process of revisiting the data, looking for relationships and collapsing the data into fewer and more abstract categories. Saldaña (2013) suggests two strategies that will help the researcher as he/she transitions into Second Cycle Coding Methods. Code mapping is the process of taking a set of initial codes through several iterations of analysis. For example, a full set of codes is listed, reorganized into categories and then further condensed to the study’s central themes or concepts. Code mapping served as a part of the audit trail of the research study because it documents how the researcher completed the analytic journey of categorization, re-categorization and conceptualization of higher order concepts. I used tabletop categories, a method that Saldaña (2013) suggests to help in the transition to second cycle coding, to help me with code mapping. I wrote individual codes on index cards, placed them on the table so that I was physically able to manipulate each index card. I moved the cards around into various configurations. I snapped photographs of each of these arrangements so that I could revisit them at a later time.

Code landscaping was another strategy that was employed to help the researcher integrate textual and visual methods (Saldaña, 2013). It is based on the idea of “tags” and the most frequent word or phrase from a text appears larger than others. As the frequency of the word or phrase decreases, so does the font size. I used Wordle (www.wordle.net) to create code landscapes for this study. This was a free online software program. The researcher was able to cut and paste a text into a field and the software program analyzed the word count. The software displayed a design with the more frequently used words in
a larger font size. This was an easy way to get a visual of the most relevant words. I created Wordles from the code book pages for the emotion coding and meaning unit coding that I had completed (see Appendix K).

**Second Cycle Coding**

During each cycle of coding, the number of codes should become less. The data analysis process was a continuous, flexible process and I remained open to new ways of looking at the data based on what happened in each coding cycle. The tabletop category and the code landscaping strategies that I used were helpful in leading me into the second cycle strategy that I chose to use for this study. I used axial coding for this final coding process. During the second cycle coding process, I used the Wordles (www.wordle.net) I created to look for the most dominant codes. I was able to remove, rearrange and reorganize the table top categories that I had created using the index cards. I was able to group similarly coded data and look for relationships. When I was satisfied with my reorganization of the data, I taped the index cards to chart paper and drew arrows and lines to show the flow of the data and their relationships to each other. This ultimately led to the creation of a graphic of a conceptual model (Figure 4.1) that shows the relationship among the major themes of the study.

**Researcher Subjectivities**

Peshkin (1988) discusses how subjectivity affects the results of all research whether it is quantitative or qualitative. Peshkin (1988) points out that merely acknowledging subjectivity is not enough and that examining subjectivity retrospectively is not acceptable. It was important for me to be aware of my subjectivity at all times during the
research process. Peshkin (1988) used a 5x8 note card to record his positive and negative feelings, as well as, times when he felt moved to cross the line and act beyond his role of researcher. As I conducted this study, I made analytic memos as I began the data analysis process and I kept a reflexive journal. These strategies were very practical ways to keep records of the emotional responses I had, and to look for patterns that emerged as the research was in process.

Peshkin (1988) also describes the concept of identifying the “subjective I’s” (p.18). Every person is a mixture that is fused together by background experiences, culture, religion, social status, etc. Peshkin (1988) posits that the “I’s” can change based on the topic of your research, and new “I’s” can emerge at any time.

As I was going through the research process, I was able to identify several subjective “I’s” that certainly influenced my research. The first subjective “I” that I became aware of was the Title I Teacher/Principal I. My past experiences as a Title I principal and teacher made me an insider within this research context. These experiences made me empathize with what the teachers were feeling and experiencing. At the same time, I had to consciously step out of that insider role to consider the possible biases and stereotypes the teachers were bringing into the research as well as my own biases and assumptions.

A second subjective I, that I was able to identify was the Director of Federal Programs I. This subjective I emerged when the teachers were talking about how Title I funds were used at their schools. I found myself being judgmental in some cases of how the school or district used the funds, and thinking of ways to do it better. Again, I was an
insider and my past experiences colored my thoughts and feelings about how Title I Funds should be allocated.

A third subjective I that appeared was the Induction Instructor I. I have had past experiences in planning and teaching induction classes in a school district. As teachers described their induction programs, I found myself comparing it to one I would have planned.

Peshkin (1988) encourages fellow researchers to “tame their subjectivity,” rather than to exorcise it (p.20). It is important to understand that the researcher will always find herself/himself in their research. As a researcher my voice and my perceptions will be present somewhere. Subjectivity will never be totally removed from the research process. It is important to be conscious of your own subjectivity and biases so that you don’t ignore other groups or people with viewpoints and value systems that are different from your own. We are all humans shaped by our experiences. We need to acknowledge these experiences and parts of our souls so that our perceptions are not skewed.

**Methods to Ensure Rigor**

Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Erlandson, 1993, p. 29) described how trustworthiness could be strengthened and assessed in qualitative studies. I will outline the strategies that I employed to strengthen the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of this study.

**Credibility**

Credibility is the compatibility of the constructed realities that exist in the minds of your research participants with those that are attributed to them. It is important to
establish credibility with the individuals who have supplied the data. In order to assure the credibility of this study I employed the following strategies:

Persistent Observation- I employed this strategy by providing a clear outline for data analysis and by constantly reviewing the data. I used First Cycle Coding Methods, Transitional Coding Methods, and Second Cycle Coding Methods to help me constantly compare data, sort out the relevant from the irrelevant data, seek patterns, and be aware of ways that participants may attempt to deceive the researcher. I also considered what might be missing from the data.

Triangulation- Data was examined from multiple sources (interviews, photographs, captions, and analytic memos) to provide justification for my findings.

Referential Adequacy Materials- The photographs that were taken by the participants added dimension to the interview and provided a richer contextual understanding to my analysis than could be provided through an interview alone.

Peer Debriefing- I asked fellow doctoral students who are not involved in this area of study to give me feedback and help me refine the inquiry process. These discussions were both formal and informal. I met with my peers a total of six times. These peers also coded interview transcripts and photographs along side of me. We met and came to consensus about the codes as another assurance that the codes were reliable.

Member Checking- I asked the participants check the findings of the study to make sure their experiences were accurately represented in the findings of the study. This was done after the data were analyzed in order to share a summary of the themes
and thematic structure. This helped validate the findings with those who have provided the data.

**Transferability**

In order to ensure transferability (extent to which the study could be applied in another context or with other respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I used the following strategies:

**Thick Description** - I provided a rich description of the data so that the reader would have a sense of what it is like to be a first year teacher in a rural, high poverty school. I used qualitative description (Sandelowski, 2000) to provide a straightforward description of the impact of working in a high-poverty setting on these new teachers.

**Purposeful Sampling** - This study was highly contextualized because I studied the impact of poverty on first year, early childhood teachers in rural, high-poverty schools. I sought information rich cases by recruiting participants who worked in schools designated as Title I Schools.

**Dependability and Confirmability**

In order to ensure the dependability and the confirmability of this study, I used the following strategies:

**Reflexive Journal** - I kept a reflexive journal to document my decisions as I engaged in the data analysis process. This journal was updated daily or weekly.

**Audit Trail** - I kept records such as my code book, interview protocol, analytic memos, reflexive journal, notes from peer debriefing meetings, code maps, and code landscaping and other items that showed the progression of data analysis.
Chapter Summary

In summary, the purpose of this study was to examine the emotional impact of teaching in a high-poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina using a qualitative research design. This study employed the use of qualitative description as the methodology and photo-elicitation as the primary means of data collection. It is important to note that the data were collected in May and June. The teachers were able to reflect upon their entire first year of teaching. Audio, textual, and visual data were analyzed inductively by using First Cycle, Transitional, and Second Cycle Coding Methods as suggested by Saldaña (2013). In Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of the data analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to listen to the voices of induction level, early childhood teachers who teach in rural, high poverty settings in order to learn more about the emotional impact of working in such a setting. Through the use of photo elicitation with interviews, new teachers in rural South Carolina schools articulated, visually and verbally, the emotional realities of working in a high poverty school. The participants created a dialogue about the connections they made to their pre-service programs, induction programs, and other support systems in order to become empowered as a teacher in a rural, high poverty school. Participants also discussed disconnections between their pre-service programs, induction programs and the realities of teaching in a high poverty classroom. Additionally, they described their inability to link to support systems, which led to their constraint as teachers. Some of the teachers described ways in which they used their creativity and resilience to overcome obstacles in order to become empowered as a teacher in a rural, high poverty setting.

This chapter will present the research findings beginning with an overview of a conceptual model, which shows the relationship among themes. Then, each component of the conceptual model will be discussed in detail, along with the associated emotions, exemplar photographs and narrative excerpts to support the findings.
Overview of Conceptual Model and Thematic Structure

A conceptual model, The Effects of the Emotional Impact of Working in a High Poverty School on Teacher Empowerment (Figure 4.1), was developed to describe the thematic structure which emerged from this study. The conceptual model is a visual representation which illustrates the relationships among the major themes of the study. The first major theme of the study was Responsibility for Child Well-being. The model suggests that the teacher, as well as, the school at large, may feel the moral obligation to take care of overall child well-being and to meet the basic needs of the student. This moral obligation may be a result of the teacher’s perceptions based on their background experiences.

As a result of this, induction teachers came to a realization that there were sociocultural differences between their backgrounds and the backgrounds of their students. This led to the second major theme of the study, the Realization of Sociocultural Differences. As teachers learned more about the living conditions of their students and their home lives, the cultural gap became more apparent to them. As the induction teachers came to realize that these differences existed, they often sought sources of support or looked for connections which helped them cope in the classroom. This model depicts three pathways. There are two separate pathways that diverge based on connections and disconnections. As a result of the connections or disconnections, the teacher is either empowered or constrained in his/her teaching. Also, there is a connecting pathway that depicts the ability to overcome obstacles that leads from constraint to empowerment.
Figure 4.1 Conceptual Model: The Effects of the Emotional Impact of Working in a High-Poverty School on Teacher Empowerment
Theme # 1: Responsibility for Child Well-being

“They don’t care, and they act like it is the teacher’s responsibility.” - Nina, Third Grade Teacher, Apple Grove Elementary

Nina’s quote captured the essence of her frustration with parents because she often felt like she must take on the role of the parent and meet the basic needs of her students. The first theme, Responsibility for Child Well-being, was discussed in every single interview in a number of ways. The participants in the study discussed their perceptions about how parents often did not have the means to provide for the basic needs of their children, or would not provide for the basic needs of their children for varying reasons. The teachers discussed the strong sense of moral obligation that they had to meet those basic needs before instruction could commence in the classroom. Amy, a first grade teacher, commented, “It’s not just about teaching academic needs. It’s fostering emotional needs and teaching them things they don’t get at home. Sometimes it’s cleaning their hands and washing their feet and things like that you don’t realize if you are not into poverty.”

In the interviews, the teachers specifically discussed their role, or the schools’ role in taking responsibility for providing food, clothing and school supplies for students and helping students with cleanliness/hygiene issues. These first year teachers described their own emotional responses of assurance, worry, concern, fear, disgust and frustration as they described their photographs, which depicted meeting a basic need of some kind such as providing food, clothing or attending to hygienic needs.
Hunger

Hunger was a major subtheme that emerged as participants communicated their experiences regarding their responsibilities for child well-being. There were 11 photographs submitted that included images and captions related to hunger issues. These included photographs related to programs such as breakfast in the classroom and the Backpack Buddy Program, and photographs that represented the teachers’ worry about the students’ access to food while at home.

Four of the participants included photographs of items related to the breakfast in the classroom program.

Caption:

Every student is offered breakfast in the classroom each morning. This gets the day started off right with the most important meal of the day.

Figure 4.2. Hannah’s photograph of breakfast in the classroom.

Teachers discussed having feelings of assurance and relief because of the breakfast in the classroom program. They viewed this program in a positive light, and by having this program, they knew they students would be fed a healthy breakfast and would be ready to learn. Hannah, a kindergarten teacher, discussed breakfast in the classroom in her interview when she was talking about the above photograph (Figure 4.2). She stated,
“It is relieving to know that they are able to get the most important meal of the day, which is breakfast, because a lot of them are in a hurry when they leave or they don’t have it.” Hannah went on to say, “… it is a good thing. I was glad to see that we have this at this school too, because it is reassuring to know that at least they have the opportunity to eat in the morning before they get their day started.”

Teachers also expressed emotions of worry and concern because the only meals many of their students were able to eat on a daily basis came from the school’s breakfast or lunch program.

Caption:
Most of my students are free/reduced breakfast and lunch. For some, this is their only meals all day!

Figure 4.3. Jennifer’s photograph of a lunch tray.

Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher from Farndale Elementary, which is located in the midlands of South Carolina, related her experience with a student who come in late to school and who was extremely hungry. Because the student was late, he/she missed breakfast. Jennifer said, “Okay, well, sweetie, you know we eat lunch at 10:30. I’ll give you some crackers, will that help?” The student responded, “Please, don’t. Please let me
go eat breakfast.” When she asked the student why the student responded, “I only eat breakfast and lunch. I don’t eat supper. We don’t have food at my house.”

Jennifer talked about her reasons for including this photograph of the breakfast tray (Figure 4.3) in the study: "I took a picture of the breakfast to show that you always have to think about your kids. If they're not behaving correctly, or they're not following directions and procedures, you have to think about did they eat breakfast? Did they get to eat supper last night? Where do their meals come from? Do they even get to eat a meal?"

“It really hurts your heart to think about the kids. Some days when they come and they are starving, and you know that they ate breakfast, you saw them eat breakfast, but they're still hungry because they didn't eat the day before. A lot of my kids came to school that way.”

Lisa, a first grade teacher at River Rock Elementary, expressed similar concerns in the caption of her photograph shown below in Figure 4.4.

**Caption:**

For some students, the only time they eat is while they are at school. Breakfast in the classroom each morning is necessary to make sure all students are able to eat enough meals.

Figure 4.4. Lisa’s photograph of breakfast in the classroom.
Lisa also elaborated on her perceptions about taking on the responsibility of meeting the basic needs of students. She stated that, “Once again, it shows that the school is really reaching out and meeting basic needs that go beyond the standards based curriculum.” When asked to describe what this picture meant to her, she said, “This picture means to me… when I was growing up… I guess it shows how different things are. I mean when I was coming through school, we never had to worry about getting fed. I guess teachers didn’t have to worry about feeding students at school and stuff. Now, every student gets free breakfast in the classroom. It shows that the school has shifted not from just education, but going into meeting those needs that a lot of students don’t have met at home.”

Leigh, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary, discussed her sense of assurance and thankfulness for the program and her frustration about the mess that it often caused in her classroom when she spoke about the photograph and caption below in Figure 4.5.
Figure 4.5. Leigh’s photograph: Frustration, yet assurance.

When Leigh was asked to tell me about this picture and what it meant to her, she responded, “This is our breakfast cart. When I first look at it, I kind of cringe because it reminds me of spilled milk, cereal all over the floor, gnats because of fruit, running out of trash bags, not having silverware—all of this stuff. Then, when I really look at it, I know my kids are fed and ready to learn in the mornings. Because most all of my children do eat in the classroom and have not eaten at home, I feel frustration, yet assurance, knowing they have food.”

Four participants included photographs that expressed their emotions of worry and concern about their students not having access to food when they are away from school. Hannah, a kindergarten teacher included this photograph and caption shown below in Figure 4.6.
Caption:
All but a few students are on free or reduced lunch. When students are home, I worry about the amount of food they have available.

Figure 4.6. Hannah’s photograph of the lunch number pad.

Hannah described what this photograph meant to her: “This is the lunch pad that the students type their numbers into- I think I have only three students who are not on free or reduced lunch. When I am not at school, or when we are on a longer break, I sometimes worry about some of them… wondering if they do get the food they need while at home, and the nourishment and not just snacks or stuff like that. I guess the feeling with that would be worry or concern because I love them and want them to be taken care of.”

Juanita, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary included this photograph (Figure 4.7) describing her worry about student hunger when the students are away from school.
Three participants also included photographs of Backpack Buddy Bags. The Backpack Buddy program was designed to alleviate hunger by providing non-perishable food for children to take home in their backpacks over the weekend. The program was funded through private donations or provided by a local food bank. Teachers expressed feelings of reassurance about being able to offer this to students in need.

Brianna, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary submitted the photograph and caption shown below of a Backpack Buddy Bag provided by a local food bank (Figure 4.8). Brianna describes the Backpack Buddy program as being “phenomenal.”
Every Friday, some of our students receive meal assistance for the weekend. This is one of my favorite things about my school. I am able to rest easy on the weekends knowing my students have food to eat.

Figure 4.8. Brianna’s photograph of a backpack buddy bag.

When describing her photograph in the interview she said, “It is a phenomenal program where our students who are at the lower income level receive food for the weekends or holidays. They send home cereal, food for them to snack on, and that just lets me know, OK, my child is going to come back fed on Monday. That is one less thing I have to worry about with the outside influences. That one is another big deal for me too.”

Brianna also gave a description of the emotions, both positive and negative, which this particular picture evoked in her. She states, “It actually brings about two, because I see it, and I struggle because I didn’t come from that background and so I hate to see any child have to worry for their next meal. You know, in the summer we cannot give the backpack program for the entire summer. I hurt for them, worry for them. What does it symbolize to them—hey somebody cares enough about me to make sure I am fed. I do
have an important job, and so I am grateful for that program. That’s just, I guess an overall happy emotion that exists in me and my children can benefit from it.”

The issue of hunger had a strong emotional impact on the participants in this study. They described their emotions of sadness, worry and concern about their students and their access to an adequate amount of food at home. They expressed emotions of thankfulness for programs such as, the breakfast in the classroom and Backpack Buddy Program, which alleviate hunger.

**Clothing Issues**

In addition to hunger, clothing was another subtheme that was discussed by the teachers in this study with regard to meeting the basic needs of children and to ensure their overall well-being. Six participants submitted photographs relative to clothing issues. Teachers described students who came to school with clothing that was not appropriate for the weather, ill-fitting clothing, clothing that was in disrepair, or in dirty clothing. The teachers talked about ways in which they personally tried to help the student, or how the school helped the student meet some of the clothing needs described above. Emotions associated with this category included disgust, sadness and worry. One teacher described a feeling of awareness.

Juanita, a first grade teacher, included a photograph (Figure 4.9) and a caption that represented her worry about students not having coats that would keep them warm enough in the winter months.
Do the students wear thin jackets during the cold months because they do not have a thick jacket?

Figure 4.9. Juanita’s photograph of jackets.

Juanita elaborated on this photograph with these comments: “I am just worried about if they have the thicker jackets that they need, or even just the clothing they need. I’ve got a couple of students who will come in with same shoes on every day and then they start falling apart, and they will say, “Will you please glue these together for me?” It makes me sad that they don’t even have something to fix it with at home. They obviously don’t have the money to buy more. That in general, clothes in general, some of them don’t have what they really need.”

Mary, a first grade teacher at River Rock Elementary school, submitted a photograph of her own dirty clothes hamper (Figure 4.10). To Mary, this photograph represented the students in her classroom who come to school wearing dirty clothing or ill-fitting clothing. She expressed her desire to be able to help them by purchasing clothing for them to wear to school. In her description of the photograph during the interview, she struggled to reconcile her upbringing with that of her students.
One thing I had to get used to working where I’m at is all of the dirty clothes that the students wear each day. Many of them do not smell nice or sometimes they wear the same thing all week. It makes me wish I could buy them all five nice outfits to wear each week.

*Caption:*

One thing I had to get used to working where I’m at is all of the dirty clothes that the students wear each day. Many of them do not smell nice or sometimes they wear the same thing all week. It makes me wish I could buy them all five nice outfits to wear each week.

*Figure 4.10.* Mary’s photograph of a dirty clothes basket.

When Mary was talking about this picture (Figure 4.10) in the interview she said, “I took this picture when I was… I usually had dirty clothes in my hamper and I hate having dirty clothes in my hamper. It made me think about children who come to school every day. I had several kids that wore the same outfit all week long. Their parents don’t wash them, or they might have hand-me downs that don’t fit them right. Sometimes parts of their body are showing and I have to tie it up, make sure it fits right. In some ways, that’s poverty, but some of those I feel like are learned skills because they don’t wash the clothes. Then again, it costs money to run the washer and dryer. It has been hard for me because, I am like, why are their clothes always so dirty? It really made me change my viewpoint on it, because as a child growing up in a middle class home, we always had clean clothes. I really had to start thinking outside the box and thinking they probably don’t have money to run water or heat in their house. That’s probably why.”
Amy, a first grade teacher at Freedom Elementary, included a photograph (Figure 4.11) of a clothes closet at her school. She described her feelings of happiness about being able to offer this service to parents and students.

*Caption:*

This is a picture of a closet of clothes for students in need. It represents the need for clothing and shoes.

*Figure 4.11. Amy’s photograph of the clothes closet*

Amy’s tone lightened as she described this photograph of the clothes closet: “This is a picture of the clothes closet in our nurse’s office. Basically, this isn’t for children who have wet their pants or anything like that. This is for children who do not have shoes and clothes that they need, and their families come to the school to seek help. This, once again, is very sad, but it also makes me happy that we are able to do this as a school; reach out to these parents. We offer this, we make it known at the beginning of the year that this is available for parents. While it is sad, it is enlightening to know that we can provide for them in some way.”

Leigh, a first grade teacher, and Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher, included photographs of pants and added to the discussion of clothing issues. In Jennifer’s
interview, she discussed her frustrations with providing a student with clothing that was never worn again.

Figure 4.12. Leigh’s photograph of pants.

Caption:
- Represents students’ clothing either not fitting or being dirty.
- Student whose pants do not fit and is showing hind parts daily.

Jennifer related the story of one particular student in her class as she described the picture in Figure 4.13. She experienced feelings of uselessness and she felt disheartened. “I am going to go ahead and tell you the emotions for this one are disheartening, sad. I
can’t even think of the word when feel useless. I definitely felt like I could not help him. I brought him new clothes. My assistant brought him new clothes. The reason why I took a picture of the pants is he never had a fresh pair of clothes on, from one day to the next. He would almost wear an entire outfit for a whole week. Even if we gave him new stuff.”

Jennifer went on to say, “He, (she becomes teary and emotional)… sorry. He always came to school with no socks on every day. The shoes were always too small. Even when we gave him new stuff, the next day he would wear it, but after that he would not wear it any more. We don’t know what happened to those things.”

Teachers expressed feelings such as sadness, worry and concern about their students who came to school with dirty clothing, ill-fitting clothing and clothing that was not suitable for the weather. They were also thankful that the school was able to reach out to families in need by providing a clothes closet.

Hygiene/Cleanliness Issues

Along with the clothing photographs, teachers discussed the cleanliness of the clothes. Furthermore, teachers often went on to discuss having to take care of basic hygiene needs once the students arrived at school. Two photographs (Figures 4.14 and 4.15) included by participants that address this topic.
I had a set of twins in my classroom who would always come in with their hair uncombed and sometimes dirty. On several occasions this year one of them came in with dried spoiled milk in their hair so myself and school nurse washed it. And one of the ladies at school would do their hair for them every day.

Figure 4.14. Lila’s photograph of detangler and comb.

Many of my students come in with dirty clothes and ragged shoes. Their families cannot afford nice clothing for the children.

Figure 4.15. Nina’s photograph of shoes/clothing

Nina, a third grade teacher at Apple Grove Elementary was the most vocal about her disgust and frustration about dealing with the hygiene needs of her students in the
morning before class began. Although this is a picture of shoes (Figure 4.15), her discussion centered on a “smelly feet” issue that she experienced in her classroom. She related this story in her interview: “We had a smelly feet issue in our room actually last week. Mrs. W. (the principal) actually had to come down and talk to the kids about cleanliness and taking baths at home, and washing their shoes, and washing their feet…”

Nina also talked about buying a pair of shoes for one of her students because the smell was so bad. She described the experience: “I had to buy… I bought some sandals for my little… one of my little guys in here because the smell was so bad it would make you nauseous. His shoes were ruined and the parents would not do anything about it. They had to have known it was that way. That’s why I took the picture of the dirty shoes because we had an issue with just cleanliness in here and the smells of not being clean and not having clean things to wear. It was really bad.”

Nina elaborated on her frustration with parents. She discussed how she had been on mission trips to other countries and although the people were very poor, they did the best they could with staying clean. She went on to say, “I’m thinking all the things that we have here that they don’t have in their country, and there’s no excuse for that when we have the means that we have here, and the parents still send them to school in the shape that they are in. I had to bring… I brought a bar of soap and a washcloth in and made them wash off their feet in the sink. I brought them in and I was like, you know, you’ve got to clean up. The smell was just awful.”

Nina also expressed her frustration about taking on this responsibility. She said, “Why are we having to do the parent’s job, because the parent involvement here is so
little. They act like they don’t care and they act like it is the teacher’s responsibility. Some of their parents send in their shoes to be washed by the school.”

Teachers discussed how they often had to take care of the basic hygiene needs of some of their students. This may have meant helping a child wash their hair, hands or feet. They also purchased shoes to help take care of bad smells in the classroom. Emotions of frustration were expressed by the teachers about having to take care of such needs.

School Supplies

The induction teachers in this study included photographs related to taking responsibility for providing backpacks and basic school supplies for their students. Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher, described her picture of a paper bag in a school book cubby. She noted, “It makes you feels that when you work in schools like this, you have to think about every aspect of their life. He never brought school materials to school, and that goes with the next picture- a bag, a paper bag and a cubby.”

*_caption:
Students do not always come to school with all their supplies. I had a little boy who did not have a book all year until a classmate brought him one.

*Figure 4.16. Jennifer’s photograph of a paper bag in a cubby.*
Jennifer went on to describe her frustration with trying to provide a book bag for a student as she described her photograph, “He never brought his book bag to school because he did not have one. Even when we gave him one, after a couple of weeks, it would disappear. So, a little boy brought him another one, and he kept it, but that was at the end of school. Otherwise, we sent things home in paper bags and plastic bags.”

Summary

This photograph taken by Lila, a PK teacher at Crescent Moon Elementary school included a caption that encompasses many of the topics and ideas discussed in Theme # 1: Responsibility for Child Well-Being.

Caption:

This school year we had a student who came in and was very dirty. We worried about the child being taken care of so we sent food home with him every day so we knew he had a chance to eat. I struggled with this a lot this school year because I felt like he deserved a better situation. I had one of the ladies I work with who had worked with the children in poverty before and she told me something that stayed with me and helped some. You can’t put your values on someone else’s life, you have to think about are they doing the best they can.

Figure 4.17. Lila’s photograph of backpacks and cubbies.
In her caption, she discussed the overall issue of child well-being and she tried to reconcile her frame of reference with that of the parent. Her assistant told her, “You can’t put your values on someone else’s life. You have to think about, are they doing the best they can.”

The participants in this study included a total of 23 photographs that were coded as being related to the overall theme of Responsibility for Child Well-Being. Photographs in this theme included photographs depicting hunger/food related issues, clothing issues, cleanliness/hygiene issues and the lack of basic school supplies.

Participants discussed a wide range of emotions related to this theme. Teachers experienced feelings of sadness when they came in contact with students who were experiencing hunger, who did not have adequate clothing and who came to school unclean. They also expressed feelings of worry and concern about their students when they were away from school. They worried about the students’ access to food on the weekends and over long breaks from school. The induction teachers experienced feelings of assurance and happiness when they were able to take a small part in helping to meet the needs of their students by being able to provide breakfast in the classroom, provide Backpack Buddy Bags, or provide access to a clothes closet.

Teachers also experienced frustration with trying to help students and when their efforts seemed to be in vain—such as providing clothing that was never worn and backpack that never returned to school. Frustration with parents and blaming parents were also noted in the interviews. The teachers had a hard time understanding how parents could not provide food, clothing, or take care of the hygiene needs of their
children. The background experiences of the teacher and their upbringing greatly influenced their perceptual lens through which they viewed the parents and students of poverty.

This led us to the second major theme of the study, Theme #2: Realization of Sociocultural Differences. Teachers certainly realized differences in their backgrounds when they talked about meeting the basic needs of the children at school because they perceived that these responsibilities were not being taken care of in a satisfactory manner in the home. The discussion about sociocultural differences was expanded upon as the participants talked about photographs, which represented housing and home life issues.

**Theme # 2: Realization of Sociocultural Differences**

“*I think it was sad at first, but later on it made me have a deeper understanding. I guess just an awareness of the fact that my students were different than I was, and that I needed to accept the, I don’t know the right word, the culture that they were growing up in and realize that maybe I needed to learn and look more into what they growing up in instead of making judgments based on my middle class background. Awareness.*”

-Mary, River Rock Elementary, Grade 1

The second component of the conceptual model is the Realization of Sociocultural Differences. From this component there are three arrows. One of the arrows is labeled as “perceptions of the teacher” and leads back to the component of Responsibility of Child Well-Being. A second arrow leads to a pathway of connections. A third arrow leads to a pathway of disconnections. In this section, I will discuss the ways in which teachers explained their realizations about the differences in their own
childhoods and the childhoods of their students and how this affected the perceptual lens through which they view the students and their parents. This discussion will lead to the explanation of each of the three pathways: connections to empowerment, disconnections to constraint, and disconnections to overcoming obstacles and to empowerment. These pathways are the final components of the conceptual model.

This theme is represented by photographs of housing, images that represent the lack of control over home life, differences in family structure and involvement of the Department of Social Services with the families. Nine of the twelve participants submitted photographs that were relative to housing issues or the home life of their students. Participants discussed the stark differences in their own home lives, upbringings and that of their students. They also expressed emotions of sadness, lack of control, and futility.

**Housing**

The homes to which children go home every day were a source of concern to the teachers who participated in this study. Some of the participants related stories of home visits they made at the beginning of the school year, or of a bus tour of the community the induction class took. The teachers expressed worry and concern about the living conditions of their students. Many of the students lived in mobile homes or campers.
We had to do home visits at the beginning of the school year. Some of the houses we saw were nicer, some were not as nice. As teachers, it’s hard to see where our students live because they are ours and we worry about them if knew what they went home to and it was really difficult sending some of ours home because we knew what we were sending them to.

Figure 4.18. Lila’s photograph of mobile homes.

Lila included the photograph above (Figure 4.18) of mobile homes and she described the home visits that she made at the beginning of the year. She indicated that many of her 4K students lived in mobile homes and the condition of the mobile homes varied, and ranged from being “very nice” to “run down and just not clean.” In the interview, Lila talked about the impact that making the home visits had on her as a teacher. She said, “One of the reasons I took it and wanted to add it was because we don’t ever really think about where our kids live. We know that they have struggles at home and that everyone’s family life is different, but generally you can’t look at one of your kids and go, “They live there, and I know what their house looks like. I know what it smells like. I know what is around it.” You don’t get that opportunity to do that a lot, and I did.” Lila went on to say, “I wanted to put this picture in because I wanted to show that it was a big part of this year, because when I look at some of my babies, I would think about that. I guess I had a harder time sending them home because I was worried about what they were going home to.”
Lila told of one home visit in particular: “I didn’t feel comfortable going into that house. I wouldn’t feel comfortable. It makes me sad. It makes me worried. It also makes me want to do the very best I can for them while they are at school so that they have something maybe to balance it out I guess.”

Amy, a first grade teacher, included a picture of a camper- a place some of her students call home (Figure 4.19). Amy described what this photograph meant to her and the emotions it evoked in her as she shared it in the interview: “This is a picture of a camper that some of our students live in. It does not have any running water or electricity. It represents where my students come from on a daily basis. It is heartbreaking to me. Tonight there are these kids…Their escape is school. That’s probably the only safe, clean environment that they’re in.”

*Caption:
This is a picture of a place some of our students call “home.”*

*Figure 4.19. Amy’s photograph of a camper.*

Some of the students lived in crowded conditions and without enough beds for everyone. Lisa included this photograph of pillows in her classroom library (Figure 4.20). She described how these students would come to school suffering from the lack of sleep.
Caption:
It is not unusual to come into my classroom and see 2 students using pillows from the classroom library while taking a nap.

Figure 4.20. Lisa’s photograph of pillows.

“This is a picture of . . . I’ve got a bunch of pillows in my classroom library. I had two students specifically who did not have beds at home. There were a lot of people living in the house, and there was not enough beds. There not enough room for beds, so these student were always tired. It was nothing unusual for one of them to fall asleep before breakfast was over. I would make them a little pallet with the pillows and let them sleep in the morning. I guess that one had the most impact on me- to realize I had to not . . . I know I had to love the kids and everything, but to help them meet the basic need of just getting enough sleep.

Home Life

In addition to worry and concern about the physical living conditions of the students, the teachers in this study also shared similar concerns about the students’ life outside of the school. Teacher shared their worry about the safety of their students when they were away from school.
Erin, a kindergarten teacher from Mountain View Elementary School, shared this picture of the circle (Figure 4.21) which represents control.

Caption:

Learning that I can’t control what happens when they walk out of my classroom. The Circle represents what I can control. What happens to them inside my classroom—safety.

Figure 4.21. Erin’s photograph of a circle.

Erin described in the interview how what she cannot control has impacted her as a teacher: “Outside the classroom is where they go home and how they get home and who they go home with. That’s what I can’t control and that has definitely impacted me as a first year teacher. Even though, I grew up in this area and grew up with students in those types of environments, I’m just learning as a teacher that I cannot control where they go home to…and what they see and what they witness and what they bring to school with them. I can only control what happens in my classroom and letting them know they are loved here and they are safe here, even though sometimes it is not good once they walk outside my door.”

When Erin was asked to describe the emotions, if any, that this picture evoked in her, she described both positive and negative emotions. She stated that “Sometimes it’s sad. I go home crying after some of the stories that I’ve heard of children and what they
have been through and what they are still going through. It definitely hits a nerve and is just very emotional.”

On a positive note, Erin said, “I am also happy that I am their rock sometimes. I am their safe place and that to me, it’s not just teaching for me. It’s making a difference and I want them to feel that and I want them to experience that with me.”

Brianna, a first grade teacher, also shared her concerns about outside influences and the impact of home life on her students. She submitted a photograph of a DARE symbol (Figure 4.22) which is an acronym for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Brittany talked candidly about her fear that all of her efforts in the classroom would be futile because of the outside influences that exist.

Caption:

I find it very frustrating that I can give my students the materials they need to succeed and yet, the outside influences of life are still there to create hardships and hamper success.

Figure 4.22. Brianna’s photograph of the D.A.R.E. symbol.

“I feel like I need to explain this more than really share what it is about. I chose the D.A. R.E symbol because I am teaching so many students whose parents I went to high school with. There is that outside influence. It’s your parents, your home, you grow up thinking they’re the be all, end all. Their way is always right, and so it is disheartening
to come to school and put all my effort forth, and see them change into young ladies and gentlemen and then know in just a couple of years, they’ll be moving on and maybe if they are not as connected with their teacher, they’re just going to fall into that same routine because it is easy. So, we already know that with poverty, there’s more in jail, so that’s disheartening, it’s terrifying, because you look at my kids and I am trying to say, “Hopefully, that will be none of you.” But there are those that we have to deal with, and it is so hard.”

Brianna described her frustration with the thought that her hard work may be in vain when she talks about her emotions related to this photograph, “…Definitely frustration, because they have so much potential, just to know that they could go downhill., and I guess that it is just disheartening. I know that I am here for a reason and I try to do that, but then know that all the hard work is gone, or for nothing. That’s hard too.”

Additionally, the teachers also talked about students who have had such a difficult home life, they had been removed from the home by the South Carolina Department of Social Services. Others talked about students who are being raised by someone other than a parent.

Amy, a first grade teacher at Freedom Elementary included this simple, yet powerful photograph (Figure 4.23) which represents the number of open Department of Social Services cases in her classroom of thirteen students.
Caption:
This picture represents the number of open DSS cases in my classroom alone.

Figure 4.23. Amy’s photograph of the number of open DSS cases

Amy described this picture with great emotion in the interview, “This is probably my most emotional picture. It is four out of thirteen of my children, in my classroom, have an open DSS case. This is not counting the two students who have had their cases sent off to the service that comes before DSS and they send it back. Once again, that number is heartbreaking; just really shows where these children come from and that you are their only escape that they have. It impacts your teaching tremendously, because you have to foster those needs as well that they are not getting at home and make them feel safe.”

Nina, third grade teacher at Apple Grove Elementary, submitted this photograph (Figure 4.24) which is of a newspaper clipping headline about a recent drug bust. In her caption, she talked about how many of the students in her classroom are no longer placed with their parents.
Many children in my classroom are not placed with their parents. They are being raised by someone other than their parents. Drugs are a huge problem in the area.

Figure 4.24. Nina’s photograph of a drug bust.

Juanita, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary, also talked about students being raised by their grandparents when she described this photograph (Figure 4.25):

Caption: Students need love and the knowledge that their teacher cares for them. I usually find the days I am the hardest on a student is the days they want to go home with me or will pick me flowers at recess to make sure that I still love them. I have a hard time when a child cries and says they want to live with me. One of my students lives
with her grandparents and desires to have the relationship of parents. She usually cries to go home with me on weekends or on the days when she has not had the best behavior.

She needs and desires structure and someone to be the parent (not the grandparent who gives in too easily). It is hard to see students come into school in the morning upset about something that happened before they got to school. Finding what helps each student put those things behind them takes time. Getting to know the students personally helped me be able to help them.

*Figure 4.25. Juanita’s photograph of flowers: Assurance of love.*

Juanita talked about her wish for her students, “I just wish they all had the structure of two parents at home. I know that’s not always possible, but her grandparents love her very much, but they treat her as her grandparents, not as her parents.”

**Summary**

This heartfelt quote from Brianna, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary, provided a good summary of the thoughts and feelings voiced by the teachers: “There are so many things that are really, really hard to see, especially looking at my childhood, and then thinking about theirs and what they have to go home to.”

The teachers’ descriptions of the homes that students lived in were very vivid as they described the look, smell and feel of homes they had encountered on home visits. These visits and experiences seemed to make the gap between their ways of living and the ways of living of the families of their students seem to be even wider. Teachers talked about that you don’t always think about where your students might live until you experience being in the homes.
The Three Pathways

In order to cope with taking on many of the responsibilities for child well-being and the realization of sociocultural differences, teachers began to look for connections that would support them in their efforts to become empowered as a teacher. As the teachers found the connections and the sources of support that they needed, they would travel along the first pathway—the one that led them from connections to empowerment. Likewise, some teachers were unable to make connections or find sources of support. As a result, they would travel along the pathway that led from disconnections to constraint. Additionally, teachers who experienced disconnections were often able to find ways to overcome obstacles and they would travel along a pathway that led from disconnections back to empowerment. The next three sections will discuss each of these pathways of the conceptual model. All of the teachers in this study could be found on all three pathways at certain times. All of the teachers experienced issues that constrained them as teachers in some areas, but not in all areas all of the time.

Theme # 3: The Pathway to Connections & Empowerment

“No matter where I looked or turned around, there was someone trying to help our school. That’s an awesome feeling, too with such a high poverty, low income school, they need those resources, and I feel like our school just has so many for our children.”

Brianna, First Grade Teacher, Mountain View Elementary

As I interviewed the teachers and learned more about the photographs they had taken, it became clear that many of the teachers had support systems in place that led to their empowerment as a teacher. These support systems manifested themselves in many
different ways. Some of the participants described having strong support from their school administration and community groups. For some participants, the support systems were manifested in the abundance of resources provided through Title I funding. For others, they manifested themselves in connections that they made to either their preservice programs or induction/mentoring programs.

Because the teachers were able to find and establish these connections, they became empowered as a teacher. The overall impact of empowerment resulted in the development of positive relationships with parents and students and the achievement of academic and behavioral goals as evidenced by the success stories that these teachers shared.

**Connections: Community Support**

Participants in this study depicted their feelings of gratitude for the community support that they received. Leigh, a first grade teacher at Mountain View Elementary submitted this photograph, which symbolized the support of the local churches that surrounded the school.
Represents the community churches that surround our school.

They give support, prayers, and food to our school and its staff.

Figure 4.26. Leigh’s photograph of a local church.

Brianna included this photograph with a caption that describes the wonderful support that she had during her first year of teaching.

Caption:

My community has done a fabulous job at making me feel supported this year. I would randomly come to school with sweet notes on my door, just like this one!

Figure 4.27. Brianna’s photograph of an encouraging note.

In her interview she described the support she received from local churches as well as other community groups: “There was a church that was using our facilities and they made sure – we were going through tough times with administration and everything,
and they made sure to put a note on our classroom door just saying, ‘Hey, we’re thinking about you, we’re praying for you,’ and that was a great symbol to me that we do have community support. It’s not just that church, either. We had many various groups, like the library, part of the summer book program, we have people to donate books for all of our students.”

**Connections: Abundance of Resources**

Pam, a first grade teacher, took this picture and discussed how Title I Funds were used to provide resources for her students. Title I Funds are federal funds that are allocated to high poverty schools.

*Caption:*

I decided to take this picture because this term was at the center of my year. Because of this, materials and book were able to be purchased for students.

Figure 4.28. Pam’s photograph about Title I funding.

Pam described her picture: “This picture is not fancy or anything, but the Title I picture just kind of shows, it just means that everything that happened this year was through Title I. My kids were able to get new books to read by themselves. She went on to say, “As a first year teacher having new books in your library helps a lot. She also
commented that, “Just this term, Title I, was a focal point throughout my whole first year of teaching.”

Other teachers described having an abundance of technology resources. Leigh and Brianna, both first grade teachers at Mountain View Elementary, included pictures of iPad carts and iPads.

Leigh’s photograph (Figure 4.29) represented her excitement about having one-to-one iPads in the classroom. She elaborated on this photograph in her interview and discussed how it impacted her instruction. “It represents our one-to-one iPad classroom, where all of my students have iPads in their hands. To me it really represents of course the abundance of materials we have in a Title I School. Personally this year, it just opened the horizon to what we could do in class.”

She described her emotion related to this photograph as “excitement.” She stated that, “it is just excitement. I am so glad that I had the opportunity because it made me think, ‘Ok, we can do this on paper, but how can we integrate technology into it?’ I was just incredibly happy for the fact that we have them in here. They have learned so many things without me having to teach them. It made them more independent, I think, so that makes me very happy.”
Caption:
- Represents the abundance of materials that we are given in order to teach our students.
- Can teach my students well

Figure 4.29. Leigh’s Photograph of the iPad Cart

Brianna included this picture of iPads (Figure 4.30) to express her gratefulness for the abundance of technology resources that help make learning fun and engaging for her first graders.

Caption:
The over-abundance of technology at this school makes teaching engaging and meaningful.

Figure 4.30. Brianna’s photograph of iPads.

Additionally, she included this photograph of wagons full of resource materials (Figure 4.31) which she labeled as, “overwhelming.” She talked about trying to sort out
the materials in order to find out what would be the most beneficial to use with her students.

Caption:
As a first year teacher, it took a great deal of time to find what materials fit where, and what would work best with students. It took a great deal of time prepping for lessons and searching for just the right resource.

Figure 4.31. Brianna’s photograph of resource materials.

She discussed this in her interview, “There was an overabundance between the community churches, technology through the district for our children, and then of course resources online, and then I took a classroom from a teacher who retired, and she gave me so many resources. I felt like there were so many out there, it was a blessing in itself. And, then, too, it has an overwhelming aspect to it. There are so many things to keep up with, just making sure they fit.”

Three of the teachers mentioned summer reading programs or summer book give away programs in their interviews. Lila included a photograph about a summer reading book give-away at her school (Figure 4.32) that was designed to prevent the students from having a summer reading loss.
Each student in the school received 8 books in hopes of preventing summer reading loss, because many students do not have an adequate book selection at home.

*Caption:*

Each student in the school received 8 books in hopes of preventing summer reading loss, because many students do not have an adequate book selection at home.

*Figure 4.32.* Lila’s photograph of the summer book give-away.

Lila was excited that her students had access to these resources over the summer. “I thought it was a great summer give-away program that the district has done. Each student… they got to go in and select their own books. It made my teacher heart happy.”

**Connections: Faith and Family**

Teachers also discussed the importance of connecting with sources of strength that were more personal in nature. I have included two exemplar photographs of connections to faith and family.

Erin, a kindergarten teacher referred to her teaching as “a calling.” She included this photograph of her daily devotional book (Figure 4.33) that represented the importance of her religious faith as a source of support.
Erin commented, “… faith, that has definitely got me through this year. Through college, I was a stress-er. I was a perfectionist, and I wanted to make that great grade and I would just tear myself down. This has definitely impacted me because I know, through teaching, you can’t do it all. You’re not going to be able to do it all, and you are not going to be able to remember everything. I took it day by day and this definitely helped me.”

Lila snapped a photograph of her engagement ring and wedding band (Figure 4.34) to symbolize the importance of having a supportive spouse at home.
I would not have been able to make it through my first school year without the support system of my husband to be able to listen so I don’t keep it bottled up inside.

*Figure 4.34.* Lila’s photograph of her engagement ring and wedding band.

**Connections: Pre-service Programs**

Teachers were asked in the interview sessions to talk about the extent to which the photographs they took connected to their experiences in their pre-service teacher education programs and to describe those connections. These connections were another source of support that led to empowerment. I have included some narrative excerpts to describe those connections, which the teachers were able to make.

Some of the connections that teachers were able to make were related to having practicum and student teaching experiences in high poverty schools. Juanita related that it was helpful to her to have some pre-clinical experiences in high poverty schools, but even though she was able to have some pre-service experiences in high poverty schools, there were differences in the cultures of each of those schools. Juanita also had 13 years of experience as a kindergarten teaching assistant in a Title I School, so that makes her perspective even more interesting. She describes this in her interview, “I did have 13 years a kindergarten assistant in a Title I School, so I kind of know that it was a lower
income for most of the students. I kind of knew what I was getting into, but this is a
different school in the same district. It is very different than the school that I was at. The
culture is different from the other school, and it seems that some of the students don’t
have as much discipline at home as the school that I came from. I think that was kind of
tough for me now realizing how different it would be. I did pre-clinicals in a Title I
School and it was a lot different than here.”

Nina, a third grade teacher at Apple Grove Elementary, echoed Juanita’s thoughts
about having student teaching experiences in a high poverty school, but recognized that
each school culture is different, “I was at a Title I School when I was student teaching,
and it was different from this. Of course, every Title I School has a different feel to it.”

Lila shared the benefits of her student teaching experience in a Title I School, “I
feel like my student teaching prepared me for it more, because I did my student teaching
at a Title I School that was with lower income kids. It was something where I could look
at it and talk to people. I could talk to teachers that had worked with those kinds of
students, because I feel like that takes a special kind of teacher. That has to be a calling.
You can’t just walk into that. I was able to talk to them and kind of get their mindset on
stuff. I feel like that part helped a lot more than I guess than any kind of class I sat in.”

Some teachers were able to make connections to coursework and book studies
that they were a part of in their pre-service teacher education programs. Heather
commented on her pre-service program, “Throughout all the courses I took at my
university, we talked about poverty and the impact it has on the students. We also did a
book study about poverty when I was student teaching so that was a good thing to take.”
This teacher also felt supported by the coursework she took prior to student teaching, “Well the courses I took prior to my student teaching, I already had an understanding of what the impact poverty can have on students and their learning, and actually, being in it, it was, I mean it matched up. It made sense what I was taught in my classes.”

Pam talked about how she was prepared to communicate with parents in her pre-service program, “In my teacher ed. program we were assigned a lot to communicate with parents. To me that was something I struggled with all throughout the school year. I had conversations with the parents before, if there’s not a problem, I am bad about just not saying anything, just keep going. If there is a problem, that is when you call home. Throughout the teacher ed. program, we had to send notes home with the students. Having the background and knowing how important it is to send positive notes home that helped me for this year.”

She went on to mention the support and encouragement that she received from her principal with regard to parent communication and the link to her pre-service studies,“ At the beginning of the year, I was struggling and, ‘how am I going to get it all together and do all that stuff?’ My principal, administrator at the school right now- she’s very good about making sure that we are sending home notes, positive things home once or twice month with each kid and making sure the parents stay informed and everything. I think having the teacher education program background that I did, making sure that it was important communicate with parents was one thing that transferred over.”
Brianna, a first grade teacher talked about being prepared to use the technology in her classroom as a result of her studies in her teacher education program, “The technology aspect, I had many courses in technology, and we’ve had an overabundance at our school. Every student has an iPad in my classroom. We have computers we can use, but I feel like I was pretty well-trained to have this type of technology. I am familiar with it. We have classes on what’s appropriate, ways to reach students through apps. I feel like that was a great thing that was discussed.”

Teachers were able to make important connections to their pre-service programs that helped them become empowered as first year teachers. Teachers were able to describe the benefits of their pre-service field placements in high poverty schools and their course work.

**Connection: Induction and Mentoring Programs**

Teachers in this study were also able to find support in and make connections to their induction and mentoring programs offered by their local school districts. Teachers were able to describe how the induction and mentoring programs connected to their photographs which they submitted for this study. Furthermore, the teachers were able to describe how their induction programs supported their work in a high poverty setting.

Participants described connections and supports such as having an open line of communication with their induction instructors, having a time for peer sharing at induction class meeting, having a good relationship with their mentors and taking a bus tour of the community prior to the opening of school.
Having an open line of communication with the induction instructors seemed to be a very important source of support for these beginning teachers. Many of them mentioned keeping an interactive journal with their induction instructors or emailing them for advice. Nina commented, “They gave advice when I would write in my journal about things that were going on, or I would email Janet a lot and just be like, ‘I am dealing with this right now and can you give me tips on how to handle this, or what would you do if you were in my situation?’ She would always be really helpful with that and email me back, ‘Well, I’ve been through that too.’ She would give me situational stuff.”

Leigh also shared how journaling with the induction instructors helped her be reflective in her practice, “The reflection part I think connected the most. The journal back and forth, it really helped me more because it was a constant of me reflecting what’s going on in here, and her giving tips back.”

Pam described how she felt supported and able to have an open line of communication with her induction instructors, “Our induction program was very supportive. We were let known at the beginning of the year if we needed anything, we could talk to one of them. They were right there with us the whole way, coming in and out of our classrooms constantly, e-mailing us, and making sure we were okay. Our induction people had an open line of communication. I felt very comfortable going with anything I needed help with, any questions I may have had. Some of my pictures just kind of show a strong sense of community where I work.”
Teachers also described the importance of having a good relationship with their mentors. Erin spoke about her mentor, “She became much more than that, a friend, encourager, motivator, and constant reminder of why I am here. She definitely helped me through this year. I don’t think everyone got the same experience that I did with my mentor. She was just wonderful. We always plan together.” Leigh said of her mentor, “She was fabulous. She was just there for me.”

The induction teachers who took part in this study also spoke about the support and connections they found in peer-sharing times that were included as a part of their regular induction class meetings. Jennifer shared that she liked to be able to talk about techniques and strategies with other teachers in her induction group. She said, “They tell you what is going on in their classes. Then it kind of helps you go, ‘Okay, well, let me step back. What if I try this technique?’ They give you new techniques, new strategies. New strategies that helped… It was very easy to talk to the other first-year teachers and find out other strategies that helped you.”

Nina, a third grade teacher also talked about sharing with other teachers in induction, particularly those from other high poverty schools in her district, “I think when we talked, when we would get together in induction and we would talk, it felt like a lot of other induction teachers were going through the same things that I was here. Especially my friends who teach at Mountain View and James Black Elementary were definitely in the same boat because I feel like they are similar to here. The schools are similar to here. We talked about things that were going on in our classrooms. They had a
lot of stuff like I’m having going on with them- just the emotional draining of taking all the stuff home with you and thinking about it. I think we all dealt with that this year.

Lila shared similar thoughts as Jennifer and Nina about valuing the time to share with peers. She indicated that her induction program offered her the support and others who could listen with a sympathetic ear, “I think my induction program was for the most part was really more being able to have people that have worked those kinds of situations, being able to take stuff to them, or just have somebody to listen that actually has a frame of reference.”

Several teachers that took part in the study connected with a bus tour of the community they took with their induction class prior to the beginning of school. This seemed to make an impression on them as they prepared to work in a high poverty area. Mary commented, “I just feel like they equipped us very well. They took us on a tour the first week that we were induction class of the whole community. I felt like that was eye opening from an outsider coming in. I lived in another area growing up and I had never been to this community. I’d just see the area. Seeing how these students lived was a great thing.”

Lisa also commented on how she connected with the bus tour of the community as well, “I don’t know if every district does this, but one thing that our district did that I really liked was, they took us on a bus tour at the beginning of the year. Our area is very rural, so they took us into the community, and we were driving along so we got to see some of the homes that may have our children in them. It prepared us before we saw our
kids to see, especially for teachers who weren’t familiar with the area, so they weren’t too blown away the first day of school or at Meet the Teacher Night or anything.”

Some of the participants in this study were also able to make important connections to information they were learning in their induction classes. They were able to establish open lines of communication with their induction instructors and establish relationships with a trusted mentor. They were able to participate in peer sharing sessions that helped them with techniques and strategies to use in the classroom. Often, these peer sharing sessions served as a type of support group for the induction teachers.

**Moving from Connections to Empowerment**

As teachers were able to make connections and make use of support systems, they became empowered as teachers. In this study, teacher empowerment manifested itself in the teachers’ ability to meet academic and behavioral goals and the ability to establish positive relationships with parents and students.

**Success Stories**

Teachers in this study were eager to share their success stories. Achieving academic and behavioral success with their students made the teachers feel proud, accomplished and excited.

Brianna shared two photographs, which represented the academic and behavioral achievements of her students. The first photograph (Figure 4.35) depicted her excitement about the transformation she was able to see in the students’ behavior from September through May. The second photograph (Figure 4.36) represents her feelings of accomplishment because of the gains her students made in the area of reading.
After months of poor behavior and office referrals, we finally have seen great progress! Students have become great leaders in our classroom.

Figure 4.35. Brianna’s photograph of a behavior score card.

There is no better feeling than seeing your students make the progress you knew they were capable of! After a great deal of hard work, some of my students even grew 30+ points in Reading MAP this year!

Figure 4.36. Brianna’s photograph of reading and math scores.

Brianna talked about these success stories in her interview, “Then with the scores and the behavior, this was a big breakthrough for our group. We had a very challenging group of first graders this year. They were said to be the largest, lowest group coming through, and just to see the behaviors from September to mid-May changed drastically. We have a clip chart in our room where they clip up for outstanding behavior, clip down
for negative behaviors-things that go against our class rules. Overall, they started out very poor, could not follow directions, did not do as expected, and whereas, at the end of the year, I have a classroom full of leaders. Anyone will tell you it’s awesome! I feel like half of the time, I could just walk out and the class would run as it needs to and that’s an incredible feeling. Same with scores- we started out with super, super low reading scores, and they jumped and for me, knowing it is my first year with the resources, it just lets me know, ok maybe you did use the right resources.”

Brianna was empowered because she was able to achieve success and meet the academic and behavioral goals she had for her students. She was able to make connections to the resources she had available to her, and she felt validated that she did make good instructional decisions in the selection of those resources.

Mary also included two photographs that symbolized reaching academic goals in reading with her first graders. In her first picture, she relates the school theme to her success with reading achievement, “When I look at this picture, think about our motto for the year was, “Oh the places you will go”- from Dr. Seuss.”
Our motto this year was, “Oh, The Places We Will Go.” I am more than proud of the obstacles my students overcame this year in order to reach their goals. All of my children except for two were reading on grade level, which is a huge feat for this group.

Figure 4.37. Mary’s photograph of the school motto.

In this narrative excerpt about the picture, she was able to make connections to resources and she spoke about establishing a sense of teamwork with the other first grade teachers and teamwork with parents, “As a team we worked really hard. We tried to get parents on our side and just really sent home a lot of materials. It took a lot more than I have noticed at other schools. I was student teaching at Fairway and I was used to all that support and not having to send home materials and stuff. We had to do a lot of preparation, but by the end of it, it paid off because all of my children except for two were on grade level. In the first grade, we only had ten total. Most of them came out of our low reading class. That was a good thing. I was really proud of that.”

She talked about how the class had set individual goals for reading and they celebrated their success, “I just get really happy. We had a big party at the end of the year just because my kids… We really don’t sugar coat to them whether or not- we just tell
them, you are on this level. We don’t do it in a negative way. We tell them that so they can have individual goals and stuff. It just made me feel proud to see the whole class come together and whether or not they were high or low, just cheer other students on and be proud of the other students and not ashamed of where they were. As a class, it was like one of those moments I really felt like we worked together to get to the point on every single child. I felt like even though they had individual goals, as a class we worked together to get some place.”

Mary’s second photograph was of a reading book (Figure 4.38), and here she attributed her success to having ample resources for reading and being able to share her passion for reading with her students.

**Caption:**
In our class, we heavily focus on reading. These students will not have opportunities to experience a lot of things. Hopefully, they can experience things with their new found skill – reading!

*Figure 4.38. Mary’s photograph of a reading book.*

Mary described this picture, “This one is about reading. At our school we had a huge push for reading across the curriculum and stuff. I’m sure that is the way it is at most schools. We have so many resources now because Mrs. White (the principal) went out of her way to furnish that for us.”
Mary went on to say, “This year I got a passion for it. My kids, I feel they could sense that from me. Some of them came to me like, ‘I don’t like books,’ but by the end of it, on their level, they were able to read and enjoy books. I was so proud of them and hopefully that takes them places.”

**Development of Positive Relationships with Students and Parents**

In addition to academic and behavioral successes, the teachers in the study were able to experience empowerment through the establishment of positive relationships with students and parents. Teachers related stories about the special relationship that is developed with your first group of students and students as givers. Teachers also talked about working closely with parents and feeling appreciated by them.

Erin talked about the impact of the special relationship she had with her students as she described this photo.

![Caption:](image)

There is something special about the very first group of students.
The impact my students have had on my life this year, the love I have for them, the mark they have left on my heart- that I will carry forever.

*Figure 4.39. Erin’s photograph about her students*
“They have definitely impacted me. Like, I said, just touched my heart and I will carry them with me and those will be my students until they graduate. They are definitely loved, and they know that. As long as they leave my room knowing they are loved every day, that’s definitely something that I want to share with them.”

Pam included a photograph about her relationship with her students and her perception of her students as givers:

Caption:
I love owls, and my students gave these to me throughout the year. These gifts are even more special because of the area in which my students live. Most of the students do not have a lot, but they still took the time to think of me. I took this picture because, to me, it shows how special my students are. These items mean a lot to me because having a connection with my students was very important to me.

Figure 4.40. Pam’s photograph of gifts.

She also included this photograph that sums up her year and her love for teaching:
Caption:
This picture sums up my whole year. There is only one thing I have ever wanted to do in my life, and that is to teach. I wanted to give my students the best year that I could. By the end of the year, we were all proud of our accomplishments.

Figure 4.41. Pam’s photograph about her first year.

The next photograph, which described a positive parent relationship, was also taken by Pam:

Caption:
This is a note written by one of the parents from my room. This note is just one of the many examples of the great community that surrounds me. Working at a Title 1 school has shown me how powerful it can be to have parents, administrators, and teachers working together.

Figure 4.42. Pam’s photograph of a parent note.
This photograph is of a note written to Pam by a parent. In her interview, she talked about the importance of strong relationships with parents and others. “One week toward the end of the school year, I had a note from a parent that I had met a couple of times before. It said, thank you for helping my daughter so much. She loves you. When I saw that, it almost brought tears to my eyes. It just shows the importance of making strong positive relationships with parents and how you’re on the same team, you help the child succeed better.”

Mary did not have a photograph related to this story, but she told this story of a way she and the school connected with parents that is a good exemplar of empowerment and her ability to achieve her purpose of a teacher: “My lowest student in my class, he came to me on a pre-kindergarten level and one day his parents were not very… They’re very young and they were still inexperienced with the whole parenting thing. Throughout the year, it’s like they had an awakening of what they needed to do and what they didn’t. I think as a school, we really worked with them. He came to me with a big book and I wanted to get the book from him and take a picture of it. He brought a book his parents had bought him and I thought that was a huge step, because before he came to my class, they really did not care about school or anything like that. They really got on board with us. I am hopeful to see what his future is going to be like now…”

These exemplar photographs provided a good summary of what empowerment looks like and feels like for the group of teachers who participated in this study. Teachers were able to achieve their moral purpose. They were able to experience academic and behavioral successes in their classrooms. Many times, these successes were connected to
the development of positive relationships with their students and their parents. It was a
great feeling of accomplishment and pride for those who were able to experience
empowerment as a teacher.

In other cases, teachers could not make those important connections that would
link them to important sources of support. As a result, they were constrained in their
teaching. This will be described in the next theme.

**Theme #4: The Pathway of Disconnections and Constraint**

“*It makes me feel that I wasn’t at the top of their list with small concerns. How can I
come to them with things I needed to talk to them about if they wouldn’t even help me fix
my toilet?*” –Jennifer, Kindergarten Teacher, Farmdale Elementary

This quote by Jessica exemplified her frustration over having a broken toilet in
her kindergarten classroom that remained unrepaired for the entire school year even
though she reported it. The broken toilet became much more than that, it was a symbol to
Jennifer that she was not valued and could not depend on her school administration for
support. The fourth theme, The Pathway of Disconnections and Constraint will describe
examples of what happens when teachers cannot make those important connections to
support systems. Teachers in this study experienced disconnections between their teacher
education programs and real classroom experiences, disconnections between their
induction programs and their actual teaching experiences, and disconnections at the
school. When teachers experienced disconnections, they were constrained in their
teaching. For the participants, in this study constraint was manifested in teacher’s
resignation to the situation and in the inability to develop positive relationships with the parents of their students.

**Disconnections: Pre-service Programs**

The teachers in this study talked about several disconnections that they experienced between their teacher education programs and their actual teaching experiences. These disconnections included the lack of varied placements in their pre-service programs and the disconnections between theory vs. practice and textbook vs. experience.

When Jennifer was asked about to what extent her photographs connected with her pre-service program she responded, “They did not connect. I can say that. All the schools that I worked in during my teacher education program were the complete opposite of these schools. Not high poverty, but the opposite. Definitely more privileged. You know you don’t have to worry about did they get every meal yesterday. You don’t have to worry about did they get a bath last night. You don’t have to worry about are they going to the doctor because of a ringworm on their head. You don’t have to worry about if my toilet breaks will it get fixed. I was not prepared to work in a school like this.”

Jennifer did not get placed in any high poverty schools during her pre-service program. She felt like she was totally unprepared for all the needs these students would have. She went on to say, “I needed to be prepared for this type of setting. You needed to have worked in that. I was not ready for it. The kids are very needy in general. Academically, socially, physically, emotionally, they are very needy kids.”
Brianna talked about the lack of pre-service experience in high poverty settings as well, “…all of my placements- I was placed in church programs, essentially where the children, I never saw that (poverty) and so coming here and seeing first-hand with all 17 of those who are struggling. That is something I never realized. I never realized, they never said your children might not be eating. There’s a program that they will send home. They didn’t say, oh and if you have other students who aren’t receiving that, asking why do they get food and I do not? They didn’t tell you how to handle that and that’s hard because it’s just, I’ve almost broke down. I don’t know how to address that without hurting, stepping on toes, so I feel like that was a disconnection.”

Others teachers in this study discussed, that although they had classes that addressed the issue of student poverty and its possible effect on student learning, they felt like they were not fully prepared for what they would experience on the job. They described gaps between what they learned in theory from textbooks and coursework and what they experienced in their classrooms.

Erin talked about these gaps in her interview, “I don’t know if college prepared me for any of these things honestly. She went on to say, “Really, I mean college could have, my professors could have talked until they were blue in the face to me about what you were going to expect, but no one could have prepared me for my first year. Does that make sense?” Erin talked about this again later in her interview, “They could have told me and told me, and told me, but until I actually experienced it for myself, I couldn’t have imagined what I would be going through and what these kids are going through. That was definitely a disconnection.”
Other teachers also shared similar thoughts— you have to get in the classroom and experience it. Nina described the differences in her college experience and her work in the classroom, “…when you are in college and you’re in class and they are telling you what your classroom is going to be like, and this is what you’re going to deal with, and this and that. It is totally not what you deal with in your first year of teaching having to do everything. I think they make it seem unrealistic-like it is going to be a bed of roses and it’s not going to be as difficult as it is.”

Nina described ways in which her job was much more difficult in reality than she thought it would be, “Because this year has been much harder than I thought it was going to be. Just taking my work home with me. Not grading and stuff, but just the emotional baggage of taking worry home with me about some of the kids- where they go and if they are getting food and stuff like that.” They did not prepare me for that in college. I don’t guess they could really could because you’ve got to be exposed to that to go through it. They really can’t expose you to that in a classroom when you’re learning about being a teacher.”

Brianna shared similar ideas about her classroom experiences versus her college experiences, “I feel like when you are trying to teach teachers about these things, you really can’t learn until you are there experiencing it. Yes, you can tell me that there is going to be poverty, there’s going to be students with holes in book bags, but it doesn’t actually click with your emotions until you’re there and it’s your child you are working with, or you see it first-hand. I feel like that is a major disconnect.”
With regard to teacher education programs, these teachers experienced disconnections with the placements opportunities they had during their pre-service education. Some teachers did not have any opportunities to experience any placements in high poverty schools prior to going to work in such a setting. Because of this, they did not feel prepared for what they were about to experience as a first year teacher.

Other teachers described a textbook versus classroom reality gap. These teachers talked about that until the class is your own and you go through the first year yourself, that you cannot know the true realities of the situation. You can read about it, but until you experience it, you cannot know the difficulty of it.

**Disconnections: Induction and Mentoring Programs**

The teachers in this study also described some disconnections with their induction and mentoring programs. Some of the disconnections described by the teachers were the lack of a close relationship with their mentor, the lack of instruction on poverty in schools, and gap between the classroom experiences and the textbook for induction.

As teachers looked for sources of support and connection, the mentor usually played an important role in the life of a new teacher. A couple of the teachers talked about the lack of a relationship with their mentors. The mentors either did not know they were assigned to the teacher, or they were too busy to provide assistance to the teacher. Juanita describes her relationship with her mentor in the interview. In Juanita’s case, her mentor did not know she had been assigned to Juanita, and Juanita was hesitant to approach her for help. She relates this in the interview, “I think as far as mentors go, I have a great mentor, but for the first six weeks of school, she did not know that she was
my mentor. At the beginning of school, it would be nice–then I could have approached her, but I thought, ‘Oh, I got this.’ Whenever I did ask her a question she said, ‘Oh, I didn’t know I was your mentor.’ She was very apologetic, I think they also need to have not too much on their plate because that can stress them out.”

Juanita missed out on this very important source of support during those crucial first few weeks of school when she could have benefitted from having that person to go to as a source of help and information.

Jennifer also talked briefly about her relationship with her mentor, “My mentor was really nice, but she was always busy, so I didn’t get to talk to her as much as I wanted.” Jennifer also missed out on having the support of her mentor, but she was able to get the help and advice she needed through her induction instructor.

Leigh also had also talked about the need for a stronger mentoring program. She had a great mentor, but she retired mid-year and was not replaced. Leigh said, “I mean we have mentors, but definitely a stronger mentor program-someone who wants to be a mentor. Mine was fabulous until she retired and left, so that made me sad. She was just there for me.”

Teachers in this study also talked about their induction programs not including poverty in the classroom as a topic of instruction at all. Amy mentioned that she could not find any helpful connections to her induction program that would support her work in a high poverty school. She commented, “I would say the program as a whole was a disconnect, because it did not offer you any instruction about how to deal with those needs.”
Hannah commented, “We really did not have any sessions about poverty or the impacts it could have. I know that not all the schools in the county are in poverty, but I feel like maybe if we would have had something like that, maybe just a session or a couple of sessions about poverty and the impact it has on students, it would have been beneficial.”

Nina talked about that even though her induction class did have sessions on poverty, there was still a gap between what she learned and her experiences in the classroom. She stated, “I mean because it’s like going to induction meeting class was more like college. They could tell you things that might happen, and they could tell you kind of what to expect, but then it’s like you get in here and it’s totally different.”

The teachers represented in this section were not able link to valuable support systems in their induction and mentoring programs.

**Disconnections: School Level Support**

In addition to experiencing disconnections related to their pre-service programs and induction and mentoring programs, teachers also experienced disconnections at the school level that led to constraint as teachers. Teachers experienced these disconnections at the school level in a variety of ways such as unrealistic curricular demands, substandard school facilities, lack of enough intervention supports to meet the needs of their students and lack of communication with parents.

Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher, felt like unrealistic curricular demands were being placed on her in the area of reading. The school where she worked was not performing well with regard to test scores in reading. So, there was a strong push for
improvement in reading. Jennifer included this photograph (Figure 4.43) of what she called a “conglomerate” of reading programs.

Caption:

It was hard, but we were required to incorporate each of the following everyday/ every week in my kindergarten class.

Figure 4.43. Jennifer’s photograph of a conglomerate of reading programs.

Constraint

Jennifer described being overwhelmed by trying to implement all of these programs into her reading block, “It’s a conglomerate of reading materials. My school is a high poverty school that they want to succeed so badly that they’re trying to incorporate as many programs as possible. To me it influenced me really badly because it was too much. It was over stimulation for me and the kids. Every day I was required to use at least four different reading programs within a reading lesson. They said it was due to wanting our kids to be able to read faster, and this and this. “Oh, we are trying to get our kids to succeed and excel faster.’ How can they excel faster if I am having to use one, then put data in this program. Use this one and put the data in this program. Use this one… it was too separated. Each program offered great things, if it was a full time
program throughout the day, but to have to use that many programs for kindergarten students? I felt they were overwhelmed and I was overwhelmed a lot.”

Jennifer was not suffering from the lack of resources, but from having to use too many resources and her instruction became disjointed. Leigh, on the other hand, had a different kind of disconnection with her reading program. She included this picture labeled, “Aggravation.”

![Caption:](image)

- Represents our Reading Recovery/LLI programs that provided assistance to students who struggle with reading.
- Lack of enough teachers to support our need for assistance.

*Figure 4.44. Leigh’s photograph about aggravation.*

Leigh described this picture as “aggravation as in the lack of enough teachers to support our need in Reading Recovery and in LLI.”

Jennifer was the only teacher in the study from the midlands of South Carolina, and she was the only teacher in the study who talked about working in a school facility that was run down and not maintained well. Jessica included three photographs which were related to facility issues at her school that impacted her as a teacher. One was of a broken toilet, one was of a broken sink and one was of paint peeling from the walls. I have included the picture of the toilet in this section because it represents more to
Jennifer than just a facility issue, it also represents her perception of the lack of administrative support at her school.

Jennifer submitted a photograph of the broken toilet in her kindergarten classroom. The toilet became broken in January and remained unrepaired when I interviewed her at the end of the school year.

*Caption:*
Repairs are not on the top of the list of to dos. My toilet was broken in January and it is the end of the year and it is still broken.

*Figure 4.45. Jennifer’s photograph of a broken toilet.*

Jessica talked about this picture at great length, and to Jennifer this represented far more than a broken toilet. “The reason why I took a picture of my toilet is because in January, my toilet got broken. One of the kids accidentally dropped a pencil in it, and I complained to the custodian. He said it was going to get fixed. February went by, it did not get fixed. March went by and it did not get fixed. I complained to the principal-April, it did not get fixed. In May, I called the District Office and said, ‘Either I want to speak to the Superintendent, or somebody needs to fix my toilet.’”

Jennifer described what this represented to her, “To me, this represents administration not watching the teachers and helping them with even the little tasks. I know that they have a
lot on their mind. But when a principal just finally introduces the problem to the district office in May when you’ve complained since January? To me that’s not… It makes you feel as a teacher that you’re not worth their time.”

She added, “It really makes me feel that I wasn’t at the top of their list with small concerns. How could I come to them with the things that I needed to talk to them about if they wouldn’t even help me fix my toilet?”

Jennifer experienced a severe disconnection with administrative support that started with a broken toilet, but led to her feelings of not being able to seek the help and support of her school administrator in other areas.

Several teachers in this study experienced disconnections with parents. This manifested itself in the inability to find a successful way of communicating with parents on a regular basis. Teachers included photographs of their weekly folders and of disciplinary notes to represent their attempts at parent communication. Hannah took a photograph of her communication folder.

Caption:
Caregivers do not check communication folders which makes it difficult to keep a school-home relationship.
Figure 4.46. Hannah’s photograph of a communication folder.

Hannah described this picture in her interview, “This is a picture of our communication folders that we send home every day. Anything important goes home in these folders, and anything the parent wants to send to us, this is how we get it. A lot of times many of our student folders aren’t even checked. It makes it difficult as… we introduced this as the main way of communications at the beginning of the year. It is very difficult to get important forms and everything signed and the disciplinary notes or even positive notes. It’s hard to get them read or anything to be looked at because a lot of times they’re not checked.

Mary had also included a photograph of a “Friday Folder. She also discussed how she had difficulty with using these folders as a successful means of communication with parents. She related what the picture meant to her, “This is their Friday Folders. These were two of them that I happened to have the last day of school and they hadn’t been picked up yet. I’d contact the parents and they’d come and be like okay it’s alright if we don’t see their report cards.

Mary talked about how this made her feel sad because the students with the folders that were left at the school had good grades, “These 2 in particular had really high averages and stuff. Every week they would come back with the folders not signed.”

She went on to talk about the values of the community, “I think that in the community where I am at, grades are seen as okay- it’s alright to make good grades, but it’s better to have other skills in life because a lot of the parents are working in skilled labor of some sort. It made me sad.’
Some of the teachers who experienced disconnections with their pre-service programs, induction/mentoring programs, school support and with parent communications followed the pathway from disconnections to constraint as a teacher.

**Disconnections to Constraint**

Just as some of the teachers in this study moved along the first pathway of finding and making connections that led to their empowerment as teachers, other teachers in the study followed the second pathway of disconnections to constraint. The teachers were not necessarily constrained in all areas of their teaching, nor did they remain constrained. What did constraint look like for the participants in this study?

For the teachers that found themselves along this pathway, constraint manifested itself in several ways. Teachers, at times, resigned themselves to a situation if they could not find supports to lead them out of the negative circumstance. Another way constraint was exemplified was in the inability to develop positive relationships with parents and administrators.

**Resignation to the Situation**

Jennifer’s toilet was broken since January and it had not been repaired by the end of school. As a result, she felt like no one was willing to help her with a relatively small problem, so she felt like she could not go to her school administration for help, even for bigger issues in the classroom. Jennifer described her feelings and emotions related to this disconnection, “They definitely invoked rage, and that sounds kind of bad. It made me feel like I wanted to fuss at them for being an administration that could not even handle the small problems. It made me feel bad because my kids wouldn’t want to go to
the bathroom. I wouldn’t let them go to our bathroom; we had to go as a group. Time management was thrown out the window. It was definitely heartbreaking to find out that people wouldn’t help you with the small problems.”

Jessica also had a broken sink that never got repaired. The sink was broken before the school year began.

Caption:
This photo was taken because repairs are not the first thing on the list. The sink broke and instead of fixing it, they just turned my water off.

Figure 4.47. Jennifer’s photograph of the sink.

Jennifer described this situation, “One was the picture of my sink. A picture underneath my sink. We had just finished cleaning water out from under it. It had broken a month before school, and they wouldn’t fix it. They just cut my water off.”

These pictures represented her resignation to the situation. She tried to file reports, but the situation just never got better. She could not find a way out of these negative circumstances, which in turn led to a negative relationship with her administrator. She commented that her principal was, “really good with the testing scores, just not the small stuff.”
Jennifer could not overcome these obstacles and make a connection to her administration. She was constrained as a teacher because she could not establish a positive relationship with her administrator and go to her for help and support. Jennifer was also constrained in her instruction. She lost instruction time and could not manage her classroom time as she would have liked due to the fact that she did not have a toilet in her classroom, and she could not let her kindergarteners go to the other restroom alone.

**Inability to Form Positive Relationships with Parents**

Several of the teachers in the study remained on the pathway from disconnection to constraint in the area of parental relationships. This was usually due to the lack of a successful means in which to communicate with parents.

Nina was one of the teachers in the study that expressed a lot of frustration, and even resentment about having to step in and take on the responsibility for the child’s basic hygiene needs. She too struggled with how to communicate with parents. She commented, “I’m like why are having to do the parent’s job, because parent involvement is so little here.”

She goes on to say later that, “I feel like it is the parent’s responsibility to make sure… I mean they are eight and nine years old. They’re not… They need to be told to do things. They’re not adults. The parents… I try to communicate with them and I try to be like… What do you say to a parent if their kid comes in smelly? You can’t say… well, I don’t really… What do you say? I just try to deal with it here instead of trying to get parents involved because when I do, it is just not very strong parent involvement with that.”
Nina cannot figure out what to say or how to talk with parents about delicate issues such as hygiene, so she just doesn’t. She resigned herself to this situation. She tried to take care of it alone rather than trying to reach out to parents.

In the section on school level disconnections, I included the picture of Hannah’s communication folder and her description of how the folders were often not checked or signed by the parent. She was frustrated because this was supposed to be the primary means of communication with the parents of her kindergarteners. She described her feelings, “It is very frustrating when you want to be able to communicate. Of course, if this doesn’t work and if it is very important, we have other ways of communicating, but it’s frustrating because it is the easiest way.

Mary talked about difficulties in establishing communication with parents and getting them to take interest in grades that the children were making in school. She indicated that the parents placed more value on having other skills in life because most of them worked in skilled labor of some type. This made her sad. She was unable to establish a connection with the parents to get them to share in the academic successes of their children.

Teachers who found themselves on the pathway of constraint did not always stay there. Some were able to overcome obstacles and move on to empowerment. In the next section, I will discuss this final pathway.

**Theme # 5: Overcoming Obstacles: Moving from Constraint to Empowerment**

*Then, when I saw the classroom, I was discouraged. I was definitely discouraged that I didn’t know what I was going to do with this classroom. Then my creative juices came up.*
Then, I got excited again when my kids walked in the classroom for the first time and saw these beautiful walls, instead of these broken walls.

*Jennifer, Kindergarten Teacher, Farmdale Elementary School*

There were times that teachers found themselves constrained in some way, but because they were resilient, they were able to overcome the obstacle and move from constraint to empowerment. Jennifer, Hannah and Leigh are exemplars of teachers who found themselves on this pathway. Jennifer was able to overcome yet another facility issue. Jennifer, Hannah and Leigh were able to overcome other obstacles and experience academic success with their students.

Jennifer had a toilet and a sink that were un repaired in her classroom, and although she was not able to overcome those obstacles on her own, she was able to overcome another facility issue—her classroom walls, which were also in disrepair. Paint was peeling off the walls. Jennifer captured this photograph of her classroom walls:

*Caption:*

My walls were covered with chipped paint and holes. Therefore, I covered them up with bulletin board paper to create a warm environment.

*Figure 4.48. Jennifer’s photograph of her classroom walls.*
Jennifer talked about how she was able to create a warm classroom environment in spite of the peeling paint, “This is the picture that I took of the wall. It has chipped paint everywhere. This was just a small wall that had a little bit of chipped paint. All over the classroom, I had holes in my walls that I covered up. I asked for it to be painted and it wouldn’t be painted. They said it wasn’t in the budget. When you are working in a high poverty school, you have to come up with new resources and new ways to create a warm environment when your environment is, shall I say, kind of crappy.” She described her feelings about walking into her class for the first time, “I felt really bad when I walked into my classroom for the first time... I was an excited first year teacher, so excited to walk into my brand new classroom. I walk in and the walls are falling down. They are destroyed.”

She talked about how she overcame the problem, “So, I pretty much put up bulletin board paper and made word walls out of it. Then, when I tore it down at the end of the year the kids said, ‘it looks like a ghost came in here.’ It kind of makes your heart break, but then it makes you become creative. At first, I would say I was excited when I came into my classroom. Then, when I saw the classroom, I was discouraged. I was definitely discouraged that I didn’t know what I was going to do with this classroom. Then my creative juices came up. Then, I got excited again when my kids walked in the classroom for the first time and saw these beautiful walls, instead of these broken walls.”

Jennifer also described how she did not have access to many resources for hands-on classroom activities, but she was able to overcome this obstacle by seeking outside resources. She included a picture of baby chicks hatching from eggs.
Teachers are given little financial help. Therefore, I was forced to become creative and find programs to allow students to have hands-on learning.

Figure 4.49. Jennifer’s photograph of chicks and eggs.

Jennifer described this experience, “Alright, so the chicks. I took a picture of this because this was an amazing experience. Emotions of joy, happiness. Seeing the kids’ faces was amazing. Working in a high poverty school, since you don’t have many funds, you have to come up with creative ways. I called the 4-H Program here, and they were like, ‘Look, we can do this for free for you. This will be a fun activity.’ It was part of our life cycle program. We were talking about the life cycle of plants, animals. Since they would give this to me for free, we took it. The kids got to see the eggs- day one to all the way until they hatched. Some of them got to take them home. The kids were so excited about it. I was so excited about it. This was like one of my favorite experiences. But, it taught me that just because your school doesn’t have money for something? Always go looking for resources.”

Jennifer was able to provide fun, hands-on learning experiences for her students by looking for connections outside the school. She was able to overcome not having resources and instructional materials for her students.
Hannah and Leigh both included photographs with captions where they mention that they had to overcome obstacles in order to achieve academic success with their students.

**Caption:**
Despite the circumstances and obstacles the student face, I have made a difference. Most students met their MAP goals.

*Figure 4.50. Hannah’s photograph of growth goals.*

**Caption:**
- Struggled with different problems throughout the year
- Overcame them and it paid off in our progress in MAP scores
- SUCCESS!

*Figure 4.51. Leigh’s photograph of achievement scores.*

Hannah described her photograph, “I’ll talk about MAP goals. MAP is a… It is a great tool for us to be able to see the progression of our students and this is just a little
snapshot of the students who did meet their goals on their reading. I believe this is their reading goals. Even though they don’t have the best home lives, even though they might not have someone who can read with them, or if sometimes I feel defeated and I haven’t done enough; even this is just one little snapshot of what they can do, it is rewarding to see that most of them did meet their goals. It makes me feel proud that the work I am doing is making a difference.”

Hannah was able to overcome all of the obstacles in her way and found that she was able to make a difference. She felt empowered and validated in her work as a teacher because she was able to overcome these obstacles and realize academic success.

Leigh took pictures of her reading scores and described her feelings of success, “Okay these are the pictures of our reading MAP scores. They represent the growth and progress that we made in the classroom. We struggled with behavior problems so much this year that I felt like it took away from instruction. Then, seeing the growth that they made, I knew that we had overcome the behavior issues and it paid off in our progress in MAP. They definitely mean success for me and the kids.”

She described her emotions related to seeing the progress of her students, “Incredibly excited. I could not believe the growth that my kids made; it was amazing. Just excitement, such excitement for them.

Leigh was able to help the students overcome their behavioral issues and establish a positive relationship with her students. They were able to focus more on instruction and as a result, they were able to make progress in reading.

**Summary**
This pathway, Overcoming Obstacles: Moving from Constraint to Empowerment is a pathway of hope. The teachers who found themselves on this pathway used their resilience to overcome obstacles in their path. Through creativity and hard work, they were able to make the needed connections that would ultimately move them from constraint to empowerment.

**Recommendations for Strengthening Pre-service and Induction Programs**

Participants in this study were asked about the ideas they had for strengthening pre-service programs and induction programs with regard to ways to better support their work in a rural, high poverty schools. Participants willingly shared ideas with me and many of the ideas the participants shared were similar to each other.

With regard to teacher education programs, it was suggested that the universities should take care to vary the placements of their students during their field experiences. Some of the participants had had no experiences in high poverty schools in any of their field placements or student teaching. So when they were hired at a rural, high poverty school, they had no idea what they were about to walk into during their first year of teaching. The teachers also encouraged varying placements between urban and rural schools. Some of the teachers had field experiences in a more urban, high poverty setting, but they found the rural, high poverty setting to be much different.

The teachers shared far more ideas about ways to strengthen induction programs, and that may be due to the fact that the induction program was more relevant to them at the point in time at which they were interviewed.
One of the ideas that many of the participants mentioned was to be allowed more time for peer sharing at their induction class meetings. They liked being able bounce ideas off others and just talk to others that were going through similar situations in their classrooms. They mentioned having a breakout session especially for teachers who work at Title I schools so that they could better understand how Title I funding works and to discuss classroom happenings that they considered to be unique to a high poverty setting. They also suggested having a second year teacher come in and share experiences and give advice to them.

Another idea for strengthening induction programs was to include bus tours of the community and to make home visits. Teachers felt like this would be an important addition to some of the induction programs so that teaches could learn more about the backgrounds and living conditions of their students.

**What is Missing from the Data?**

As the data were analyzed and categories were collapsed into themes, I also considered what might be missing from the data that was collected from the participants. The major meaning unit categories from each coder, for each interview was entered into an online tool called Wordle (www.wordle.com). Wordle enabled me to create a code landscape and the codes that were used most often appear in a larger font. The codes primarily dealt with meeting a basic need of some type. The codes included words such as cleanliness, hunger, responsibility, etc. They did not deal with ideas related to classroom instruction for the most part. Only the word success, which in the case of this study, was related to instruction and was evidenced the academic and behavioral success
stories the participants shared. Participants did not talk much about instructional matters. Their photographs and descriptions of their emotions centered on meeting the basic needs of students and child well-being. I wonder if teachers are focusing more on these needs in the classroom rather than focusing on instruction.

Another way that I was able to consider what might be missing from the data was the participants’ responses to the question, “Is there anything that you wished you could have photographed, but could not. If so, what was it and why?” Seven of the participants responded that they would have taken a picture of a particular student, but because photographs of human subjects were not allowed in this study, they could not include the photograph. For example, Mary wanted to include a photograph of a composite student, “That would be the photograph that wraps everything together. He’s a Backpack Buddy. He has an open DSS case. He’s gotten clothes from the clothes closet. He lives in one of those type things. It just wraps it all up.”

Two participants indicated that they would have taken a photograph of the back side of their school identification badges. The back of the badge has the school emergency codes listed on it. These teachers talked about feeling unprepared for emergency drills such as a Code Red. They were also worried about what their response would be should a real emergency occur.

Of the remaining three participants, one listed a book bag that belonged to a student who had moved. The other two did not describe anything that they wished they could have photographed, but could not.
Chapter Summary

“It’s been an awesome year, despite all the mixed emotions that I’ve experienced. I think working in a poverty school connects me so much more to my children”

-Brianna, First Grade Teacher, Mountain View Elementary

The findings of this study answered both of my research questions:

1. What is the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina?
2. In what ways do these emotions empower or constrain these teachers?

The early childhood teachers in this study readily talked to me about their first-year experiences in rural high poverty schools. They shared their photographs and emotions with me which painted a vivid picture of their everyday life in the classroom and the emotions they experienced along their journey as a first year teacher.

The teachers were often sad, worried and concerned about the well-being of their students, and felt an overwhelming need to meet the basic needs for food, clothing, personal hygiene and school supplies. They were often frustrated with parents and wondered why they had such a hard time providing for their children.

The teachers grappled with the differences in their own backgrounds and upbringing versus the background and upbringing of the students in their class. They sometimes became discouraged and wondered if their attempts in the classroom would be futile.

The teachers looked for connections and sources of support as they traveled along their teaching journeys. Some of the teachers were able to make connections and find
support systems that would later to lead to their empowerment in the classroom as evidenced by the ability to form strong positive relationships with students, parents and school administrators. These teachers were able to share their success stories about academic and behavioral breakthroughs that happened in their classrooms.

Other teachers were not able to make connections to sources of support as they navigated their first year of teaching. The inability to find these sources of support and connections led these teachers to become constrained in their teaching. Constraint was evidenced by the failure to develop positive relationships with parents, students, and/or administrators. They often resigned themselves to the situation and just accepted it because they could find no support system to help them find a way out of the situation.

Some teachers in this study were overcomers. In spite of facing obstacles and experiencing disconnections, these teachers were able to overcome their circumstances. If a connection or support system was missing, they became resilient and creative and use self-determination to overcome the problem.

The teachers experienced many emotions from happy to sad and from discouragement to encouragement, from frustration to satisfaction etc. One teacher described it as a “rollercoaster ride of emotions.” Their reflections on their first year experiences helped me discover three important pathways that gave me insight into ways we can help beginning teachers make connections and help them link to support systems that will help them thrive in their first-year of teaching in a high poverty setting, rather than just survive it.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This study used photo-elicitation with interviews to explore the topic of the emotional impact of working in a high-poverty school on first-year early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina. The study also gave insight into how these emotions either empowered or constrained the teachers in their work.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings and a discussion of the findings in relationship to current literature in the field. This chapter also provides a discussion about the implications for practice and the implications for future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to listen to the voices of first-year, early childhood teachers who work in rural, high-poverty schools in South Carolina in order to understand the emotional impact of working in such a setting. Through the use of photo elicitation with interviews, the researcher was able to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the emotional impact of working in a high-poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina?

2. In what ways do these emotions empower or constrain these teachers?

The early childhood teachers in this study readily talked about their first-year experiences in rural high-poverty schools. They described their photographs and shared their emotions that painted a vivid picture of their everyday lives in their classrooms, and the emotions they experienced along their journeys as first-year teachers.
The teachers were often sad, worried and concerned about the well-being of their students, and they felt an overwhelming need to meet the students’ basic needs for food, clothing, personal hygiene and school supplies. They were often frustrated with parents and wondered why they had such a hard time providing for their children.

The teachers grappled with the differences in their backgrounds and upbringings versus the backgrounds and upbringings of the students in their classes. They sometimes became discouraged and wondered if their attempts in the classroom would be futile.

The teachers looked for connections and sources of support as they traveled along their teaching journeys. Some of the teachers were able to make connections and find support systems that would later lead to their empowerment in the classroom. Empowerment manifested itself in the ability to form strong positive relationships with students, parents and school administrators. These teachers were able to share their success stories about academic and behavioral breakthroughs that happened in their classrooms.

Other teachers were not able to make connections to sources of support as they navigated their first year of teaching. The inability to find these sources of support and connections led these teachers to become constrained in their teaching. Constraint was evidenced by the failure to develop positive relationships with parents, students, or administrators. They often resigned themselves to situations and just accepted them because they could find no support system to help them find a way out of the situation.

Some teachers in this study were overcomers. In spite of facing obstacles and experiencing disconnections, these teachers were able to overcome their circumstances. If
a connection or support system was missing, they became resilient and creative and used self-determination to overcome the problem.

The teachers experienced many emotions ranging from happy to sad and from discouragement to encouragement, from frustration to satisfaction, etc. One teacher described it as a “rollercoaster ride of emotions.” Their reflections on their first-year experiences helped the researcher discover three important pathways. The three pathways included:

Pathway #1: Connections to Empowerment

Pathway #2: Disconnections to Constraint

Pathway #3: Overcoming Obstacles- Moving from Constraint to Empowerment

The three pathways gave me insight into ways we can help beginning teachers make connections and help them link to support systems. Being able to link to these support systems will help them thrive in their first-year of teaching in a high poverty setting, rather than just survive it.

**Participant and School Demographics**

The participant demographics of this study closely aligned with the demographics of teacher education programs represented in the current literature. The participants in this study included 12 white females ranging in age from 22–44 years old. Many of the participants referred to their middle-class upbringings during the photo-elicitation interview. The current literature regarding the pre-service education programs tells us that new teachers entering the field of early childhood are most often from white, middle class backgrounds (Howard, 1999; Nieto 2000; Sleeter, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2011; Swartz,
2003). Other literature regarding the demographics of the current teaching force in the United States indicated that 90% of the teachers are white. This statistic also reflected the pre-service pool from which these teachers were selected (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013; Swartz, 2003).

These demographics may have implications for preparing teachers to work in diverse, high-poverty settings. The demographics of most teacher education programs in United States are staying the same, yet the diversity of American public schools is increasing. Immigration patterns, minority enrollment percentages, and the poverty levels of students have changed in the last decade (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Nieto, 2000; Orfield & Lee, 2005).

Although this study focused on poverty, rather than race, it is important to note that students of color are often disproportionately represented in high-poverty schools, particularly in the Southern regions of the United States. Orfield and Lee (2005) studied the racial composition of high poverty and extreme poverty schools by region. They found that Black and Latino students comprise more than 90% of the students in extreme poverty schools in the South.

The school demographics represented in this study depart from the findings of Orfield and Lee’s (2005) study. There were six different elementary schools represented in my study that were in rural areas of South Carolina. Five of the elementary schools were in the upstate of South Carolina. The five schools in the upstate of South Carolina had more white students than Black and Latino students. One school, Farmdale
Elementary, was located in the midlands of South Carolina in a rural area and this school population was comprised of primarily Black, non-Hispanic students. See Table 4.2.

Poverty rates in the nation and South Carolina continued to increase over the last ten years (Kids Count Data Center, 2013; National Poverty Center, 2013). Nationally, the percentage of children under the age of 18 who live in families below the poverty level increased from 18% in 2007 to 23% in 2011. In South Carolina, the percentage of children living in poverty increased from 21% in 2007 to 28% in 2011 (Kids Count Data Center, 2013).

The schools represented in my study have high poverty rates and are designated as Title I Schools. Title I is the largest federally funded educational program in the United States. It provides additional funds to eligible school districts to assist public and private schools with the highest student poverty concentration to meet school educational goals. Title 1 regulations require school districts to provide services to all schools where at least 75% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. (United States Department of Education, 2013a).

The schools in this study had the majority of their school populations living in poverty as reflected by the poverty index, which was calculated by the South Carolina State Department of Education (South Carolina State Department of Education, 2014). Each year, the South Carolina State Department of Education calculates a poverty index for each school. The poverty index is a percentage based on free and reduced-price lunch data and Medicaid eligibility data (South Carolina State Department of Education, 2014). The poverty index for schools in this study range from 79.00% to 96.33%. See Table 4.2.
The demographics discussed have implications for pre-service education programs and how we prepare teachers for work in culturally diverse, high-poverty settings. The findings of my study revealed connections teachers were able to make to their pre-service programs as well as disconnections that existed between their pre-service programs and their everyday experiences in a rural, high-poverty school.

**Teacher Education and Induction/Mentoring Programs: Connections and Disconnections**

There may be a cause for concern for teacher educators when the demographics of the teacher education programs are stagnant, and the diversity of the classrooms in our country is increasing. It is important for teachers to enter the field equipped to educate and support all learners. It is difficult to change the beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices of those who have had limited interactions with culturally diverse populations (Barnes, 2006).

Some of the teachers in this study made connections to experiences that they had in their pre-service education programs. Connections that teachers were able to make included connections to field experience placements and to coursework.

Teachers in this study talked about being able to make important connections to field experiences that they had during their pre-service programs. These field experiences may have been practicum placements or student teaching experiences. Teachers who were able to make connections to field experiences appreciated having a chance to see what it was like to work in high-poverty schools before becoming employed in one. They found that seeing teachers in action who had experience in high-poverty settings was
helpful to them. Additionally, the teachers reported that these experiences helped them to make the decision to teach in a high poverty school.

Although the teachers found having practicum and student teaching experiences in various high poverty schools helpful, their first year was still difficult for them because the culture of each Title I School was different. They also found that until they had the total responsibility for the classroom, it was impossible to understand the enormity of the task until they experienced it. Some of the teachers reported feeling underprepared in spite of their previous experiences in high-poverty schools.

These findings seem to support the findings of McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson and Robinson (2008). Internship experiences such as student teaching are often the culminating experience of a teacher training program. McKinney and colleagues (2008) examined the role of the internship experience in the development of teachers for high-poverty schools. In this study, they compared the traditional internship experience with an internship experience in a professional development school. This study found that neither the traditional internship nor the internship associated with the professional development school enhanced their preparation. Even though the students were provided with the necessary tools and skills for working in an urban setting, there was no carry over into the teachers’ practice in the classroom (McKinney et al., 2008). They also found that both types of internship experiences can dampen the teachers’ enthusiasm and dedication to work in urban, high-poverty schools. The data suggested that more experiences that occur earlier in the teacher education program might be necessary.
Teachers also discussed connections that they were able to make to courses that they took, or to book studies that they had on poverty. The teachers stated that the courses helped them to understand more about the poverty and its possible impacts on student achievement. They commented that these courses were helpful, but they were not able to name the texts used when asked about these book studies in an interview.

Other teachers in my study described disconnections between their pre-service teacher education programs and their classroom experiences. The participants described a textbook vs. classroom reality gap. They also described this in similar terms as they did having field experiences in a high poverty school. They stated that they could read about working in a high poverty school, but until they experienced it for themselves, they could not fully understand the difficulty of it.

How do we teach future teachers about poverty? The literature reflected that the issue of poverty is, usually, addressed in a general course on multiculturalism, but these courses may be superficial. Many predominately white institutions continue with their “business as usual” (Sleeter, 2001, p. 95). They often address multicultural education in a cursory, disjointed manner. When these teachers were placed in urban schools, they were completely unprepared for the school setting and the students who inhabited that setting and had great difficulty. Students of color who attended these predominately white universities were also critical of the superficiality of the diversity programs. The students of color felt like these programs did not extend what they already knew or prepare their white colleagues for work in diverse schools.
The teachers in this study did not mention having classes that encouraged them to engage in critical reflection or question their beliefs and assumptions about students of poverty. The findings of my study indicated that some of the teachers blamed the parents for not taking care of basic needs. They did express an awareness of the sociocultural differences that existed, but somehow they were unable to question their ways of thinking and perceptions. They became frustrated when their ways of communication with parents did not work. They were often unable to consider alternative ways of communication. In many cases, they were not able to break free of deficit thinking. They made small attempts, but they were unable to step outside of their frames of reference that were heavily influenced by their background experiences and upbringing.

The current literature suggests that teacher education programs need to focus on equity and social justice. Scholars such as Nieto (2000) and Ladson-Billings (2006) call for a more multi-dimensional approach to teacher preparation programs. Nieto (2000) calls for teacher education programs to place equity and diversity at the heart of teacher education programs. She suggests three ways for teacher education programs to accomplish this: by taking a stand on social justice and diversity, making social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, and promoting teaching as transformational journey. Nieto (2000) encourages schools of education to give prospective teachers the opportunities to face and accept their identities. Teachers who are monolingual and White often have limited experiences and don’t question their race, class or social privilege. Ladson-Billings (2006) also echoed these thoughts and suggests that prospective and
novice teachers often believe that they are without culture. Prospective teachers need to recognize themselves as cultural beings and examine the cultural underpinnings of their beliefs and attitudes.

These studies mentioned above had relevance to my study because I encouraged novice teachers to examine themselves and their emotional responses to the impact of teaching in a high poverty school. Even though they did engage in reflection, it was not critical reflection.

The participants in my study reported making some important connections to their induction programs. Some of those connections included having an open line of communication with induction instructors, having a strong relationship with trusted mentors, and having time to share ideas with peers.

Teachers also reported disconnections that existed between what they were learning in their induction programs and what they were experiencing in their classrooms. Disconnections described by the teachers in my study included the lack of a close relationship with a mentor, the lack of instruction on poverty in the classroom, and a gap between their classroom experiences and the induction program curriculum.

The findings of my study support the findings of a research study on stakeholder perceptions of induction programs. A critical analysis study conducted by Portelli et al. (2010) gives some important insight into new teacher perceptions regarding induction, mentorship and teacher testing. According to this study, new teachers expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and hesitant to ask questions for fear that their competency would
be questioned. The novice teachers felt like they were in a survival mode- a “sink or swim” type of situation (Portelli et al., 2010, p. 33).

The teachers in my study did report feeling overwhelmed by the neediness of their students. One of the teachers was hesitant to approach her mentor. However, most of the participants in my study stated that they had an open line of communication with their induction instructors, and they felt comfortable asking them for assistance.

As a part of the study on stakeholder perceptions (Portelli et al., 2010), 37 new teachers were interviewed, and 100% of the participants agreed that mentoring should be an integral part of the induction process. They found it helpful to make a personal connection with a person that they could trust for practical advice. The participants stressed the importance of the mentor being a successful, experienced classroom teacher that could offer real strategies that would work when put into practice in the classroom. The participants did not feel that researchers or their school administrators could help them with the day-to-day realities of the classroom (Portelli et al., 2010).

Teachers in my study did indicate that a strong relationship with their mentor was important. This relationship was an important source of support for the first-year teachers in my study. This was a source of support that helped the teachers move on to empowerment in their own classrooms.

The new teachers in this study also identified a gap between the theoretical information that they learned as a part of their teacher education programs and their practices in the classroom. They wanted mentors who could help them with practical teaching strategies, learn how to do administrative tasks, solve problems, work more
efficiently and eliminate the waste of time (Portelli et al., 2010). They also hoped for a mentor that would help them learn about the school culture and politics, and in turn help them develop a sense of belonging in the school setting.

The findings of my study also supported these findings of Portelli et al. (2010). Teachers in my study also reported a gap between their “textbook” experiences in their pre-service programs and their work in the classroom. They also reported a similar gap between the induction class curriculum and their classroom practices. They valued time for peer-sharing and collaboration because they were able to learn about practical strategies that they could take back to their classrooms and use immediately.

Interestingly, when these 37 teachers in the stakeholder perception study (Portelli et al., 2010) were asked about their perceptions of the role of social justice and equity should play in an induction program, responses reflected a very shallow knowledge of these concepts. Social justice and equity were not perceived to be a high priority in the content of induction programs. Some respondents indicated that they had a class or two in college about social just and equity. The participants had varying degrees of theoretical knowledge about social justice and equity. Most felt that they did not enter the workforce with sufficient knowledge to integrate social justice into their classrooms (Portelli et al., 2010). This is of grave concern, because without practical knowledge of how to incorporate social justice and equity in the classroom, the status quo of the dominant culture will continue to exist and social inequities may continue to be reproduced.

The induction programs described in the interviews conducted as a part of my study are consistent with the description of fourth wave induction programs provided by
Wood and Stanulis (2009). Quality fourth-wave induction programs (1997-2006) are exemplified by their comprehensive, organized systems of assistance and multiple formative-assessment strategies. The goals are to increase novice teacher retention, promote overall well-being, increase competence, and improve student achievement and to meet any mandates regarding certification. Fourth-wave induction programs include the following nine components (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 5):

1. Mentor preparation and mentoring of novice teachers
2. Reflective inquiry and teaching practices
3. Systematic and structured observations
4. Developmentally appropriate professional development
5. Formative teacher assessment
6. Administrators’ involvement in induction
7. A school culture supportive of novice teachers
8. Program evaluation and research on induction
9. A shared vision of knowledge, teaching and learning

Participants in my study described the presence of most of these components in their induction programs. All of the participants were assigned mentors who had been trained in a three day mentoring class per South Carolina State Department of Education requirements. This element was present even though the induction teacher relationships with their mentors were not always a strong one. Some of the participants described keeping a reflective journal. This journal was shared with the induction instructors. The
teachers reflected on their experiences and asked for advice about situations that occurred in their classrooms.

Wood and Stanulis (2009) also describe fifth wave induction programs which began in 2007. There is more pressure to focus on teacher accountability and the effect of the teacher’s effectiveness on student learning. These fifth-wave programs are just beginning to include more of a focus on the context of teaching, such as a focus on urban schooling and the need for differentiation of instruction to address the needs of diverse learners (Wood & Stanulis, 2009).

The findings of my study depart from the findings that describe the fifth-wave induction programs. The teachers in this study did talk briefly about accountability and their effect on student achievement, but it did not seem to be a focus of any of the induction programs. Teachers from River Rock Elementary and Crescent Moon Elementary described how their induction program focused on the context of their teaching. They took a bus tour of the community, participated in book studies on poverty and had a better understanding of Title I funding. The other teachers in the study did not mention any contextual focus regarding their induction programs. The induction programs described in this study have not made the full transition into fifth-wave induction programs as described by Wood and Stanulis (2009).

**Emotional Geographies**

The theoretical framework of my study was based on the work of Canadian Researcher, Andy Hargreaves, who wrote extensively about teaching as an emotional practice and about the emotional geographies of teaching. All of the emotional
geographies which Hargreaves (2001) described were represented in the findings of my study. In 2001, Hargreaves expanded upon his ideas of teaching as an emotional practice with concept of emotional geographies. Emotional geographies consist of “the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and color the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other” (Hargreaves, 2001, p.1061).

Emotional geographies help us to understand more about supports and threats to the formation of emotional bonds and the understanding of schooling. Hargreaves (2001) describes various forms of emotional distance that can have a detrimental effect on the emotional understanding among teachers, students, colleagues and parents. The five key emotional geographies are sociocultural, moral, professional, political and physical distance.

Sociocultural distance occurs when teachers find themselves teaching children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds from their own (Hargreaves, 2001). Teachers are often physically, socially and culturally removed from the communities in which they serve. Because of this, teachers often stereotype the communities in which they serve, and they are also subject to being stereotyped by the community. Hargreaves (2001) found that sociocultural distances were evidenced in the teacher’s assumptions about parents. Teachers may view the parent’s failure to attend meetings as a lack of caring and a lack of support for the school. Teachers may attribute issues related to poverty and being related to single parenthood. Teachers and others in “caring”
professions may blame their clients. This blame leads to feelings of frustration and to feeling overwhelmed by the neediness of their students and their parents.

Sociocultural distances were described by the participants in my study in a variety of different ways. Socio-cultural differences were represented in the findings of my study in the first theme, Responsibility for Child Well-being. Participants described their perceptions that the basic needs of their students were not being taken care of at home in a satisfactory manner. Teachers described their feelings of being overwhelmed by the needs of their students. These teachers expressed feelings of worry, sadness and concern about having to meet the basic needs of hunger, clothing and personal hygiene at school. Teachers expressed frustration, resentment and often blamed parents for not being able to meet these needs. Some teachers felt like the parents did not care about their children because they were not able to meet these needs.

A second way teachers experienced sociocultural distances was when the teachers realized how different the living conditions of their students and their home lives were from their own. Teachers submitted photographs of campers and mobile homes and described home visits. They also described feelings of worry and concern about the living conditions of their students and it made it hard to want to send them home at the end of the school day. Teachers also described their worry about the impact of the home lives of the students on their educational futures. Teachers described many students who had been removed from their homes and were being raised by people other than their parents.

Moral distance is another type of emotional geography identified by Hargreaves (2001). Moral distance occurs when teachers experience negative emotions due to the
inability to achieve their goals, or their purposes are being threatened. This may happen when a new curriculum is imposed. Teachers may feel a sense of loss and demoralization. Moral distance may also occur when teachers feel at odds with those around them. They may experience this when they are questioned by parents about curriculum and instructional decisions. When teachers experience these negative emotions, they withdraw and lose momentum and energy for doing their work. Moral distance does not have to pose a threat in organizations that have mechanisms in place where it is acknowledged that we can learn from others who are different than us and to learn more about the goals we share in common with each other.

One of the teachers in my study described being overwhelmed because she was required to implement a multitude of reading programs in her kindergarten classroom. She felt like she was a failure because she could not implement all of these programs successfully, nor could her students perform well in all of the programs. This teacher could not achieve her moral purpose as a teacher because her reading instruction became disjointed when these programs were imposed upon her.

Conversely, teachers in my study often described instances of moral closeness rather than moral distances. They were able to describe ways in which they were able to achieve their moral purpose as a teacher because they were supported by the community, spouses, and parents. They also described having an abundance of resources in the classroom, and this helped them provide instruction and achieve their moral purpose as a teacher.
A third type of emotional geography described by Hargreaves (2001) is professional distance. Teaching is a largely female dominated profession that has been institutionalized. Teachers are expected to care for their students, but often the care is expected to be in a detached manner such as in the medical or legal professions. Teachers are encouraged to be more clinical in their expressions and emotions. Also, the teacher is an authority figure in the teacher-student and the teacher-parent relationships. Again, professional distance can bring about negative emotions when the teacher feels like he or she is being criticized or questioned. Teachers may distance themselves from parent interactions in order to avoid criticism.

The teachers also experienced professional distance in my study. Some of the teachers in the study described how they distanced themselves from parents when it came to discussing personal hygiene issues. They were unsure how to broach the subject with parents, and rather than talking about it, they preferred to try and handle the situation themselves. They felt like they would be “stepping on toes.” They did not want to open themselves up to being criticized by the parents or subjected to their anger or embarrassment about the situation.

Teachers in my study also talked about professional distance when they talked about feeling unprepared for emergency drills. They described how they wanted and needed to be professional and in control should an emergency occur. They wanted to be able to maintain this professionalism and in control in order to remain calm and to protect their students.
The teachers in this study were not detached or clinical in the expression of their emotions. They openly described their feelings associated with the photographs that they submitted for this study. They were quite passionate about teaching and their feelings about their students.

Hargreaves (2001) described physical distance as being the most obvious type of emotional geography that is found in the teaching profession. It is hard to get to know and come to understand others when face to face contact and interaction happens on an infrequent basis. Teacher-parent interactions are often sporadic and vary in their intensity.

Physical distances were evidenced in my study mainly in the area of parent communications. Some teachers described how using parent communication folders was not a successful technique. These teachers described how the folders were not signed by the parents. They also described how parents did not pick up the folders at the end of the school year even though it contained the report card. Other teachers described a lack of parent involvement. The inability to communicate with parents often led to a physical distance.

Political distances are closely tied to our experiences of feeling powerful and powerless (Hargreaves, 2001). Feelings of power tend to make people feel secure and protected, and this leads to positive emotions including feelings of satisfaction and protection. The perception of being powerless increases feelings of stress, anxiety, anger and depression. In teaching, teachers may experience these feelings if they work for an authoritarian principal.
One of the teachers in my study described her feelings of powerlessness. She had a toilet that remained unrepaired for many months even though she reported it to the custodian and her school administration. She felt like her voice was not being heard. This led to her constraint as a teacher. She felt like she could not talk to the principal about other important issues if she could not even get a response about her toilet repaired.

**Critical Pedagogy**

The philosophical lens for this study was deeply rooted in critical pedagogy and giving voice to those who are marginalized. The students of poverty are recognized as a marginalized group because the topic of poverty is often excluded in education reform agendas and the students, and their families are often blamed for their academic difficulties. The marginalization of students of poverty may continue to be exacerbated unless we learn more about the impact of teaching in a high poverty area upon the emotional state of the teacher and upon their instructional techniques.

The emotional responses that teachers have to poverty can also have direct impact on how instruction is delivered in the classroom as well as an impact on the teacher-student relationships. Empowering teachers to engage in dialogue about their emotional responses to poverty will also empower to think more critically about themselves as a teacher and their instruction.

Freire (1970) encourages us to consider the banking concept of education and how it differs from the problem-posing concept of education and how each of these concepts can influence the teacher-student relationship. The banking concept of education is when a teacher takes a more authoritarian approach to teaching. There is
little involvement from the student, and the students have no choice about the curriculum. The pupils are viewed more as objects or receptacles ready for deposits of knowledge from the teacher (Freire, 1970).

This type of instruction often exists in high poverty situations. Teachers are often trying to “fix” the students and integrate them into the “healthy society” (Freire, 1970). Conversely, the concept of problem-posing of education is a practice of freedom. The students engage in authentic dialogue with the teacher, challenge themselves, reflect and unveil reality (Freire, 1970). Students become critical thinkers and are an integral part of the learning process.

In this study, the teachers did not talk a lot about instruction. The few teachers who did discuss instruction did so when they shared their success stories. Teachers centered their discussions on their responsibilities for child well-being and sociocultural differences. In those discussions, there was evidence that the teachers were trying to “fix” the students and integrate them into normal society. They were trying to “fix” the students based on their perceptual lens as a white-middle class female. Although, they seemed to acknowledge their differences and perspectives, they did not question their beliefs to any great extent. It seemed like a lot of time was being used to take of student needs before instruction could take place. This focus on meeting needs may take away from the focus on instruction and hamper student achievement.

The beginning teacher is often unaware of the power they do have to become change agents and to transform the lives of the students. In this study, empowerment was exemplified by academic and behavioral success stories and the development of positive
relationships with parents and students. In this study, that is where the data on empowerment ended. What might empowerment look like beyond the confines of this study? Teachers in this study were often so overwhelmed by the needs of their students, they did not realize other ways in which they could become empowered to be successful teachers. Delpit (2006) describes the tired teachers in her induction class. She suggests that teachers should challenge their perceptions that they have about students and their parents and “look beyond what they think they see in parents and students to what they may see in themselves” (Delpit, 2006, p. 220). The teachers in my study were not yet aware of their abilities to dig a little deeper within themselves to become transformative. Delpit (2006) offers ten precepts, which I described earlier, that will help teachers change the lives of their students. The precepts which stand out from Delpit’s (2006) list are to honor the students’ home culture and to build upon the strengths of the children and the experiences that they bring to school. These would be great starting points for the teachers who participated in my study to consider ways of become further empowered in the classroom.

**Implications for Practice**

This study contributed to the body of knowledge by identifying three pathways that an induction teacher might find herself/himself in during their first year of teaching. The Pathways are:

- Pathway #1: Connections to Empowerment
- Pathway #2: Disconnections to Constraint
Pathway # 3: Overcoming Obstacles- Moving from Constraint to Empowerment

It may be helpful for practitioners in the field, particularly induction class instructors, to have knowledge of the three pathways. As they work with the induction teachers, they could determine what pathway a teacher might be taking and help them make connections to support systems that will help them remain empowered as a teacher. Likewise, it may be helpful for induction teachers to be able to be knowledgeable of the three pathways as well. Having this knowledge may be a useful tool to use in self-reflection and a way for teachers to consciously seek sources of support that will help keep them on the pathway to empowerment.

The teachers suggested that they wanted more time for peer sharing during induction class sessions. They felt like it was beneficial to bounce ideas off other teachers and to get instructional ideas and strategies that they could use in the classroom. They also liked the peer sharing times because they served as a type of support group for them.

Peer-sharing time may be a time where teachers could engage in critical reflection. In my study, the teachers were eager to reflect on their first year and readily shared their emotions. Although their reflections answered my research questions for this study, all of the reflections did not turn out to be critical reflections. The work of Howard (2003) offered suggestions that would help teachers take their reflections a step further. Howard suggests that an important consideration in using critical reflection to its optimal potential is to be specific about what reflect upon as they engage in this process. Teachers should examine class data on an ongoing basis and ask themselves deep, reflective questions about equity in the classroom. He also states teachers should see to avoid
reductive notions about culture (Howard, 2003). Teachers should avoid stereotypical thinking and realize that immense differences can exist within groups. Teachers should focus more on individual students and their thoughts and beliefs.

The main implication for teacher education programs is to ensure that pre-service teachers have varied placements throughout all their field experiences. Some of the teachers in this study reported having no field experience placements in high-poverty schools. As teacher educators, we should ensure that all pre-service teachers have opportunities to experience working in a high poverty school with a teacher who is empowered and is able to establish positive relationships with the students and their parents. It is important that they have access to teachers who are successful in their work in a high poverty school.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina. Although this study contributes to the body of knowledge in the field, there are some limitations of its findings. This study was limited to the study of induction teachers in two geographical areas of South Carolina, and therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other induction teachers working in other locations or cultures. I chose purposeful sampling for this study in order to obtain information rich cases. Patton (as cited in Erlandson, 1993) states:

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting **information rich** cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can
learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169)

I was able to obtain information rich cases for this study, but it may be useful to broaden the scope of the study to include more participants and to extend it to other geographical locations. Researchers who may want to further this type of research may want to explore the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school on male teachers or teachers from varied ethnic groups, because males and teachers of color were not represented in this study.

The interview protocol that I used encouraged teachers to reflect upon their first year of teaching in a high poverty school and how they were emotionally impacted during that year. However, all of the teachers did not quite take it to the critical reflection point during their interviews as I hoped that they might. Other researchers may want to create questions that would guide the teachers into critical reflection. Howard (2003) offers some suggestions about how to use critical reflection optimally with pre-service and in-service teachers. A consideration in using critical reflection to its maximum potential is to be specific about what to reflect upon and have a specific list of questions to guide the reflection process. Researchers may want to create interview questions that will help teachers challenge their assumptions.

Finally, another topic that researchers may want to explore is the student achievement in the classrooms of teachers on each of the pathways. Is the student achievement higher in the classroom of a teacher who feels empowered than in the classroom of teacher who feels constrained? Is there a lack of student achievement
because teachers are so heavily focused on meeting basic needs that they lose some of their instructional focus? This may be a topic of interest because the teachers in this study did not talk about instructional matters very much, and it would be interesting to learn more about their classroom instruction and its impact on high-poverty students.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the findings of this study in relationship to the current literature in the field. This chapter began with a summary of the study findings and a discussion of the findings. Implications for practice were provided as well as recommendations for future research.

In conclusion, the findings of this study expanded on the work of previous researchers on teacher emotions to specifically include the emotions of first-year teachers in high-poverty schools in rural areas. The findings contributed to the understanding of the emotions that these teachers experienced and what types of situations or events stimulated these emotions. The teachers in the study revealed emotions brought about by taking on many of the responsibilities for child well-being. Teachers also experienced sociocultural distances as described by Hargreaves (2001). Findings revealed three pathways upon which these teachers may travel during the journey of that important first year of teaching. Each of these three pathways ultimately led to the teachers’ empowerment or constraint.

The findings of this study have implications for induction programs and teacher education programs. Induction program leaders may want to have an awareness of the three pathways and assess their induction teachers to determine what pathway they might
be taking. They could in turn provide the induction teachers with more support and help them make important connections so that these new teachers may become empowered in their work. The induction teacher may also want to be knowledgeable of the three pathways and self-assess. If they are experiencing a lack of support, or the inability to connect to support systems, they could make a conscious effort to seek help. Finally, induction program instructors may want to include a time for peer sharing as a part of the induction program. Not only does this provide an important source of support, but it could also serve as a time for critical reflection.

Finally, this study has implications for teacher educators. As teacher educators plan for field experiences for pre-service teachers, they may want to consider varying the placements of their students. Some teachers in this study had no previous experience in a high poverty setting prior to their employment. Giving teachers an opportunity to train in a high-poverty school may provide them with some key learnings and prepare them to deal with some of the emotions that they may experience should they become employed in a high-poverty setting.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Permission to Link to NCES
Appendix B

IRB Approval

Dear Dr. Stegelin,

The chair of the Clemson University Institutional Review Board (IRB) validated the protocol identified above using exempt review procedures and a determination was made on April 25, 2014 that the proposed activities involving human participants qualify as Exempt under category B2, based on federal regulations 45 CFR 46. You initially submitted an expedited application, but the reviewer determined that it qualified for exemption. This exemption is valid for all sites with a research site letter on file. The approved consent document is attached for distribution. Your protocol will expire on February 28, 2015.

The expiration date indicated above was based on the completion date you entered on the IRB application. If an extension is necessary, the PI should submit an Exempt Protocol Extension Request form, http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/forms.html, at least three weeks before the expiration date. Please refer to our website for more information on the extension procedures, http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/guidance/reviewprocess.html.

No change in this approved research protocol can be initiated without the IRB’s approval. This includes any proposed revisions or amendments to the protocol or consent form. Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects, any complications, and/or any adverse events must be reported to the Office of Research Compliance (ORC) immediately. All team members are required to review the “Responsibilities of Principal Investigators” and the “Responsibilities of Research Team Members” available at http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/regulations.html.

The Clemson University IRB is committed to facilitating ethical research and protecting the rights of human subjects. Please contact us if you have any questions and use the IRB number and title in all communications regarding this study.

Good luck with your study.

All the best,

Nalinee

Nalinee D. Patin
IRB Coordinator
Clemson University
Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Voice: (864) 656-0636
Fax: (864) 656-4475
E-mail: npatin@clemson.edu
Web site: http://www.clemson.edu/research/compliance/irb/
IRB E-mail: irb@clemson.edu
Appendix C

Recruitment Flyer

Do you like to take pictures?

Information about Participating in a Research Project!

The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo Elicitation Study

What: An education research study seeking to learn and understand more about the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school with the end goal of improving teacher education and induction programs

By Whom: An educator with 28 years of experience who has worked in Title I Schools, has served as a Director of Federal Programs and now is completing a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction

Why: First year teachers possess valuable knowledge regarding the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school and how these experiences may connect to their teacher education programs and induction programs. By using teacher produced photographs and interviews, the voices of first year teachers will be heard through this research. This project will allow teachers to share their world through the use of photographs. Knowledge gained from this study will be used to inform teacher educators and induction class instructors with valuable information about the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school in order to inform instruction within these programs.

Who Can Participate:

- You must be a first year teacher.
- You must currently be teaching in grades PK-Grade 3 in a school designated as a Title I School in a rural area.
- You must be willing to use your own phone or camera in order to take photographs.
**What’s Involved:** Two meetings with the researcher- the first to obtain necessary permissions and to provide instructions for taking photographs; the second to participate in an interview with the researcher to talk about the photographs.

**Compensation:** Each participant will receive a $25 Visa Gift Card at the conclusion of the second session.

**Where:** Teachers will be interviewed at a place of their choosing.

**When:** Beginning April 2014

**How:** To discuss this study in more detail, call Kim Jedlicka, M.Ed. at 864-723-4049 and leave a confidential message with your name and number for a return phone call or by email at nichol5@clemson.edu. Requesting information does not require participation in the study in any way.
Appendix D

Participant Information Form

Participant Information Sheet

Name of Participant: _____________________________________________

Gender: Male/Female

Contact Number: ________________________________________________

Email Address: _________________________________________________

Name of School: _______________________________________________

Name of School District: _________________________________________

What grade are you currently teaching? PK  K  1  2  3

Are you a first year teacher? Yes/No

Is the school in which you are currently employed designated as a Title I School? Yes/No

Are you working in a rural school? Yes/No

Are you willing to use your own phone, camera, or other device to take 5-10 photographs? Yes/No
Appendix E

Informed Consent

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo-Elicitation Study

Description of the Study and Your Part in It

Dr. Dolores Stegelin, along with Kimberly Jedlicka, is inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Dolores Stegelin is a Professor in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education at Clemson University. Kimberly Jedlicka is a doctoral student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Dolores Stegelin. The purpose of this research is to learn more about the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school on first year, early childhood teachers in order to improve pre-service education programs as well as teacher induction programs.

Your part in the study will be to take photographs of 5-10 objects that symbolize the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school. No images of human subjects or that will identify your students will be allowed. You will have two week time period in which you will take your photographs. You will insert your photographs into PowerPoint slides, add captions to describe your photographs and submit the photographs to the researcher via email. You will participate in a one on one interview, which will be digitally recorded, with Kim Jedlicka at a site of your choosing. Additionally, you will also be invited to participate in a third session in order to validate the results of the study.

In order to participate in this study you will participate in a phone screening or an in person screening that will last approximately 20 minutes. Additionally, you will participate in two face to face meetings with the researcher. Visit One, which will focus on enrollment in the study and directions for participating in the study, will take about one hour. Participants will take photographs at their convenience over a two week time period. Visit Two will be the digitally recorded interview session and it will last from one-two hours. Visit Three is optional and will last about 30 minutes.
Risks and Discomforts

We do not know of any risks to you in this research study. You may experience mild emotional discomfort when discussing the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school. However, the time for reflection may allow you to process these emotions in a constructive manner.

Possible Benefits

We do not know of any way you would benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, this research may help us to understand the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school and lead researchers to identify ways to strengthen pre-service teacher education programs and induction programs.

Incentives

You will receive a $25 Visa Gift card as an incentive for participating in this study. The gift card will be given to you at the conclusion of the interview session.

Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you are in this study, or what information we collect about your responses in particular. Your identity will not be revealed in any publication that might result from this study. Pseudonyms will be given to each participant for use during data collection and in the final report. Audio recordings, photographs and copies of transcripts will be stored in a locked office or on a password protected computer and kept indefinitely by the researcher for research and educational purposes.

Choosing to Be in the Study

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, or if any problems arise, please contact Dolores Stegelin at Clemson University at 864-656-0327.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or irb@clemson.edu. If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC’s toll-free number, 866-297-3071.
Consent

I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant’s signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

A copy of this form will be given to you.
Appendix F

Photograph Release Form

Clemson University
THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF TEACHING IN A HIGH POVERTY SCHOOL ON FIRST YEAR, EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS IN RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA: A PHOTO ELICITATION STUDY

Photo Release Form

I, ________________________________ give permission for Dr. Dolores Stegelin, along with Kimberly Jedlicka to use and publish my photographs developed during “The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo Elicitation Study.” They are free to use the photographs for presentations and publications about this project.

Contact Information.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Dolores Stegelin at dstegel@clemson.edu or Kim Jedlicka at nichol5@clemson.edu.

Participant’s signature: ________________________________ Date: __________

Participant’s name: ________________________________
Appendix G

Participant Instructions

Dear (First Year Teacher):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation study entitled, *The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo Elicitation Study*. This study involves listening to first year teachers describe the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school, and I believe you have significant insights to share.

This study will take about 2-3 hours of your time over the next month. Your participation in this project consists of the following parts:

**Capturing Photographs**

- Over the course of the next two weeks, you will take five to ten photographs that symbolize the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school.
- You will use your own smart phones or other photographic device to take photographs for this study. The device needs to be able to produce images that may be downloaded.
- In order to take photographs that are suitable for this study, reflect upon ways that working in a high poverty school has impacted you as a teacher emotionally this year.
- You may want to use the attached table to help you reflect and plan what you want to photograph and what the photograph represents. Be creative!
- Take photographs of five-ten objects, materials, facilities, community surroundings, etc. that symbolize the emotional impact that working in a high poverty school has had upon you. You may take photographs that extend beyond the walls of your school. These objects can symbolize the good, bad and the ugly—*all* the ways in which working in a high poverty school has impacted you.
- No human subjects are allowed in the photographs.
- You will have two weeks to take your photographs.
- When you take the photograph, write down informal or anecdotal notes about how this object made you feel or why it influenced you to choose it as part of this project. You may use the attached chart for your notes.
• Insert your photographs into PowerPoint slides. You will need one slide for each photograph. If you need assistance with PowerPoint, I will provide instructions for you.
• Add a brief caption to each photograph explaining what this photo means to you.
• Submit the slides to Kim Jedlicka via email to this address: nichol5@clemson.edu by (deadline date two weeks from initial briefing and instruction).

**Photo-Elicitation Interview**

We will meet for a face-to-face interview at the end of the two-week period. The interview will last for approximately one hour. We will look at the photographs and talk about the photographs that you collected. The interview will be audio-taped using a digital voice recorder so that I can transcribe it for data analysis.

To prepare for this interview, please select the photographs that you wish to talk about. You may choose to talk about all of them if you so desire. You will also be asked to place your photographs into categories, so you may want to think about how your photographs may be grouped prior to the interview session.

**Feedback**

Finally, I would like to send you a draft of my analysis in order to validate the results and to make sure that I have accurately represented the findings of this study.

Through your participation in this project, I hope to learn more about the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school. This is an opportunity to tell your story and a safe space in which to reflect upon your journey as a first year teacher in a high poverty school.

This is an unfunded dissertation study. I am very grateful for your participation and enthusiasm. You will be compensated with a $25 Visa Gift Card and the knowledge that you will be helping future teachers.

Remember, there is no wrong way to do this project! Be creative and have fun!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jedlicka

PhD Candidate, Clemson University
My Photographs: Images that Symbolize the Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Where/What</th>
<th>Why</th>
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</table>
Appendix H

Interview Protocol

The following interview questions will be used with the 10-15 research participants in this study. The interview will be digitally audio-taped so that it can be transcribed for data analysis. The interview will last approximately 1 hour. All of the photographs will be stored electronically as well. The purpose of this project is to learn more about the experiences of induction teachers who work in high poverty schools in order to determine ways to improve teacher education programs and induction programs.

1. Here are the photographs that you collected over the past two weeks. Please take a few minutes to look through your photographs and think about how they may be grouped. Place them into categories. What would you label each of these categories?
2. We are going to talk about the photographs that you took. Take a few moments to select the photographs that you wish to talk about and pull them to the side. If you wish to talk about all of the photographs you took, that is acceptable as well. Which photograph would you like to talk about first?
3. Please tell me about this picture.
4. What does this picture make you think about?
5. What does this picture mean to you?
6. Does this picture evoke certain emotions/feelings in you? If so, please describe them.
7. Is there anything that you wished that you could have photographed, but could not? If yes, tell me about what that would have been and why.
8. To what extent did you find these photographs connected with your experiences in your pre-service education program?
9. To what extent did your pre-service education program prepare you for, or support your work in a high poverty school?
10. Do you perceive any disconnects between what you were taught in your teacher education program and the everyday realities of working in a high poverty school? If so, please tell me about them.
11. To what extent do these photographs connect with your experiences in your current induction program?
12. To what extent does your induction program support you in your work in a high poverty school?
13. Do you perceive any disconnects between what you are learning in your induction class and what you face each day in your classroom? If so, please describe them.

14. What ideas do you have that may help teacher educators and induction program instructors strengthen their programs with regards to preparing and supporting teachers for work in a high poverty setting?

Thank you for sharing today. I will be analyzing this interview and the photographs that you shared with me today to build a description of the emotional impact of working in a high poverty school on first year teachers in rural areas. I want to make sure that your voice is represented accurately in this study. I will be sharing the final results of the study with you so you may validate that it reflects you.
Appendix I

Member Check Protocol

Dear Research Participant:

Thank you for taking part in my research study about the emotional impact of teaching in a high poverty school on first-year, early childhood teachers in rural South Carolina. I completed the data analysis and would like your feedback about my findings. Because the study is about you, I want to ensure that the findings reflect your experience.

I have attached a copy of a graphic that which shows the major findings of the study. This model shows the relationships among the themes. Please take a look at the model and the descriptions that I have included for each component of the model and think about how they might relate to your photographs.

I have attached your photographs to this email to remind you of each of the photographs and so that you can read your captions.

When I analyzed your photographs and the description you gave in the interview, I included it as a part of the following theme # and name:

- Photograph 1
- Photograph 2
- Photograph 3
- Photograph 4
- Photograph 5
- Photograph 6
- Photograph 7
- Photograph 8
- Photograph 9
- Photographs 10

In order to get feedback, please let me know the following:

1. Do you think I placed your pictures in the appropriate category? Yes or No
2. If not, where would you place each of the photographs and its description within the themes depicted on the model? Why?

3. Can you identify which pathway(s) you might have found yourself on last year? If so which one(s) and why? The pathways are: Connections to Empowerment, Disconnections to Constraint and Overcoming Obstacles: Moving from Constraint to Empowerment.

If you cannot identify one of the pathways, why not? Is there a better description for where you were last year?
Appendix J

Photograph Coding Sheet

Participant:
In Vivo Codes for Categories:

Photograph ___ of ___
In Vivo Codes: Empowered vs. Constrained

Confirmed, Contradicted or Expanded
Emotional Geographies Represented:
Appendix K

Wordle Examples

Figure A-1: This image is a Wordle representing participants’ meaning units derived from interview transcripts from the researcher.
Figure A-2: This image is a Wordle representing participants’ meaning units derived from interview transcripts from a peer reviewer.
Figure A-3: This image is a Wordle representing participants' meaning units derived from interview transcripts from the researcher and the peer reviewer.
Figure A-4: This image is a Wordle representing participants’ emotion codes derived from interview transcripts from the researcher and the peer reviewer.
Appendix L

Curriculum Vitae

Kimberly O. Jedlicka
School District of Oconee
414 S. Pine Street
Walhalla, SC 29691
(864) 886-4400
kjedlicka@oconee.k12.sc.us

EDUCATION

2009- Present  Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.
PhD Student in Curriculum and Instruction (GPA: 3.94)
Graduation Date: December 18, 2014

1997 – 1999  Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.
30 hours above Masters of Education in the area of Administration and Supervision
  • Received Elementary Principal/Supervisor Certificate

1989  Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.
  • Awarded Master of Education Degree in the area of Special Education

1982 – 1985  Clemson University, Clemson, S.C.
  • Awarded Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education
    o Magna Cum Laude Graduate

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

  • Director of Teacher and Personnel Services

  • Director of Federal Programs & Professional Development

  • Principal
  • Assistant Principal

  • Third Grade Teacher
  o Teacher of the Year, 1992-1993

  • Resource Teacher, grades K-6

  • Teacher, Learning Disabilities Self-Contained Class, grades 1-4

  • Resource Teacher, grades K-6

CERTIFICATION

South Carolina State Board of Education Professional Certificate in Elementary Education, Special Education- Educable Mentally Disabled, Special Education- Learning Disabilities, Elementary Principal, and Elementary Supervisor

STRENGTHS

Demonstrates a positive attitude to convey a sense of commitment and excitement about teaching and learning; shows a sincere interest in professional responsibilities through enthusiasm and sensitivity to others; treats all with dignity and respect; maintains open line of communication to work with parents, students, and peers to achieve necessary goals; displays a strong work ethic.

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

(ED 854) International Perspectives on Poverty, Clemson University, spring 2013 (Coteacher)

(EDEC 3000) Foundations of Early Childhood, Clemson University, spring 2011 (Coteacher)
RESEARCH

Doctoral Dissertation: The Emotional Impact of Teaching in a High Poverty School on First Year, Early Childhood Teachers in Rural South Carolina: A Photo Elicitation Study

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS


Jedlicka, K., & Stegelin, D. (2012, October). Poverty and the schools: Meeting the needs of young students. Presented at the South Carolina Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, Columbia, SC.


Jedlicka, K., & Kinard, A. (2006, November). It’s gonna be a brand new day! Presented at the South Carolina Council for Children with Behavior Disorders Conference, North Myrtle Beach, SC.

Jedlicka, K., & Williams, E. (2005, June). Leadership lesson number one: How to increase teacher motivation and morale. Presented at the South Carolina Association for School Administrators’ Summer Leadership Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.


Jedlicka, K., & Romansky, B. (2002, April). *Taking a “write turn”: Using writing to create local school reform and increase student achievement.* Presented at the International Reading Association Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Jedlicka, K., & Romansky, B. (2002, February). *Putting the pieces together for a school-wide writing program.* Presented at the Southeast Regional International Reading Association Conference, Hilton Head, SC.


**INSERVICE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATIONS**


**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

- South Carolina Association for School Administrators
- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
- International Reading Association
- National Staff Development Council
- Phi Delta Kappa
- Reading Recovery Council of North America

**PROFESSIONAL SERVICE/PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Anderson University Teacher Education Advisory Board
- Tri-County Technical College Early Childhood Development Advisory Committee
- Reading Recovery Site Coordinator
- Trained Principal Evaluator
- New Principal Mentor
- South Carolina Mentor Trainer
- SAFE-T Evaluator Trainer
- Trained in Cognitive Coaching
- March of Dimes Executive Committee
- Leadership Oconee Class of 2011
- Clemson University Office of Teaching Effectiveness Workshops:
  - *Creative Tools for Conflict Resolution: How to Live Peacefully with Your Students and Peers*
  - *Finding Research and Project Funding Opportunities Tailored to Your Needs*

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

- April 1988        Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Clemson University
- 1992-1993        Teacher of the Year, La France Elementary, La France, SC

**School awards earned during tenure as Principal of Pendleton Elementary School:**
- South Carolina Exemplary Writing School
- Red Carpet School Award
- Blue Ribbon Schools Lighthouse Award
REFERENCES


Hughes, J. A. (2010). What teacher preparation programs can do to better prepare teachers to meet the challenges of educating students living in poverty. *Action in Teacher Education, 32*(1), 54-64.


