A Bridge Over Troubled Water: Induction Teachers' Perspectives Regarding Their Efficacy Towards Meeting the Needs of Diverse Populations of Students

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A BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER: INDUCTION TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THEIR EFFICACY TOWARDS MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Graduate School of
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Doctor of Philosophy
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by
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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative multi-case study was to explore the perceptions of 13 first-year teachers as it relates to their readiness to meet the academic needs of their minority students. The findings provided information on their readiness, teacher preparation programs, and support needed from school leaders during their Induction year of teaching. The study was designed to explore the academic needs of the diverse population of students in a rural county school district in the Upstate of South Carolina. A triangulated study was conducted to include face-to-face interviews and an analysis of the transcripts to explore and examine the participants’ readiness. The findings revealed 12 themes aligned to three research questions. The themes based on their readiness were classroom management, culture shock, expectations, preconceptions and biases, preparedness, and relationships. The themes associated with their preparation were instructional knowledge, diversity, and communication. The themes associated with the support needed from the school leaders were professional development, ongoing support, and collaboration. The findings suggest the first-year teachers in this study do not understand and accept the cultural differences that exist between themselves and their students. Participants found it difficult to believe their values differed from their students, and this culture shock made it difficult to build relationships with students. The participants were prepared with content knowledge, but were not equipped with the skills needed to impart this knowledge to students. The findings were interpreted and situated in the context of the existing literature including the conceptual framework of culturally
relevant pedagogy. The implications of the study are discussed and recommendations for future study were also provided.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving mother, Reverend Ruth Coleman Byrd, who suffers from Alzheimer’s disease. Although she will never physically read a page of this work, through example, love, and endurance, she has been my motivation to write every page of it. I am eternally grateful to you Momma for loving, supporting, encouraging, and believing in me. You always knew that I could do it.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the novice teachers that work tirelessly every day to cultivate, motivate, and educate the children in our public school systems.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge first and foremost my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is because of my God, I am who I am today, and it is also because of Him I reached this heighten milestone in my life. I am forever grateful to Him for His protection, His strength which is made perfect in my weakness, direction, favor, and unconditional love.

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To my family members who cared for my mom while I worked to obtain a doctoral degree, I am forever grateful for your understanding and support. To the faculty, staff, and students of Sanders Middle School, I am humbled and thankful to be your leader. I acknowledge and value our daily experiences.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Nathaniel Bryan. Bryan, I thank you for sharing your knowledge and wisdom and for introducing me to culturally relevant pedagogy.
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*Figure 1. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*
PREFACE

“A Bridge Over Troubled Waters”

When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes, I'll dry them all (all)
I'm on your side, oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down

When you're down and out
When you're on the street
When evening falls so hard
I will comfort you (ooo)
I'll take your part, oh, when darkness comes
And pain is all around
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down

Sail on silver girl
Sail on by
Your time has come to shine
All your dreams are on their way
See how they shine
Oh, if you need a friend
I'm sailing right behind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind

- Simon & Garfunkel (1970)

“A Bridge Over Troubled Water,” released in 1970, was Simon & Garfunkel’s final studio album and their greatest success. A winner of five unprecedented Grammy Awards, Simon and Garfunkel’s use of simile to describe “A Bridge Over Troubled
“Water” is parallel to the experiences of novice teachers that struggle to meet the academic needs of the students in our public schools today. It’s a cry for help. More than 40 years later, these lyrics capture the current state of the teacher education field in this age of accountability and high stakes testing. Children of color are the growing majority in our public school system, and they historically underperform their White counterparts. One may argue this cry for help from these novice teachers, primarily 82% or more White, is being ignored, overlooked, and even disregarded. Novice teachers need a voice, an advocate to help “bridge” them over troubled waters. Considering the findings of this study, I urge pre-service education programs, school district Induction programs, and school instructional leaders alike to provide novice teachers the resources, training, guidance, and ongoing support they need to meet the academic needs of the students within our schools. Hear their voice. Be their bridge over troubled water.
Humble Beginnings

I began my career as an English teacher in a predominately African American high school in the midlands area of South Carolina in August 2002. Southwest Academy of the Arts (pseudonym) was situated in the heart of a poverty-stricken community and was the only high school accessible to the neighborhood children. Similar to many other inner city schools, Southwest had a distinct student population of 1% White and 99% African American. By content standards and academic measures outlined by the state of South Carolina, historically, Southwest Academy of the Arts was an underperforming academic institution of learning. During my time at Southwest, its high school graduation rate was at an all-time low of 56%.

As a first-year Induction teacher, it was at Southwest when I was unknowingly introduced to the theoretical framework culturally relevant pedagogy. There the curriculum, previously selected by a state department of education curriculum specialist in English-Language Arts, was already in place for me to follow. Dealing with the challenges of managing my classroom effectively, I quickly became aware of my students interest in learning or lack thereof. I remember meeting with the curriculum specialist to discuss the “instructional” plans prescribed and set forth for me to follow. We would meet. She would tell me what I was going to teach and would provide me with an array of resources to accomplish this task. Multiple instructional aids and resources
were available to the students and teachers of Southwest Academy of the Arts because it was a Title I school that received additional federal funds to support content area teaching and learning. Initially, I was astonished and very much relieved; I found lesson planning to be a breeze. It was only when I began class and would attempt to use the multiple activating strategies she had provided me to “hook” my students that I quickly realized, they were merely uninterested in the topics of discussion or learning tasks I was attempting to “teach” them. Naively continuing my purposeful task of teaching and educating my students, I remember asking students to open their books and turn to page x so we could begin reading William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* or George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. Some would open their books grudgingly asking, “Why are we reading this boring stuff?” Others would ignore me and put their heads down for a quick nap during English class. A few would pull out clean sheets of paper to construct rap lyrics or write notes to their friends. To no avail day after day during my first year of teaching, we would complete this ineffective process over and over again of me “teaching” and them not learning.

Shortly thereafter at our instructional planning meetings, I clearly remember sharing my frustrations with my curriculum specialist. I would say, “The students are not participating in the learning process. They are more interested in one another than what I have planned for them to learn.” Mrs. Jenkins, my ELA curriculum specialist, would look me in the eye, pat my hand and say, “But these are the classics they are to be familiar with prior to graduating from high school.” Since I somewhat understood this expectation as I too was expected in high school to read classical works such as *To Kill A*
Mockingbird and The Canterbury Tales, I would comply and leave her office with my next set of “instructional” plans for the upcoming week.

This frustrating cycle continued for weeks and months. I would assess my student’s learning and would have 85% or more of my students failing my class. It became evident there was a huge disconnect, an enormous mismatch between the prescribed curriculum set for learning and the students in which I had been entrusted to teach. This disconnect caused me to question my desire and ability to teach. I began to reflect in an effort to figure out where it all went wrong (Irvine, 2010a; Villegas & Lucas, 2013). My students weren’t interested in learning nor were they interested in behaving so that learning could take place. I reflected. I came to a realization. I had an epiphany. My students had no interest in what we were learning because they were not able to see the relevance or make connections to what we were reading. In their minds, these works had no significance to their worlds; no impact on their lives.

After eight months into the school year, I became in tune with this vivid reality and my first year teaching experience began to change. I found ways to incorporate the use of pop culture and hip hop into my curriculum, allowing my students to find song lyrics they were familiar with to teach poetic devices (Ladson-Billings, 2016). I began looking for novels, short stories, nonfictional genres and informational texts that were relevant to their lives, their worlds. After all, the goal was to teach the concept and the skill not a specific particular chosen text. I remember pausing while reading various texts to hold Socratic seminars and conduct debates using philosophical chairs. I remember taking the time to allow my students to model their thinking and formulate their thoughts.
in writing using different types of graphic organizers and quick writes. My student’s discussions about their lives and how their life experiences connected to the characters in the story were so profound. We would read texts to probe deeper beyond enjoyment. We read with a purpose: to understand text structures, apply prior knowledge and make connections to other texts, ourselves, and the world, to make predictions and ask questions, and to create visual images to bring the text alive. We would also read to increase our cultural competence and awareness of not only our own culture, but the cultures of others as well. We would read to awaken our critical consciousness allowing a platform to challenge the status quo and build our vocabulary as well as conduct investigations and develop products and ideas that could solve societal problems (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

A new culture of learning was developed and facilitated. It was at that point, that moment, I realized I was on the right track, I had finally found a way to capture their attention for meaningful, purposeful learning. It was not until this moment that I came to appreciate and understand the importance and the need for such intervention for children of color and children of poverty. It was much later in my career that I realized I had emerged into a culturally relevant teacher/practitioner who used literature, other printed texts, and other media sources to cultivate the learning experiences of my students in an effort to probe their thinking, increase student engagement, and improve student achievement.

These new cultures of learning began to shape and mold my students’ behavior as well. We experienced fewer disruptive behaviors. Sleeping during class and doodling on
paper became a thing of the past. Somehow I hooked them; I had their undivided attention. Students were eager and excited to complete the learning goals and tasks for the day. They even began to shape their personal demeanors. They sat up straight in their desks with confidence. They had learned, unknowingly to me, how to code switch. In the classroom, they worked hard to use correct grammar and hold accountable and appropriate conversations about the texts and topics we were exploring. It was interesting to note the difference between the conversations they had in the hallways and at lunch with their peers compared the discussions and conversations we would have in the classroom. A culture of high expectations had been established and was consistently maintained.

**Middle Class Norms and Poverty in Public Education**

Cultural norms and behaviors of schools are based on mainstream assumptions. When there is a cultural mismatch or cultural incompatibility between students and their school, certain negative outcomes such as miscommunication; confrontations among the students, the teacher, and the home; hostility; alienation; diminished self-esteem; and possibly school failure occurs. (Irvine, 2010b, p. 59).

The middle class is the governing body of society. The way people in general experience life is determined by their upbringing and the environment in which they were reared. Many children of color are reared in environments that do not meet the status quo for membership in the middle class society. Beyond their home environments, unfortunately, is a foreign middle class world run by unknown, hidden rules needed for
survival in which many children of color and those living in poverty are not equipped to handle. Hidden rules are defined as the unspoken habits and cues used to indicate membership in a particular group (Payne, 2013). Payne further argues these rules arise from cause-and-effect situations and reflect the mindsets that are needed to survive in that economic reality. The environment in which one is raised teaches the hidden rules of survival that are needed in that environment. Payne (2013) asserts, “School and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of the middle class. These norms and hidden rules are never directly taught in schools or in businesses” (p. 1).

Yet, because of the internal conflicts children of color and of poverty encounter due to cultural incompatibilities such as these, they begin to feel isolated which surfaces through behaviors that are deemed hostile and rebellious by middle class society. This “fight or flight” mentality is the child’s automatic, innate response that readies him to respond to such perceived attacks, harm, or threats which threaten his mere existence.

In rural areas, researchers argue the middle class is shrinking and social connectedness is declining in all social classes because these areas are losing population and the sense of community they once had. Some urban areas are collapsing as middle-class families move to the suburbs looking for better schools and a better life (Lind, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Warren & Tyagi, 2003).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), between fall 2002 and fall 2012, the percentage of White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools decreased from 59% to 51%. In contrast, the percentage of Hispanic students increased from 18% to 24%. The percentage of African American students,
however, roughly remained the same (NCES, 2016). Additionally, the percentage of children under age 18 living in poverty varied across racial and ethnic groups. In 2013, the percentage was highest for Black children living in poverty at 39% percent, followed by Hispanic children at 30%, and White children at 10%. This changes the dynamics of a school environment. Such a change has major implications for the teaching profession. According to Sowell (1998), if a community allows a group to be disenfranchised for any reason, the whole community becomes poorer, and at that point, it risks sustainability, which ultimately results in a community of poverty with a population that lacks resources. Payne (2013) has identified eight resources, which greatly influence the academic achievement of specific student populations. Poverty is the extent to which an individual is without these eight resources: (a) financial, (b) emotional, (c) mental, (d) spiritual, (e) physical, (f) support systems, (g) relationships/role models, and (h) knowledge of hidden rules.

The term “poverty” has become a loosely coined term that is used to define the deficiencies and deficits which exist between the “haves” and the “have not”. Leading culturally relevant theorist, Gloria Ladson-Billings, sums up this problematic notion with the following thought-provoking phrase, “It is not the culture of poverty; it is the poverty of culture” (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 24). Instead of spending more time educating ourselves on the presence and existence of poverty and its effects on society, we should spend more time appreciating, examining, and learning more about the vast cultures that make up our multicultural society. By doing so, we can begin to meet our nation’s
children where they are and accept and appreciate the vast differences which make us all unique.

Because of the age of accountability, instructional leaders, particularly in areas with high percentages of poverty rates and students of color, are tasked with equipping today’s classrooms with highly skilled professionals who are able to differentiate and individualize instruction for each and every learner using research based theories, concepts, and practices that promote and increase the academic achievement of their learners. Demands for this increased accountability necessitate a theoretical framework, and through the theoretical framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, I seek to inform this work.

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

Gloria Ladson-Billings, the founding anthropologist of culturally relevant pedagogy, defines CRP as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It represents and validates the cultures of all students, and rests on three main ideals: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2011b). Gay (2000) asserts that culturally relevant pedagogy uses “the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning more relevant to and effective for students” (p. 29). Culturally relevant teaching offers an intervention for reversing the perennial underachievement that has become commonplace for an increasing number of students (Howard, 2003).
Howard (2003) argues that the call for a culturally relevant pedagogy is situated on the belief that many of the current educational practices and philosophies that permeate schools have failed miserably when it comes to educating students from culturally diverse and low-income backgrounds. As it pertains to student populations in U.S. public schools, it is projected non-Whites will soon be the majority of students in public schools. In fact, according to demographers and census data, our nation’s schools are increasingly comprised of Black and Hispanic students. As of 2011, 48.3% of students were Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American. In contrast, it is interesting to note the increasing number of minority students in our public school system is coupled with an 82% predominately White teaching population (NCES, 2013).

Howard (2003) argues this shift in ethnic demographics has important implications for schools and, more importantly, classroom teachers. Culturally relevant pedagogy strives to empower students to examine educational content and processes, create, construct and deconstruct meaning, succeed academically and socially, and see contradictions and inequities in local communities and in our society as a whole. It incorporates student culture in the curriculum and transcends negative effects of the dominant culture by creating classrooms that are challenging and innovative and focused on student learning and achievement. It also builds cultural competence and links curriculum and instruction to sociopolitical realities (Milner, 2011). Using theories from anthropologists and theorists such as Ladson-Billings (1995, 2009), Gay (2013), Irvine (2010a), and Milner (2011), I seek to inform this study.
Statement of the Problem

Improving student achievement has been a primary historical focus in the United States public school system. Our nation is faced with an ever-growing, immediate need to face the demands of accountability; an accountability to increase the rigor and academic performance of our students. More recently, a greater attention has been placed on public schools due to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a reformed component of No Child Left Behind. Due to this federal demand for accountability, public schools are tasked with finding sufficient ways to close the achievement gap that currently exists between subgroups of students, particularly children of color and their White counterparts. A substantial number of public schools across our country have adopted numerous teaching and learning initiatives and best practices in an effort to increase the academic achievement of students.

Closing the Achievement Gap has become a loosely coined term in public education used to refer to the discrepancies that exist between the under and over achieving. More specifically, Ladson-Billings (2006) describes the achievement gap as one of the most talked-about issues in United States education that refers to the disparities in standardized test scores between Black and White, Latina/o and White, and recent immigrant and White students. Milner (2013) identifies these disparities as (a) Race/ethnicity: Black/African-American and Brown/Latino/Hispanic students tend to score lower than White/European-American students on standardized exams, (b) socioeconomic status: Students from lower socio-economic statuses tend to score lower than those from higher socio-economic statuses on standardized exams, and (c)
Language: Students whose first language is not English tend to struggle more than native English speakers in their academic courses.

Ladson-Billings (2006) argues although the achievement gap is one of the most talked about issues in United States education, the gap exists not only in standardized test scores, but in dropout rates, relative numbers of students who take advance placement examinations; enroll in honors, advance placement, and “gifted” classes; and are admitted to colleges and graduate and professional programs. Further, she contends the fault that lies on this so-called achievement gap is undeniably misplaced. Before we can even discuss the gap in learning that exists amongst children of color and their White counterparts, we must first recognize that this gap exists because of an “education debt” comprised of historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral components. She proclaims there is not as much of an achievement gap as there is an education debt that the educational system owes to so many students it has poorly served. Ladson-Billings calls into question the idea of focusing on the achievement gap as a way of explaining and understanding the persistent inequality which exists (and has always existed) in our nation’s schools. She further asserts this all-out focus on the “Achievement Gap” moves us towards short-term solutions that are unlikely to address the long-term underlying problem of inequality in America.

This persistent gap of achievement for poor, minority, and disabled students remains a national dilemma (McKinsey & Company, 2009). There are multiple “hidden agendas” associated with the academic achievement gap. According to Lavin-Loucks (2006), the academic achievement gap is a way to discuss pervasive racial and
socioeconomic disparities in student achievement. Such a discussion piques a thriving interest and a yearning desire to seek authentic, causable answers. Irvine (2010a) argues rather than focusing on an “achievement” gap, more emphasis should be placed on closing other gaps that exist in education that cause researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and administrators to believe there is an “achievement” gap. “Specifically, the teacher quality gap; the teacher training gap; the challenging curriculum gap; the school funding gap; the digital divide gap; the wealth and income gap; the employment opportunity gap; the affordable housing gap; the health care gap; the nutrition gap; the school integration gap; and the quality childcare gap” (Irvine, 2010a, p. xii). In order to create equitable classrooms where all students have opportunities to learn and excel at higher levels, we must consider the influence such gaps have on the current teaching and learning process undergone in our nation’s schools.

With the reauthorization of NCLB, the academic needs of students of color and poverty are still not being met in our public school system today. Teacher preparation programs in higher education, holistically, are not adequately preparing novice teachers to effectively teach the population of students in which they encounter in their classrooms. These novice teachers are entering the teaching profession with little to no training or academic references to the tenets of culturally relevant teaching or like pedagogies. A greater embedment of culturally relevant pedagogy, based on the following three propositions: (a) successful teachers focus on students' academic achievement, (b) successful teachers develop students' cultural competence, and (c) successful teachers foster students' sense of sociopolitical consciousness, is needed in
higher education teacher preparation programs to more successfully equip novice teachers for their transition into our nation’s public schools (Ladson-Billings, 2011b).

**Purpose of the Study**

From the perspective of the Induction teacher, the chief purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teacher’s readiness to meet the academic needs of the students in which he or she is tasked with teaching. Another purpose for this study is to investigate, through the perception of the Induction teacher, the ways in which pre-service education programs are preparing novice teachers to be culturally responsive educators that meet the complex needs of minority students. An additional purpose for this study is to identify ways in which school leaders, through professional development and ongoing support, can equip novice teachers with the skills they need to meet the academic needs of children of color and poverty.

**Research Questions**

Using the following three research questions as a basis of examination, I explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and further needed support to meet the academic needs of the students they are now teaching:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

In an effort to illustrate the lived experiences of 13 Induction classroom teachers in a small upstate South Carolina rural school district setting, by utilizing the multi-case study methodology, the following data collection techniques of qualitative research were used in this triangulated study: (a) interviews and (b) observations, and (c) document analysis of long-range plans, daily and weekly lesson plans, classroom management plans, formal Induction observation feedback, teacher reflections, evaluation findings, Induction survey results, and researcher observation field notes.

The outcome of the study will provide ways in which pre-service education programs could prepare Induction teachers to be culturally relevant and responsive practitioners in the field of education to increase the academic achievement of the minority student populations they will teach. As a result of this study, the data will inform educational leaders of the types of professional development and ongoing support classroom teachers need in order to promote the academic achievement for students of color. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the study’s participants documenting both their collegiate and current teaching experiences. To provide an even more concentrated narrative, an analysis of their backgrounds, subjectivities, and positionalities as well as an explicit analysis of their use of instructional strategies and methods to improve academic achievement, promote cultural awareness and competence,
and encourage students to develop a sociopolitical and critical consciousness which challenges the status quo will be conducted.

**Significance of the Study**

There are three substantial ways this study can inform the current body of research. First, the study’s chief significance will be to reveal the lived experiences of first-year teachers who are tasked with meeting the academic needs of students of color in diverse population settings, thus giving their lived experiences a voice in educational research. Secondly, this prism can be a guide to inspire instructional leaders to provide Induction teachers, through professional development and ongoing support, tailored guidance and assistance in meeting the academic needs of the students in which they teach.

Lastly, teacher preparation programs will be able to utilize the findings of this study to show a need for a greater embedment of experiences pertaining to such theoretical frameworks that promote the academic achievement for students of color as well as provide novice teachers with more diverse practicum experiences. This approach to learning can be used as an additional tool that can lessen the current gap in learning, amongst learners of all races, which presently exists. Classroom teachers’ backgrounds, subjectivities, and positionalities influence the way they teach and the curriculum supports they choose to use in their classrooms. Their philosophies of teaching are shaped by these dispositions. Novice teachers need more experience and practice with culturally relevant pedagogy and alike pedagogies. It is essentially important to embed these practices into teacher education curricula so novice teachers are equipped with
pedagogical practices to use with the diverse learning population they will one day teach.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is culturally relevant pedagogy. Drawing from anthropologists and leading educational theorists’ scholarly works that address the historical mismatch prevalent in the lives of students of color as it pertains to both their school and home environments, the following terms have been coined in an effort to address these disparities: “culturally appropriate” (Au & Jordan, 1981); “culturally congruent” (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981); “culturally responsive” (Cazden & Legett, 1981; Gay, 2000); “culturally compatible,” (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987); “culturally synchronization” (Irvine, 1990); “culturally relevant” (Ladson-Billings, 2009), and “culturally sustaining” (Paris, 2012). Although all of these works, micro through macro level, have been used to inform the body of literature, I draw mainly Gloria Ladson-Billings’ notion of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Ladson-Billings, the leading theorist in culturally relevant pedagogy, defines CRP as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Made popular by Ladson-Billings in the early 1990s, CRP represents and validates the cultures of all students, and rests on three main ideals: (a) students must acquire academic success; (b) students must develop and sustain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2011a). Culturally relevant pedagogy connects the cultural experiences of children of color to teaching and learning to ensure the above three main ideals (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009). It is an antithetical to traditional modes
of teaching that prioritizes White, middleclass culture in schools, schooling, and school curriculum.

Other theorists have contributed to CRP body of literature. In recent years, the concept, culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP), has become a noticeable, protuberant lens used to aid educators in conceptually understanding why the achievement gap even exists. Culturally relevant pedagogy can be a daunting idea to understand (Irvine, 2010) and implement, yet apparent in the literature, CRP has proven itself to be an avenue in which researchers have determined does indeed increase the academic achievement of students of color which ultimately aids in closing the deficit achievement gap which exists (Ladson-Billings, 2009, 2014; Irvine, 2010b).

Irvine argues, however, the problem lies with classroom teachers having only a cursory understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy, and their efforts “to bridge the cultural gap” between themselves and their students often “fall short” (Irvine, 2010b). Billings strongly believes students must experience academic success; develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Billings, 2009, 2011b). Milner (2011) argues culturally relevant pedagogy strives to empower students to examine educational content and processes, create, construct and deconstruct meaning, succeed academically and socially, and see contradictions and inequities in local communities and in our society as a whole. It incorporates student culture in the curriculum and transcends negative effects of the dominant culture by creating classrooms that are challenging and innovative and focused on student learning and achievement. It also builds cultural
competence and links curriculum and instruction to sociopolitical realities.

Billings coined and explicitly described the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in her ground-breaking, ethnographic study of eight teachers and their efforts to increase the academic achievement of children of color in *The Dream Keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* (Ladson-Billings, 2009). In this text, a strong basis of academic competence was demonstrated. All eight teachers demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students. Ladson-Billings (2009) argued culturally relevant teaching requires that teachers attend to students’ academic needs, not merely make them “feel good.” She further argues the “trick” of culturally relevant teaching is to get students to “choose” academic excellence. This particular style of teaching crosses racial and political barriers. Stemming from an anthropological perspective, culturally relevant pedagogy is understood to be progressive, conservative, and liberatory. Which way of thinking and which set of practices culturally responsive teachers choose to emphasize depends on what they and their students need at that particular time (Beckett, 2011).

Irvine (2010b) further develops the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy by arguing,

CRP is more than simply acknowledging ethnic holidays, including popular culture in the curriculum, or adopting colloquial speech. CRP is not one-day workshops on diversity or multiculturalism. It is not a focus on programs honoring Black History Month or Cinco de Mayo. (p. 58)
Culturally relevant pedagogy goes beyond the surface level of developing a long-range plan outlining students’ interests, home environments, and charts of their performance. Resources such as these, although commendable and well-intended, do not even begin to scrape the surface of CRP. Such intentions are genuine; however, when these well-meaning educators begin to build authentic, caring relationships with their students, they will already know what their interests are and what information in which they can relate. Good intentions and such awareness are merely not enough to bring about changes needed in educational programs and procedure to prevent academic inequalities among diverse students. It is necessary for educators to understand culturally relevant pedagogy, and then use that knowledge as a culturally responsive teacher in order to support the students in their classrooms (Dixson & Fasching-Varner, 2009; Irvine, 2010b).

The theoretical framework of the research study provided in Figure 1 represents the culturally relevant pedagogy theory. The culturally relevant pedagogy is centered around the academic achievement for students of color and the factors which hinder their academic growth. School accountability reports nationwide reflect an achievement gap in learning as it pertains to students of color and their White counterparts.
Limitations

Case studies facilitate rich conceptual and theoretical development; however, they are known limitations associated with the use of this methodology. Some of the limitations of case study research include: (a) too much data for simple analysis, (b) data collection and analysis are time consuming especially when attempted on a larger scale, (c) difficulty capturing a realistic picture in writing, (d) no numerical representation, (e) generalizability is weaken because it is hard to establish the probability that data is
representative of some larger population, and (f) are easily dismissed by those who do not like the messages that case study renders (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2001). It is important for researchers, conducting case study analysis, to be fully aware of the limitations associated with this type of work. Being cognizant and conscious of such can alleviate error and reduce the risks associated with this type of work.

**Definition of Relevant Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following relevant definitions are presented.

*Academic Achievement* – Academic achievement is the outcome of education; the extent to which a student, a teacher, or a school has achieved outlined educational goals.

*Achievement Gap* – The achievement gap refers to the difference in the educational performance of groups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and gender. The achievement gap defines the gap in learning that exists in the context of standardized test scores, grade point averages, dropout rates, and/or college enrollment and completion rates. The gap occurs when one group of students outperforms another group, and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant (that is, larger than the margin of error) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

*Critical Race Theory* – Critical race theory is a radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power. An important movement in legal thought which included a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power (Degaldo & Stefancic, 2012).
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy – Culturally relevant pedagogy is defined as a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It connects the cultural experiences of children of color to teaching and learning to ensure academic success, cultural competence, and sociopolitical awareness (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2009, 2014).

Culturally Responsive Teachers – Culturally responsive teachers are defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2013).

Culture – Culture is an important survival strategy that is passed down from one generation to another through enculturalization and socialization, a type of road map that guides and shape behavior (Irvine, 2010). It refers to a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to give order and meaning to our own lives as well as others (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991).

Induction – Induction is defined by the South Carolina State Department of Education, the Induction program provides novice teachers with the support and guidance in the early stages of their careers. The state of South Carolina defines an Induction 1 teacher as a first-year teacher. The terms novice and Induction are used interchangeably throughout this work.

Poverty – Poverty is defined by the United States census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition. A family, along with each individual in it, is considered poor if the family's total income is less than that family's threshold. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically and are adjusted
annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The official poverty definition
counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and noncash
benefits such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps (NCES, 2016). Payne (2013)
defines poverty as the varying degrees to which a person lacks any one of following nine
resources: financial, language (ability to speak in formal register), emotional, mental,
spiritual, physical, support systems, relationships/role models, and knowledge of middle
class hidden rules.

*Race* – Race is a social concept used to categorize humans into large and distinct
populations or groups by cultural, ethnic, historical, religious, or social affiliation.

*School Accountability and Accountability Systems* – A system designed to
encourage school improvement by holding schools accountable for their students'
performance (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016).

*Students of Color* – Any student that is non-White/non-Caucasian; primarily
Hispanic and African American; a minority is considered a student of color.

*Title I Schools* – According to the United States Department of Education, Part A
(Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides additional financial
assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high
percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet
challenging state academic standards.

**Organization of the Study and Summary**

This qualitative research study is prepared in five chapters. Chapter one provided
an overview of an introduction with the researcher as instrument outlining a personal
connection to the research, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study and the three research questions used to guide the study. This chapter introduced culturally relevant pedagogy as a basis to further our understanding of how its use can help us conceptualize ways we can indeed increase the academic achievement of students of color. The chapter progressed with the significance of the study, outlined the theoretical framework as well as the limitations associated with case study analysis, a list of definitions of relevant terms, and overview of the organization of the study.

Chapter Two is an extensive review of literature that is relevant to this study. More specifically, an expansive list of emerging themes apparent in the research and explanations is provided. The literature review covers an array of topics, which include school accountability, critical race theory and its connection to the field of education, and culturally relevant pedagogy, all inclusively needed to understand the fundamentals of this particular study.

Chapter Three includes a methodological review of the multiple characteristics of qualitative research, an extensive discussion of the case study design, particularly the multi-case study approach, a rich description of the research setting and context of the study, the triangulation process used to select participants for the study and profiles of the participants, a detailed process of collecting and analyzing data findings, a description of the researcher’s positionality and subjectivity, and a discussion of ways in which trustworthiness and validity were implored in this study. Chapter Four presents descriptive data with analysis and results, the theoretical framework, the iterative process, themes, and discussion of the findings. Chapter Five includes a fit and discussion of
findings through the lens of the theoretical framework, the research questions answered, the researcher conclusions, recommendations for future research and educational practices, implications, and a reflection summary as researcher as instrument.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In an effort to explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, their academic preparation, and further needed support to meet the academic needs of the students they have been tasked with teaching, the following research questions guide the review of literature included in this chapter:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

The goal of this literature review is to situate this particular study in the context of previous research and other scholarly material in the field of education as it pertains to the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to promote the academic achievement of students of color. This chapter presents an analytical synthesis of empirical literature addressing the relevant themes associated with this work. This literature review includes the following areas of discussion: an in-depth understanding of school accountability and the influence, or lack thereof, it has on the academic achievement of students of color, an intense, concentrated discussion of critical race theory, its effects, and connections to the
halted academic achievement of children of color, a meaningful debatable argument on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to promote its use to achieve academic excellence for students of color, and an overview of teacher preparation programs as it pertains to the cultural responsive readiness of Induction teachers. In order to paint a concise, accurate annotated illustration of the extensive precepts of culturally relevant pedagogy, one must first understand the influence school accountability has historically had on public education. It is equally important to understand how such inefficiencies and deficits have emerged from this universal, disordered system. Ultimately, an effort is made to reveal a need for an intervention when it comes to educating, not schooling, children of color.

**School Accountability and Racial Disparities in Education**

*No Child Left Behind and the Academic Achievement Gap*

In Eric A. Hanushek and Margaret E. Raymond’s “Does School Accountability Lead to Improved Student Performance,” we find these words:

The cornerstone of current federal educational policy has been expansion of school accountability based on measured student test performance. Although many states had already installed accountability systems by 2000, a central campaign theme of President George W. Bush was to expand this to all states, something that became a reality with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The policy has been controversial for a variety of reasons, leading to assertions that it has distorted schools in undesirable ways, that it has led to gaming and unintended outcomes, and that it has not and will not accomplish its

In the public school sector, NCLB (2001) set forth federal regulations mandating both state and national accountability for student achievement. Although seemingly unrealistic from its origin, NCLB has become an unrealistic measure to gauge improvement in our schools. The decade of the 1990s began an era of accountability that systematically measured student’s ability to master particular content standards for what should be learned in grades 3-8. In 1996 although only 12 states had accountability systems at the school level, 39 states did so by the year 2000 (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005).

Such accountability notions, requiring schools to demonstrate adequate yearly progress in meeting content standards for learning or risk severe sanctions such as state takeover or school closures, have placed an immediate attention on student performance. This shift, launched in an effort to leave no child left behind, revolutionized public education. Whether this has been a positive or negative revolution would be in the eye of the beholder. The premise here is a reflection of how this accountability notion has affected and impacted subgroups of students, particularly students of color.

According to demographers and census data, our nation’s schools are increasingly comprised of Black and Hispanic students. It is projected non-Whites will soon be the majority of students in public schools. In fact, in 2011 minority students made up 48.3% of the United States public school population. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the projected percentage of minority school aged children in 2017 is 52.1%. This is driven largely by dramatic growth in the Latino population and a decline in the White population. The number of African-Americans has remained stagnant since
It is interesting to note the increasing number of minority students in our public school system is coupled with an 82% predominately White teaching population (NCES, 2013). It is widely recognized that the cultural gap between student populations in schools and teachers is large and fast growing. Howard (2003) argues the increasing degree of racial homogeneity among teachers and heterogeneity among students carries important implications for the field of education. He further asserts, “United States schools will continue to become learning spaces where an increasingly homogeneous teaching population (mostly White, female, and middle class) will come into contact with an increasingly heterogeneous student population (primarily students of color, and from low-income backgrounds)” (p. 197). Gay and Howard (2001) assert as educators address the demographic divide, teachers must face the reality that they will continue to come into contact with students whose cultural, ethnic, linguistic, racial, and social class backgrounds differ from their own.

The academic achievement gap is one of the most controversial topics of discussion in the United States public education arena. This conflict is primarily centered on the disparities that exist with standardized testing amongst children of color and their White counterparts. The school accountability age has significantly increased student achievement gains, particularly for White students but not students of color. According to Ladson-Billings (2006), the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress reveals the gap between Black and Latino fourth graders and their White counterparts in reading scaled scores was more than 26 points. In eighth grade reading, the gap was more than 23 points, and in eighth grade mathematics the gap was more than 26 points. Haycock and
Jerald (2002) assert by fourth grade nearly two out of three African American and Hispanic students read below the basic level of achievement, compared to only one in four Whites. In math, the numbers are not much better, nearly two out of three African American and one in two Hispanic fourth graders perform below the basic level compared with only one in five Whites (Haycock & Jerald, 2002). However, because both Blacks and Hispanics generally show smaller gains relative to Whites, accountability by itself is insufficient to close the gap in learning, it is merely widening it (Hansushek & Raymond, 2005). These findings pose many implications for the teaching profession. Howard (2003) argues, “Teacher educators must re-conceptualize the manner in which new teachers are prepared, and provide them with the skills and knowledge that will be best suited for effectively educating today’s diverse student population” (p. 195).

**Educating the African American Slave**

To support the above claims, one must take into consideration historical disparities that historically existed in education: the educating of enslaved African Americans, *Brown v. Board of Education* of 1954 and the Coleman Report of 1966 (Anderson, 1988; Coleman, 1972; Zirkel, 2005). During the early 1800s, it was a crime to teach enslaved African American children to read or write in the South, yet ironically during this same era of time, a massive campaign to achieve popular schooling for free Americans developed in the United States. This began the process of developing a public school system in the United States of America, but it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that the organization, scope, and role of schooling were transformed into a carefully articulated structure of free tax-supported public institutions (Anderson,
1988). Shortly after slavery was abolished in 1863, enslaved African Americans were able to join the ranks of our nation’s free citizens and were given rights as any other citizen. According to Anderson (1988) the ex-slave’s campaign for first-class citizenship, however, was successfully undermined by federal and state governments and by extralegal organizations and tactics. From the end of Reconstruction until the late 1960s, Blacks were then ruthlessly disfranchised existing in a social system that virtually denied them citizenship, the right to vote, and equal opportunities in education (Anderson, 1988), thus launching the start an academic achievement gap in learning among children of color and their White counterparts. Segregated schools, inadequate facilities, second hand resources, and minimal opportunities were all contributing factors to the start of the academic learning gap and educational racial inequities.

**Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas**

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* brought attention to racial inequities in student outcomes when this landmark decision ordered an end to state-mandated racial segregation of public schools. Although *Brown v. Board of Education*’s ultimate goal was to eliminate racial stigma and create racial equity in education, this racial and ethnic stigma is a powerful force in education today leaving many children of color feeling racially isolated and inferior (Zirkel, 2005). While the year 2014 represented the 60th anniversary of outlawing racial segregation in schools, many researchers strongly argue this “hope” of eliminating segregation, removing the burden of inferiority, still exists today despite the ruling of *Brown* (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2011a; Bell, 1992; Zirkel, 2005).
Specifically, Justice Warren, the Supreme Court Chief Justice in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared: “Separate but equal doctrine rests on basic premise that the Negro race is inferior,” but considering the intellect and argument of the black councilmen Thurgood Marshall “proves they are not inferior.” In his final words to the court he asserted, “We conclude unanimously that in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal” (Martin, 1998, p. 173). He further affirmed, “To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” (Martin, 1998, p. 173).” In American schools, closing the achievement gap and educational racial inequities have been a focus since the civil rights movement.

**The Coleman Report**

The Coleman Report was brought about because it was commissioned as a result of the civil rights movement. The Coleman Report of 1966, the first post-*Brown v. Board of Education* evaluation, is another historical finding which further develops the argument of racial disparities in public education. Specifically titled the Equality of Educational Opportunity, the Coleman Report was a collection of survey results that sought to reveal equity in education as it pertained to all citizens of the United States. Approximately 4,000 schools, 60,000 teachers and 570,000 students were studied in elaborate detail by a team headed by Professor James S. Coleman of John Hopkins University. Although Coleman (1972) himself declared the most important findings from this study were twofold: (a) variations in school quality showed little association with
levels of educational attainment when students of comparable social backgrounds were compared across schools and (b) a student’s educational attainment was not only related to his own family background, but also to the backgrounds of the other students in the school, it was later determined this information was indeed un-factual.

A re-evaluation of the findings was conducted, and the findings of the report revealed a surprising conclusion. The findings were expected to confirm that there was gross inequality in the provision of educational resources between Black and White schools. Instead, they found that Black and White schools were quite similar with respect to physical facilities, formal curricula, and other such measurable characteristics (Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972). The findings of the study focused on the equality of outcome rather than the equality of input. Although this is how the “busing in” affect came into play where Black children were bused into predominantly White areas to attend school in an effort to integrate schools, it is astonishing to note after a re-evaluation of a coding area in the data, it was ironically found that the academic achievement of minority students was one to two years behind that of their White counterparts in first grade, and three to five years behind in twelfth grade (Coleman, 1972). The findings of the study revealed there was a significant achievement gap between Blacks and Whites, which began in the first grade and grew larger each year (Mosteller & Moynihan, 1972).

Therefore, the report concluded that academic achievement can be related to family background in earlier years, yet pushing the model of integration did nothing to correct the academic disparities it merely widen the gap. Although schools were
intentionally created whereas children of their own race constituted the majority, there was little difference in the quality of schooling between white and minority schools (Coleman, 1972). Since these historical landmarks and even today, racial achievement gaps still exist in our schools. Explanations for disparities in the academic achievement of low-income, minority, and mainstream students have a long, complex, and contested history in the United States as well as other nations.

**Racial Disparities in Education**

Unfortunately, this racial academic achievement gap is still prevalent in our schools today. The requirements of NCLB mandate states test all students in Grades 3-8 in an effort to meet and exceed adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals which ultimately lead to 100% of students scoring proficient by the year 2014 has not closed this deficit gap, it has increasingly widened it (Neuman-Sheldon, 2006). Using the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as a premise, President Barack Obama has relinquished to states the flexibility to creatively prepare their students for the work force and/or post-secondary educations. According to President Obama, “We’re going to let states, schools and teachers come up with innovative ways to give our children the skills they need to compete for the jobs of the future.”

While these initiatives and reauthorizations, No Child Left Behind, the process of educating of enslaved African Americans, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Coleman Report, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as others, should be applauded for responding to the need for intervention in the public school sector, they overlook organizational impairments that have supported and worsened deficits in
learning even more. Such initiatives support an all or nothing notion. We should forever be eternally grateful for the legendary work of Associate Justice Thurgood Marshall and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas*, but a harsh reality still remains, segregation in schools, in retrospection, is still prevalent in today’s society.

Closing the achievement gap is fundamental to the growth and success of our nation. However, the stance in which public education traditionally has taken has done nothing but cause an even wider gap for learning for students of color and their White counterparts. The academic achievement gap, as we refer to it, is predicated on race and class division. Although it is a means to discuss pervasive racial and socioeconomic disparities in student achievement, it should not be its only predictor. Such highlighted disparities support the notion that there is definitely a culminating hidden agenda (Lavin-Loucks, 2006). Furthermore, historically and even today in multiple regards, the classroom has been a battle ground for people of color; a battle ground which is often misconstrued and puts in to question one’s self-worth, self-esteem, and self-awareness (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

**Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory (CRT) is used to provide an intense, concentrated discussion on its connections to the halted academic achievement of children of color in comparison to their White counterparts. The countless contributions of critical race theory could be attributed to the late professor Derrick Bell, J.D. Known for the bridging of race, education, and law, Dr. Bell is known as the founding, intellectual father of critical race
theory. CRT, a legal movement in scholarship, came about from the pursuit of interested legal scholars like Dr. Bell (African American) and Alan Freeman (a White American), two individuals from different races which shared a common tenet: they were each deeply perplexed over the slow pace of racial reform in the United States. They believed the traditional approaches of filing amicus briefs, conducting protests and marches, and appealing to the moral sensibilities of decent citizens produced smaller and fewer gains than in previous times (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

Race is a social construct. According to Ladson-Billings (1998), “Race has become metaphorical – a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes, and expressions of social decay and economic division far more threatening to the body politic than biological “race” ever was” (p. 8). Understanding the concept of race can help educators move toward understanding the disparities that exist in education. Critical race theory (CRT), as defined by Degaldo and Stefancic (2012), is a radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power. The critical race theory movement was a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. Springing from the 1970s, lawyers, activists, and legal scholars realized acts of protests, organized marches, and planned community meetings were no longer an effective method of maintaining a voice for racial demonstration. A newer, more effective method was needed to combat racism, and critical race theory became that method. The first workshop held at a convention outside of Madison, Wisconsin the summer of 1989 was the beginning of this new uprising.
Inequalities in Schools

Although race was an un-theorized concept in scholarship, it was the work of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) that launched critical race theory’s connection to education. They are to be attributed for the emergence of critical race theory in the educational sector. From the perspective of the critical race theorist, there are multiple inequalities in education that exist. To inform this particular study we will specifically focus on the inequality of race between the schooling experiences of White middle-class students and those of poor African American and Latino students (Kozol, 1991). In an effort to connect critical race theory to education, the work of Billings and Tate moves beyond the boundaries of educational research literature to include arguments and new perspectives to suggest there is a logical and predictable rationale for this marginal deficit (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2013).

One theme entrenched in the work of critical race theorist is “naming one’s own reality” or “voice” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Critical race scholars are savvy story tellers whose “voices” echo and advocate countlessly for racial justice; their story telling ability is one characteristic of this movement which makes it so powerful. Critical race theorists use parables, chronicles, stories, counter-stories, poetry, fiction, and revisionist histories to illustrate the false necessity and irony of much of current civil rights doctrine in legal scholarship (Ladson-Billings, 2013). The voice component of CRT provides a way to communicate the experience and realities of the oppressed, a first step in understanding the complexities of racism. As asserted by Ladson-Billings (1998) the voice of people of color is an essential component of deeply
understanding our current educational system. She further reveals there are indeed connections linking critical race theory in legal scholarship to research in the field of education today. She states, “Considering education in the United States is not outlined explicitly in the nation’s constitution, it is one of the social functions relegated to individual states. Thus, states generate legislation and enact laws designed to proscribe the contours of education” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 17).

Another recurring theme, apparent in the literature, which characterizes both critical race theory and education, is “equal opportunity.” Although equal funding, equal curriculum, equal facilities, equal instruction currently exists, critical race theory illuminates and questions what has been done to help children of color “catch up” with their White constituents. Ladson-Billings (1998) furthers asserts, “If we look at the way that public education is currently configured, it is possible to see the ways that CRT can be a powerful explanatory tool for the sustained inequity that people of color experience” (p. 18).

She explicitly uses the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, and desegregation as exemplars of the relationship that can exist to validate her argument that the way we have personified public education is indeed embedded in the tenets of CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings and Tate’s (1995) understanding of social inequity, particularly school inequity is based on the following three propositions from critical race theory: (a) race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States, (b) United States society is based on property rights, and (c) the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which
we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity. These theorists explicitly describe the ways in which these propositions can be applied to our understanding of educational inequity by providing “meta-propositions” to clarify their line of reasoning. They also use these propositions to draw parallels between educational equity and the notion in critical race legal theory of whiteness as property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Ladson-Billings (1998) discusses critical race theory as it relates to the field of education, she boldly declares:

Adopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will have to expose racism in education and propose radical solutions for addressing it. We will have to take bold and sometimes unpopular positions… But, I fear we (educational researchers) may never assume the liminal position because of its dangers, its discomfort, and because we insist on thinking of ourselves as permanent residents in a nice field like education. (p. 22)

This is what it will take to transform classrooms, worldwide, to truly be a safe haven of learning that delineates barriers of racism, unknown cultural norms, and racial academic achievement deficits. When “we” as educational researchers and daily working practitioners take on this mindset collectively, we can and we will desegregate the most segregated place in society, the public school classroom.

**Culturally Relevant Pedagogy**

There are a plethora of well-conceived conceptions of various instructional pedagogies used to promote the academic achievement of students (Shulman, 1987;
All are richly engulfed in pedagogical practices and styles whose theories and principles impact the academic achievement of students in our school’s today. Although many scholars have advanced these pedagogical practices in the field of education, an argument, through a review of literature, is made here to encourage the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in classrooms particularly as it pertains to the academic success for students of color. More specifically, an argument is made to promote and encourage an embedment of culturally relevant pedagogy in teacher preparation curricula in an effort to promote academic achievement amongst students of color.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is defined as pedagogy that student intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” It represents and validates the cultures of all students, and rests on three main ideals: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings, the leading theorist in this pedagogy, has produced multiple pieces of empirical literature, which convey the essential use of this pedagogical form of teaching. Initially there was a list of more than 10 culturally relevant general themes identified. After clustering similar concepts amongst the authors, four major themes emerged. In order to fully understand the benefits of the use of CRP and to promote the use of this theoretical style of learning, an extensive discussion of these four conveying themes is warranted. The four themes are (a) building meaningful relationships through and for learning, (b) the impact failure has on learning and self-esteem, (c) linking schooling to culture, and (d) the need to equip novice culturally
relevant and responsive teachers. Before we investigate the above themes, it is important to convey a review of the tenets in which the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy are founded.

The Tenets of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three tenets: (a) students must experience academic success, (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence, and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the social order (Ladson-Billings, 2014). A component of CRP emphasizes the importance of students maintaining cultural integrity and competence along with academic excellence. So often in society when a person of color uses correct grammar or speaks eloquently, he/she is accused of “acting White.” Fordham and Ogbu (1986) too point out such occurrences. Such phenomenon can cause children to fear being ostracized by their peers for demonstrating interest (Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example,

Shun, a 7th grader at Sullivan Middle School, is an African American with great potential and skill. As a current pre-algebra student, the fact he scored a 665 in 2014 and a 679 in math in 2013 on the state standardized test thus superseding the state’s 645 mark of exemplary, he is currently earning a grade of 71/D in pre-algebra. The teacher, Mrs. Bryant, says, ‘Shun is a very capable student. In fact, he is probably my most capable student, yet his work ethic and attitude keep him from excelling. If he has the highest grade on a quiz or test, he gets upset if I announce his success to the class. After conversing with my principal on how to help Shun excel, he said he had had many conversations with Shun about his
Shun is a prime example of a student who lacks cultural competence because of the misconceptions he has about the stigmas that go along with being “smart” in his environment. This is the type of behavior the school system, based off middle class norms, rejects. It takes a compassionate, understanding teacher to be able to help Shun overcome such unfortunate disgraces as his environment is a place, he perceives he cannot be his authentic, excelling self.

Another component of CRP is critical consciousness. Ladson-Billings (1995) asserts, 

Culturally relevant teaching does not imply that it is enough for students to choose academic excellence and remain culturally grounded if those skills and abilities represent only an individual. Beyond those individual characteristics of academic achievement and sociopolitical consciousness that allows them to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities. If a school is about preparing students for active citizenship, what better citizenship tool than the ability to critically analyze the society? (p. 162)

Ladson-Billings firmly argues critical consciousness is crucially important for all students to understand and implement, yet it is most important for students who are suffering due to previously established systems of inequality to understand and implement. Specifically, critical consciousness encourages an equitable and interchangeable
relationship between teacher and student where both individuals can be learners and teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2011a).

Many teachers, educators, and teacher educators collaborate with Ladson-Billings and use her works to inform their daily practices. To clearly paint a picture outlining the positive effects culturally relevant pedagogy has on student academic achievement, this literature review seeks to develop themes that emerge from the works of not only of Gloria Ladson-Billings, but of other meaningful contributors in the field such as Geneva Gay (2002), Jacqueline J. Irvine (2009), Michele Foster (2004); Shelly Brown-Jeffy and Jewell E. Cooper (2011). Although there are others, this review of literature is limited to the works of these contributors to the field. The following conveying themes of culturally relevant pedagogy are discussed extensively below: linking schooling to culture, the impact failure has on learning and self-esteem, building meaningful relationships through and for learning, and the need to equip novice culturally relevant and responsive teachers.

**Building Relationships for and through Learning**

One of the recurring themes emerged from culturally relevant pedagogy in the literature is pertaining to teacher-student relationships. One of the main components of culturally relevant teaching involves students and teachers, collectively, learning together. Beckett (2011) asserts culturally relevant teaching necessarily involves teachers and students working together to develop a common understanding of the world they live in. What is essential is not what students learn, should learn, or must unlearn, but what teachers and students learn together.

Ladson-Billings (2009) ascertains that relationship building was a strong indicator
for the success of the students of color. Ladson-Billings affirms that teachers and schools must first maintain affirming student-teacher relationships if they are to see an increase in the academic achievement of students of color. Eight teacher participants in The Dreamkeepers demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students. In the text, Ladson-Billings (2009) asserts, “The trick of culturally relevant pedagogy is to get students to “choose” academic excellence” (160). This three-year study evaluating the successful teachings of African American students was predicated on the recommendations of parents and principals. These teachers were identified by both parents and their principals for the types of positive relationships they had established with their learners which promoted academic growth, self-esteem, and the fact the teachers understood the need for the students to operate in the dual worlds of their home community and the White middle class school community (Ladson-Billings, 2009). These teachers saw themselves as a part of the community and teaching as a way to give back to the community and, more importantly, they expected the same from their students.

According to Ladson-Billings (2009) student-teacher relationships are “fluid and equitable” and extend beyond the classroom. Much care and concern as well as community involvement was evident characteristics of these great teachers. These eight teachers attempted to create bonds with their learners instead of idiosyncratic, individualistic connections. Through relationship they encouraged students to learn collectively by teaching each other and being responsible for each other’s learning. They shared a connectedness with their students; their students also shared this same
connectedness with one another (Ladson-Billings, 2009), and such a connectedness builds classroom community.

Teaching each other and being responsible for each other’s learning further develops the notion of building relationships through and for learning. Throughout this process, the teacher is the most essential component in building these relationships. She viewed her students as “co-teachers” who helped with facilitating and conducting inquiry and exploration through the teaching and learning process (Ladson-Billings, 2009). This way of learning demonstrated not only much care and concern, but also a level of trust and respect instilled in each individual learner, including the lowest achievers, was a major indication of their ability growths.

Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), two other prolific conductors in the field, also encourage teachers to treat all students with respect and understanding and to maintain high expectations for all students. It is their belief teachers and students have to work together to create “stimulating” classroom environments. Furthermore, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) asserts, “The teacher is an important significant other in the lives of students because of the amount of time spent in schools. Students need to know teachers care, and teachers should recognize and respect their students for who they are as individuals and as members of a cultural group” (p. 77). On an average, a child spends 32.5 hours a week in school, which results in a child spending 1,170 hours of school per year. Considering the amount of time a child is required to spend at school, it is vitally important he/she spends time positively interacting with adults who not only care for and
respect them, but who, through meaningful relationships, push them to become critical thinkers who are problem solvers, investigators, and independent thinkers of learning.

**The Effects of Failure on Learning and Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem has become a commonsense way of speaking and thinking about students who experience academic or discipline problems in schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006). In an effort to help education professionals make better use of culture as a construct, Ladson-Billings (2006) argues self-esteem issues with students is not an individual, case by case isolated issue; instead, it is an American societal issue. She develops this notion by prefacing American society in a context that gives primacy to the individual instead of the group. She argues:

> Despite the way group membership shapes and defines much of our lives, we focus on the individual. Our national narrative suggests that ‘every individual has the opportunity to be president.’ But the empirical evidence suggests that people whose net worth is less than $1 million, who are of other than European descent, who are female, and who are not college educated are unlikely to sit in the Oval Office. (p. 106)

Ladson-Billings (2006) further develops this notion by arguing our children’s self-esteem issues evolve from our society’s way of thinking:

> America has a self-esteem problem. We constantly understand ourselves through the mirror of other nations. We say our schools are failing because we score lower than Singapore and Finland on some standard measure. We say our nation is not productive enough by comparing ourselves to the Chinese or the Germans. We
say we are living up to democratic principles by comparing ourselves to totalitarian regimes. (p.106)

Ladson-Billings (2006) deepens our understanding of the issue our students have with self-esteem. She further asserts:

Our supreme reliance on individuals means that we look at students as individually responsible for their success in school. We lack complex understandings of how individual, family, community, school, and societal factors interact to create school failure for some students. It is much easier to explain students’ failure by looking at something internal to the students than endemic in this thing we call school culture. (p. 106)

To combat the issue of self-esteem which plagues the hearts and minds of many underachieving students in our schools, we must first be willing to deal with un-acquitted truths, as explicitly described above, that exist not only within our schools but within our society as a whole.

Gay (2013) also contributes to our understanding of the impact of failure and self-esteem has on learning. Listed below are three factors Gay identified in regards to failure in our schools:

1. Test scores, grade point averages, course enrollments, and other indicators of the school achievement of many students of color are *symptoms*, not causes of the problems.

2. Academic achievement is not the only significant indicator of school success and/or failure.
3. While school failure is an experience of too many ethnically diverse students, it is not the identity of any.

Similar to Ladson-Billings (2009) these ideas represent both an invitation and a mandate to teachers thus encouraging educators to use these principles as a philosophical basis for teaching and learning in their classrooms. If teachers would be receptive to this way of thinking, it will aid in assisting students of color to grow into not only understanding the importance of experiencing academic excellence, maintaining cultural competence, and developing a critical consciousness, but understanding academic achievement is not the only measure of success, and failure is an experience that is not a part of who they are nor is it a predictor of their future. Much intellectual ability and many other kinds of intelligences are lying untapped in ethnically diverse learners. If these are recognized and used in the instructional process, school achievement will improve radically (Gay, 2010).

Culturally relevant and responsive theorists (Gay, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2011b) see failure as an experience that has no connections to a student’s identity. Gay (2010) asserts unfortunately, this is not true for many students who are unsuccessful in school. They and their teachers connect their academic difficulties to their personal worth, and the individuals are deemed failures. Furthermore, Ladson-Billings (1998) denotes,

Classroom teachers are engaged in a never-ending quest for ‘the right strategy or technique to deal with “at-risk” students. This race-neutral perspective purports to see deficiency as an individual phenomenon. Thus, instruction is conceived as a generic set of teaching skills that should work for all students. When these strategies or skills fail to achieve desired results, the students, not the techniques,
are found to be lacking. Fortunately, new research efforts are rejecting deficit models and investigating and affirming the integrity of effective teachers of African American students. This scholarship underscores the teachers’ understanding of the saliency of race in education and the society, and it underscores the need to make racism explicit so that students can recognize and struggle against this particular form of oppression. But it is not just the distortions, omissions, and stereotypes of school curriculum content that must be considered, it also is the rigor of the curriculum and access to what is deemed “enriched” curriculum via gifted and talented courses and classes. (p. 19) Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) are also in agreement with this notion of failure. They argue, “The culturally relevant teacher simply does not accept failure, but begins where students are and works hard to help them succeed” (p. 78). The impact failure has on student learning and self-esteem can be detrimental; however, it is not irreversible. Culturally relevant teaching rejects and precludes this disadvantageous commonsense way of speaking and thinking about the academic experiences lived by children of color and seeks to create equitable, stimulating classrooms where students are able to freely tap into their fullest potential.

**Linking Schooling to Culture**

Anthropologists historically have always stressed the importance of inserting culture into education, instead of inserting education into culture especially for learners who are not a part of the middle-class mainstream. This task has been studied for years as a problem of discontinuity between what students experience at home and what they
experience at school in the speech and language interactions of teachers and students (Ladson-Billings, 1995) under the following researchable tenets: culturally appropriate (Au & Jordan, 1981); culturally congruent (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981); “culturally responsive” (Cazden & Legett, 1981); culturally compatible (Jordan, 1985; Vogt, Jordan & Tharp, 1987); and culturally synchronization (Irvine, 1990). All of these works, micro through macro level, have been used to inform the multiple works contributed by Ladson-Billings on the topic of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Gay brought her own definition and justifications to the field of culturally relevant pedagogy. She calls it culturally responsive teaching and defines it as “Culturally Responsive Teaching is about teaching, and the teaching of concern is that which centers classroom instruction in multiethnic cultural frames of reference” (Gay 2013, p. xxiii).

Gay (2000) argues,

Curriculum content should be chosen and delivered in ways that are directly meaningful to the students for whom it is intended. In some instances, this mean validating their personal experiences and cultural heritages; in others, it means teaching content entirely new to students but in ways that make it easy for them to comprehend. (p. 112)

Although the achievement of students of color is disproportionally low, the fundamental of culturally relevant pedagogy is still an applicable and attainable way to improve the academic achievement of students of color. More and more instructional interventions are occurring that prove using the cultural heritages, orientations, and resources of ethnically and racially diverse students improves classroom learning (Gay,
Culture and diversity are two central conceptual and methodological themes emerged in the theoretical pieces of both Ladson-Billings and Gay. Derived from empirical research and conceptual theory, the practices and principles set forth by these trailblazers in the field can increase the achievement of students of color, especially those who are marginalized in mainstream society and victimized by low educational achievement (Gay, 2010).

Focusing on the role of textbooks in the classroom and how they lack cultural relevance, Gay (2013) argues textbooks make up 75-95% of all classroom instruction and students are inclined to believe the information included in a textbook is indeed an accurate account. However, textbooks are often published in a context familiar to the middle class dominant culture. Gay further illuminates the importance of diversifying who is present in context of textbooks. She urges what a character or person in a story is doing, wearing, and saying impacts the cultural climate of a classroom.

Irvine (2003) argues a similar belief. She prefaces her work with an argument that all students regardless of race bring cultural beliefs, values, and perceptions to school; however, the difference between the school experiences and success of the different groups is that the culture of middle-class White students is more likely to be compatible with the culture of the school than is the culture of children of color. Irvine asserts, “Because of the cultures of African Americans and other students of color are different and often disregarded, these students are likely to experience cultural discontinuity in schools” (Irvine, 2003, p. 6). Throughout her works, she refers to this as a “lack of cultural synchronization,” (Irvine, 1990). Irvine (2003) so eloquently employs:
Teachers bring to school their own set of cultural and personal characteristics that influence their work. This includes their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, ethnicity, gender, and social class. Many African American students and other students of color, by contrast, have a different set of cultural and personal characteristics. When teachers and students bring varying, and often conflicting, cultural experiences to the classroom, there is the possibility of cultural discontinuity. When cultural conflict exists between the student and the school, the inevitable occurs: miscommunication and confrontation between the student, the teacher, and the home; hostility; alienation; diminished self-esteem; and eventually school failure. When teachers and students are out of sync, they clash and confront each other, both consciously and unconsciously, in matters concerning cultural variables such as verbal language, nonverbal language, and nonverbal behaviors. (p. 8)

Foster, another prolific scholar, further extends Ladson-Billings, Gay, and Irvine’s notion of connecting learning to culture. Foster (2004) illuminates, “Although most teachers endorse the mantra ‘All children can learn,’ too many are unprepared to teach in high-need schools or to work with poor students from diverse backgrounds or other students deemed ‘difficult to teach’” (p. 64). These notions are candid expressions and beliefs that cultivate the understanding that children learn best when their cultural experiences are taken into consideration. Such thinking is culturally appropriate, congruent, and responsive to the learning needs of children of color.

**Culturally Relevant and Responsive Teachers**
To successfully move the field of teacher education beyond the fragmented and superficial treatment of diversity that currently prevails, teacher educators must articulate a vision of teaching and learning in a diverse society and use that vision to systematically guide the infusion of multicultural issues throughout the pre-service curriculum. (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 20)

Current national data and population trends indicate by the year 2023, more than half of the student population in public schools will be represented by students of color (NCES, 2011). Therefore, it is projected non-Whites will soon be the majority of students in public schools. Ironically Whites make up 82% of the teaching population. The fact that students of color tend to bring richer experiences and perspectives to multicultural teaching has tremendous implication for teacher education, particularly those not trained to be culturally responsive. Currently, novice teachers bring very little cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experiences to their new entrusted classrooms. While current teacher education demographic data suggest the teaching force is diversifying slightly, the typical pre-service teacher is still most often White and female. Multicultural education has to be an essential component of their pre-service experiences and learning in order to meet the growing needs of the increasing amount of non-White students.

Continuing business as usual in pre-service teacher education will only continue to widen the achievement gap between children of color and their White counterparts. There is a need for pre-service teacher education programs to develop the attitudes and multicultural knowledge base of predominately White cohorts pre-service students. According to Sleeter (2010):
Many teacher preparation programs have added coursework in multicultural education, teaching the urban child, teaching English language learners, or some variation of these. A good deal of research examines student learning in these courses from various angles, focusing mainly on how or whether they change how predominantly White pre-service students think. (p. 98)

Although such courses are taught and presented with “good” intentions, stand-alone multicultural education courses are not enough to prepare novice teachers for the battles they face ahead. This one-size fits all approach to learning merely introduces culturally relevant concepts and skills; it does not sufficiently equip these future educators emerging into the profession.

Considering a pre-service teacher’s background, subjectivity, and positionality shapes and informs his philosophy of teaching, more culturally relevant and responsive immersions into the total curriculum are needed. The works of Sleeter, Ladson-Billings, Harrington, and Villegas and Lucas are used to evaluate the present state of teacher preparation programs as it pertains to the need of an embedment of culturally relevant and responsive teaching. Some of the recurring themes addressed here are: (a) a cursory understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy through one or two multicultural education courses in pre-service teacher preparation programs, (b) an awareness of sociocultural identity, and (c) the need for reflection to shape a teacher’s subjectivity and positionality. Sleeter (2010) stresses the importance of making an impact on these pre-service teachers as well as providing these students opportunities to have multicultural field experiences
so they can develop awareness, insight, and skills for effective teaching in multicultural contexts.

**A Cursory Understanding of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.** According to Ladson-Billings (2004), the typical pre-service teacher takes a series of foundations courses in the history, philosophy, and sociology of education. Anthropology of education rarely appears in pre-service teacher education. She further asserts:

But the problem of culture in teaching is not merely one of exclusion. It is also one of over determination. What I mean by this is that culture is randomly and regularly used to explain everything. So at the same moment teacher education students learn nothing about culture, they use it with authority as one of the primary explanations for everything from school failure to problems with behavior management and discipline. (p. 104)

Ladson-Billings sums up this problematic notion with the following thought-provoking phrase, “It is not the culture of poverty; it is the poverty of culture.” This witticism phrase was derived from Michael Harrington’s 1997 work on the culture of poverty (Harrington, 2017). Harrington argues,

“They use this phrase to describe what they see as a pathology of poor students and hide behind child poverty as an excuse for why they cannot be successful with some students” (p. 105).

Villegas and Lucas (2002) assert, “Preparing teachers to teach children of diverse racial, ethnic, social class, and language backgrounds is a pressing issue in teacher education today and will continue to be for some time to come” (p. 20). Many pre-service
teacher education programs have added a course or two pertaining to multicultural, bilingual, and urban education. This is a common, recurring theme developed and referenced in all the works mentioned above (Sleeter, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2011; and Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, offering one or two courses is a failed attempt for preparing novice teachers to be culturally responsive. All this has done is merely introduce the concept. More curriculum proposals in teacher education are needed for preparing culturally relevant and responsive teachers. There is no one correct approach to this type of learning; however, an embedment of culturally relevant and responsive practices as well as more “diverse” field opportunities in pre-service programs are needed to prepare novice teachers for the reality they will face in our quailed public school system.

Desimone, Bartlett, Gitomer, Mohsin, Pottinger, and Wallace (2013) conducted a five-year longitudinal study which included analyzing interviews with first-year, middle school math teachers, as well as their principals and formal mentors to learn how these teachers thought their pre-service training could have better prepared them for the teaching profession. In this study, it was founded many of the novice teachers thought their training had done an inadequate job preparing them for diverse populations of students and that their student teaching experience was poorly aligned with their first job. These teachers often struggled with classroom management, yet the teachers did not necessarily cite a lack of training in classroom management as the root of the problem. Instead, they cited management of the classroom would have been easier if their pre-service training would have included training about culturally diverse children, children
living in poverty, and children who are otherwise at risk (Desimone et al., 2013). The participants in this study also identified student teaching as one of the most valuable parts of their training, yet when they struggled to meet the needs of diverse learners in inner-city schools, the new teachers often pointed to student teaching as part of the reason because their assignments were in predominantly White suburban schools in middle-class neighborhoods which left them unprepared for the population of students they faced in their first jobs. Teacher preparation programs working with novice teachers to increase student-teacher placements that are aligned with the type of school the beginning teacher is targeting for employment as an implication suggested in this article.

**An Awareness of Sociocultural Identity.** Another recurring theme in the literature as it pertains to novice teachers and a teacher preparation program is that of an awareness of sociocultural identity. Novice teachers need to engage in participatory learning, which allow them to engage in experiences, which reveal and develop their own sociocultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2013). Villegas and Lucas (2013) argue:

> Although some prospective teachers enter their teacher preparation programs with a strong sense of who they are socially and culturally, most need to engage in autobiographical exploration, reflection, and critical self-analysis to develop that sense. They need to explore the various social and cultural groups to which they belong, including those identified with race, ethnicity, social class, language, and gender. They also need to inspect the nature and extent of their attachments to
those groups and how membership in them has shaped their personal and family histories. (p. 22)

This is essential to the development of an individual’s sociocultural consciousness and awareness. Through reflection, as outlined above, a novice teacher can begin to shape his subjectivities and positionalities.

**A Need for Reflection.** Another theme has emerged here: reflection. Culturally relevant and responsive teachers are reflective. Reflecting is a very important component of culturally responsive teaching. According to Irvine (2010b) reflection assists teachers in confronting their misunderstandings, prejudices, and beliefs about race that impede the development of caring classroom climates, positive relationships with students and families and ultimately their students’ academic success. Culturally responsive teachers reflect on their classroom experiences, which enables them to examine their actions, instructional goals, methods and materials in reference to their students’ cultural experiences and preferred learning environments. Villegas and Lucas (2013) encourage the use of reflection as an essential activity for novice teachers to engage. When these teachers develop a process of reflection, they begin to understand the differences their students bring to the table and are able to utilize these differences to impact learning in the classroom. According to Villegas and Lucas (2013), culturally and linguistically responsive teachers not only know their students well, they use what they know about their students to give them access to learning.

Action research is inquiry conducted by teachers for teachers for the purpose of higher student achievement. It requires teachers to identify an area of concern, develop a
plan for improvement, implement the plan, observe its effects, and reflect on the procedures and consequences (Irvine, 2009). Culturally relevant and responsive teachers are action researchers that extend the reflection process.

Culturally responsive teachers are highly skilled professionals. Gay (2010) builds an argument which supports improving the academic achievement of students of color who currently are not performing well requires teachers with comprehensive knowledge, unshakable convictions, and high-level pedagogical skills. In her text, *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, Gay facilitates the development of these and diffuses the use of superficial analysis, simplistic interpretations, and quick-fix responses to these complex issues. Foster (2004) illuminates the achievement of low-income students can increase by enhancing the competence and performance of teachers who are already working in the neediest schools. She further asserts teachers can be taught to be culturally relevant educators. However, they must be open and willing to have hard conversations and undergo the essential training needed to implement such pedagogy of teaching.

**Conclusion**

According to the findings of Lawrence and Tatum (1997), teachers are basically pre-serviced to teach without developing historical and cultural understanding of minority students within the schools. The goal of this literature review was to position this particular study in the context of previous research and other scholarly material in the field of education as it pertains to school accountability and racial disparities in education, CRT as well as the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to promote the
academic achievement of students of color. This chapter presented a critical synthesis of empirical literature addressing the relevant themes associated with these works.

This literature review included an extensive review of literature in the following areas of inquiry: an in-depth understanding of school accountability and the influence/impact, or lack thereof, it has on student academic achievement, an intense, concentrated discussion of critical race theory, its effects, and connections to the halted achievement of children of color, and a meaningful argument on the use of culturally relevant pedagogy to promote its use to achieve academic excellence for students of color. In order to clearly illustrate this concise annotation, it was necessary to first understand the influence school accountability has had historically had on public education. It was equally important to understand how such inefficiencies and deficits have emerged from this universal, disordered, muddled system. Ultimately, an effort was made to reveal the need for an intense intervention when it comes to educating, not schooling, children of color.

For centuries, we have been “socialized” to believe that schools are the great equalizers in American society. We are told that schools level the playing field by providing opportunity for all, regardless of social background (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, this cannot be further from the reality of truth our students live daily. Schools are far from being the impartial settings they are believed to be. In the words of Crow (2006),

Closing the achievement gap is fundamental to American democracy. However, focusing the achievement gap only on increasing test scores at the exclusion of
educating students to be engaged participants and beneficiaries in a democracy is short-sighted and ultimately dangerous to the future of democracy - and incidentally not an effective means of accountability. (p. 3).

Without doubt, the achievement of our students has direct ramifications for the future well-being of our society (Hanushek, 2004). It should be a very high priority to ensure that all of our students do in fact gain the skills that will be needed as our economy grows and evolves (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005).

However, there is a gap in scholarly literature that specifically addresses how, from first-year teachers’ perspectives; teacher preparation programs have prepared them to be culturally responsive and relevant. Multiple studies worldwide have been conducted to identify ways in which teacher education programs can be enhanced to promote the academic achievement of students of color; however, using the voices of novice teachers and their perceptions of their readiness, this study takes it a step further. *Voice* is a common theme entrenched in the works of critical race theorists. The experiences of this study’s participants can be the *voices* used to advocate and motivate, beyond cursory notions, teacher preparation programs to embed tenets of culturally relevant and responsive teaching into their curriculum. Their voices can also be used to guide school leaders in providing the needed professional development and administrative support to fill these gaps that currently exist in our schools as it pertains to classroom teachers.

Existing research on school reform and teacher preparation program efforts and comparisons of high and low performing schools provide some insight, but tend to focus on the conditions of success rather than on the factors that limit progress.
A growing number of teachers have begun to dump all manner of behavior into a catchall they call “culture.” Whenever teachers seem not to be able to explain or identify with students, they point to students’ culture as the culprit. How might we, who understand and appreciate the significance of culture in education, help our colleagues and students in teacher education make better use of culture as a construct? (Ladson-Billings, 2006, p. 105)

Ladson-Billings builds a strong foundational reference, which expose the misconceptions many classroom teachers have about their cursory understanding of the presence of culture and race in their classrooms. Gay (2010) makes a very valid point:

Students needing culturally responsive teaching are students struggling to pass proficiency tests and other presumed “high standards of academic excellence” throughout the United States are not only African American, but Native American, Latino American, Asian American, and European America; male and female; poor and middle class; urban and rural dwellers; English-dominant speakers and others who have limited proficiency in English; native-born citizens and immigrants. (p. 8)

These are the faces of the students reflected in our public schools now more than ever, yet our teacher education preparation programs are not efficiently equipping novice, pre-service teachers with the skills they need to meet the diverse needs of these learners. If we are ever to see this academic, racial achievement gap deficit disseminate, we must better equip our teaching practitioners with the necessary skillset needed to meet the ever-changing needs of these children of color. Pre-service teachers need an
understanding beyond cursory exposure, which helps them understand their learners, appreciate and accept their diversity, and use it as a means to aid students in becoming productive citizens able to function sufficiently in our global, democratic society.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research studies are very complex, detailed narratives that often times include an in-depth depiction of events using the experiences of the participants being studied. In an effort to capture the experiences of the participants in this research study, I use the multi-case study design to conduct this research study. Using the phenomenological principle of lived experiences, this study uses the multi-case study methodology to illuminate and cultivate the lived experiences of the study’s participants, thus providing their experiences a voice in educational research. Using the following three research questions as a basis of examination, I explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and ongoing support needed to meet the academic needs of the students they were tasked with teaching:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

Triangulation

In an effort to illustrate the lived experiences of 13 Induction classroom teachers
and one Induction program director in a small upstate South Carolina rural school district setting, by utilizing the multi-case study methodology, the following data collection techniques of qualitative research are used: (a) interviews and (b) observations, and (c) document analysis of long-range plans, daily and weekly lesson plans, classroom management plans, formal Induction observation feedback, teacher reflections, evaluation findings, Induction survey results, and researcher observation field notes. The use of triangulation is very important in qualitative research, including the case study analysis.

Yin (2013) asserts, “The need to use multiple sources of evidence far exceeds that in other research methods, such as experiments, surveys, or histories” (p.114). This fluid research structure enables me, as the researcher, to not only capture the lived experiences, but as recommended by Merriam (2009), it allows me to analyze the various components of a bounded case study analysis system outlining 14 different cases. My goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the participants in this study during their first year of teaching and to investigate the ways in which school leaders, through professional development and ongoing support, can assist these teachers with increasing the academic achievement of minority students. Merriam (2009) argues in qualitative research, the interest lies in the process not the outcome. Furthermore, the research interest lies in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation (p 19).
Purpose of the Study

From the perspective of the Induction teacher, the chief purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the students in which they teach. Another purpose for this study is to investigate, through the perception of the Induction teacher, ways in which teacher pre-service education programs are preparing novice teachers to be culturally relevant and responsive educators that meet the complex needs of diverse populations of students, particularly black and brown children.

The aforementioned studies in Chapter Two (Sleeter, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009, 2011, 2014; Villegas & Lucas, 2002, 2013; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; & Desimone et al., 2013) provide relevant research results that support the need to promote and encourage the use of culturally relevant pedagogy in the teaching profession as it pertains to the academic success of students of color. However, these studies are limited to general promotion of culturally relevant pedagogy and do not specifically illuminate the ways in which, through professional development and ongoing support, school administrators, from the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers, can increase the academic performance of minority students through the use of such pedagogical practices. Desimone et al. (2013) reports the experiences of first-year math teachers only in the middle school setting and how they struggle with serving diverse populations of students which were very different than the predominately White populations they served in their student teaching experiences. However, this particular study will investigate, from the perspective of the first-year Induction teacher, ways in which teacher pre-
service education programs are preparing novice teachers to be culturally relevant and responsive educators that meet the complex needs of minority students. This study also highlights how school administrators, through professional development and ongoing support, can equip novice teachers, in South Carolina, with the skills they need to meet the academic needs of children of color which currently make up 47% of the public school population in South Carolina (SCDE, 2017).

Overview of the Chapter

This methodology chapter begins with an overview of qualitative research including a discussion of Hatch (2002), Merriam (2009), and Stake’s (1995) works outlining distinctive characteristics of qualitative research. This description of qualitative research and its many characteristics is followed by a discussion of the case study method design, an extensive description of the setting and locale of the research study, the participant selection process and profiles of the participants, the qualitative data collection and analysis procedures used to conduct the study, researcher positionality and subjectivity, a discussion of the process used to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the study’s results and findings, and a summary of the chapter.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

Stake (1995) asserts, “Because science strives to build a universal understanding, the aim of qualitative research is not to discover, but to be able to construct a clearer reality, and a more sophisticated reality” (p. 101). This is one of the key differences between qualitative and quantitative research as qualitative research seeks to inform
readers with a greater understanding of a phenomenon; thus, its goal is not to discover or unravel new findings, it is merely to cultivate a deeper understanding of a phenomenon.

Many attempts have been made to characterize qualities that distinguish qualitative work from other research approaches. Through synthesis, Hatch (2002) constructed the following list of qualitative research characteristics from several widely cited sources: (a) natural settings; (b) participant perspectives; (c) researcher as data gathering instrument; (d) extended firsthand engagement; (e) centrality of meaning; (f) wholeness and complexity; (g) subjectivity; (h) emergent design; (i) inductive data analysis; and (j) reflexivity. Because research is, after all, producing knowledge about the world, qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible (Merriam, 2009). According to Hatch (2002) because social settings are unique, dynamic, and complex systems, qualitative research provides a means whereby social contexts can be systematically examined as a whole without breaking them down into isolated, incomplete, and disconnected variables (p. 9).

**Lived Experiences and Voice in Qualitative Research**

In qualitative research, the lived experiences of real people in real settings are the objects of study. Qualitative inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. The intent of qualitative inquiry is to explore human behaviors within the contents of their natural occurrence. Merriam (2009) argues, “Humans are best suited for this task, especially because interviewing, observing, and analyzing are activities
central to qualitative research” (p. 2). Qualitative research seeks to understand the world from the perspectives of those living in it and tries to capture the perspectives that people use as a basis for their actions in specific social settings. Merriam (2009) further asserts one characteristic of qualitative research is all researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. This principle falls in line with the notion Stake (1995) stresses, this is, “Interpretation is a major part of all research” (p.9).

Hatch further exerts the perspectives or voices of participants ought to be prominent in any qualitative report. While traditional, quantitative methods generate data through the use of instruments such as questionnaires, checklists, scales, tests, and other measuring devices, the principal data for qualitative researchers are gathered directly by the researchers themselves (Hatch, 2002). Field notes from participant observations, transcriptions of interviews with informants, document analysis such as artifacts and other records/documents, objects and pictures, and other detailed descriptions that cannot be reduced to numbers without distorting the essence of the social meanings they represent are frequent methods and procedures in which qualitative researchers collect data related to the phenomena under investigation. There are over forty types of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). This chapter identifies valuable ways in which the use of qualitative methods of research enhances the research process. Choosing a study design requires understanding the philosophical foundations underlying the type of research, taking stock of whether there is a good match between the type of research and
your personality, attributes, and skills, and becoming informed as to the design choices available to you within the paradigm (Merriam, 2009).

Above very distinct qualities of qualitative research have been identified and examined for the purpose of outlining key characteristics of qualitative research. Because there are many more, it is essential to identify and explain even more qualitative research key characteristics. Another important characteristic, according to Merriam (2009), is that it usually involves fieldwork. The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site, institution, or field in order to observe behavior in its natural setting. This technique of qualitative research is used to conduct this study. Merriam argues this is a customary practice done by anthropologists whose interest is to learn about other cultures.

**Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research**

According to Stake (1995) there are three major differences between qualitative and quantitative research: (a) the distinction between explanation and understanding as the purpose of inquiry; (b) the distinction between a personal and impersonal role for the researcher, and (c) a distinction between knowledge discovered and knowledge constructed. Another distinct difference between quantitative and qualitative research is the use of words and pictures. Words and pictures are used to describe happenings in natural settings rather than numbers to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon because qualitative research focuses on process, meaning, and understanding. The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive (Merriam, 2009).
Case Study Design the Multi-case Study Approach

This qualitative study was conducted using a multi-case study approach. The study will be guided by Gloria Ladson-Billings’ cultural relevant pedagogy.

Use of the Case Study Design

Merriam (2009) argues the case study design, a form of qualitative research, is conducted so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained (p. 34). The goal of this research study is to explore the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and ongoing support needed to meet the academic needs of the students they teach. To reach this goal, it is essentially important to find ways to investigate the day-to-day occurrences within these first-year teachers’ classrooms by conducting in-depth discussions with the teachers who live this reality daily. Such episodes, happenings, and events impact significantly student achievement. The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify, collect, and interpret the experiences through the voices of Induction classroom teachers who work in these complex naturalistic settings daily. Qualitative case studies in the field of education are often framed with the concepts, models, and theories from anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, and educational psychology (Merriam, 2009). Thus is a principal standard of culturally relevant pedagogy and is the case with this research study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory which guides this work is that of Gloria Ladson-Billings, the leading theorists of culturally relevant pedagogy. The term CRP was coined as Ladson-Billings researched the daily instructional practices of experienced classroom teachers who were
successful teachers of African American students (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on three propositions: These propositions are (a) successful teachers focus on students' academic achievement, (b) successful teachers develop students' cultural competence, and (c) successful teachers foster students' sense of sociopolitical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 2011).

Culturally relevant pedagogy strives to empower students to examine educational content and processes, create, construct and deconstruct meaning, succeed academically and socially, and see contradictions and inequities in local communities and in our society as a whole. It incorporates student culture in the curriculum and transcends negative effects of the dominant culture by creating classrooms that are challenging, innovative, and focused on student learning and achievement. It also builds cultural competence and links curriculum and instruction to sociopolitical realities (Milner, 2013). Using theories from anthropologists and theorists such as Ladson-Billings (1995; 2009), Gay (2013), Irvine (2010), Milner (2013), I seek to inform this study. Culturally relevant pedagogy is the lens used to conduct this research study. It was used as a premise to explore, examine, and analyze the data collected.

The Multi-case Study Approach

Case study research is one of several forms of social science research. The expectation of a case study is to catch the complexity of a single case (Stake, 1995, p. xii). This methodology seeks meaning from its participants based on their experiences with a phenomenon, allowing the researcher to describe commonalities of these participants consisting “of ‘what’ they experience and ‘how’ they experienced it”
(Creswell, 2012, p. 58). Stake (1995) suggests the case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. The multi-case study design, however, takes this notion a step further by binding 14 single case studies, similar in nature, to identify significant commonalities and mutual occurrences.

The multi-case study design is used to conduct this study. If a study contains more than a single case then a multiple-case study is required. Baxter and Jack (2008) argue while a holistic case study with embedded units only allows the researcher to understand one unique case, a multiple or collective case study will allow the researcher to analyze within each setting and across settings. In a multi-case study, several cases are examined to understand the similarities and commonalities between the cases. Although there are many different types of qualitative research that can be used to conduct research, the case study design has been chosen to carry out this research study. Merriam (2009) defines the case study as an intensive, holistic description that analyzes a single unit or bounded system; these characteristics differentiate the case study design from other types of qualitative research. She further argues the case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest lies in the process rather than the outcome, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can very well directly influence policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 2009).

There are different types of case study designs: ethnographic case study, historical case study, psychological case study, sociological case study, descriptive case study,
interpretive/analytical case study, evaluative case study, and collective or multi-case study. The collective/multi-case study is the design I used to conduct this research study. This involved collecting and analyzing data from several cases. Merriam (2009) argues, “The more cases included in a study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be” (p. 40). She further argues the inclusion of multiple cases is a common strategy for enhancing the external validity or generalizability of one’s findings.

**Characteristics of the Case Study**

Yin (2013) highlights the case study design would be the preferred method, compared to others, in situations when the researcher has little or no control over the behavioral events brought out in case study analysis. In fact, Stake (1995) asserts we tout case study as being noninterventive and empathic. Meaning, we try not to disturb the ordinary activity of the case, not to test, not even to interview, if we can get the information we want by discrete observation or examination of records. However, in this particular study, as the researcher I felt it was essential to use the method of interviewing to captivate and capture the vast unique experiences of the study’s participants.

According to Merriam (2009) interviewing is a common means of collecting qualitative data. Stake (1995) further suggests the real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does, as the overall purpose is to seek to understand how the people being studied see things. Stake’s conception of case
studies draws from naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological, and biographic research methods.

Researchers choose the case study design precisely because they are interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing. Merriam categorizes the case study as being particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic; meaning, the case study focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon which produces an end product that is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study that illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009).

**Research Setting and Context of the Study**

The research setting and the contest of the study will outline the location of the participants and the nature of their work.

**Research Setting**

Floren County (pseudonym) is a rural county located in the Piedmont Region of South Carolina. It is one of seven counties in the Upper Savannah Region of the state, and it has an area of 714 square miles and a population density of 93 people per square mile. Located in the heart of Floren County, Floren County School District 46 is nestled between Greenville, Spartanburg, and Columbia, South Carolina. It is an area that provides convenient access to some of South Carolina’s most metropolitan areas, highways, beaches, and mountains. Floren County has a population of 66,229 residents with the following demographic make-up for the county as a whole: 72% White, 26% African American, 4% Hispanic. The percentage of persons living below the poverty level is 20.0% compared with only 17.6% of state residents living below that level. The
median household income is $38,829, in contrast to the state median of $44,623.
According to the same source, 22.6% of the population of Floren County is under 18 years of age and only 77.1% of residents age 25 or older have a high school diploma. Additionally, 25,540 disabled persons, who are age 5 and older, live within the county. This is nearly 21.5% of the total county population; the percentage for the state is only 17.0%. Nearly 14.4% of persons 25 or older in Floren County hold at least a bachelor’s degree compared to over 24.6% of the state’s population.

Floren County School District 46 has 9 schools including one comprehensive high school, 2 middle schools, 4 elementary schools, and 2 preschool through 8th grade schools. The district also sponsors the Floren County 46 Preparatory Academy, an at-risk program for middle and high school students. Floren County School District 46 serves approximately 6,100 students. The district employs approximately 840 total staff. Of these, 530 are instructional staff with 379 of those being certified staff. Based on current local data relating to students eligible for subsidized meals, the district has an overall poverty rating of 73% with schools ranking from 96.5% to 62.9% of students qualifying for this service. The demographic breakdown for the district is 56.6% White, 29.9% African American, 10.0% Hispanic, and 3.5% other races. Over half of the Hispanic students attend two district schools. A total of 1,143 students, 18.7% of all district students, are enrolled in special education programs.

Students living within the county face significant risk factors associated with poverty. The percentage of children at risk of school failure based on school readiness, age and education of their mothers, and poverty presents a constant challenge to the
school district. The high number of births to teen mothers and mothers without high school diplomas is also a concern for the district. All of these risk factors are compounded by an unemployment rate of nearly 7.9%.

**Context of the Study**

The majority of the elementary schools and 2 middle schools, Jefferson Middle and Floren Middle, serve students through both Montessori and traditional instructional models. Special needs students are served in programs designed to meet their individual needs throughout the district. Each school provides services for students with all types of disabilities through inclusion, resource, or self-contained classrooms. Each school has additional certified staff for visual and performing arts, physical education, library/media center services, and guidance services. Across the district, teacher specialists serve as instructional coaches. These instructional coaches also serve as curriculum coordinators who work closely with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to provide high quality professional development and monitor instruction in all subject areas at each school. They additionally serve as mentors for the Induction teachers in their buildings along with veteran classroom teachers trained to be mentors through the state of South Carolina.

There is also a district Induction director, a retired principal, who meets with Induction teachers monthly to provide support and assistance during the first year of teaching. D-1 (pseudonym) is a retired principal who served Floren School District 46 for 15 years as a school principal. She met with the Induction teachers 2 to 3 times as a whole, monthly as an elementary group and a secondary group, conversed monthly with
Induction teachers individually as needed, observed their classrooms when requested, and provided them with both written and verbal feedback. She also worked closely with their principals and mentors to address concerns, offer assistance, and support.

**Selection of Participants**

The selection of the participants was chosen using a strategic process. This section will outline that process and provide information on the length of the study, the induction teacher program background data, focus group and the prescribe data collection methods.

**Length of Study**

The time frame selected for the study was established considering the time constraints surrounding the public school system. Data was collected beginning February 2016 and extended beyond July 2016 of the 2015-2016 school year. The study was extended throughout the summer in an effort to await the district’s superintendent’s recommendations for rehire to the Floren School District 46 Board of Trustees. This further allowed more accessibility by allowing opportunities to collaborate and communicate when needed with the study participants during the summer months when school buildings were empty and pressure was at a minimum. Summer is often times used a time of reflection and regrouping for educators because the day-to-day operations of the school are not a demanding factor or a distraction.

This extended time for research over the summer during the 2015-2016 school year allowed me to gather multiple data sources to further evaluate the perceptions of Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of their students. It also allowed
more time for reflection, dialogue, and discussion with the mentors of the chosen participants to see how they progressed throughout the year, using both the South Carolina mid-year and end-of-year Induction Teacher Assimilation Program (ITAP) Classroom Observation Record evaluation findings for document analysis. The participants in this study worked in a public South Carolina K-12 school district with a formalized Induction and mentoring program under the state’s Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) Program.

**Induction Teacher Program Background Data**

The following data was provided by the personnel director or Floren School District 46: During the 2015-2016 Floren School District 46 employed and supported 38 Induction classroom teachers: 16 elementary level and 8 middle level, and 13 secondary level (high school). Twenty-eight of these teachers were first-year classroom teachers with no years of teaching experience. The remaining 10 were Induction II teachers that did not successfully pass Induction during the 2014-2015 school year; one of which also did not successfully pass Induction II and was not offered an opportunity to return to Floren 46. At the conclusion of the school year, data was available to determine the number of Induction teachers that were not offered opportunities to return. Although 10 Induction teachers did not successfully pass Induction, 7 were offered an opportunity to return in their current positions and were given Induction II teaching contracts. Twenty-eight Induction teachers successfully met the requirements for Induction, were offered Annual 1 contracts, and will undergo the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation for Teachers (SAFE-T) during the 2016-2017 school year. SAFE-T is a component of the
overall ADEPT System. It is the formal evaluation model used to evaluate South Carolina classroom-based teachers statewide and began with the 2010-2011 school year. SAFE-T replaced the original ADEPT formal evaluation models and provides a consistent, reliable, valid measure of teacher effectiveness in South Carolina school districts. Of the 13 Induction teacher participants in this study, 6 did not successfully pass Induction 1 which is 46%.

The personnel director also provided me with the following information pertaining to each Induction classroom teacher: (a) years of experience (some had taught previously in other districts and had not successfully passed Induction), (b) degrees earned, (c) college or university attended, (d) status of Induction, (e) certification status (PACE/alternative modes of teaching or initial certification) and (f) school site locations.

**Focus Group**

With the district’s 38 Induction teachers as a pre-assessment, I conducted a focus group in an effort to recruit participants for the study and to build interest in the study. An informational session with 38 Induction teachers was facilitated. Verbal consent from each person present was obtained prior to the beginning of the session. Uninterested individuals were excused from the room prior to the start of the session. The purpose of the informational session was to explain the purpose of the study, build participant interest, and inform possible participants what their participation would entail. Prior to the beginning of the informational session, observational data was collected. Anecdotal field notes were taken as these Induction teachers interacted with one another in this particular setting. These individuals were current Induction program teachers who teach
on the elementary, middle, and high school level in Floren School District 46. At this session, I asked if anyone was interested in participating in the study. For the interested individuals, I requested the following information in writing: name, email address, school site, and phone number. The sample population for the study crossed grade spans so all grade levels was represented in this study. After reviewing the list of potential participants, 13 Induction teachers comprised of 4 elementary, 3 middle, and 6 high school and the Induction program director were chosen as participants in the study.

**Prescribed Data Collection Methods**

After the participants were chosen, I scheduled a time to interview and observe each participant in their naturalistic setting. These 13 participants were interviewed using a recording device for transcription purposes. Prior to the interview, I provided each participant with written consent for participation in the study. Participants signed the consent agreement and interviews were shortly thereafter scheduled and conducted. Each participant was interviewed based on the established interview protocol and were asked to provide copies of lesson plans, long-range plans, classroom management plans, monthly Induction Teacher Assimilation Program (ITAP) Classroom Observation records, teacher reflections from observations, and evaluation findings for document analysis. Collected later was the district’s Induction program survey results and my observation field notes. Participants' names were removed from those documents to protect the privacy of all participants and a pseudonym was given for each participant. I conducted observations for the participants in the study on the day of the previously scheduled interviews. During these observations, anecdotal field notes were drafted.
specifically for the purpose of observing the interactions between each participant and his/her students, the students in which the participants have been tasked with meeting their academic needs.

Specifically, using an interview protocol and field notes, I wanted to explore, examine, and evaluate the vast similarities and/or differences of the lived experiences of first-year Induction classroom teachers in Floren School District 46. I wanted to pinpoint rationales as to how these first-year teachers succeeded or failed at meeting the varying needs of the students of color. Additionally, I was interested in the issues they experienced and encountered in the classroom ultimately to raise an awareness of the increasing or static number of teacher pre-service education programs preparing novice teachers with the skills needed to effectively teach in diverse, rural school district settings. I ultimately wanted to know in what ways were these teacher’s successes and/or challenges attributed to their established instructional knowledge and experiences, the support the District provided them through the Induction program and through the guidance and support they received from their school leaders.

Participant’s Profiles

A brief description is provided for each participant using a pseudonym. A pseudonym was given for each participant with the letter to represent the school level and a number to represent the number of participants at that level. Teacher participants were represented from elementary, middle and high schools.
Elementary Teachers

There were four teacher participants from two different elementary schools within the same school district. Three of the participants were at the same school and one participant was at the second school. They are identified as E-1, E-2, E-3 and E-4.

Participant E-1. E-1 is a first-year primary (4k and 5k kindergarten) Montessori teacher at Forge Elementary School. Participant E-1 was a very young, energetic lady who appeared very relaxed, comfortable, confident and excited to teach her students. Looking forward to a great year of teaching at Forge Elementary School 2016-2017, E-1 grew up in Liberty, South Carolina, a “little bitty” town with two red lights. She drives from Liberty daily to Laurens to work. The schools she attended as a child were Title I schools. She described these schools as Title I, but said Title I was different back then:

I guess not as much poverty and as much needs as the kids as it was and I guess like we didn’t see it as much back then cause we were kids, but I really don’t think there was as much, it wasn’t – no, it wasn’t like that. And my parents were really involved too, I never had, you know, to have to worry about like the parents struggling and everything…. I mean everything’s completely different, cause not only do these kids have to learn as academic things, but they need somebody to love them, they’re – they need breakfast when they come in, they need lunch and a snack when you send them home and they’re worried about who’s gonna love them, who’s gonna put clothes on ‘em, put ‘em on the bus the next morning, they’re not worried about what 2 + 4 is.
E-1 is a recent graduate of Lander University where she earned a bachelor degree in early childhood education and Montessori certification. Forge Elementary has a high Hispanic population of students which causes a language barrier and communication conflicts in the classroom. Its poverty index is 99%. E-1 explains how she overcomes this barrier below:

And then I have a lot of Hispanic kids so we have that language barrier, but the good thing with having a lot of Hispanic kids is I’m always gonna have at least one or two who have very fluent English and Spanish, so they can help me communicate back and forth to my kids that I have a hard time understanding.

E-1’s classroom is located in the back building of the school. Her classroom was very large, warm and welcoming with multiple “little” seats and table desks for students to sit and use while working. She has an expansive classroom library, prep sink, and a carpeted, mat area where students come and sit for small group instruction. E-1 is the only participant who completed her student teaching experience in Floren 46 in a Title I elementary school with a poverty index much lower than Forge Elementary, her current teaching assignment. E-1, whose voice renders a strong Southern twang, speaks boldly with confidence. She is assured of both her strengths and weaknesses as a first-year Induction teacher. She loves incorporating hands on activities into her classroom and has a great passion for the Montessori curriculum. Aside from school she has two Boykin spaniels and loves spending time at the lake. She’s also engaged to be married soon.

**Participant E-2.** E-2 is a product of Floren County. She was a student in the neighboring school district within the county. Although this is her first year teaching in a
public elementary, E-2 is not your typical Induction teacher. Experiencing difficulty finding a job as an elementary teacher in a public school setting, E-2 worked in the private sector as a preschool teacher with a very small population of students, fewer than 7-10 students in her classroom. She stated:

You would have thought I knew where to start but I truly feel like this was my first ‘real’ year of teaching. I was nervous. I had most of their background (referring to her students), but I guess the biggest struggle for me was knowing exactly where to start as far as how the public school does things. Just knowing where to start, what to use. I didn’t really have a team member that did the same thing that I did, so that was kind of a struggle for me.

Spending years in a preschool setting, working one-on-one with younger children, E-2 contributes her successful start as a public school educator with a ‘real’ classroom to the veteran teachers that surround her, check on her, and review her lesson plans on a weekly basis. She mentioned that,

Also, learning my principal’s expectations and knowing my student’s background. I just knew that their background would probably be a little bit different than some of the kids that I had taught in the past just because of their family situations, the income that they have. Coming to a Title I school, I knew those would be factors, but all in all, what I learned is kids are still the same, whether you have money or whether you don’t. They still wanna learn, you just have to find something that really interests them and they wanna be loved. After I figured this out, the rest really came easy for me.
Growing up and attending an underprivileged elementary and middle school, E-2 had a “good” experience in school. She loved her teachers and attributes her career path to the teachers that taught her as a child. She also contributes her success in life with having supportive parents who pushed her to work hard and always do her best. This is why she attended Erskine College as an elementary education major.

E-2 teaches reading to traditional fourth and fifth grade students at EC Todd Elementary School in Laurens School District 55. EC Todd, with a population of roughly 600 students, is a Title I school with a poverty index of 77% percent. Soft spoken in nature and a mother of three herself, E-2 nurtures and shows her students lots of affection:

I think I have a pretty good relationship with my kids, I’m hard on ‘em, I expect a lot out of ‘em because I know that they can behave, I know that they can do. I stick with what I say to them…. I’m very consistent with what I do and so I’m hard on ‘em and they know I’m hard. And for the most part they’re accepting of that because I think sometimes they have too much leeway in other aspects of their life. To have that structure is good for them and I think they respect me for that and I respect them for working hard at it. They always are willing to give a hug or accept a hug, and so when they do that I do try to give them that hug and just tell them, you know I care about you just because I know it’s hard sometimes. Knowing how they’re growing up.
Knowing and understanding the background of the students in which one teaches is very important. Age, wisdom, and experiences in life have taught E-2 this very important effective component of teaching and learning.

**Participant E-3.** E-3 is a first grade elementary teacher at EC Todd Elementary School. A young energetic female from Pawley’s Island, South Carolina, grew up in an affluent area where she attended a private Catholic school from kindergarten through 8th grade. Her parents later transferred her to a local public high school. After graduating from high school, E-3 attended Coastal Carolina University as an early childhood education major. While at Coastal Carolina, E-3 was afforded an opportunity to student teach at an affluent elementary school near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. While reflecting on that particular experience, E-3 shared:

When I arrived at my student-teaching it was in the Spring semester, so you know the teacher had already set the guidelines, the expectations, the rules, the procedures, and they knew exactly what to do, they did it, she was definitely a more experienced teacher, so whenever I walked in her room, whenever I was student-teaching, it looked perfect. It was the perfect 1st grade classroom. The students were engaged, they were active, but still engaged and she (the teacher) didn’t have to do much redirecting. She could work with small groups while the other ones were working in stations and doing their own work. But, I guess I didn’t realize that in the beginning you have to teach them to do that and I didn’t really know how – you know I thought well I can just say you know you need to
go to stations and this is what we do in each station, explain it once and they’re gonna do it. No, not at all.

Once E-3 was assigned her own classroom, she experienced what she calls a culture shock. The students were nothing like the students she taught during her student teaching experience. The students were nothing like the students at E-3’s private Catholic school, and because of these life experiences, E-3 experienced difficulty teaching the students she was assigned at EC Todd Elementary School.

**Participant E-4.** E-4 is a first-year lower Elementary Montessori teacher at EC Todd Elementary School. She has a mixture of 29 first, second, and third graders in her classroom. Originally from Floren and graduating from Floren 46 schools, E-4 is a product of the district’s K-8 Montessori program. She attended the University of South Carolina Upstate and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education. Unlike E-1, E-4 had not yet finished her Montessori certification training, she was just beginning the training at Lander University as a first-year Induction classroom teacher. When asked why she decided to become a teacher, E-4 answered:

Well originally as a little kid, I hadn’t really said I wanted to be a teacher, I was more going into Vet, but either way I wanted to help others and make a difference. Then I transitioned to wanting to be a teacher just as I grew up I understood more of my mom’s role in education.

E-4’s mother had taught English at the local high school for several years and is currently a veteran Guidance Counselor in a neighboring school district:
It’s just seeing how much people don’t really recognize that teachers do or like you know the guidance counselors do everything and seeing how she would make a difference in students’ lives. When we go out somewhere or we’re around town or we don’t even have to be in Floren, and there’s always someone she’s gonna run into that she knew, that she taught and always has things to say. So I just wanted to carry that on.

Valuing education coupled with having a strong work ethic, E-4 was a very involved student:

I went to school in Floren and I was involved in a lot of stuff there, student council, volleyball team, and teacher cadet. Teacher cadet just made me want to work with the smaller children even more and I was glad I had that experience. And then I went to USC Upstate where I actually was a teaching fellow which is something that less than 200 people in the state of South Carolina are awarded.

Chubby in stature, E-4 is a very soft-spoken classroom teacher, yet order, structure, and a positive learning environment permeate the walls of her classroom. When she speaks, she has her students’ undivided attention. Her classroom theme for the school year, “Sailing into Excellence” was evident through her interactions with her students both inside and outside of the classroom. E-4 did not find setting up her classroom for the first time hard at all. The other Montessori teachers and her veteran Montessori classroom instructional assistant told and showed her how to set up her Montessori classroom for “success”:
I was talking with my assistant and then I was talking to my mentor (a veteran Montessori teacher in the same building) and she’s like well this, this, and this, and we need to move this over here, and all these things and I was like oh my gosh I didn’t realize I wasn’t as prepared as I thought I was. At least to have things where they should be, like there’s a certain order that the lessons have found on the shelf, they start with 1st grade lessons on the top and they go down to 3rd grade, but they also – they don’t go all the way across the shelves like where the sections are, they just, they kinda go, like… I mean that’s part of ah, Maria Montessori’s philosophy is to have it in ascending order as they go through the grades. Next year, I wanna try to figure out a way to re-organize, to incorporate that in and have it a little bit different, I mean I’m an organized person, but get it the way like the Montessori should be organized.

Typically leaving the school on a nightly basis around 6:30 PM, as a first-year teacher E-5 struggles with planning meaningful instruction for 3 different grade levels, 3 different content area standards, and 3 different sets of plans plus learning a different method of teaching, Montessori. She has a peer teacher who she does plan with on a weekly basis. They don’t “divide it up,” E-4 says, “they plan together.”

**Middle Level Teachers**

There were three teacher participants from two different middle schools within the same school district. Two of the participants were at the same school and one participant was at the second school. They are identified as M-1, M-2, and M-3.
Participant M-1. M-1, a recent graduate of Lander University’s bachelor of arts degree in secondary history education, has a different perspective of his collegial experiences in the teacher education program than the other three Lander graduates who are participants in this study:

The only classes I really had were content specific. I did not have any courses about classroom management and the little I learned about differentiation of instruction was very minimal. I remember us talking about it, what it is that is, but I do not remember us planning lessons centered around differentiation of instruction. We planned lessons around content. World War I, The Cold War, The Civil War, stuff like that.

M-1, now confident, energetic, relaxed, and seemingly in control of his classes, has not always been this way. He recalls his first days of teaching and remembers being afraid, intimidated, and not assured of what to do:

The kids, their behaviors shocked me. They scared me. I had never experienced anything like it in my life. They talked continuously and their voices get louder and louder. Some of them can be so rude. Honestly, I didn’t know what to do with them.

Through mentorship, support from school administration, and connecting with peers in other schools who teach the same grade level and course as he for curriculum and management support, M-1 has been able to transform his classroom into an engaging environment where students feel empowered to learn and grow through learning.
**Participant M-2.** M-2 is a first-year physical education teacher that is shared by the two largest middle schools in Floren School District 46. She follows an A/B Day 1/Day 2 schedule at both Floren Middle and Sullivan Middle Schools. She grew up in Kershaw, South Carolina and attended Kershaw High School where she was a very active student in athletics. Floren and its small town atmosphere remind M-2 of her hometown, Kershaw. Also a recent graduate of Lander University, as a physical education major, M-2 says, “All I ever wanted to do was be a physical education teacher. Nothing really else suited my needs or what I wanted to do. I loved playing sports and participating in athletics in high school.”

M-2 was hired late July 2015, a few weeks before school began. Very confident, assured, and willing to try new things, M-2 feels her time spent at Lander instilled resilience and a strong foundation to build upon as a classroom teacher:

I feel like I was prepared from things I learned at Lander, such as standards and how to develop lesson plans and equipment and management. Physical education majors at Lander learn how to teach sports skills in their classes. In those classes they teach you everything you need to know about teaching a student anything related to sports. One class that really helped me with learning how students think and their different learning styles was psych. Ed. In physical education, you’re gonna teach to all styles of learning so that’s one thing that they forced on us when we were in college and it kind of came to realization once you start teaching, so I think that’s what really helped me.
Participant M-2, creative in nature, built relationships while at Lander University. She is able to contact her advisor and/or past professors to seek guidance and advice on how to handle situations she encounters as a first-year teacher:

I still use lesson plans that I wrote in college. I still can call and talk and go see my professors from college. Sometimes on the way home, I would just call my professor to ask for guidance on how to handle situations I encountered. And they would say this is what you need to do.

Her biggest frustration is sharing a working space (gyms/offices/classrooms) with veteran male teachers who have set what she describes as a “static” tone for learning. She has creative ideas on ways to engage her students in meaningful physical activities that extend beyond what she calls the standard walking laps around a gym, shooting basketball, and playing flag football. She wants her students to try “line” dancing and step aerobics, and acrobatics. But each time she launches a lesson plan to engage her students in similar activities as listed above, she experiences resistance and defiance from her students as they ask, “Why do we have to do this today,” “Can we shoot basketball today,” or “Coach Rogers doesn’t make us do this. Why do you,” as the veteran teachers sit back and watch this all unfold.

Beyond sharing a workspace with other male teachers, one of which is also a graduate of Lander University’s physical education program and was instrumental in M-2 getting her first teaching job, she also works for two different administrations as well as working two different groups of professionals:
It’s hard to see where I fit in. I have expectations at this school and a different set of expectations at another school. Some of the kids, especially those in 7th and 8th grade who have had the ‘other’ P.E. teacher, come into class and are upset because they feel I do things differently. That’s been a challenge for me. Even though me and the ‘other’ teacher both graduated from the same college, we don’t use the same teaching methods and so my students are used to being taught one way, or used to getting what they want from the ‘other’ teacher has been very challenging. I long for the day I am at one school in my own gym. Yeah. And then they make comments like, ‘I’m gonna go tell the other coach that you didn’t let me do this,’ and I’m just like, “Okay, well they’re not your teacher. You know, you’re in my class right now. Not his.

One interesting point M-2 shared in regards to her experiences as a first-year teacher in both schools is the kids are the same:

Although I work at two schools on two different sides of town, one thing I’ve noticed is there is very little difference in the attitudes and behaviors of the kids. You still have your kid who’s gonna get distracted; you still have your kid who you’re wondering this week are we gonna get through the week without you being sent somewhere else. Kids are kids, whether they’re poor kids, or rich kids, or Hispanic, Black, White, the good, the bad, all of ‘em are the same, they are kids.

**Participant M-3.** After completing a master of education in middle level language arts and social studies from Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina in
2011, Participant M-3 has just been able to land a job as a classroom teacher this school year. She stated, “I’ve been applying for jobs but haven’t been successful…”

Participant M-3, originally from Ally, Illinois, graduated from Mammoth College in Ally, Illinois, in 1996. She recalls her student teaching experience and shares: “I finished my student teaching at a private Catholic school because of some problems with management and getting along with the children in the inner city schools. I am still struggling with these types of children today.”

Participant M-3 respectfully resigned from her position as teacher in the late spring semester. Reasons unknown and not specifically discussed, this decision came about near the very end of the school year after she had successfully completed Induction. Through mentorship and support from her school administration, including a close, supportive relationship with the instructional coach/Induction mentor, M-3 made tremendous gains and strides as a classroom teacher during her second semester: My Induction mentor and administrative team began working with me closely December of the fall semester on classroom management and the organizational structure of my classroom. We incorporated the use of a timer, structured the lesson in 5-10 minute segments, and incorporated strategies to engage my students in meaningful learning. M-3 hopes to return to the classroom to put the strategies and tactics to good use.

**High School Teachers**

There were six teacher participants from one high school within the same school district. The participants taught different subjects. They are identified as H-1, H-2, H-3, H-4, H-5, and H-6.
Participant H-1. Participant H-1, a Hispanic male in his mid-20’s with thick dark hair, about 5’7 and small in stature, grew up in Lexington, South Carolina. He is a first-year teacher who teaches Orchestra/Strings to both middle and high school students at Floren District 46 High School, Hix Thomas and Owens K-8 Schools. As a violinist who is a recent graduate of Winthrop University, he earned a Master of Arts in Teaching Music Education while at Winthrop, but also holds a bachelor’s level music degree from Presbyterian College. A very focused, detailed-oriented and thorough teacher, outside of the classroom, H-1 loves to play soccer. His love for soccer and music are driving forces in his life.

Participant H-1, a product himself of an affluent school district, in his own words, explained his quest to the teaching profession:

Very fortunate to be in a very affluent area and I started to get interested in music right when my teacher came in 5th grade and said here’s instruments, choose one, and I chose violin. That teacher actually made a very big impact on my life. She made me decide that I wanted to go into music and just enjoy music. But when I first went into college, at Presbyterian College, I wanted to be a biology major, but I still loved music so I still played. Well, I discovered quickly that I couldn’t do Biology and I’d been coaching soccer for a while by then, so I knew that teaching something was a very rewarding experience and I enjoy seeing kids put what you taught them into practice and be successful. That was one of the best feelings I’ve ever felt in my entire life. And so from that point, I knew I wanted to be teacher, and after my junior year as an undergrad, I became a music major. To
add a teaching certification would have taken at least three more years, I decided
to get my Master’s degree in Music Education after graduating from PC.
His experiences, very different from the experiences of his students, do not stand in the
way of H-1 imparting a passion for music into his students.
I have a great rapport with the students. I tend to think if I was in high school,
what I liked to do, what I expected from my teachers. What kind of things did I
need to do to have a good relationship with my teacher and so? Also getting some
humor out of them, making sure that they’re comfortable in a class with just being
themselves. And so I always encouraged that in my class, they still know I’m their
teacher, but at the same time they know they can come to me for anything that
they need.
H-1 was the only participant who did not bring any biases or preconceived notions about
his students or their lives to the classroom. When asked he said,
You can have someone who has all the money in the world and can’t play at all
and then you can have somebody who has no money at all and is the most
amazing player you’ve had. So, you don’t wanna throw any of that under the bus
because talent comes in all shapes, forms, and fashions.
There are only two Orchestra/Strings teachers in Floren 46. The two of these teachers
serve a total of 5 schools: 4 middle schools and 1 comprehensive high school. H-1,
serving a total of 3 schools, serves 2 schools per day. One of which is the high school
which he serves daily.
Participant H-2. H-2 is a health science/physical education teacher at Floren District High School. A female from a small town similar to Floren called Little Mountain, South Carolina, H-2 was born and raised there all of her life. Their graduating classes at the local high school never exceeded 100 graduates. H-2 describes Little Mountain as a very small family type oriented town. H-2 attended the University of South Carolina where she was fortunate enough to earn both a Bachelor degree in Athletic Training and a Master of Arts degree in teaching physical education. She is a trained athletic director and classroom teacher who teaches a number of classes: Introduction to Health Science, physical education, and spends the remainder of her school day in the athletic training room assisting student athletes with injuries. It was her love for athletic training that led her to the teaching profession:

At that point during my Bachelor’s degree in the clinical experiences I realized that me teaching undergrads like years below me was something I enjoyed so I thought okay maybe teaching is the route for me to go where I can use teaching and athletic training collectively. So that kind of put me into teaching and most athletic training people are gonna be certified in PE because they go together, the sports, so that’s why I went into physical education and then I came here to Floren.

Participant H-3. H-3 is a biology teacher in the Floren District High School’s Freshman Academy. H-3 is from the Greenville, South Carolina. She was educated in a private school for 8 years before transferring to a local charter high school, Brazier Middle College. Intrinsically motivated as a student, H-3 was afforded the unique
opportunity to graduate from high school and finish college early. A proud graduate of Clemson University, H-3 started her matriculation process as an animal science major with a minor in education.

After completing a summer internship at the Greenville Zoo, she returned to Clemson and decided to pursue a master of arts in teaching as a biology major. This change in major opened the door for her to the field of education,

During my junior year of college after completing an internship at the Greenville Zoo in their education department and I realized how much I enjoyed teaching and how much I loved it. So I went and I got my MAT through Clemson and loved teaching and getting to know the kids.

One of H-3’s most challenging frustrations is motivating her students to learn:

And then I – getting here, I teach the applied kids, the lower level students this semester and they have no desire to be what I was and go to college the way that I did, um, so that was kind of the – a learning curve for me to learn what motivates them. Because I was motivated by grades and just intrinsically motivated and they’re definitely not. So, I wasn’t ready to – to deal with them the way that I should’ve been.

Like many of the participants in this study, H-3 feels unprepared to teach, motivate, and support her students through learning.

Participant H-4. H-4, a native of a small town called Loris in South Carolina near the Myrtle Beach area, decided to attend college near his hometown at Coastal Carolina University. While there, H-4 received both a bachelor of arts in history and
Master of Arts in Teaching. Being surrounded by some really inspiring teachers and that helped me a lot with my plans for college:

I guess I wanted to start teaching after my junior/senior year of high school, I had some really inspiring teachers. I wasn’t a real good student in middle school and once I got to my junior and senior year of high school, my teachers really helped to inspire me, helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my life. Just good experiences.

As a first-year ninth grade Geography teacher at Floren District 46 in August 2015, H-4 admits he was very confident and when asked about his readiness to meet the academic needs of his students, he responded:

As far as my actually preparation, I felt well prepared. I felt ready and confident. But later in the year, it was a little less so. I had a very rough first semester especially, but second semester went very smoothly I think. My preparation was good, as far as my program (referring to his program of study in college), I don’t think it could’ve been any better. I think just a new area, a new school, a place I wasn’t familiar with, students I wasn’t familiar with is very difficult to acclimate to but as far as my preparedness I wouldn’t have any complaints at all.

H-4 found it hard to connect with his students and colleagues attributing this to the cultural differences and backgrounds. When asked what preconceptions and biases of his own did he bring with him to his classroom, he responded:

My completely honest blunt first impression of the student population was kind of what you would guess for the rural district. I came from the Myrtle Beach area,
the students that I interned were mostly were a little higher socioeconomic status. When I got here, I mean to put it bluntly, the first thing I thought of was these are poor old country people and it really takes some time to get used to. You really gotta build that relationship and get to know them and their struggles, where they come from. This helps in geography cause it is kind of a subject that is all about differences in people and differences in places, so, sometimes it’s helpful, but sometimes it causes a little frustration cause you just don’t understand each other like you might if you’re from the same area. I feel like an outsider sometimes, you know they’re kinda standoffish, but I mean the students aren’t so bad. The students are pretty welcoming. As long as they feel comfortable with me, like as far as our working relationship, what I expect, all of that, then we don’t really have a lot of problems.

Participant H-4, a small man in stature, well groomed and overly confident, did not successfully pass Induction. He is slated to complete Induction 2 next school year for the following reasons: (a) struggled with setting high expectations for students and himself as the teacher, (b) experienced trouble relating to the population of students he was tasked with teaching, (c) classroom management, (d) effective planning, and (e) frequent absences. H-4 admits, after reflecting, all that he learned at Coastal Carolina did not prepare him for what he has experienced as a first-year teacher, especially when it comes to the behaviors of his students and how it impacts teaching and learning:

It is not practical like it should be. They don’t teach you what to expect in most classrooms. They teach you strategies to use for medium, like middle to high level
students is what they are training people for. And it’s virtually useless in lower
level you know 9th grade just out of middle school type classes.

H-4 also shared that he feels the biggest problem he has faced this school year as a first-
year teacher is not having any help in the school. His administrators, mentor, and
instructional coach would all say they were going to help him, but he does not believe
that any of them supported his growth. He contributes this as the main reason he did not
successfully pass Induction.

**Participant H-5.** H-5 shared his love of the arts. He noted that

Art was my passion, but it was never my passion to share my love for art with
children. I make art. I can’t teach it. I had two favorite classes in high school: Art
and Social Studies. After struggling as an artist, because you know being an artist
doesn’t pay very well, I decided to go back to school to pursue a career teaching
my second love, history.

H-5, originally from Massachusetts, never thought his quest for a career in art would lead
him into the teaching profession teaching history to high school juniors and seniors. After
attending the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth and receiving a bachelor degree
in fine arts with a concentration in illustration, H-5 moved to the South and attended
Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina to receive a Masters in the Arts of
Teaching in Secondary Social Studies. H-5, an eccentric artistic teacher, works hard to
incorporate his love for art into his social studies classroom. His unconventional
approach to teaching has become very popular with his students. The dynamics in his
classroom are energizing. In his own words,
For some reason, the kids really dig me. I share with them my life outside the classroom. My love for art and how I use it to help them make connections to history, our world, and how it evolves. For example, when creating a handout for my students pertaining to a particular content standard we are learning, I demonstrate my thinking through drawings and illustrations of my very own in which I include on their handouts and encourage them to construct illustrations of their own. This is the key to getting my students to make connections between their thoughts and what we are learning at any particular time.

H-5 contributes much of his success as a first-year teacher to his studies at Converse College. When asked how prepared he felt to meet the academic needs of his students and to share his biggest frustrations as a first-year teacher, he sites what he calls “simple” things such as trying to figure out how to run the copier or where to go and who to ask for different things. He specifically shared:

Stuff like lesson planning and pacing and all that, I feel Converse actually did a good job of preparing for that. All the weird paperwork you have to do as a teacher, Converse prepared me for that, because they made me do all that. Long-range plans, I did all that in college, that’s easy.

H-5’s biggest obstacle was adapting lessons and learning activities to the varying learning needs and ability levels of his students. He stated,

First semester, I lucked out, I had all the honors kids and they were a lot higher level than I’m used to, so I had to adjust to that. But then I had a Tech Prep class too, so I had to adjust to that and really figure out the difference between the two,
because although it’s the same class, it’s not the same class. They are two different levels. I had to figure that out. I have to do a lot of planning. It already takes a while to plan out a semester and figure out all the lesson plans and all that, but what was really challenging for me was planning for the different ability levels of my students. I did not have a lot of practice with this at Converse.

H-5 has a great relationship with his students. He rarely has to write discipline referrals. His students, honors and tech prep, work hard for him. He sees himself as a facilitator of learning who spends time planning upfront to create high-energy activities where students are engaged in group work collectively working to meet the high expectations of their teacher.

**Participant H-6.** H-6, a recent 2015 graduate of Furman University and a first-year Induction teacher, is the choral director at Floren District 46 High School. With a program of 63 students in grades nine thru twelve, H-6 encountered a culture shock when she began teaching at the high school. Unlike her student teaching experience, H-6’s profound love for music and the arts was welcomed and accepted by the students at Eastside High School where she completed her student teaching experience:

> It sort of opened my eyes. Eastside was rather privileged and they had a booster club, five established classes, one of which was AP. They had 4 different choirs and the beginning freshmen were recruited from feeder middle schools…. My student teaching experience did not prepare me for what I am experiencing now. It did help me with shaping the way that I can do lesson plans, various ways that I can teach in a classroom, and working with that kind of student. It was very much
an ideal situation. And I feel like when I got out of here (referring to Floren High), what I got out of Eastside then I came here, this was actually much more reflective of what I had experienced in my own high school.

Growing up in a very country and southern town full of confederate flags, although her family moved rather frequently, Hickory, North Carolina is the place H-6 calls home. With a very strong presence and seemingly firm disposition, H-6 attributes her success in life to having a very supportive family who encouraged strong study habits and work ethic. Her decision to become a classroom teacher was primarily inspired by her desire to be able to help others learn. This, coupled with her passion for music which stems from her high school experience, is what peaked her interest in studying chorus and general music at Furman University.

Battling a bout of depression, nervousness, and having experienced struggles with classroom management, as a first-year teacher, H-6 had a seemingly difficult school year. Beyond day-to-day teaching occurrences, H-6 struggled with staying afloat of logistical planning for choral performances and events. Having an assistant principal who also was an arts performance teacher was very helpful. H-6 relied heavily on Mr. Moore, assistant principal, to help her with planning and logistical matters pertaining to Chorus. Classroom management was also a struggle for H-6:

Although my experiences at Floren District High School remind me of my own experiences in high school in Hickory, North Carolina, it differed with behaviors of students. It was just different. It was a little bit easier to handle in terms of teaching them cause this was a very good program coming in to it, if it had been a
bad program, I think it would have been easier to sort of start the program off in my own way. But seeing as I came in on sort of the coat tails of another, it was a little bit more difficult getting the kids to work with me just on my discipline level, not so much the academic. The academic I was prepared for, luckily Furman was very vigorous when it came to that. But it’s just the classroom management and the discipline side that was sort of lacking. At the beginning of the year, I felt academically very prepared, classroom management – none whatsoever. They (students) were terrified of what I could do, I was terrified of what they could do.

**Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures**

In an effort to capture the lived experiences of the participants in this study and to analyze the various components of a bounded case study analysis system of 14 cases, the following methods will be used to gather data for this study: (a) interviews and (b) observations, and (c) document analysis (Merriam, 2009 & Creswell, 2013). Unlike experimental, survey, or historical research, case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. In fact, all methods for gathering data can be used in a case study (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative research, data collection and analysis typically occur simultaneously because data analysis does not necessarily occur at a specific time (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The data collection and analysis process for this study was gleamed from Creswell’s (2013) techniques of case study analysis.
Interviews

The primary source of data of this research study is the semi-structured interview. Turner (2010) argues using semi-structured interviewing techniques allows the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up questions based on the responses to the pre-constructed questions a participant provides. As the researcher, I recorded and transcribed all interviews. Interviews were transcribed using an extensive process of coding data sources for the purpose of developing and creating codes and themes that emerged in the data. Data sources were coded for the interviews conducted with the chosen participants for this study. Merriam (2009) asserts interviewing is a common means of collecting qualitative data.

As the researcher, I conducted a semi-structured interview with each of the 13 Induction teachers and the Induction program director at the end of their Induction year. These interviews lasted roughly 30 minutes. I conducted the interviews at a time and place the participants deemed most convenient and conducive, their individual classrooms. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. I also took notes during the interviews. Each participant was asked the same set of questions; however, their responses to these questions determined the type and number of additional follow up and probing questions I would ask. Patton (1990) argues the purpose of interviewing participants is to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe such as feelings, thoughts, and even intentions and behaviors. He specifically states, “We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attached to what is going on in the world (p. 196).” Therefore, we ask questions which allow us to enter into
the other person’s perspective. Merriam (2009) further asserts interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them.

**Observations**

Observations are also a primary source of data in qualitative research and can be distinguished from interviews in the following two ways: (a) observations take place in the natural field setting and not in locations designated for an interview, and (b) observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview (Merriam, 2009). Merriam further asserts, “Being alive renders us natural observers of our everyday world and our behavior in it. What we learn helps us make sense of our world and guides our future actions (p. 94). Observation is a research tool when it (a) serves a formulated research purpose, (b) is planned deliberately, (c) is recorded systematically, and (d) is subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability (Kidder, 1981).

When conducting qualitative research, the following should be observed: (a) the physical setting, (b) the participants, (c) activities and interactions, (d) conversations, (e) subtle factors such as informal and unplanned activities, nonverbal communication, and physical space, and (f) the researcher’s own behavior and how it is affecting the observed environment (Merriam, 2009). For the purpose of this study, observation data was collected at both the informational session as well as in each participant’s classroom, naturalistic setting. Observation data was collected from individual observations of teachers using anecdotal field notes. These field notes were recorded in as much detail as
possible to form a database for analysis. These field notes were very rich in description and included direct quotations from the participants during the observations and many observer comments (Merriam, 2009). Observation is a major means of collecting data in qualitative research because it offers a firsthand account of the situation under study, and when combined with interviewing and document analysis, it allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated (Merriam, 2009).

**Document Analysis**

In addition to the data gathered from the interview process, documents were also evaluated and examined for the purpose of conducting this study. Creswell (2013) asserts documents are viable sources of information that include rich text data. Merriam (2009) argues interviewing and observing are two data collection strategies designed to gather data that specifically address the research question. Documents, however, are usually produced for reasons other than the research at hand, and therefore are not subject to the same limitations considering they do not intrude upon or alter the setting in ways that the presence of an investigator often does. Documents are ready-made sources of data easily accessible to the researcher (Merriam, 2009).

Lesson plans, long-range plans, classroom management plans, classroom observation records, teacher reflections on instruction and student learning, evaluation findings both midyear and final, Induction program survey results, and researcher observation field notes were the primary document sources I used to conduct this study. Document analysis was used to evaluate the use of these chosen documents. Document analysis involves skimming, thoroughly reading, and critically evaluating through
interpretation what one has read. Merriam (2009) argues in fieldwork, the data collection and analysis process is driven by research questions, educated hunches, and emerging findings. The first step in the document analysis is to find relevant materials. The second step is to assess the authenticity of the documents. The third step is to adopt a system for coding and cataloging the documents. In documents analysis, the researcher has to create a system to code and categorize the documents. The fourth step of document analysis is to know when saturation is reached (Merriam, 2009).

According to Bowen (2008) saturation is reached when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added. In addition, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue theoretical saturation, in effect, is the point at which no new insights are obtained, no new themes are identified, and no issues arise regarding a category of data. Complete saturation is rarely attained; however, when additional data and further analysis failed to uncover any new thematic idea in relation to the emerging theory, the researcher should stop sampling and end the coding process.

All files used for document analysis and audio transcription were all secured using an electronic database and secure filing folders throughout the process of conducting research. As the researcher, I skimmed a vast number of documents provided to me by the participants in the study. Once I identified the relevant documents, I thoroughly read them for the purpose of authenticating, interpreting, evaluating, and coding in an effort to make sense of the data. The documents were then organized and categorized into themes. As the researcher, I stopped collecting data when I reached a point of data saturation.
Managing the Data

All files, including pertinent documents and audio transcriptions were collected, secured, and analyzed using an electronic database throughout the process of conducting research called Dropbox. Dropbox was used securely to store files, recordings, and the development of codes and themes. Google Docs, an application of Google, was also used to store data. These programs not only managed the data, they also assisted with the organization of the data. I uploaded all recordings and transcriptions to Dropbox to begin the analysis process. The interviews were transcribed and coded using a research-based thematic coding process. I then used oversized post-it chart paper with research question headings to post and paste, categorize, and cluster findings. Once I grouped findings into categories, I then organized these findings into themes. I used both Dropbox and Google docs to make sure no data was lost through the process of coding the themes. I also used a paper/pencil concept with multiple color highlighters to label and identify themes. These documents were kept in a secure filing cabinet. Once all interviews were completed and findings were rendered, all data was destroyed.

Researcher Bias

Researcher bias can greatly influence the outcome of a study. In an effort to eliminate and minimize bias that would affect the outcome of this study, this section will share the positionality and subjectivity and vulnerable participant populations.

Positionality and Subjectivity

Subjectivity and researcher positionality are universal methodical (methodological) problems that are often times known as the researcher’s personal “I’s.”
Peshkin (1988) indicates a need for researchers to be aware of their subjectivity prior to collecting data instead of an afterthought through a seemingly meaningless statement identifying that subjectivity is present within a study. He further asserts researchers need to be aware of their subjectivities, because “when their subjectivity remains unconscious, they insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stakes” (p. 17).

My philosophies and perceptions are biases and are heavily influenced by my own professional experiences and personal anecdotes including prejudices and preferences pertaining to the research topic. Levering (2006) argues “Subjectivity can be defined as granting personal meaning, acknowledging that each human individual has his own outlook on reality. The individual perspective goes with the prejudices and preferences we have gained in our individual, personal history” (p. 255). It was important that I was aware of my subjectivity and positionality. It was also essential I did not allow these to influence the implementation of the study. It was also equally vital I set aside any prejudices, assumptions, and preconceived notions that could hamper the authenticity or validity of the study by remaining open, and allowing participants to freely participate in this study to ensure a quality research study. Peshkin (1988) asserts the researcher cannot remove his subjectivity, yet the researcher needs to remain aware of it throughout the study.

**Vulnerable Participant Populations**

Considering my passion for teaching and learning and holding employment in the school district included in this study, I have formed prejudices, assumptions, and preconceived notions. Specifically because of my professional relationships with some
of the study participants, their participation in this study makes them susceptible to vulnerability. Liamputtong (2007) provides guidance on how to go about performing sensitive research with vulnerable people. Liamputtong brings together numerous salient points for the conduct of research among vulnerable groups of people. He argues researchers need to consider the following strategies to protect the research participants from harm arising out of their participation in the research: (a) a safe approach to contacting participants and obtaining informed consent, (b) the location for conducting the interviews to reduce participant anxiety and fear, (c) debriefing with participants to alleviate emotional distress, and (d) providing other support services to include counseling if needed due to stigma or discrimination because taking part in sensitive research may create a stressful situation for the researched especially when a private part of their lives is made publicly known (Liamputtong, 2007).

Liamputtong further argues trust must be developed with the participants and is essentially required throughout the research process. He also touts participants are to be clearly informed of their rights to withdraw from the research at any time and should informed they have rights to check how they are represented in the study’s findings. Furthermore, I used a process of triangulation to confirm the emerging findings of this study, and this process strengthened the trustworthiness and validity of the study thus eliminating researcher positionality.

**Trustworthiness and Validity**

It is important to conduct a study with credible information. This study is designed to follow detailed trustworthiness guidelines, validity and reliability.
Trustworthiness

All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Doing so involves a process of conducting the investigation in an ethical manner. Although many critics are reluctant to accept the trustworthiness of qualitative research, frameworks for ensuring rigor in this form of work have been in existence for many years (Shenton, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) outline 4 questions which should be used to evaluate the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study: (a) “Truth value” How can one establish confidence in the truth of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out, (b) “Applicability” How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents), (c) “Consistency” How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects in the same (or similar) context, and (d) “Neutrality” How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer?

The bigger overarching question Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue is how can an inquirer persuade his audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of and what arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked, that would be persuasive on this issue? Trustworthiness involves establishing if findings are credible (confidence in the truth of
the findings), transferable (showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts), dependable (showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated), and confirmable (a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the respondents and not researcher bias, motivation, or interest).

Validity and Reliability. Merriam (2009) argues validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented (p. 199). Merriam (2009) further stresses a researcher can use strategies to enhance validity and reliability of a study: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation, (d) rich, thick description, and (e) researcher’s biases. To ensure trustworthiness and validity in this research study, the above strategies were incorporated and utilized. I conducted a seamless triangulation process that aided in the development of codes, patterns, and thematic categories to develop the themes for this study (Merriam, 2009).

Summary

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) argue qualitative research produces not findings arrived by statistical procedures. It is merely research about a person’s lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, and cultural phenomena. The multi-case study design has been used to capture the lived experiences of the participants in this study. The following data collection techniques of qualitative research were used as primary sources to conduct a triangulated study: (a) interviews, (b) observations, and (c) document analysis. Using the
phenomenological principle of lived experiences, this study used the multi-case study methodology to illuminate and cultivate the lived experiences of the study’s participants, thus providing their lived experiences a voice in educational research. Using the following three research questions as a basis of examination, the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and further needed support to meet the academic needs of the students they are now teaching were explored:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

Included in this chapter is a methodological review of the multiple characteristics of qualitative research, an extensive discussion of the case study design, particularly the multi-case study approach, a rich description of the research setting and context of the study, the triangulation process used to select participants for the study and profiles of the participants, a detailed process of collecting and analyzing data findings, a description of the researcher’s positionality and subjectivity, and a discussion of ways in which trustworthiness and validity were implored. The findings of the study will not only give its participants’ lived experiences a voice in educational research; it will also aid school
leaders in providing Induction teachers with relevant professional development and applicable ongoing support needed during the first year of teaching.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter 4 presented the analysis of data for this qualitative research study based on the experiences of the participants being studied. This multi-case study design used triangulated data from the lived experiences of 13 teacher participants. The findings gave voice to the experiences of the Induction teachers during their first year of teaching. Utilizing three research questions as a basis of examination, Chapter 4 explored the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and support needs beyond the Induction year. As such, the information presented in this chapter represents the data analysis and findings to address the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

This chapter detailed the results of in-depth interviews of the 13 first-year teachers from four school sites and one director of the Induction program for the district. Interviews,
observations, and analysis of documents were used to further explore, illuminate, and
cultivate the lived experiences of the participants. These multi-case studies were
organized using the research questions and focus on 12 major themes which emerged
from the research. Although the questions were listed in a chronological order and all
questions were answered, the researcher skipped around some to allow the participant
responses to prompt the next questions asked. Within this particular population of
participants, 4 were early childhood/elementary teachers, 3 were middle school teachers,
and 6 were high school teachers. Two of the elementary teachers were Montessori
primary and lower elementary teachers. Four were teachers of Related Arts teaching
courses to both middle and high school students in the areas of health science, chorus,
physical education, and orchestra/strings. Three were social studies teachers and the
remaining two participants were English Language Arts and science teachers. The
district's Induction leader/director was also a participant in the interview, observation,
and document analysis process.

Each interview began assuring the participant his responses would remain
confidential and his identity would be protected. Some of the interviewees appeared shy,
nervous, or afraid when answering the questions. However, this could have been their
natural personalities. All interviews took place in each participant’s naturalistic setting,
their individual classrooms. Each participant had the opportunity to select the day and
time of the interview. The interviews were recorded using a Sony IC Recording Device
after seeking permission from each participant and stored using a secure online data
collection system. I, not only recorded the interviews, but also took anecdotal field notes during each interview to aid in coding the transcripts at a later date.

During the month of May 2016, the interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks occurring during the participant’s planning periods throughout the school day. After conducting and recording the 13 interviews, I transcribed the data and coded the findings using the transcripts from the interviews. Using a color-coding system, I used the interview questions to set up categories first and then collapse the categories into themes. I also used the participant’s responses as category guides for coding and color-coded responses as they each connected to one of the three research questions. I lastly gathered similar quotes into loose categories with a list of suggested themes at the end. I used a more open-ended coding method where the participant’s words dictated or suggested possible ways to code them and grouped sentences and phrases together when they seemed to be saying similar things or conveying similar messages. Some sentences and/or phrases were double coded because they fell into more than one category. I used very open-ended questions letting the interviewees share whatever thoughts they had related to the open questions.

I then analyzed data to look for comparisons among the responses from the participants. After using the above coding process, patterns were highlighted among the responses to form an analysis of the results. I conducted a seamless triangulation process that will aid in the development of codes, patterns, and thematic categories to develop themes for the counterstories (Creswell, 2013 & Merriam, 1998).
Descriptive Data

The participants in this multi-case study were Induction teachers from Floren School District 46. After conducting a focus group for the purpose of participant selection, a total of 13 teachers from elementary, middle, and high school were selected. Additionally, verification of each participant was viewed personally and using the state’s certification database to ensure they each met the requirements outlined by the state for Induction teachers.

The 13 Induction teacher participants in the study were predominately White, middle class, and mainly from different regions of South Carolina with a few outliers (Table 4.1). There were 12 White teachers and one Hispanic. All the participants were born and reared in the United States with ten from South Carolina and one each from Illinois, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. Five of the 10 South Carolinians were from the Upstate, three from the Midlands, and two from the Northeast. There were a combination of 4 males and 9 females. A pseudonym was given for each participant with the letter to represent the school level and a number to represent the number of participants at that level.
Table 4.1. *Multi-case Participants Cultural Background*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Home Environment (*)</th>
<th>Childhood Region (**)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Liberty, SC Upstate</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Clinton, SC Upstate</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>Pawleys Island, SC Northeast</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Laurens, SC Upstate</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Laurens, SC Upstate</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Kershaw, SC Midlands</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>Lexington, SC Midlands</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>Little Mountain, SC Midlands</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Greenville, SC Upstate</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>Myrtle Beach, SC Northeast</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Working Class</td>
<td>Hickory, NC</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Based on socio-economic class
(**) Childhood region

The 13 Induction teacher participants in the study attended a higher education institution in South Carolina either for their bachelor’s or master’s degree (Table 4.2). Eleven of the 13 received their bachelor’s degree from a university in South Carolina. Six of the participants have a master’s degree. Six failed Induction I; of which, two left the district and four are enrolled in Induction II within the same district. All were highly qualified to teach the subject they were assigned to teach.
Table 4.2. *Multi-case Participants Higher Education & Induction Results*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>College/University</th>
<th>Degrees</th>
<th>Induction Results</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Lander</td>
<td>BA in Early Childhood</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Induction II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Erskine</td>
<td>BA in Elementary</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Coastal Carolina</td>
<td>BA in Early Childhood</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Induction II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>USC Upstate</td>
<td>BA in Early Childhood</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Induction II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Lander</td>
<td>BA in History</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Induction II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Lander</td>
<td>BA in Physical Education</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Monmouth College Converse College</td>
<td>MEd in Middle Level SS</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Left district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Presbyterian College Winthrop University</td>
<td>BA in Music MAT in Music Education</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>University of SC University of SC</td>
<td>BA in Athletic Training MAT in Physical Education</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Clemson Clemson</td>
<td>BA in Animal Science MAT in Biology</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Coastal Carolina Coastal Carolina</td>
<td>BA in History MAT in History</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>Left district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts Converse</td>
<td>BA in Illustration MAT in History</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Furman</td>
<td>BA in Music Education</td>
<td>Passed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 13 participants in the study represented in Table 4.3 were a combination of elementary, middle and high schools. All participants participated in the Induction program for first-year teachers. There were 4 teachers at elementary, 3 at middle, and 6 at high schools. The subjects taught were from 13 different areas.
Table 4.3. *Multi-case Participants School Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Participated in Induction</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4K &amp; 5K Montessori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Montessori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Reading 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Health Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Biology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Government/Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Chorus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Floren County School District 46 is a rural county located in the Piedmont Region of South Carolina serving a student population of 6,100 pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is one of seven counties nestled in the Upper Savannah Region of the State; the district is the home to over 66,229 residents, in addition to thriving businesses and attractions. There are 9 schools including one comprehensive high school, two middle schools, four elementary schools, and two preschool through eighth grade schools. The ethnic composition for student enrollment is 56.6% White, 29.9% African American, 10% Hispanic, and 3.5% other races. Floren County School District 46 employs approximately 840 professional and support staff.

Table 4.2 represented the multi-case for 13 teachers who were provided Induction mentor support and training. Across the district, instructional coaches and
veteran teachers trained as Induction mentors serve as mentors for the Induction teachers in their buildings. There is also a district Induction leader, a retired principal, who meets with Induction teachers monthly to provide support and assistance.

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data analysis began when the data collection process had reached a point of data saturation (Simon, 2011). While the data collection process was structured to gain information from participants based on a defined set of questions, probing questions were asked to ensure the participants’ voices were understood (Yin, 2003). In analyzing the data, multi-case studies were tested, utilizing a method of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the view of participants (Creswell, 2012). Data were collected and analyzed to present the findings using three approaches to triangulate the data: interviews, observations, and document analysis. The three forms of data were organized, analyzed, and examined to extract themes.

Specific to case study analysis, Merriam (2009) maintained there is no particular method for data collection and data analysis. However, she does suggest using step-by-step processes for data collection and analysis if the researcher prefers to use them as a guide. Due to the ease of understanding, I chose to use a Step-by-Step Guide to Data Analysis by O’Connor and Gibson (2003). Table 4.4 represents the steps that were taken in this research study.
Table 4.4 *Step-by-Step Guide to Data Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Supporting Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>◊ Organizing the data</td>
<td>“Valid analysis is immensely aided by data displays that are focused enough to permit viewing of a full data set in one location and are systematically arranged to answer the research question at hand” (Huberman &amp; Miles, 1994, p. 432).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>◊ Finding and organizing ideas and concepts</td>
<td>“Identifying salient themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together is the most intellectually challenging phase of the analysis and one that can integrate the entire endeavor” (Marshall &amp; Rossman, 1995, p. 114).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>◊ Building overarching themes in the data of the final steps</td>
<td>Each of the responses can have one or more themes that enhance the meaning to the data of which you could potentially collapse under one main over-arching theme (Yin, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>◊ Finding possible and plausible explanations for findings</td>
<td>Create a summary of findings and themes (Merriam, 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Step 1, I gathered the data for greater readability and organization of the information. Data collection for this study consisted of the examination of documents, interviews, and observation of Induction teachers. In the collection and analysis of the data, major themes emerged that described the perceptions of and support to first-year Induction teachers. The interviews, observations, and documents/archival data were separated. Each research question was placed on an index card and glued to chart paper. First, I worked with the interviews. The transcribed interviews were color coded, cut apart, and placed on the chart paper according to the research question. Each component was labeled by pseudonym for ease of understanding.
Next, the field notes from the observations were placed in a format that allowed easy access to information. The formatted observations included the name of the Induction participant, the Induction mentor’s name, time, place, and purpose of the observation. The field notes were highly descriptive, so additional information was placed in a hold folder for the second step in the process. Furthermore, observations were also collected using a reflective component that captured the observer’s commentary (Merriam, 2009). The observable information was then placed according to research questions and repetitive words were highlighted and circled for potential themes.

Document analysis is used as the umbrella term for the number of visuals, digital, written notes, forms, and other physical materials relevant to the study (Merriam, 2009). Specifically, the documents were reviewed and placed temporarily in folders by research question. The documents were placed in temporary folders because the main reason for including document analysis in this study was to triangulate the data. Once the interviews were aligned, then the documents were used to support or dispute the information collected and analyzed.

In Step 2, I began to organize the interview, observation, and document data by sorting categories of data. Using codes, field notes, and initial data, some of the original categories become sub-categories (O’Connor & Gibson, 2003). Multiple revisions were made as I continued to sort and reorganize. An open coding approach was also used to generate categories of information from interviews, field notes, and documents (Yin, 2003). The recorded information was compiled and the raw data was displayed. The information was placed in data chunks based on the common themes. The data chunks
were arranged and rearranged to accurately display the raw data in matrix format. By displaying the raw data in matrix and tabular form, the data was easier for me to compare and locate themes to support preliminary conclusions as the research questions were answered. Each theme was color coded using a different color highlighter and/or circled using colored pencils and markers. Each unit of data had identifying codes by the pseudonym, grade level, gender, geographic location, and subject or grade taught.

In Step 3, I began to examine the data in order to build over-arching themes. It was in this step that the names of the categories began to emerge. For example, one of the themes that emerged when the categories were organized was preparedness. While preparedness had some characteristics of relationship, there were enough instances to create a separate category.

The fourth step in the analysis of data was pulling the categories together and examining plausible explanations of the findings. The data was compared to determine similarities in responses and to locate new information that provided emerging categories. One area that was closely examined was Induction teachers who passed Induction I. There was no direct correlation to the grade levels they taught or how they rated on the Induction survey. In fact, six out of 13 Induction teachers failed Induction I; and 3 of the 6 were elementary teachers.

**Theoretical Framework**

As defined within the literature, culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings,
CRP represents and validates the cultures of all students, and rests on three main tenets/propositions: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Over 25 years ago Ladson-Billings coined the term CRP after conducting a study of 8 successful teachers of African American students in inner city schools. Ladson-Billings explains how these teachers thought they were just working (teaching), but from what she observed they experienced great success with using instructional practices which aided students of color in (a) experiencing academic success, (b) developing cultural competence, and (c) imploring a socio-political consciousness while participating in successful learning experiences.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is the lens used to conduct this research study. It was used as a premise to explore, examine, and analyze the data collected. Of the 12 themes identified within this work, 8 of the themes, as defined in this chapter, have direct correlations to CRP: Classroom management, collaboration, culture shock, diversity, expectations, instructional knowledge, preconceptions and bias, and relationships.

**The Iterative Process**

Data were collected and analyzed to present the findings using three approaches to triangulate the data: interviews, observations, and document analysis. The three forms of data were organized, analyzed, and examined to extract themes. From the interviews, observations, and document analysis, 12 themes emerged.

During the first iteration, codes emerged from the data via a process of reading and thinking about the text material. Word repetition and transitions were most often
used during the coding process for identifying themes. The word repetition technique identified words that were repeated multiple times. Transitions provided an opportunity to look for naturally occurring shifts in thematic content that varied from the interviews to the observations and document analysis.

Initially, as it pertains to the participants’ perceptions of their readiness during their first year teaching, their experiences during their teacher preparation programs, and the continued support needed beyond the Induction year, there were 29 categories identified while analyzing the data during the first iteration. Using the 3 research questions as a premise for examination, I listed the 29 categories and clustered them by research question and the participants’ perceptions of readiness, perceptions of pre-service education programs, and perceptions of support needed from school leaders: 16 were associated with research question one and the participants’ perceptions of readiness, 8 were associated with research question 2 and the participants’ perceptions of pre-service education programs, and 5 were associated with question 3 and the participants’ perceptions of support needed from school leaders. As I reviewed the data, I collected anecdotal notes in the margins, which I also later quantified, categorized, and collapsed into common themes. I then created names for each theme using my analysis of data. During the second iteration, 15 themes emerged from the data. From those 15 themes, three were moved to sub-themes. The two themes, cultural differences and behavioral expectations, were moved to sub-themes and placed under culture shock. Academic preparation was also an initial theme, but was placed under instructional knowledge as an overarching theme. At the conclusion of the iterative process, 12 themes remained. This
process, including all 29 themes and 12 final themes, is displayed below in Table 4.5
Code Mapping: 3 Iterations of Analysis.

Table 4.5, Code Mapping: 3 Iterations of Analysis, presents data with the larger, consolidated picture that emerged from the “process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, p. 32). Through the voices of the interviewees, Table 4.5 highlights the perceptions of the participants’ readiness, pre-service education programs, and support needed from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the students in which they taught during their first year of teaching. During the first iteration, the responses were compared within and between 3 initial category clusters. Table 4.5 represents the initial 29 themes identified while analyzing the 3 data sources during the first iteration. These 29 themes were then taken and re-examined to determine additional ways to cluster into fewer categories.
Table 4.5 *First Iteration of Analysis: Coding Map*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clusters</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1: 16 Initial Codes</td>
<td>Lacks management; Management/uncertainty (teaching routines – not sure how to teach them); Cultural Differences; Apprehensive/Nervous; Feeling and treated like an outsider; Unclear Expectations – not knowing where to start – having to figure it out on their own; Behavior Expectations; Varying Ideas of Poverty and Opportunity Gaps; Open Mindset; Own personal experiences – I too know what it’s like to struggle; Reflective Thinkers – better prepared for the next year; Confidence in Ability; Mentorship – seeking help outside of school; Creating a kid friendly environment/making them comfortable/humor – ensuring not to be seen as a friend/Going the extra mile/Making a point to show Care; Talking/Discussion/Listening; The need to build relationships with students before teaching them (academic needs) – do you know enough about me to teach me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2: 8 Initial Codes</td>
<td>Pedagogy/Methods Related Courses; Academic Preparation; Concepts of Culture and their Effects on Classrooms; Classroom Management; Lack of variety in student teaching assignment; Varying Age and Ability Groups; Sense of Community through Communication; Support/Dependency upon the Experiences (stories) of Others/Mentorship; Pulling from one’s own experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3: 5 Initial Codes</td>
<td>The Need for an Instructional Toolbox; Strategies to Enhance Learning Environment; The Need for Constructive Feedback; Ongoing Support from Administration; The Need for Collaboration Amongst Peers (Alike Cohorts of and Veteran Teachers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second iteration in Table 4.6 were clustered into 3 components pertaining to the participants’ perceptions of readiness, perceptions of pre-service education programs, and perceptions of support needed from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the students in which the participants taught. Once these 3 components were established during the second iteration, the 16 themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of readiness were re-examined and clustered into 8 themes. The 8 themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of pre-service education programs were re-examined and clustered into 4 themes. The 3 themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of support needed from school leaders were re-examined and remained three themes.

**Table 4.6 Second Iteration of Analysis: From Codes to Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Clusters</strong></th>
<th><strong>Themes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1: Perceptions of Readiness (8)</td>
<td>Classroom Management; Culture Shock; Cultural Differences; Behavior Expectations; Learning Expectations; Preconceptions and Biases; Preparedness; Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 2: Perceptions of Pre-service Education Programs (4)</td>
<td>Instructional Knowledge; Academic Preparation; Diversity; Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3: Support needed from School Leaders (3)</td>
<td>Professional Development; Ongoing Support; Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the third iteration, Table 4.7, 15 themes were re-examined and clustered into fewer a like categories: 6 pertaining to participants’ perceptions of readiness, 3 pertaining to participants’ perceptions of pre-service education programs, and 3 pertaining to participants’ perceptions of the support needed from school leaders to meet the academic
Table 4.7 *Third Iteration of Analysis: Final Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Readiness (6)</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Culture Shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preconceptions and Biases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Pre-service Education Programs (3)</td>
<td>Instructional Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Support needed from School Leaders (3)</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion of Findings**

In an effort to conduct a seamless triangulated study of 13 multi-case studies, an in depth analysis of interviews, observations, and relevant documents was conducted to record the findings. Fourteen interviews were conducted with 13 Induction teachers from Floren School District 46 and one Induction director using the Interview Protocol Appendix 1 and 2. There were three to four sub-questions that were clustered and connected to the three research questions. The discussion of findings was categorized and clustered using the 3 research questions posed in this study. The 12 themes that emerged from the data are associated with the three research questions and are included in the discussion of the findings.
In order to hear the voices of the Induction participants as they perceived their readiness, four sub-questions were asked. The questions were designed to capture the first year in its totality. The Induction teachers were asked questions that ranged from the first days of school to the last month of school to gain their perceptions. The majority of the teachers spoke of the initial culture shock, the need to improve upon classroom management, build relationships with students, and set high expectations for learning. All themes emerged from the observations, interviews, and documents analyzed regarding the Induction teachers perceptions of their readiness to meet the academic needs of the students in which they teach.

**Perceptions of Readiness**

In education, each school year there is usually a significant number of new teachers (Sleeter, 2010). According to the reported literature in this study, there is a gap in scholarly literature that specifically addresses how, from first-year teachers’ perspectives, teacher preparation programs and school district Induction programs have prepared them to be culturally relevant and responsive. Through the voices of the participants within this study, the Induction teachers’ perceptions of their readiness were explored, examined, and analyzed from multiple aspects. The themes that emerged from their perceptions of their readiness were (a) classroom management, (b) culture shock, (c) expectations, (d) preconceptions and biases, (e) preparedness, and (f) relationships. These themes emerged from the interview narratives, observations, and documents analyzed regarding the Induction teachers’ experiences as they started their first teaching experiences.
Classroom Management. School systems throughout the United States are looking at discipline practices and the circumstances surrounding the causes (Billitteri, 2008). New teachers are especially finding it difficult to manage their classrooms. Having a sound working knowledge of research associated with classroom management can maximize the learning of a district’s diverse students (Wilmore, 2008). Many of the participants see classroom management not as their responsibility, but that of the school leader. Classroom management was a challenging area for 11 of the 13 participants in this study. All 11 of these participants were of White descent. Sleeter (2010) discussed how many pre-service education programs add coursework in multicultural education, teaching the urban child, or some variation of each. He further asserted that a good deal of research examines student learning in these courses from various angles, focusing mainly on how or whether they change how predominantly White pre-service students think. Considering a pre-service teacher’s background, subjectivity, and positionality shapes and informs his philosophy of teaching, classroom management is often times an issue because of the aforementioned disconnect.

Across the board, the Induction teachers in this study struggled with managing the inappropriate behaviors of their students. According to a five-year longitudinal study conducted by Desimone, et al (2013) on pre-service training for first-year teachers on their preparation program, the novice teachers thought their training had done an inadequate job preparing them to manage behaviors with students in diverse populations. These teachers often struggled with classroom management, but cited their pre-service training lacking in cultural diversity as a reason for their failure to properly manage their
classes. Throughout the interviewing process, the teachers spoke of management and the uncertainty in how to teach routines and procedures to “unruly” children in diverse populations.

Participants E-3, E-4, M-1, M-2, H-2, H-4, and H-6 shared how the inappropriate behaviors of their students prohibited them from teaching so that their students could learn core competencies. Participant M-2 said, “I just don’t know how to teach them. They come into the classroom talking and they leave out talking. They are often times loud and extremely disruptive. Participants E-3 echoed these sentiments. “My students cannot work in groups. I am told to do more with small groups, but the students will not stop talking.”

Levels of student misbehaviors were observed at the elementary, middle and high school levels. In an observation at the elementary school with Participant E-3, it was clear she lacked classroom management skills. While she conducted a guided reading group mini lesson with a preselected higher group of students based on reading levels, the other students (lower ability levels) were at learning stations. Although the assignment was posted on the board, they were not told what to do so many were off task hitting and kicking one another.

A similar situation happened at the middle school. While teaching a whole group lesson on the causes and effect of worldwide depression that took place in the 1930s including the economic crash of 1929, Participant M-1 divided students into two groups to facilitate a discussion using the AVID philosophical chairs learning strategy. Before placing students in their groups, he gave students clear expectations and instructions on
how to complete the activity. When the students began arguing and over talking one another, M-1 hesitated for minutes as if he were scared or did not know how to regain control of the class. M-1 asked the students to calm down several times before an African American male student got the class under control. Documented reports from the Induction mentor confirmed that M-1 was extremely uncomfortable during an observation when he provided instruction about an assignment and the students almost immediately began to debate and share their responses out loud for all to hear.

Participant H-4 was observed monitoring students working independently to label regions on a blank map in his high school geography class. A few students began to get off task when they started a conversation with the teacher about his weekend. He told students he had returned to Myrtle Beach where he lived prior to coming to work at their school. The students started asking the teacher about his weekend experience at the beach as neither of the two boys had ever been to the beach. The teacher used this as an opportunity to build a closer relationship with the boys and expose them, through his own experiences, to a place they had never been. The conversation lasted the entire class period. Participant H-4 felt good about this opportunity to build a rapport with these students, until one student told him, “They always find a way to get out of work.”

Participant H-4 was complimentary of his undergraduate academic training; however, he was not so complimentary of his academic training. He said,

It was much easier to relate to and a little bit harder to sort of handle when it came to discipline, that kind of thing. So it was a little bit easier to handle in terms of teaching them cause this was a very good program coming in to it, if it had been a
bad program, I think it would have been easier to sort of start the program off in my own way, but seeing as I came in on sort of the coat tails of another, it was a little bit more difficult getting the kids to work with me just on my discipline level, not so much the academic. The academic I was prepared for, luckily Coastal Carolina was very vigorous when it came to that. But it’s just the classroom management and the discipline side that was sort of lacking.

Eleven of the 13 Induction participants had classroom management plans. Their classroom management plans were examined during the document analysis process. Participants E-3, E-4, and M-1 were asked by their school administration to create a new management plan because of the number of disruptions prohibiting them from teaching. Participant M-1 was asked to create a new management plan when he appeared to be afraid of the students. Participant M-1’s classroom management plan included revised behavioral expectations and clearly outlined the consequences students would receive if expectations were not met. His plan also included a list of redirecting strategies he was expected to use when students needed redirecting. Some of these strategies included pivoting, ignoring junk behaviors, using positive reinforcements to correct undesired behaviors, and strengthening relationships with students. The above plan was derived from BehaviorTools Training. BehaviorTools is a component of the Professional Crisis Management Association (PCMA). Its methods are consistent with state-of-the-art behavioral research and principles. All teachers in Floren School District 46 are required to undergo BehaviorTools training. This training, however, may not occur during the
Induction year. Participants H-2, H-4, and H-6 also shared their classroom management plans.

**Culture Shock.** Culture shock was how many of the participants described how they felt when they encountered some of the behaviors their students exhibited within their individual classrooms. When pre-service teachers transition into service many revert back to the experiences they had as learners (Kuhn, 2015). Many of the study’s participants come from suburban and more affluent environments. Some felt a sense of apprehension while working in a community that was different from the one in which they were raised.

An examination of the Induction teacher participants’ perceptions clearly describe their experiences with the students of color in which they currently teach. This examination revealed the teacher participants had never experienced such conditions prior to working at their assigned schools. The participants shared their views of education through behaviors they valued based on their personal life. Three stories will be shared about the cultural differences they experienced when they started teaching in Floren District 46.

Participant E-3 found it difficult to believe that her value was so different from the children she was assigned to teach. She is a first grade teacher. She said, “I don't know if it was a culture shock or lack of experience, but these children are so different. They would get their little attitudes with me and I had never had anybody say those things to me you know the things that they would say, adults or students.
So I mean I was just very shocked and I think I would get a little bit of an attitude back.”

Participant E-2 came to the district with some experience teaching in the private sector for 16 years as a pre-school teacher. She said,

> When I think about diversity, I really think about culture. Culture I guess is the way we live, where we live, and how we’re brought up. In my culture I guess you could say I was raised in a White, middle class family, we’re Christians, we go to church, and we work hard for what we want. You know we’re workers and so I think that’s a part of it. This was how I thought about the students I would be teaching. I thought they would have the same values that I hold…. But they weren’t. They were different.

Participant H-1 describes his initial reaction to coming to Floren School District 46,

> It was a big culture shock for me, coming from Lexington County, a place where everybody had money, and those who didn’t have much money were still given those opportunities and then you – and then I come here and when people say that they didn’t have money and I mean we’re talking kids that couldn’t even afford to pay $40 for an entire year to rent an instrument and I’ve never seen poverty that low.

Participant H-1 spoke of the rewards from working with children in poverty. Participant H-1 further stated, “It was a big culture shock, and I couldn’t believe it, but, and, but it was very eye opening and a very rewarding experience because a lot of times it’s those in poverty who tend to have the better attitudes.”
After a review of the participants’ long-range plans, it was revealed that some Induction teachers had a cultural disconnect with their students. With no formal training, recommendations were listed by school administrators for participants to include diversity strategies for the purpose of understanding how to teach children of diverse populations. Strategies included ways to talk to children in poverty, how and when to make physical contact, and the importance of parental communication. In some instances, participants participated in book studies at their schools pertaining to teaching children in poverty. This occurred at one of the four school sites described in this study.

Participant H-1 included the following summary in his long-range plan as it pertains to the specific population of students in which he teaches:

Owens Middle School is a Title I school. The economic prospect of my student’s home is largely poverty. Free and Reduced lunch programs indicate that 76% of my students are in poverty. My children of poverty react much differently from my middle-income background students. These students require more structure, time, patience and resources than do my other students. My student’s economic situation is grim. This socioeconomic factor is just one contributing facet that I view as a possible qualifier in test results. My students need support specifically in reading and writing.

**Expectations.** According to former Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, American students have stagnated, and in some cases regressed, while achievement gaps in the country remain large (Sloan, 2010). It appears from the participants in this study that the expectations for student success are linked to the expectations of support from the
school leaders for their success. Ladson-Billings argued the “trick” of culturally relevant teaching is to get students to “choose” academic excellence and therefore set high expectations for them.

According to critical race theory, nearly all schools claim to hold high expectations for all students, but in reality, what is professed is not always practiced (Gay, 2000). Participant E-2 had unclear expectations of what she needed to do when she started teaching. She felt lost when she had to figure it out on her own.

Observations made during this study show instruction that demonstrated high expectations as well as low expectations. During an observation with Participant H-1, he shared an experience with his class, “I attended a workshop for teachers this weekend. The speaker read a quote that I want to share with you, not because it is so profound, but because I believe it is necessary for my success and your growth and achievement. When teachers expect great things from their students, teachers’ moment-to-moment interactions with young people expand dramatically in both number and quality. When Participant H-1 was interviewed, some of the same expectations were noted.

I always had high expectations and when you meet the students at first, you have to sort of meet somewhere in the middle for expectations and then after they meet those expectations I rose my expectations to hold them accountable for higher abilities. So toward the end of this year they’ve been held accountable for higher abilities, being able to play music all the way through.

Participant H-1 sentiments were shared during an interview with Participant H-6.

Participant H-6 mentioned,
There were expectations from the previous years, and you know they had no idea what to expect when I came into the picture, cause it was a rapid turnaround and they didn’t realize I guess for some of ‘em that there’s gonna be a new teacher in August.

**Preconception and Biases.** Preconception is an opinion formed as a result of bias. Researchers believe teachers who care can eliminate the negative effects of children who are different from them (Nodding & Brooks). The participants in the study had varied levels of preconceptions regarding the students they served and the district. Certain comments showed strong evidence of bias as it relates to their personal values, as well as the culture shock experienced when they first met their students. The Induction participants showed some level of bias as it related to their perceptions and values.

A psychological study has discovered the way we think about others can bias our perception of their emotions (Nauert, 2016). Using this notion as a basis, the participants were asked what role they thought their own preconceptions and biases play in their readiness to teach their students. The responses varied.

Participant E-2 was quick to respond,

I just knew that their background would probably be a little bit different than some of the kids that I had student taught in the past (referring to her student teaching experience), just because of you know their family situations, the income that they have. Coming to a Title One school, I knew those would be factors, but all in all, kids are still the same; whether you have money or whether you don’t … they still wanna learn.
Participant H-6 has a slightly different response that related more to her upbringing. She said,

From my own experiences I was a little bit more awake to what was happening in the world around me. You know, we didn’t always grow up with opportunities and the same advantages. My dad worked in the Navy and so we were moving around a lot and there was a point where we were barely scraping the bottom of the barrel just to be able to get our rent paid on time. While I don’t think we were ever in poverty, never in full poverty, but in the same way I’ve experienced some of the same experiences that kids with lesser opportunities have had before, but not to the extent that they’ve had.

Like Participant E-2, Participant H-4 response was based on his upbringing even though they were different. Participant H-4 stated, “My completely honest blunt first impression of the student population was kind of what you would guess for the rural district. I came from the Myrtle Beach area, the students that I interned were mostly little higher socioeconomic status and when I got here, to put it bluntly, the first thing I thought of was these are poor old country people and it really takes some time to get used to.”

Participant H-3 also brought her personal bias out when asked,

I came from a charter school. I was one of those kids, those overachievers. And then I get here and I am given the lower level students this semester and they have no desire to be what I was and go to college the way that I did, so that was kind of the – a learning curve for me to learn what motivates them. I was motivated by
Participant M-3 shared how working with her students helped her to see things in a different way and from a different perspective. She shared, “It kind of surprised me the way some of the responses I would get sometimes. They taught me to think outside the box in a different way. I liked being in a diverse school.”

**Preparedness.** Blomeke, Hsieh, Kaiser, and Schmidt (2014) examined different preparedness as a necessary skill for teacher education programs. The majority of participants mentioned their lack of preparation to meet some of the most compelling demands of a 21st century public classroom. Although prepared for the academic component of teaching, some participants were not prepared for the diverse cultural backgrounds of their students. Opportunities to be more reflective in their thinking during their pre-service education programs could have helped the Induction teachers be better prepared for the diversity they encountered within their classrooms. Reflection invites preparedness. Participants in the study spoke of how they reflected on their teaching and actions in order to make decisions in preparation for teaching their students. In fact, many of the participants relied on the experiences of others to guide their reactions to problems that arose within their individual classrooms.

According to a review of literature, Howard (2003) argued, “Teacher educators must re-conceptualize the manner in which new teachers are prepared, and provide them with the skills and knowledge that will be best suited for effectively educating today’s diverse student population” (p. 195). The participants in this study all felt prepared to the
meet academic needs (content, content standards, lesson planning, and thorough command of subject matter) of the students they teach. All the participants had some level of anxiety. Participants M-3, H-2 and E-3 all felt a need to do more in order to be more prepared.

When discussing their level of preparedness to meet the academic needs of their students, the participants were quick to provide examples of how they met the needs of their students. Participant E-1 felt extremely prepared,

I had a good feeling about what was going on here, and it was more like I had to figure out my students and then try to figure out their academic needs, cause I had to know them before I could even start teaching them anything. I feel like their scores were good, I mean their data, they came in a lot of them really low and they’re leaving completely way beyond where I thought they were ever gonna end up. So I mean over all I feel like we had a really good year and I met those needs, you know?

Participant H-1 compared his experience at the beginning of the year to the change at the end of the year:

When I started in August, my first thought was to get to know these kids first, you know, I need to show that I care for them already without knowing them. So I would always greet them at the door with a handshake and make sure that they knew that they were welcome and that they were in a comfortable place. I was also making assessments as I greeted them. Over the next eight months, I was
pleased to see a major change. In a music setting, it’s easy to see how they have improved their ability to create good sounding music.

Preparedness, as prescribed and outlined by the district’s Induction program, differed from the perspectives of many of the participants in the study. In an effort to prepare and support Induction teachers during their first year of teaching, a document analysis was conducted to highlight the key components of the Floren School District 46 Induction I Program for novice teachers. Throughout the school year, the program was comprised of monthly sessions led by the Induction director. The monthly sessions appeared timely. In August, there were 3 full day sessions. The first 2 days focused on providing information specific to the district and preparing for the first week of school. The third day provided the participants an opportunity to learn about the technology available in the district as well as the instructional expectations. In September, the Induction participants were given an opportunity to discuss issues they may have encountered the first week of school and long-range planning. After the initial sessions with all the participants, the entire group did not get back together until April. The sessions from September 24 through March 24 were separated by levels. Middle and high school Induction teachers attended sessions on one day and the elementary teachers attended on another. The topics for those sessions were the same. The final session was “End of the Year Information and Celebration”.

**Relationships.** The participants saw the role of the teacher as responsible for building relationships conducive to learning. By developing positive relationships with their students, teachers can buffer factors that negatively impact student academic
achievement. Many participants saw this as an act of caring (Noddings & Brooks, 2017). One of the recurring themes in the literature emerged from culturally relevant pedagogy pertains to teacher-student relationships. Culturally relevant teaching involves students and teachers, collectively, learning together. Beckett (2011) asserted, “What is essential is not what students learn, should learn, or must unlearn, but what teachers and students learn together” (p. 75).

The review of literature revealed many reforms that showed failure among educators that support inadequate or unplanned time as a reason for not building meaningful relationships with their peers (Barth, 2006). Many of the participants in this study expressed some similar concerns. Understanding the importance of relationships, as noted in the literature, D-I was asked about Induction teachers who were struggling in the program. D-I described the process used in the program.

First of all, I try to build a rapport with the teachers and build a relationship of trust with them. They need to know that I am not running to their administrator to report everything that they tell me. Secondly, I make myself available to teachers by giving them my email address and my cell phone number. Also, I am available for administrators to contact me if they see issues in the classroom. I respond to the needs of the teacher and administrator. Classroom visits are an option. I have met privately with teachers who didn't want others to know that they were seeking help. I provide feedback to teachers on their long-range plans and unit work samples. Almost always, they are receptive and appreciative of the change. However, there are a few that don't like the message so they avoid the messenger.
Participant H-6 felt the school she was at did not support her need to build relationships with other teachers. She said, “I know I need to work with other teachers, but they have their own things to do. Plus, there is no time during the day to meet with others and get to know them.” H-4 mentioned how different he felt, “I feel a little like an outsider sometimes. You know they’re kinda standoffish, but I mean the students aren’t so bad. The students are pretty welcoming, but not the adults.”

Ladson-Billings (1995) maintained critical consciousness encouraged an equitable and interchangeable relationship between teacher and student where both individuals can be learners and teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1995). During the interview process, Participant E-3 discussed the need to build relationships with students before addressing their academic needs. She mentioned a disturbing comment by one of her parents regarding her child. During a parent conference when she was expressing concern about the child’s low academics, the mother asked her, “Do you know enough about my child to teach her anything? What experiences can you share with her? You need to show my child that you care.” She stated, “It was that moment that I understood the importance of building a relationship with my students and showing them how much I cared about their success and about them as a person.” Participant E-1 also talked about the difficulty in building a relationship with her students because of their differences. She said,

When I started, for me it was different. The children here were more I guess like worldly. Whereas, kids I student taught understood when I shared that I loved them. These kids, they just don’t know what that means. They look at you like you’re crazy, they’ve never heard that before. Over the year, my view of my
students has changed. I have learned to create a kid friendly environment where my students are now in a warm and friendly environment. I make sure they can tell that I care and try to interject humor when I can. I really have learned to go the extra mile to show that I care.

Participant M-1 spoke about the need to build a relationship with his students. He said, “My students show little respect for me at times. I am told I need to get to know more about them, and my relationship will improve to the point of them respecting me. In fact, my Induction mentor actually told me I have to show them that I care about them. I did not know that I was not showing that side of me. I do care. I’m sometimes confused as to what I need to do.” Similar thoughts were shared from Participant H-6. She said, “I do not always feel like I need to do more. I think they need to have a certain level of respect for the teacher.”

Participants E-2, E-4, M-2, H-1, H-2, and H-5 had the opposite experience when it came to building and understanding the importance of relationships. They all spoke about the need to have a positive working relationship with other teachers. Participants E-1 and E-4 spoke about the ease in which they developed a rapport with other teachers at the school. Both were at Montessori schools and spoke about the relationships they have formed with other Montessori teachers. Participant E-2 talked about how teachers have been willing to help her set up her room and share materials she could use in her classroom. Participant E-4 shared, “I have depended heavily on the veteran teachers for guidance. They have been very receptive to helping me.” Participant M-2 also expressed her appreciation for the help she had received from her peers, as well as relationship with
some of her students. She said, “While I think I am capable of doing a great job alone, I do understand the value of forming relationships with those who I work with and the students I serve.”

When asked about relationships with students, Participant E-4 said, “I think they’re pretty good. They know that they can come to me with things and I – I mean I’ve had them come to me with things and you know some of them are sad things and some of them are happy things, but they know that you know I’m here to listen when they need me. We can talk at recess. Some of them write me notes. However when they need to talk to me, I’m available. I tell my kids I love you and I care about you and if you need anything you just let me know and all those types of things.”

Participant H-5 felt the way to establish a successful relationship with a student was to keep it professional, but at the same time learn how to keep it light. He said, “I like to joke around with my students. I tell them that if I’m giving you a hard time, it’s cause I like you. Students from last semester, they still stop by and give me a hard time. They’re bugging me for pictures at graduation and so it’s kind of professional but fun at the same time. We have a cool relationship, but they understand I’m a teacher, I can’t be your friend, but that doesn’t mean we can’t joke around, but they understand that there’s a place to stop, there’s a line.”

Participant M-2 felt the subject she taught was one that would automatically allow students to have a strong relationship with her as the teacher. She said, “I don’t think it’s necessarily they like me, I think it’s more they enjoy PE more, so I don’t think it would really matter who was teaching them, just the fact that they really enjoy PE, and I try to
make it good for them to enjoy so I guess you could say that we have a good relationship.”

**Perceptions of Pre-service Education Programs**

The participants in this study shared their experiences through voice to provide ways in which teacher preparation programs can be enhanced to promote the academic achievement of students of color. According to Ladson-Billings (2004), the typical pre-service teacher takes a series of foundations courses in the history, philosophy, and sociology of education. Anthropology of education rarely appears in pre-service teacher education. The themes that emerged from their perceptions of their pre-service education programs were (a) instructional knowledge, (b) diversity, and (c) communication. These themes emerged from the interview narratives, observations, and documents analyzed regarding the Induction teachers’ experiences as students in collegiate pre-service education programs throughout the state of South Carolina.

**Instructional Knowledge.** Instructional knowledge is an overarching theme that emerged from the data. It was developed from a list of pedagogical instructional practices mentioned by the 13 participants within the study when discussing their pre-service education programs. The teacher’s instructional knowledge is an integral part of the classroom and impacts the curricular, pedagogy, and the outcomes of student learning (Hill et al., 2008). Teacher understanding of curriculum and instruction is an integral component of classroom instruction.

All of the participants weighed in on their university preparations. Participants used varied terms when addressing their academic preparation. Participants M-1, M-2,
M-3 spoke about pedagogy and methods related courses. Participants E-3, M-3, H-4 and H-3 addressed student teaching experiences and relevancy in the classroom. Participants H1, H-3, and H-5 addressed varying age and ability groups. Participants E-2 and E-3 discussed the opportunity gaps. Interestingly, the middle school participants were the only group discussing specifically their methods course and pedagogy.

Pedagogy and methods related courses were how the middle school participants remember their college preparatory courses as it related to their teaching in a diverse school. Participant M-1 felt during his preparation he learned how to differentiate instruction. Yet, it was difficult to apply when he came to this school. Participant M-3 felt her university provided multiple instructional strategies for ability grouping and questioning techniques, but it was difficult to administer when behavior is not internal. Participant M-2 and M-1 talked about learning styles.

Participants E-3, M-3, H-4 and H-3 addressed student teaching experiences and relevancy in the classroom. Participant H-3 said,

Teaching the relevance of course content allowed me to motivate my students to be more engaged as learners. Yet, Clemson did not really prepare you to teach to the kids that are not motivated. They don’t give you enough information or enough skills to show you how to motivate those kids that just aren’t motivated. So, I guess I learned it, then figured out how to use it with my students.

Participants E-3, M-3 and H-4 discussed the strength in their preparation programs for students who are motivated to learn and the strategies they learned in
ensuring relevance in instruction. They also spoke of the students’ lack of interest when they were trying to provide relevant information they knew the students needed to learn.

Participant M-3 also addressed differences in instruction learned during her preparation for teaching. She said,

I took a class that taught you or showed you how to differentiate instruction and think of different ways to present information to students cause students learn differently. So you gotta figure out a way for them all to understand it. I took a class that taught you that and coming up with tests and quizzes and assessments - that’s the word I’m looking for – an entire class that part of it talked about assessment and then I even had a class that was strictly about the structure of a middle school and the different components of a successful middle school and the things you needed to do and the way to approach different groups of people.

Participants H1, H-3, and H-5 addressed varying age and ability groups.

Participant H-5 discussed why he needed to rely on varied instructional strategies when teaching history courses with varied ages and abilities. Participant H-5 credited his preparation to luck. He said, “I was well trained, but lucky to get all the honors kids. But they were a lot higher level than I’m used to, so I had to adjust to that, but then I had a Tech Prep class too, so I had to adjust to that and really figure out the difference between the two, because it’s the same class – but it’s not the same ability.” Participants H-1 addressed his preparation for working with students at all ability levels. “I came in like I say with expectations that were really high regardless of their ability level and they knew it. And they knew I was gonna be hard on them, but for a reason.”
Participant H-3 felt that with science courses you are expected to work with students at all ability levels. She was observed during a biology lesson that was checked for varied instructional strategies. The Applied Biology I students were completing a Project Based Learning project on genetics. They had been working on this assignment in class for nearly 2 weeks. She gave them time in class to complete because she knew they would not get much accomplished at home and she knew that she had a wide range of ability levels in this class. As she conferenced with individual groups to check their progress, she was upset that many were far behind and had completed very little as expected. Many of the students were off task, talking about their weekends, on their cell phones texting and surfing social media while they were supposed to be using their devices to conduct research. She said to the class, “I just don’t understand why you aren’t doing your work. Why do you act like you don’t care? You are going to get a zero.” The students seemed unbothered by their teacher’s comments and continued their off task behaviors.

Participants E-2 and E-3 discussed the achievement gap they most remember learning about during their teacher preparation programs. Participant E-3 said, “I think all of my field experiences and student teaching helped me almost more than my actual classes. I learned how to look at the data that showed the gap between certain groups and that I’m supposed to use different strategies to help them get caught up.” She also mentioned that she was told to use different strategies: “But in the college classroom they can tell us about it and they can talk about it and they can just say keep your mind open, have an open mind, you know, everybody’s different and all this, but then when
you get in a classroom that’s when you actually see it, so I think I learned more in my field experiences and student teaching about using different strategies to close the gap.”

The teacher’s level of relevant instructional knowledge, or the lack there of, is a critical component of classroom instruction.

**Diversity.** Diversity is often seen as the source of poor learning prospects and outcomes. Petrilli (2013) addressed economically diverse students and the problems they have relating to cultural diversity and race relations in public schools. Teachers who are assigned to teach at schools with diverse populations often find it difficult to understand the perspectives of these children and their families. The participants in this study used the word diversity more than 100 combined times in describing some aspects of their experiences. Teachers’ personal definitions of culture were quite varied, but mainly included aspects of upbringing, family environment, practices, and beliefs, as well as formal and informal learning through relatives, friends, church, and school.

Irvine (2010), a CRP theorist, argued that the problem lies with classroom teachers having only a cursory understanding of culture and their efforts “to bridge the cultural gap” between themselves and their students often “fall short”. Conditions and cultural patterns in rural South Carolina schools and in the communities they serve vary greatly. Also affected is the role of education in the lives of those in these rural areas. This diversity runs contrary to some of the most pervasive misconceptions about rural communities and their schools. This was the case for the majority of the participants in this study, including one who has lived relatively close to her school most of her life.
In many cases, the teacher participants used the words diversity and culture interchangeably. However, on the other hand, diversity was almost seen as distinctly different from culture. Diversity was more about social class tied to socioeconomic status, as well as some differentiation between ethnicities. More than culture, diversity was seen as the source of students in need, in poor home conditions (whether poor financially or poorly managed home lives), differences in expectations for “appropriate” behavior, attitudes, study habits, personal responsibilities, safety, job prospects, etc. Irvine (2010) believes placing more emphasis in our society on closing "other" gaps beyond the achievement gap is how student achievement is increased. Some of these gaps include the income gap, affordable housing gap, health care gap, quality childcare gap, and the nutrition gap (Irvine, 2010, p. xii).

The Induction teacher participants in this study are consistent in their interview responses regarding their college preparation in cultural diversity. Participants H-6, E-1, E-2, E-4, H-6, and M-3 addressed diversity while describing their pre-service education program experiences. During a classroom observation, Participant M-3 thought diversity simply related to race until she taught a reading lesson using the book, The Outsiders. As she asked her students open ended questions about their thoughts on the society the Socs and Greasers lived in, the shocking expression on her face revealed how stunned and surprised she was by their responses. In the teacher’s classroom observation reflection, it was noted her idea about what was right and wrong in a society was totally different from her students. Their thought-provoking responses led to a rich and deep discussion about life in the 1980s.
During the interviews, Participant H-6 talked about how music can cross all cultural lines of communication. She said,

Music allows you to have diversity in the classroom. I use cultures to teach about diversity. This was a high point in my teacher preparation training. I know that cultures I think really help to determine what kind of music we can teach, what kind of focus we can have for each group and the kind of energy level that we’re allowed to teach with, because if I have a group that gets so easily wound up, then I can’t really teach them these really exciting pieces because it gets out of hand way too quickly. At the same time it’s also kind of what we succeed in, sort of portraying, cause you know different cultural background pieces are what we can sort of hang around with where we can show the kids and let them experience – because if they don’t know different cultures then they have no idea.

Participants E-1 and E-4 spoke about teaching in a Montessori classroom that invites diversity. Participant E-4 said, “It was important to me that my children respect diversity and the Montessori ideas I got in training helped me to achieve diversity in my teaching. In a self-contained setting it is easy to use holidays such Christmas and Hanukah to encourage a respect for other races. We use a variety of books for read-a-louds and center activities.” Participant E-1 shared a similar experience she learned from being trained in Montessori. Participant E-1 said, “My Montessori education experience was heavy on the teaching and addressing the needs of every race. In kindergarten and the preschool years, they train us in exposing students to people and cultures all around the world.”
Leading theorist, in the area of culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings argued teachers have to help students develop cultural competence by aiding students in being firmly grounded in one’s own culture and fluent in at least one other culture. Each student should leave school bicultural; however, this is a hard practice to implement when classroom teachers themselves are limited in their knowledge of various cultures and diversity.

After 8 months of teaching, 2 of the 3 middle level participants shared they wished they had a more diverse student teaching experience. Participant M-1 student teaching experience included teaching in an affluent high school setting where he taught honors courses. Participant M-2’s student teaching experience was in an affluent elementary school within the same city.

The participants’ student teaching experiences were different based on grade levels. Two of the elementary participants completed their student teaching assignments in Title I schools. Each of their current teaching assignments are in Title I schools with higher percentages of poverty ranging from 70% to 98%. All six high school participants’ student teaching experiences were in affluent high schools: 3 of which were in the upstate of South Carolina, 1 was in the Charlotte Mecklenburg area, another was near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and one was in the midlands of South Carolina. With the exception of the teachers that teach related arts courses, all participants taught higher level honors courses.

Participant M-3 discussed diversity from a different lens. She spoke about the cultural differences she learned from her pre-service education program and how
different it was for her when she actually acquired her own classroom as a first-year teacher. Participant M-3 referred to a diversity class she took in a master’s course. She said, “I took a diversity class – that’s exactly what it’s called is Diversity, and learning how students are so different and how to hone in on those differences, and I think because I was at Monmouth for so long and that was just okay this is kind of what you have to do to be a teacher. The two experiences together made me more prepared to teach children of different cultures and races.”

Communication. Communication involves listening, speaking, reading and writing. In light of the diversity in education, teachers need to be highly skilled in all aspects of communication. This communication may take place with words or in non-verbal forms. Effective teachers communicate concern and care through tone of voice and body language (Nodding & Brooks, 2017). Communication emerged as a recurring theme during the interviews, observations, and document analysis. During the interviews, some participants discussed how difficult it was to communicate with their students. Other participants spoke about communicating with other teachers. Communication is discussed as an essential component of teaching and learning in articles and reports on school improvement. Effective communication between teacher and student can influence the student’s school adjustment and teacher/student relationship (Erbay, Omeroglu, Cagdas, 2002). Participants E-1, E-2, H-6, H-2, M-2, H-6, and H-2 all found benefits to effective communication when teachers work together. Most expressed the benefits the students receive when there is open communication between both student and teacher.
When asked to think back to experiences in their teacher education programs as it pertains to the knowledge drawn from those experiences, Participants E-1 said:

Well I feel like a little bit of everything was learned in our education department since there was a small group of students with a big education department in that … when they get to education they break it down to these are your early childhood, this is your elementary, and you know your special and physical ed people, so like my group I graduated with there was 12 of us and so we were together from the end of our sophomore year till we graduated so we had the same professors. It was a family atmosphere. We were able to share with each other what we were learning. The professor stressed collaboration and effective communication would be important to our studies.

Participants E-4 and E-2 expressed the importance of communicating with parents. Participant E-4 said, “One thing that helped me was my professors expressed the need to have clear and continuous communication with parents. They said you may be teaching the children, but the parents are the real ones you need to let know about their children. I had a class on how to communicate with the parents and what all these different things that you can do to make sure they’re involved.” It had been more than 16 years since Participant E-2 had been in college, yet she does remember her professor discussing the importance of effective parental communication. Participant E-2 said, “I don’t know that I can necessarily recall my college experience because I don’t think where I was then is where I am now. What I do remember is the teachers (professors) talking about parent communication. I’ve always been a people person, so I guess I
always remembered that so I don’t really have a hard time talking with parents. I will say that one benefit for me was my preschool teaching experience. I worked with a lady, her name was Tammy, and she was my mentor, and she told me from day one to work with parents and you will have fewer issues.”

As described above, many of the participants relied on the experiences of professors and mentors in the field of education to guide their actions and reactions within their individual classrooms. M-2, H-2, and H-6 relied on the experiences of past professors and are still in frequent contact with them. E-1, E-2, and E-4 relied on the experiences of veteran teachers who they saw as mentors in the field of education.

Communication is an integral component of teaching and learning and highly affects the effectiveness of a classroom teacher.

**Perceptions of Assistance needed from School Leaders**

Research has provided evidence on the importance of school leaders and the success of teachers in their contributions to growth in student achievement (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Information obtained from the analysis of data led to the following emerging themes: (a) professional development, (b) ongoing support, and (c) collaboration. These themes emerged from the interviews and documents analyzed regarding the Induction teachers needs for school leaders.

**Professional Development.** Professional development is another theme that emerged from the data. Many of the participants discussed the need to have additional professional development in order for them to be better prepared to work with the assigned population within their schools. Others felt special training should be linked to
classroom management strategies in diverse settings. Professional development, or the lack there of, is critical to the success of a classroom teacher. It is the means in which teachers are introduced to best practices and given opportunities to learn and develop so they can grow professionally.

All the participants understood the importance of professional development. The difference was in the types of professional development they saw as needs. The participants’ needs related to professional development were divided into three categories: understanding data, instructional knowledge, and classroom management. The elementary teachers tended to want data driven and instructional training based on programs and interventions. Whereas, the middle and high school teachers wanted more content specific training and training that included the effective use of instructional strategies to meet their student’s academic deficiencies. They all discussed the need for more training on classroom management for the population of students in which they teach.

The elementary teacher participants wanted more training on understanding data to drive instruction. Participant E-1, while reviewing data, has determined her primary students’ Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) RIT scores are pretty low as she noted during her interview. While watching her conduct a guided reading group with a group of her lower students, she struggled with questioning and probing techniques. When students could not answer her questions, she had a hard time re-wording the question and probing student’s thinking to help them justify their positions and/or answer the questions. Also noted in an analysis of participant E-1’s lesson plans, many of the
scripted intentional questions included and used to facilitate learning were lower level recall questions about the text. Participant E-2 felt comfortable using the preschool checkoff sheets provided by her district, but would like to have more training on analyzing the data and looking at the data differently. She said, “I would like to be trained on examining student results to teach children based on learning styles.” Included in her long-range plan was a brief summary of an analysis of the data, but there were no next steps or interventions included that she could use to facilitate more intentional learning.

Participants E-1 and E-4 felt the need to have professional development ongoing for the Montessori program and thought the strategies they learned would be good for all elementary teachers. Participant E-1 said, “During my Montessori training I learned that in teaching my students I must focus on respecting and encouraging each child's individual differences, and in doing so, I will meet their educational needs. I’m not always sure how this works though, but it always seems to work (laughter).” High school teacher Participant H-5 shared he wanted content specific professional development. He said, “I’d like to have training specific to the subject I’m teaching. I got to go to an Economics workshop this past year – that was immensely helpful. So being able to go to things like that really helps, because really I was a different Economics teacher when I came back from that workshop. It really helped to refresh a lot of things in my mind, gave me some new ideas, and I came in with all those ideas the next day.”

Other participants focused on having a toolbox of instructional strategies (some called it a teacher toolbox). During a review of Participant M-1’s lesson plans, it was noted multiple whole group instructional strategies were included. During an observation
conducted by his Induction mentor, the following comments were included in his written feedback, “During this 70 minute observation, there was no differentiation of instruction observed. The teacher posed questions and assigned all tasks to the whole group.” During the interview process with Participant M-1 he shared that he would like more training and support in the area of differentiation of instruction. He also said, “It is difficult to teach social studies in different ways.” He then added, “If there are other ways to teach social studies, I welcome the challenge.” Participant M-3 also expressed the need for an instructional toolbox. Participant M-2 also discussed the need for professional development on strategies for teaching the whole child, conflict resolution, and coping with life’s problems.

The high school Induction teachers also wanted additional professional development. They felt the focus should be content specific with embedded strategies for all teachers. Participant H-4 wanted professional development that supported strategies for day-to-day instruction. Participant H-4 stated, “We don’t have the department level things, don’t have the content focused things – things that I really need on a day to day basis. You know the… specific things to fill in my lesson plans with. We just don’t have that type training.” Participant H-2 wanted to have more training on Project Based Learning and hands-on activities. She said, “I would like to see more motivational things where I can adapt the material, make it interesting for these kids, maybe they don’t like it so I’d have more training of project-based content where they get hands-on to bring in the academic knowledge.” Participants H-2, H-3 and H-6 wanted to see more strategies to
enhance the learning environment. Participant H-2 and H-3 had a list of specific trainings they would like to see ongoing at their school and in the district:

- Ways to Motivate/Inspire Students/Intrinsic Motivation
- Dealing with student resistance/apathy
- Improving School Climate for Title I Schools

Participant H-6 added ongoing workshops on discipline and management of the classroom.

Others talked about the use of technology to support instruction. Participant H-5 teaches Government and Economics to high school students. Students are drawn to his personality and work really hard for him. One area in which he feels he can improve is the use of technology. During his observation, students used their textbooks and copies of primary and secondary documents to answer a list of questions he had given them. Floren District 46 High School is a one-to-one school. Each student has a Chromebook, but each of their Chromebooks sat on the floor as they used their textbooks, paper, and pencil to answer the teacher’s questions. Participant H-5 said during his interview regarding instructional technology, “Kids like it so I need to include it.”

Most of the Induction teachers wanted training on classroom management that was specific to their school population. Participant H-3 wanted to see more Project Based Learning training as it relates to decreasing the amount of behavioral issues in her classroom. She said, “I’d really love like a behavior management kind of professional development and I think that would help me a lot cause it’s something I still struggle with, and then I’m working on doing PBLs and so I’d like some more training.”
**Ongoing Support.** The participants in this study classified the support they received from school leaders from limited to helpful. However, most participants felt they needed additional support in being successful in educating their diverse student learners. Many of the participants felt they were not effectively reaching the students they served because they did not know how to make the information relevant due to a lack of cultural understanding. Additional support in this area would have helped them be more successful. The teachers seem to care about the students they served, but some do not think school leaders think they care. Noddings and Brooks (2017) discussed the need for a caring environment if teachers are to have successful teaching experiences.

The Induction teacher participants were also asked about support from school administration. Interestingly, the theme ongoing support emerged. Of the 13 participants in the study, 5 participants found their administrators very supportive: E-2, M-2, M-3, H-2, and H-3. Participants E-1 would like to have support from Induction mentors and administrators. She would like for them to observe her teaching at different times of the day and provide her with critical feedback. She said, “I feel like, um, some observations and like different times, so a lot of my observations and it’s just timing things, you know they would be in the afternoons and so they would see the same things every time they would come in and not the stuff in the morning. I call it the two positives and a negative, like come in, tell me you know what looks good and something I need to work on, because in here I’m the only one that does this and I’m still new to the Montessori program. Getting feedback like this from my Induction mentor and administrators will make me a better teacher.”
Participant H-1 would like to seek support to grow the music department. He is mindful of the expense surrounding the program, but would like for the school leader to include the music program in the vision when making improvements. He noted,

Support comes down to – unfortunately – and I say unfortunately, but it’s both fortunately and unfortunately – comes down to money. Money is huge in an instrumental music program, um, orchestra is one of the – is the most expensive instrumental music program because of the cost of instruments, and the cost of maintenance and things of that sort. While I’ve gotten amazing support from every single one of my administrators in the past, I like to make sure the program is a part of the bigger growth plan.

All of the participants thought it would be helpful to have a notebook, some sort of cheat sheet, or new teacher orientation that addressed the unknown. They felt if they had an emergency plan or information provided to them at the beginning of the year including information pertaining to fire drills, where to find the supplies they need for their classrooms, the specific responsibilities of each administrator, procedures for handling and removing disruptive students from their classrooms, where to go in the event of an emergency, who to contact in the office for attendance questions, information on upcoming professional developments and conferences, and how to obtain more technology for their classrooms, it would ease their anxiety and increase their confidence levels as classroom teachers.

Several Induction participants saw the feedback they received as constructive. Participants E-1, E-3 and M-3 felt receiving ongoing constructive feedback in a non-
threatening manner would be helpful. Participant E-3 felt that when receiving classroom observation feedback, it would be helpful to receive tools, resources, and solutions to fix problems instead of pointing out problems. Participant M-3 liked the feedback received during her Induction year, but thought it should be ongoing and non-threatening. She said,

See that was the thing. I liked the fact that if the administration saw something—like I was missing something, or they saw something that like, oh, have you ever thought of trying this? I like the fact that they felt comfortable enough to help me. I would like to see this level of support continue. They probably have a point that I had not thought about. That is the only way I’m going to learn. Sometimes I tried it but that didn’t really work, but I’ll remember it and I’ll use it in— if it ever comes up again.

Several participants would like to have mentors or administrators model strategies in their classroom and more focused training on differentiating instruction and classroom management for continuous and ongoing support. Participant M-1 agreed with the others. He said, “Maybe some modeling, like some modeling of differentiation or different classroom management things would be helpful.” Also, Participant E-4 would like to have help with structure and organization of her classroom. Participant H-4 agreed. He would like to have support that is similar to a new teacher orientation with the Induction mentor.

**Collaboration.** Participants talked about the need to collaborate with peers and leaders about their concerns. Allen (2013) discussed the impact that professional learning
communities have on teachers modeling and learning the art of collaboration. Some teachers spoke about the need to learn from others and not being afraid of saying the wrong thing. As evident with culturally relevant pedagogy and in the same sense, classroom teachers should collaborate with students so they too can learn from others and be given opportunities to challenge the status quo by developing a critical consciousness through collaboration with both peers and teachers. The classroom should be a safe place; the same can be said for other classroom teachers. They too need a safe place to collaborate and communicate their thoughts, frustrations, and challenges with peers and leaders.

The Induction teacher participants were consistent with the literature on the need for ongoing collaboration with other professionals and students in their building and school district. The benefit of collaboration is directly related to increased student achievement when teachers understand and implement the characteristics of effective collaboration (Bauml, 2016). A small but growing body of evidence suggests a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement (McClure, 2008).

Participants E-4, M-1 H-1, H-4 and H-6 would like to continue the relationship with teachers and mentors through the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Classroom-Based Teachers SAFE-T, which occurs after a participant successfully completes the Induction program. SAFE-T is South Carolina’s formal teacher evaluation tool. “Having the same mentor would strengthen the relationship established during the Induction period. It would also be someone who knows me,” Participant M-1 mentioned. Participant E-4 credits her Induction mentor for taking the time to collaborate with her
and support by providing multiple resources to use in her classroom throughout the school year: “Helping to show me and teach me like things that I just haven’t learned yet has been good. At the beginning of the year I was in the other class. Then I was moved to the Montessori classes. With my mentor, I was able to make the adjustments. Just to help guide me has been helpful. It would be good to have that continued support.” The high school participants suggested having like cohorts, peers, and peer observations for the upcoming year.

**Induction I Program - Participant Support and Collaboration**

When asked about the Induction program and its level of support, most of the feedback was positive; however, there were some areas of concern. Six of the 13 participants saw the program as *helpful*; 3 saw the program as *somewhat helpful*; and 4 saw the program as *not helpful*. Of the 6 participants who rated the program helpful, 4 of them failed Induction I and 2 passed. Of the 3 participants finding the program somewhat helpful, 2 passed and 1 failed. There were 4 who thought the Induction program was not helpful at all; 3 passed Induction I and 1 failed the course.

To ascertain information regarding the Induction I training, collaboration, and support, the Induction Program Director was interviewed about her perceptions of the program. When asked about the topics chosen for the monthly meeting, D-I felt as if input was solicited. She said,

> Each year a calendar of dates and topics must be submitted to the state department for approval. Mrs. Jenkins (pseudonym), Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and I meet at the end of each school year and review the results of
the survey completed by Induction teachers to determine changes that should be
made to the schedule. We try to vary the program by including guest speakers and
instructional coaches in their trainings.

Participants finding the program helpful have these comments about the program.
Participant E-1 felt the director broke everything down, was willing to help, had lots to
take back to her own classroom and apply. However, Participant E-1 failed Induction I.
She was however allowed to remain at her school and enroll in Induction II. Although
Participant E-4 failed Induction I, she too was allowed to remain at her school and enroll
in Induction II. Despite the fact that she was unsuccessful in Induction I, she still felt the
program was helpful to her in learning management skills and as a forum for additional
support and collaboration. She added, “The people in the program made sure I was
prepared but was not able to support me with content specifics due to the specialized
Montessori training.” Participant E-2 passed Induction I. She thought the program was
helpful with the completion of paperwork, but more training with instructional
technology would also be helpful. Participant H-1 also passed Induction I. He felt the
course was relevant, and was a refresher for all that was required to complete it.
Participant E-3 failed Induction I, but was allowed to remain at her school and enroll into
Induction II. She felt she benefited from the Q&A sessions with an open forum style. She
was able to use the solutions she learned in her classrooms. Participant E-3 noted, “The
training provided relevant instructional strategies such as thinking maps that I was able to
use with my students.” She felt the training was good for completing the necessary
paperwork but wanted to see more exemplars to use as guides in teaching.
Three high school participants found the Induction I course somewhat helpful. Participant H-6 passed the Induction I course. She felt the course needed more opportunities for open discussion and dialogue to problem solve. Although there was some, she said, “Having opportunities to dialogue was good, but not enough. Having sprinkles here and there weren’t enough. Also, I think support groups/study groups are needed to complete long-range plans and unit work samples.” Participant H-4 questioned the relevance and practicality of course components. He said, “I would like more relevant components. The relevance needs to be linked to the population of students we serve and not generic.” H-4 further mentioned, “It is not practical like it should be. They don’t teach you what to expect in most classrooms. They teach you strategies to use for medium, like middle to high level students is what they are training people for. And it’s virtually useless in lower level classes you know 9th grade just out of middle school type classes.” Participant H-4, a small man in stature and overly confident, did not successfully pass Induction I and left the district. Participant H-5 agreed with H-6. He passed Induction I, but felt the program needed more opportunities for open discussion and dialogue to problem solve. He noted, “Limited time was built in at the beginning of the sessions, but that was not enough. Also, there was far too much time focused on the paperwork.”

About a third of the participants felt the Induction I course was not helpful. Participant M-2 passed, but felt the course needed more focus on content area groups. She also felt the information shared with the whole group did not apply to every content area. She commented, “I think smaller groups or forums would have been more
beneficial.” Participant H-3 also passed, but felt the course needed to be more practical and relevant. Participant H-2 passed and looked at the course as simply a refresher geared towards the completion of paperwork long-range plans and unit work samples, all of which were taught in their pre-service education programs. Other participants also felt the Induction I Course was merely a refresher from “stuff” they learned in college, such as how to write a long-range plan and a unit work sample. Participant H-2 felt it was a waste since, “Universities already follow the ADEPT model – course components (Induction I Program) needed to be more relevant and practical”. Participant M-1 failed Induction I but was allowed to remain at his school and enroll in Induction II for the next school year. Like the others, he felt the course components needed to be more relevant and practical, particularly for differentiation of instruction and classroom management.

Comments from the participants who found the program somewhat helpful and not helpful revealed the participants did not feel the sessions were relevant, nor did they feel they had opportunities for input beyond the end of course survey. Yet, D-I felt input was solicited, “Teachers are surveyed in April so that we can make changes as needed to the next year's program. Throughout the year, we ask for input from the teachers. An example is having teachers respond to a chart on the wall that says ‘I feel good about..." and "I need help with…’ Along the teacher who assists me with Induction training, we carefully review student responses and try to add activities that address the needs indicated on the charts."

While recommendations for changes were made by the Induction participants, D-I did not feel the resources would allow such changes:
With the time constraints and limited funds that we have, changes may be impossible. We can change what is taught without a problem, but getting teachers at the end of the day when they are already exhausted is an issue that would be nice to change. If these teachers could meet in the mornings or on staff development days, that would be nice. Yet that presents other issues (planning for a sub while they are away, missing other staff development that is also important).

So I think we are doing the best we can.

Support and collaboration provided in the Induction program were seen from multiple lenses. Participant D-I felt changes needed to be made to the program based on the different feedback, but felt it would be a difficult undertaking. Whereas, the participants at each level felt there were changes that should be made in order to make the program more beneficial and relevant for participant’s success during the Induction year.

**Summary**

Chapter 4 described the qualitative nature in which the study was conducted and the data analyzed. A triangulated study including an analysis of interview narratives, observations, and documents was presented within the findings. In qualitative research, the focus is on personal meanings and individual human experiences (Neuman, 2011). Thirteen multi-case studies were appropriate for the study to explore in-depth the Induction participant’s experiences in Pre-K to high school as participants in the district’s Induction program (Yin, 2013). Participation in the study was completely anonymous and confidential. Participants were assigned an alias, pseudonym to use throughout the entire research process to protect their identities. The pseudonym given to the participants was
aligned with their school levels. Teachers in the elementary schools were identified with an E followed by the number of teachers at that level. The same was done for Induction teachers in middle and high schools.

Chapter 4 reported the results of the analysis of data according to the three research questions and based on the lived experiences of 13 Induction teachers. Comments from the director of the Induction program were added as another piece of information to add credibility to the findings and documented information. The findings revealed several themes that emerged throughout the observations, interviews, and analysis of relevant documents. As a result of the data collected and analyzed in these multi-case studies, 12 themes emerged from the findings. Many of these themes were consistent with the review of the literature included in Chapter 2. The six themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of their readiness were Classroom Management, Culture Shock, Expectations, Preconception and Bias, Preparedness, and Relationships. The three themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of their pre-service education programs were Instructional Knowledge, Diversity, and Communication. The three themes associated with the participants’ perceptions of the support needed from school leaders were Professional Development, Ongoing Support, and Collaboration. Following the data analysis procedures of Yin (2013), the data was chunked by school levels, participants’ experiences both positive and negative, and cultural backgrounds.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research study designed to examine the perceptions of first-year Induction teachers in a rural South Carolina school district. This chapter also details a discussion of the findings through the lens of the theoretical framework, the research questions answered in a summary of the results and conclusions based on findings, recommendations for future research and educational practices, implications for Induction programs within public school districts beyond the state of South Carolina, and a reflection including the researcher as instrument component.

The study qualitatively explores the lived experiences of 13 Induction teachers using a multi-case study approach. While studies have been conducted on novice teachers, this study adds insight into understanding the cultural dynamic found when first-year teachers have experiences that move them out of their comfort zones into an area in which they feel underprepared. The following questions guide and direct this study:

1. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
2. What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
3. What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

**Fit of Existing Literature and Discussion of Findings and Theoretical Framework**

Theoretically, this study is guided by culturally relevant teaching (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Ladson-Billings, the leading theorist in this pedagogy, as well as others has produced multiple pieces of empirical literature, which convey the essential use of this pedagogical form of teaching. The use of this theoretical framework was extremely helpful in understanding why novice teachers struggle to meet the academic needs of the diverse populations of students they are tasked with teaching in today’s public school systems. The use of this theoretical framework was also helpful in exposing the lack of experiences and knowledge pre-service education programs provide their students to work with frameworks and pedagogical practices created to assist teachers with meeting the academic needs of students of color. The theoretical interpretations of the findings are discussed in detail below.

Over 25 years ago, Ladson-Billings (2009) studied successful teachers of African American students and from what she observed (the pedagogical practices) she coined the term culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Culturally relevant pedagogy is defined as “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 382). It represents and validates the cultures of all students, and rests on three main ideals: academic achievement, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.
There are three guiding principles for CRP: (a) teachers must guide students through experiencing academic success, (b) teachers must help students develop and maintain cultural competence, and (c) teachers must provide students with opportunities to develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the social order (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

America's public schools are on the cusp of a new demographic era. The overall number of Latino, African-American, and Asian students in public K-12 classrooms is projected to surpass the number of non-Hispanic whites. According to demographers and census data, our nation’s schools are increasingly comprised of Black and Brown children. Children of color are the new majority within our schools, yet the teaching profession remains predominantly White (NCES, 2013). This enrollment milestone represents serious implications for the teaching profession which includes not only an increasing number of children living in poverty and needing more English language support. But more importantly, this milestone represents an increasing number of cultural and linguistic learners whose life experiences differ from those of their predominantly White teachers. Poor students of color, like all children, live complex lives that challenge teachers’ best intentions. Because of this interesting dynamic, the classroom no longer represents a place where students are taught and expected to learn. It sadly becomes a place where bodies are managed and maintaining order becomes the primary task (Ladson-Billings, 2011).

As it pertains to the findings in this study, the participants, after graduating from their pre-service education programs, felt well prepared to meet the academic needs of
the students in which they would one day teach. Their programs prepared them academically for the content they would teach. However when it came to facilitating learning for the diverse populations within their individual classrooms, the teachers struggled with finding ways to motivate, encourage, and support their students through learning. They were faced with many barriers that prohibited learning from taking place, particularly the absence of effective classroom management, student apathy, and a lack of student interest in content. Participants found it extremely difficult to develop and maintain positive supportive relationships for learning with their students. Their pre-service education programs equipped them with the academia needed to facilitate learning, but failed to provide them with instructional and behavioral strategies to cultivate, motivate, and support diverse populations of students.

Tenets of CRP, and other pedagogies like CRP, were developed and created to help classroom teachers with the daunting task of meeting the academic needs of students of color. These pedagogies are sometimes introduced in pre-service education program courses which give novice teachers a cursory understanding of their use and meaning (Irvine, 2010). This opportunity gap has serious implications on the teaching profession. Currently public school teachers enter today’s classrooms with little to no experience, exposure, or knowledge needed to facilitate meaningful teaching and learning. Some, as very few of the participants in this study, are able to draw from their own personal experiences to find ways to reach the black and brown children in their classrooms; however, overall there is a cultural disconnect, a cultural shock, and a cultural mismatch which causes a divide between the classroom teacher and his/her disengaged learners.
Today’s new century classroom students are unique and have different needs. These learners, in this technological age in which we live, believe multitasking is an efficient way to work; they enjoy texting, eating, watching movies on Netflix and Fire Sticks, listening to music, and surfing social media simultaneously all while completing a class assignment. They receive their news and alerts from push notifications and social media posts and not from the 6 o’clock news or daily newspaper. Their interests are different. Email is an “old’ form of technology to them. If you need them, it is best to tweet them or message them through apps like Snapchat or Kik. When it comes to learning, they prefer “doing” science experiments instead of “reading” an article about science. They value staying connected; that is why their phones are always in their hands. This is what today’s new century students enjoy and prefer. The children in poverty are no exception to the enjoyment of technology. However, there are barriers associated with their home life and lack of resources that effect their academic growth and development.

Our historical, one size fits all approach to teaching and learning for decades has created what Ladson-Billings refers to as an educational debt. Ladson-Billings argues it is more than a gap in learning; it is an educational debt that has been owed before today’s current students even entered school, yet they are products of an academic achievement gap. The debt owed is more than an academic debt; it is a historical debt, an economical debt, and even a moral debt. The task should be to pay down the debt as we have an elected responsibility to all our children (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

The question becomes how do we “pay down” the debt? The findings of this study suggested we equip novice teachers that are tasked with teaching these students
with the instructional tools, skills, and growth mindsets needed to accomplish this task. Culturally relevant teachers envision more for their students. They envision their students as being filled with possibilities (Ladson-Billings, 2011b). Through the lens of CRP, teachers guide students through choosing academic success; meaning, they support students through learning by building meaningful relationships, setting aside their preconceptions and biases, setting high expectations for learning and behavior, and alleviate culture shocks by learning and understanding the different cultures of their students.

Also through the lens of CRP, teachers help students develop cultural competence of not only their culture but at least one other culture. Ladson-Billings argues the goal is for students to have the ability to be firmly grounded in their own culture of origin and fluent in at least one other culture. The tenets of CRP include not only students being bicultural, but classroom teachers as well. The findings of this study suggest today’s classroom teachers are graduating from their pre-service education programs incompetent when it comes to their limited knowledge of culture. This puts them at a disadvantage from the beginning when they enter into the classrooms of today’s public schools. Lastly through the lens of culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers create learning environments where students are allowed to develop a socio-political consciousness; meaning, content is relevant, applicable, and is meant to be questioned and challenged. Through CRP, we give students the notion they are going to need what they learn in life because many students of color start to resist learning because they do not see the relevance. That’s why
their learning should be connected to everyday living and how it affects them in all aspects of life.

Ironically, Ladson-Billings has deep roots in South Carolina, the geographical location of this study. Her maternal grandparents were from Fairfield County. Her dad was from Dillon County, and her mother was from the Upstate of South Carolina, Spartanburg County, just 30 miles from the geographical location of this study.

Summary of the Study

This study used a multi-case study design to provide an in-depth description of how, in one particular school district, Induction teachers utilized their skills and experiences learned from personal experiences within their individual lives and pre-service education programs. Within this triangulated study, key themes to support the findings emerged from the interviews, observations, and documents of the Induction teachers and the district Induction leader. The research questions were answered based on emerging themes that defined the experiences of Induction teachers based on their perceptions, classroom practices, Induction training, and prior learning in higher education programs.

The Research Questions Answered (Summary of Findings and Conclusion)

In this study, I purposely collected data about the prior experiences of the participants. This background information helped me to better understand their lived experiences, preconceptions, and biases as well as develop a descriptive and detailed profile for each participant. The research findings in this study have created a meaningful understanding of the cultural experiences of Induction teachers in one rural school
district. The 13 Induction teachers taught in elementary, middle, and high school with the majority of them coming from outside of the school district in different regions of South Carolina and Midwest and New England states.

The participants interviewed for this study were asked to discuss their lived experiences as an individual, a pre-service education program participant, an Induction teacher in a rural South Carolina school district, and the support and guidance they needed from school administrators to be successful in their future endeavors as classroom teachers. This chapter drew conclusions, provided a summary of the findings in this study, and answered the 3 research questions used to guide the study.

**Research Question 1**

*What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?*

Table 5.1 represents the raw data matrix of emerging themes and sources for the triangulation of data for research question one, a summarization of each theme’s focus, and the sources of data identified to determine that focus. The analysis of the interviews, observations and/or documents confirmed each theme based on participants’ perceptions. The results for research question one appear in Table 5.1 aligned with the themes in the order listed within the chapter. The 6 themes, classroom management, culture shock, expectations, preconceptions and biases, preparedness, and relationships are used to answer research question one.
Table 5.1 Raw Data Matrix Emerging Themes Research Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classroom Management</td>
<td>Participant documents, interviews and observations highlighted cultural differences, behavioral expectations and a lack of control of the classroom.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Culture Shock</td>
<td>Participants shared value differences and insights into what they experience when coming to their schools.</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Participants shared their expectations of students, the Induction program, and school leaders.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preconceptions &amp; Biases</td>
<td>Participants discussed the roles their own preconceptions and biases played in their readiness to teach their students.</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>The participants in this study felt prepared to meet academic needs (content, content standards, lesson planning, and command of subject matter) of the students they served.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>The participants’ relationships with students were observed. Participants shared during interviews the importance of relationships, specifically the need to establish positive relationships for learning with their students.</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: I = Interview; O = Observation; D = Document Analysis

Research Question 1 addressed the perception of first-year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they were tasked with teaching. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were classroom management, culture shock, expectations, preconceptions and biases, preparedness, and relationships. The theme classroom management highlighted the participants’ multiple unsuccessful attempts at effectively managing their students’ behaviors within their classrooms. The theme culture shock was described as the participants’ reactions to their failed attempts at successfully managing the student behaviors within their classrooms.
Participants defined expectations from 3 different perspectives: expectations of students, expectations of the district’s Induction program, and expectations of school leaders. When asked to reflect, the participants were somewhat able to identify their own personal preconceptions and biases in their readiness to meet the academic needs of their students. Their levels of preparedness varied as it pertained to their instructional knowledge of content and the pedagogical practices they felt were needed to effectively teach the minority students within their classrooms. Lastly, the participants felt establishing relationships with students were important and felt positive relationships with students were needed for learning to take place.

Data released by Goldrick, Osta, Barlin and Burn (2012) indicates over the past twenty years, Induction programs have increased considerably. The percentage of first-year teachers participating in organized Induction programs increased in recent from 50% in 1990 to 95% by 2011. The increase can be attributed to the 27 states that required some kind of Induction program for new teachers (Goldrick et al., 2012). Yet, these percentages are just a part of the story. What happens when first-year teachers, predominantly 85% White female, meet the increasing population of students of color they are assigned to teach in our public school system. The findings in this study revealed the majority of 13 participants in this study entered the classroom with a vision of the first-year euphoria picturing students attentive, academically engaged, and eager to learn, only to experience an unimaginable culture shock of disengaged learners who they were afraid and apprehensive to reach and teach.
The transition from the teacher preparation program to the P-K to 12 classrooms has been characterized by many educational experts as a reality shock (Gaede, 2010; Sehba, 2013). Sehba (2013) mentioned shocking situations occur when people realize the difficulty of adjusting to surroundings and often feel threatened. The reality in this situation was the shock of working with cultural differences (Kuhn, 2015). The cultural shock of discovering students perceived as disruptive, unprepared, and disrespectful placed first-year teachers scrambling to find answers for meeting the academic needs for these diverse populations of students. Participants found it difficult to believe their values could differ so much from the students they were assigned to teach. They also found themselves comparing their upbringing to that of their students. Clearly, a cultural divide existed between the participants reared in middle class homes and the lived experiences of the students in which they were tasked with teaching. Some suggested environment had a link to values.

These preconceptions and biases, which existed due to the socio-economic differences, were highlighted in the participants’ actions and behaviors during the observations and their responses to questions during their interviews. Classroom management was also an issue with the Induction teacher participants in this study. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) stated, "The fundamental task of classroom management is to create an inclusive, supportive, and caring environment" (p. 267). Evidence suggested from a limited number of teachers the goal was to create a caring classroom. However, the majority of the teacher participants whose experiences differed from those of their students demonstrated few examples of exercising openness.
and cultural humility. Due to those differences with their students, classroom management plans were revised to include diversity strategies which targeted specifically the students they served.

This same notion was evident within the findings of this study. One significant finding relevant to both the existing literature and this study was that of relationships. The nature of relationships among the participants varied from Induction teacher to district Induction leader, Induction teacher to peer experienced teachers, and Induction teacher to students. The district Induction leader to Induction teacher relationship was found to be somewhat one sided. The district Induction leader shared how she provided feedback to teachers on specific work including long-range plans and unit work samples, although she felt as if the ones who needed specific feedback were not always receptive to critical feedback. While many of the participants appeared to struggle as Induction classroom teachers, there was no mention of the support they received from the Induction program director from any of the participants.

The Induction teacher and experienced teacher relationship took on more of a supportive role. The Induction teacher participants sought out experienced, veteran teachers when they needed help with classroom management and instructional strategies and depended on the experiences of these veteran teachers to develop plans for success within their own individual classrooms. Specific to the Induction teacher and student relationship, most teacher participants understood the importance of creating a caring, nurturing environment. However, there was much discussion on the difficulty of building meaningful relationships with their students. Also noted was the lack of formal training
on building relationships with students in their pre-service education programs and professional development received during the Induction year.

Expectations were implied throughout the study, but the discussion that occurred surrounding the participants’ readiness to serve their students was overwhelming. Teachers enter into their profession expecting to make a significant difference in the lives of the children they teach (Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003). However, they often found many students unproductive, not academically prepared, and categorized their behaviors as disrespectful. As such, the participants’ lack of preparedness was often magnified.

While many of the participants mentioned being prepared, their actions and discussions demonstrated the opposite. The participants felt prepared in their knowledge of the content, content standards, and subject matter for teaching a specific grade level or course. However, the issue was they lacked the skill set to impart the information to the students. As such, their lack of preparedness was significant. Proctor (2001) argued content knowledge was not enough when teaching inner city students; preparation was necessary and specific to preparing teachers to meet the needs of these students.

It can be concluded from this study that first-year Induction teachers are not ready to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students within this school district. After the initial culture shock, many of the teachers allowed their preconceptions and biases, based on their own personal upbringings, affect their perceptions of the students they taught. In addition, their failure to understand the culture and environment of the students they taught affected how they managed the classroom. Further, it was
concluded Induction teachers need to be better prepared to meet the academic needs of the students they serve in diverse environments. Finally, it can be concluded Induction teachers need to build effective, positive working relationships with other teachers as well as students, parents, mentors, and school leaders.

**Research Question 2**

*What is the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?*

Table 5.2 represents the raw data matrix of emerging themes and sources for the triangulation of data for research question two, a summarization of each theme’s focus, and the sources of data identified to determine that focus. The analysis of the interviews, observations and/or documents confirmed each theme based on participants’ perceptions. The results for research question two appear in Table 5.2 aligned with the themes in the order listed within the chapter. The 3 themes, instructional knowledge, diversity, and communication, are used to answer Research Question 2.
Table 5.2 Raw Data Matrix Emerging Themes Research Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instructional Knowledge</td>
<td>Participants used varied terms when addressing their academic preparation and their preparation for teaching diverse students.</td>
<td>X   X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>The participants in this study used the work diversity more than 100 combined times in describing some aspects of their experiences with students.</td>
<td>X   X   X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Participants shared how they communicated with students and other teachers. Most of the comments and observations were regarding student behaviors.</td>
<td>X   X   X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: \( I = \text{Interview}; \ O = \text{Observation}; \ D = \text{Document Analysis} \)

Research Question 2 addressed the perception of first-year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were instructional knowledge, diversity, and communication. The theme instructional knowledge was defined as the varied terms the participants used to describe the specific academic preparation they learned during their pre-service education programs. When describing their daily experiences with their students, the participants used the term diversity more than 100 combined times to describe their interactions with their students. Diversity was also used to describe the ideal student teaching and practicum experiences the participants wished they had in order to prepare them for their current populations of students. Although the theme communication was used often in reference to student behavior, it was defined as how the participants communicated with their students and peer teachers.
Larson and Farber (2015) maintained first-year teachers begin their careers with a sense their work is personally fulfilling and socially significant. The participants in this study did not state such thoughts; however, the perceptions of the first-year teacher participants in this study indicate they felt their pre-service education programs prepared them to meet the academic needs of their students. However, the data suggested their perceptions of their pre-service programs were strikingly different from what the participants discovered when they attempted to impart content knowledge to their students using the strategies they learned from their pre-service preparation programs.

Consistently discussed regarding the teacher preparation program was instructional knowledge and diversity. Instructional knowledge was given high marks. The participants shared the instructional and content knowledge gained from their teacher preparation programs. It was perceived the teacher preparation programs were highly effective in this regard. The diversity, or lack thereof, as it pertains to participants’ teacher preparation programs, was highlighted as it related to the populations of students they taught during student teaching versus the populations of students they taught during their Induction year. Most shared they were not prepared to work with the diversity they found when they accepted their first public school teaching assignment. Of the 13 participants, 11 received student teaching assignments in affluent areas and were not given opportunities to work with students in more diverse populations.

The communication theme emerged consistently during the participant interviews. The participants discussed communications with students, parents, and teachers in either written, verbal, and/or nonverbal means. Effective communication skills are critical for
lasting relationships between teachers and others, particularly, when improvement is needed (Northouse, 2015). Daily communication with students in formal and informal circumstances was both positive and negative. Positive communication often happened in informal situations, specifically when the participants were sharing personal experiences with their students (Simonds & Cooper, 2015). Although they felt the communication was not always productive, there were always opportunities to communicate with their students. During the interviews, some participants discussed how difficult it was to communicate with their students. Negative communication often resulted during instructional time when students did not understand content or exhibited off-task behaviors (Guerrero, Andersen, Afifi, 2013). This often led to a level of disrespect, which would in turn lead to parent conferences, which, although negative, increased the level of communication.

The participants discussed interactions with parents as important based on advice and training during their teacher preparation. Further, an entire Induction training session was devoted to parent conferencing. However, it should be noted none of the participants mentioned this training or anything they learned during this training. Several participants shared their experiences with their mentors both during their student teaching and first year teaching experiences. The participants shared one of their most valuable experiences included opportunities to discuss strategies and approaches to take with their mentors. The participants were highly depended upon the experiences of their mentors to develop plans and approaches to take when handling situations that arose within their individual classrooms. Several participants highlighted their experiences with their mentors both
during their student teaching and first year teaching experiences. Some longed for this level of communication during their first-year teaching with peers and administrators within their buildings.

It can be concluded from this study that first-year Induction teachers’ preparation programs were both positive and negative as it related to helping them meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they serve. It can also be concluded the teachers had the prerequisite knowledge to teach the courses they were assigned to teach. They had a sound understanding and need for the importance of effective communication and instructional knowledge which was effective for the populations of students they were assigned to student teach in many different affluent areas. As it pertains to their Induction year of teaching, it can be further concluded the participants did have a grasp of the knowledge and content needed for teaching the students in this diverse population; however, they lacked the skills, strategies, dispositions, and mindsets needed to effectively teach the students in this diverse population.

**Research Question 3**

*What assistance do first-year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?*

Table 5.3 represents the raw data matrix of emerging themes and sources for the triangulation of data for research question three, a summarization of each theme’s focus, and the sources of data identified to determine that focus. The analysis of the interviews, observations and/or documents confirmed each theme based on participants’ perceptions.
The results for research question three appear in Table 5.3 aligned with the themes in the order listed within the chapter. The 3 themes, professional development, ongoing support, and collaboration, are used to answer research question three.

Table 5.3 Raw Data Matrix Emerging Themes Research Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Participants embraced some aspects of the training they received through the Induction program. However, there were comments that echoed dissatisfaction with the content included within the Induction I course.</td>
<td>X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ongoing Support</td>
<td>Participants examined the support from school leaders necessary for them to be successful in educating their diverse students, and the need for this support to be extend beyond the Induction year.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Participants talked about the need to communicate and talk to peers, administrators, mentors, and college professors about their concerns.</td>
<td>X X X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: I = Interview; O = Observation; D = Document Analysis

Research Question 3 addressed the first-year teachers’ perceptions on what they felt was needed from school leaders for them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they serve. The themes that emerged from the data analysis were professional development, ongoing support, and collaboration. The theme professional development was defined as the training the participants received through the District’s Induction program during their first year of teaching. The theme ongoing support was how participants described their need for continual feedback, guidance, and support from
school leaders. They desired this support to extend beyond the Induction year. The theme collaboration was defined by the participants as their need to communicate and collaborate with their peers, school leaders, mentors, and even college professors for support and guidance on how to handle the multiple problems they faced as first-year classroom teachers.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) conducted a review of the literature on how school leadership impacts schools and concluded school leaders tend to impact student learning through their influences on teachers. The school leaders’ influence on teachers can be found in how they engage with the school environment. Themes that emerged from the data analysis of this study were professional development, ongoing support, and collaboration. Further, these themes were consistent with those found in the literature as necessary for school leaders support.

All the participants understood the importance of professional development and thought that it should be continual. The difference was in the types of professional development they saw as a need. In the first-year as Induction teachers, the participants in this study were required to participate in monthly after school sessions of professional development which assisted them with being prepared for the first week of school, writing long-range plans and unit work samples, and preparing for the formal evaluation. Some felt the sessions were meaningful, and others felt the sessions were non-productive. Many envisioned the professional development would provide them with a “toolbox” of instructional strategies to use in their classrooms that would be specific to the population of students in which they taught. However, that was rarely the case. There were short
segments of opportunities during the professional development sessions for open
dialogue where participants could share their concerns and the problems they were
facing, but because the trainings and topics of discussion were already outlined,
participants felt they did not receive solutions to their problems at these Induction
professional development trainings.

Ongoing support was mentioned consistently by each of the participants. Each
participant was assigned an Induction mentor at the school site, and there was a district
Induction leader over the Induction program. Mentors were expected to observe
participants monthly and provide the participants with feedback and resources needed.
Beyond this support many of the participants thought it would have been helpful to have
a notebook or some sort of cheat sheet that addressed things they may need throughout
the year.

Several Induction participants saw support as receiving constructive feedback.
Several participants would have liked to have Induction mentors model strategies on how
to differentiate instruction. They also would have liked to have professional
developments on effective classroom management strategies for continuous and ongoing
support. The Induction teacher participants were consistent with the literature on the need
for ongoing support and collaboration with other professionals in their buildings and
district.

Collaboration emerged as a major theme when the discussion centered on teacher
preparation programs and the district’s Induction program. Current educational reforms
require comprehensive, meaningful teacher collaboration (Conley & Cooper, 2013). The
participants in this study strongly supported the need for meaningful collaboration between experienced teachers, mentors and professors, school leaders, and themselves. The participants in this study also supported the need for meaningful relationships and collaboration with students, but experienced difficulty building these relationships.

It can be concluded the participants’ perceptions as to the type of support they needed to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they served differed from the type of support they received from the district’s Induction leader and school leaders. It was also concluded the professional development provided through the Induction program did not provide them the support they needed to teach their current students. Induction teacher participants felt the need for ongoing support and prescribed support in a toolbox of information. Finally, it can be concluded collaboration with experienced, veteran teachers is vital to the success of first-year classroom teachers.

**Researcher Conclusions**

After conducting a thorough analysis of the study’s findings, it has become clear to me that novice teachers are successfully completing pre-service education programs unprepared to meet the academic needs of the students in today’s classrooms. Consistent with the findings of this study it is evident that first-year Induction teachers are lacking the requisite skills needed to successfully teach the students in our public schools. Specifically, they are lacking the skillful pedagogical competences needed to both teach and motivate diverse populations of students. Although well versed in content specific knowledge and areas of needed expertise, these novice teachers lack the skillset and growth mindset that is much needed to accomplish the daunting task of teaching,
empowering, and equipping black and brown children of color, that are in many cases children of poverty.

When asked to reflect on their pre-service education programs to determine what prior knowledge, background, or theoretical frameworks they were able to draw from to assist them with meeting the needs of the diverse population of students in which you currently teach, none of the participants mentioned any formalized training in frameworks such as diversity, multiculturalism, culturally relevant pedagogy, or culturally responsive teaching. Only one participant mentioned taking a course called Diversity. This finding has serious implications for the future of the teaching profession. One of the guiding principles of Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant pedagogy is helping students choose and experience academic success, yet according to the findings of this study, many novice teachers are failing in helping their students achieve this task which is ultimately the primary purpose of the teaching and learning process. Without this important foundational and guiding principle, students lack an integral fundamental norm needed for success as learners.

Ladson-Billings (2009) argued the trick is to teach students to choose academic success. The findings clearly reveal not only are novice teachers not helping students choose academic success, but that novice teachers do not know how to teach or show their students how to choose academic success. Very little to no training or exposure to such has been provided for them in their pre-service education program, induction program, or in their own levels of preparedness as it pertains to their personal life experiences.
Ladson-Billings’ (2009) remaining two tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy are also absent in many novice teachers’ classrooms: (a) helping students develop and maintain cultural competence and (b) providing students with opportunities to develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of social order (2009). It is vitally important for children to see the relevance in what they are learning. While doing so, it is equally important to provide them with learning opportunities to embrace culture and gain an appreciation for diverse cultures. The findings in this study suggest students in today’s classrooms are given very few opportunities to embrace cultural differences and improve their own cultural competences within the classroom. They are however taught daily to embrace and adapt to the culture of the classroom teacher, which in most instances is grounded in many middle class societal norms.

Today’s culturally and linguistically learners whose life experiences differ from those of their predominantly White teachers create not only a cultural divide but also a cultural disconnect between these relentless students and their frustrated teachers. Novice teachers are not preparing students to be culturally competent because they themselves have not been afforded opportunities in their pre-service training, Induction program training, or own personal experiences to become culturally competent. As a result, they have grown to know or define culture through the behaviors of their students, and because of this interesting dynamic, Ladson-Billings (2011) argued the classroom no longer represents a place where students are taught and expected to learn. It sadly represents a place where bodies are managed and maintaining order becomes the primary task, which creates a harsh implication for the future. Novice teachers walk into learning
environments completely unprepared to manage them which results in failure for both the classroom teacher and the students within the classroom. Behaviors, whether positive or negative, should not be how one grows to understand culture. Behaviors are subjective in nature and should not be used to define cultures or specific groups of people, especially to define children within a classroom setting.

Novice teachers have not been taught how to appreciate, embrace, and cultivate the vast diverse cultures and diversity within their classrooms. They have been traditionally taught a one size fits all approach to teaching and learning that no longer works. For centuries we have attempted to institutionalize education. The findings of this study suggest our pre-service education programs and Induction programs that prepare novice teachers for today’s classrooms have also adopted this non-progressive mantra. Because of this on-going non-progressive cycle, Ladson-Billings (2006) argued we have more than a learning gap; we have an educational debt that is owed to our nation’s children. An historical, economical, political and a moral debt created from years of disservice, social injustice, and deficient thinking.

Now, regardless of who created this debt, today’s classroom teachers and educational leaders are charged with the task of paying down this debt. We have an elected responsibility to all of our children not just to the ones that resemble or behave like us. This mindset is crucial to the developmental and foundational understanding of a teacher’s disposition and philosophy of teaching. The findings in this study reveal pre-service education and Induction programs are spending little to no time allowing novice teachers to examine, reflect, or analyze this concept. Instead, greater influence is being
placed on helping novice teachers examine the role of the traditional classroom teacher through content expertise and student compliance through traditional and historical teacher expectations. Yet, the research clearly shows pre-service education and Induction programs need to assist novice teachers with re-examining their role as the classroom teacher through the lens of paying down an educational debt by teaching students to choose academic success, become bi-culturally competent, and create a safe, equitable learning environment where students can develop a critical consciousness by challenging the status quo (Ladson Billings, 2011). This is the role of today’s classroom teacher within our public school system. Novice teachers need opportunities in their pre-service education programs and Induction programs to examine this notion. After which, they will be able to successfully lead their classrooms with this mindset and disposition by paying back the owed debt and effectively teach and motivate their students to learn and choose academic success.

**Recommendations**

This study was designed as a blueprint for other educators, especially district leaders charged with recruiting, hiring and retaining teachers for today’s classrooms. The recommendations made are reflections of the findings and limitations of the study. The recommendations for future research provide suggestions and ideas for studies that could be conducted to embrace the existing body of research on educational leadership. The recommendations for educational purposes are intended to improve first-year teachers’ skill sets and practices within Induction programs in school districts throughout the nation.
Recommendations for Future Research

The following are recommended for future research:

1. Future research studies should be expanded to include participants based on regions. This study focused on the thoughts and perceptions of Induction teachers as a whole. It would helpful to include participants from other states to determine if commonalities exist in perceptions based on different geographic locations. The qualitative case study design used in this study could be duplicated to gauge a larger perspective. Studies involving multiple states and multiple participants could allow for further data analysis that a study with a limited number of participants cannot.

2. It is recommended comparative research be conducted on male and female Induction teachers. This study had 4 out of 13 participants who were male. It would be interesting to conduct two mini case studies. Then compare the responses of males to that of females to see if their perceptions of the program were different. Ultimately, this research will add to the existing body of knowledge on the underrepresentation of males in the teaching profession.

3. It is recommended a qualitative case study or a narrative inquiry research be conducted on the second year for those teachers that failed Induction I and were given an opportunity by the district to continue teaching under an Induction II contract. The focus of this research would be on the training of the Induction II participants to investigate the differences between the two programs.
4. Just as men and women do not share a common set of experiences, neither do white women and women of color (Brunner & Grogan, 2007). For this reason, another possible avenue for future research is to compare the lived experiences of women of color with the lived experiences of white women who are in the Induction program. This qualitative research study could build on existing research to expand deeper and more complex knowledge of the success rate of women teaching in diverse populations. As is the same with white men and men of color.

5. It is recommended research be conducted on teacher training programs and their focus on instructional strategies for teaching children in poverty and diverse populations. In this same sense, the student teaching experience should also be included in this study.

6. It is recommended quantitative research be conducted with an Induction I group using the emerging themes from this research. The themes were classroom management, culture shock, expectations, preconception and bias, preparedness, relationships, communication, diversity, instructional knowledge, professional development, ongoing support, and collaboration. Themes that are further found consistent with this study should be included in an Induction training program for this district.

7. It is recommended research be conducted on the mentors of the Induction participants to examine the effectiveness of the relationship. It would be helpful to
understand the relationships that exist between those who complete the program versus those who were not successful.

8. It is recommended second year Induction II teachers and school leader participate in a naturalistic inquiry to examine the lived experiences from both perspectives. While I believe the Induction teacher needs ongoing and continual support, I am also concerned about the perceptions of the school leaders and how support is perceived from the top.

**Recommendations for Educational Practices**

The recommendations for educational practices are meant to improve first-year teachers’ skill sets and practices within Induction programs in school districts throughout the nation:

1. The evidence from this study supports the premise that specialized training is necessary for teaching diverse populations. It is recommended the school district in this study work with area colleges and universities to embed tenets of culturally relevant and responsive teaching and other multicultural pedagogies into their coursework, so novice teachers are afforded opportunities to learn more diversity strategies to more effectively meet the academic needs of their students. Investing time in this process will increase the effectiveness of the first-year teachers, improve student performance, and potentially decrease the first-year teacher retention rate.

2. The evidence from this study supports the importance of re-evaluating the Induction program based on the experiences of the participants in this study. Six
of the 13 Induction participants did not successfully complete the Induction I program. That is approximately a 46% failure rate. Conducting an exit interview with the participants who are repeating the program and those leaving the district regarding their experiences during the Induction year could provide additional data to support changes to the Induction I program.

3. The evidence from this study suggests the Induction leader/director of the Induction program should conduct one-on-one conferences with Induction teachers based on individual needs in an effort to create a personalized program in coordination with their assigned mentors to support the Induction teachers.

4. The evidence from this study suggests that a formalized program tailored to needs be created to support teachers in their second year of teaching as they undergo formal evaluation. Having a mentor who works one-on-one with the teacher would be recommended based on their identified needs and not necessarily their content areas.

5. The evidence from this study suggests that Induction teachers build relationships with students and their families in diverse communities. The teachers need support, training, and guidance on how to build and sustain these relationships.

**Implications**

Research consistently shows when teachers feel as though they do not have the requisite training to teach children in challenging environments with high-poverty, low-performing schools they leave the school district (Darling-Hammond, 2010a; Laine, 2008). Therefore, it is of the utmost importance school districts work to improve training
programs for novice teachers. Effective Induction programs have been shown to increase retention rates in low performing areas (Darling-Hammond, 2010b).

The Induction program in this study appeared to be organized with human support; however, there could be negative implications for not making recommended changes to the Induction program from those surveyed at the completion of the program. There was an Induction leader who facilitated the Induction program under the leadership and guidance of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. There were trained Induction mentors for each Induction teacher within the district. The yearly agenda appeared to be clearly outlined with topics linked to the concerns and needs of the district. Yet, many of the participants did not feel as if the program was effective because it was not applicable to their ever growing and changing needs as first-year teachers. These comments were heard from those who successfully completed the program, those leaving the district, and those invited to remain in the district to undergo Induction II. Failing to listen to the voices of those who have had success in the program as well as those who were not successful could potentially weaken the program and have implications for more teachers not successfully completing their Induction year of teaching.

Induction programs for first and second year teachers were intended to provide beginning teachers with support and guidance within the profession. Straying away from that premise could have strong implications for educational failure. It is important for teacher preparation programs to equip their students with the necessary skills to teach children of all colors, especially children of color. According to the United States census
Whites made up more than half of the population living in poverty areas. However, they comprised a higher proportion of those living outside such areas. This was not the case for Blacks and Hispanics. Four times as many Blacks and three times as many Hispanics lived in poverty areas than those who lived outside of them. As such, it is important for first-year teachers to be mindful of the locations of their first teaching experiences in order to be better prepared to teach the populations they serve. It is equally important for institutions of higher education to implore this same notion when choosing locations for students to complete practicum hours and student teaching experiences.

**Reflection and Researcher as Instrument**

From the beginning, this study has charted multiple paths surrounding Induction teachers. The study, starting as nothing more than an idea, leads to findings that truly concerned me as an educational leader. The study revealed conclusions that support the literature and revelations that afforded me an opportunity to reflect and rethink my practice as an educational leader in today’s public schools. As I continued to research more about Induction teachers, I quickly realized my findings have been a part of the educational challenge for centuries, and mirrored that of teachers during the 19th century. During the Second Great Awakening, the Educational Reform Movement started a push for a more literate society (Brinkley & Appleby, 2012). As such, teachers were recruited to teach throughout the nation, including South Carolina.

Since the dawn of public education, educators have continually called attention to the challenges encountered by beginning teachers. Much like the early years, teachers traveled across the country to teach students in an environment far different from the land
they lived. The problems still exist today, whereas these teachers were not products of the community in the study. As such, there were cultural differences that presented a problem with instruction and discipline behaviors. While the discipline may have been less severe, nevertheless, classroom management was an issue.

As I reflect on the findings and conclusions and think about the beginning teachers who will continue to grace the halls of our nation’s schools, I am convinced the problem is about understanding and accepting cultural differences, particularly as it relates to race relations in America. I believe, now more than ever, the problem is larger than schools focusing on race in order for schools to change. A national movement must happen that uses critical race theory (Degaldo & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2013) which supports the need to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power. Ongoing support for Induction teachers must continue if we are to win the war of illiteracy, but it will not be possible in America if we do not first address the issue of diversity.

As it pertains to the participants in this study, many grew up in similar small rural towns, but none were products of poverty. As a matter of fact, most had a good family life with engaged parents that were active in their communities. Most of the participants were overachievers as students in school and many recognized at an early age their interest in the teaching profession. Interestingly, 6 of the 13 participants obtained certification to teach in their current teaching assignments from master degree programs: 5 master of arts in teaching and 1 master of education in teaching.
The participants’ experiences in this study remind me of my own professional experiences as a novice teacher. I remember experiencing daily frustrations as I too entered my first classroom with great expectations for learning. I too, an overachiever reared in a middle class home, felt very prepared to meet the academic needs of my students. However just as the teacher participants in this study, it was not until I actually entered the classroom that the students showed me quickly I was not as prepared as I had thought. Barriers, such as classroom management, the need to build meaningful relationships for learning, a culture shock, expectations, my own preconceptions and biases, and a lack of training stood between my students learning and me teaching. Unknown to me at the time, I attribute the success my students and I experienced to Ladson-Billings’ culturally relevant pedagogy. It helped my students and me break through the barriers we encountered. It introduced us to a new culture of learning.

Because of the age of accountability, instructional leaders, particularly in areas with high percentages of poverty rates and students of color, are tasked with equipping today’s classrooms with highly skilled professionals who are able to differentiate and individualize instruction for each and every learner using research based theories, concepts, and practices that promote and increase the academic achievement of their learners. Demands for this increased accountability necessitate an intervention of some form. Schools across the nation are faced with the enormous task of providing continual support and professional development for classroom teachers who work daily with the growing number of black and brown children in our public school system (Darling-Hammonds 2010). Darling-Hammond (2010a) further asserts, “For teacher education,
this is perhaps the best of times and the worst of times. It may be the best of times because so much hard work has been done by many teacher educators over the past two decades to develop more successful program models…. It may equally be the worst of times because there are so many forces in the environment that conspire to undermine these efforts.”

I live this reality on a daily basis as a building level principal. I see firsthand the struggles of novice teachers as they attempt to facilitate meaningful learning for the students in their classrooms, yet they lose so much instructional time correcting behaviors and attempting to keep students on task. They struggle with maintaining a strong presence in the classroom so meaningful teaching and learning can take place. As a school principal, my experiences peaked my interest and led me to wanting to know more about Induction teachers’ perceptions of their readiness to meet the academic needs of their students. My experiences led me to wanting to examine their pre-service education programs to see what, if any, components of culturally relevant and responsive teaching or alike pedagogies existed within their pre-service training. Lastly, my experiences have led me to wanting to know how I, as an instructional leader, can support and assist novice teachers with the overwhelming task of teaching our nation’s children. While holding fast to the words of the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, “If not us, who? If not, when,” I have discovered as an instructional leader in today’s public school system, it is my duty, it is my obligation, it is my debt, it is my cross to bear, it is my burden, and full responsibility to be the bridge over troubled water aiding, assisting, and equipping today’s classroom teachers with the necessary skills, training, and
opportunities for growth needed to meet the academic needs of the students in which they are tasked with teaching. I hear their cry. I answer their call. I am their voice. I am their advocate. For the sake of my students and the future of our nation, it is my daily mission to be that bridge over troubled water.
Appendix A

Initial Email Invitation

Good Afternoon Mr./Mrs. XXXXX,

On February 24th I visited your Induction Program professional development training talked with you about participating in a study I am conducting as a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Clemson University. For this study, I am very interested in your experience as a first-year Induction teacher and your perception of your readiness/preparedness to meet the academic needs of the students in which you are currently teaching. I am also interested in your collegiate experience and your opinion of how it has prepared and equipped you for your current teaching assignment.

Your experiences will inform research and assist instructional leaders in their efforts to continuously support first year teachers with meeting the academic needs of their students.

May I have about 30 minutes during your planning period one day soon to talk with you? What day(s) and time are convenient for you?

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to talking with you soon.

Lacresha R. Byrd
Appendix B

Invitation Letter

Dear ____________________:

My name is Lacresha Byrd and I’m a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at Clemson University. For my dissertation topic, I am conducting research that will examine Induction Teachers’ Perspectives Regarding their Efficacy towards Meeting the Needs of Diverse Populations of Students. The study will be conducted under the guidance of Dr. Rob Knoeppel, faculty member at Clemson University.

I am interested in your experiences as a first-year Induction teacher and your perception of your readiness/preparedness to meet the academic needs of the students in which you are currently teaching. I am also interested in your collegiate experience and your opinion of how it has prepared and equipped you for your current teaching assignment. Your experiences will inform research and assist instructional leaders in their efforts to continuously support first year teachers with meeting the academic needs of their students. Your participation will involve one informal interview that will last about 30 minutes. This research has no known risks.

Please know that I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. Your identity or personal information will not be disclosed in any publication that may result from the study. All interview data will be stored in a secure location and destroyed upon the conclusion of the study.

Please keep in mind that your participation is voluntary. If you have any additional questions, regarding the study, please contact me (lbyrd@laurens55.org), or Dr. Knoeppel (rck@clemson.edu). Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your consideration in participating in my study.

Sincerely,

Lacresha R. Byrd
Appendix C

Informed Consent

Information about Being in a Research Study
Clemson University

**Induction Teachers' Perspectives Regarding their Efficacy towards Meeting the Needs of Diverse Populations of Students**

**Description of the Study and Your Part in It**

Dr. Rob Knoeppel and Lacresha R. Byrd are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Knoeppel is a professor and the Chair of the Educational Leadership department of the Department of Educational and Organizational Leadership Development at Clemson University. Lacresha is the doctoral student at Clemson University running this study with the help of Dr. Knoeppel. The purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions of first year Induction teachers’ readiness, academic preparation, and further needed support to meet the academic needs of the diverse students they are now teaching.

Your part in the study will be to answer a series of questions in an interview setting pertaining to your experiences as an Induction teacher. With your permission, we would like to audio record the interviews. At this time, we will request to see copies of your lesson plans and/or long-range plans. The interview will be conducted by Lacresha Byrd and will take place in your classroom with your building principal’s knowledge of the study. Follow-up interviews may be requested.

It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete the interview process if selected.

**Risks and Discomforts**

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

**Possible Benefits**

Findings rendered in this study will benefit the body of educational research outlining ways in which school leaders can assist Induction teachers with administrative support and professional development as it pertains to the academic success of their students. Classroom teachers and educational leaders can benefit from this study.
**Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will take measures to ensure and protect your identity privacy, and confidentiality. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. All participants and locations will be protected using pseudonyms as findings are rendered and published. Data will be destroyed upon the completion of the study.

**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 Dr. Rob Knoeppel at Clemson University at 864-656-1882.

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 864-656-0636 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.

A copy of this form will be given to you.

**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 printed name: _________________________________________________

Participant’s signature: ________________________________ Date: _______________
Appendix D

Interview Protocol

Interviewee: ___________________________  Date: 
Interviewer: Lacresha Byrd  Setting: 

Interview Protocol

Pre-Interview Question
Let's start by having you say a bit about your own background—how you grew up, your own schooling experiences, and why did you decide to become a teacher?

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of first year Induction teachers’ readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
2. What is the perception of first year Induction teachers about the aspects of their teacher preparation programs in helping them to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?
3. What assistance do first year Induction teachers perceive they need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students they are now teaching?

Interview Questions

1. What is your perception of your readiness to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students you are now teaching?
   a. When you met your students for the first time, how prepared did you feel to meet their academic needs?
   b. Now eight months later, how prepared do you feel to meet the academic needs of your students?
   c. How would you describe the relationship between you and your students?
   d. What role does your own preconceptions and biases play in your perception of your readiness?

2. What is your perception of aspects of your teacher preparation programs in helping you to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students you are now teaching?
   a. Thinking back to your experiences in your teacher education program, what prior knowledge, background, or theoretical frameworks are you able to draw
from to aid you in meeting the needs of the diverse population of students in which you currently teach?

b. Let’s talk about your student teaching experience. How diverse was your student teaching assignment? Did it prepare you for your current teaching assignment? If so, how?

c. How does diversity and the diverse cultures of your students impact your classroom?

3. What assistance do you perceive you need from school leaders to meet the academic needs of the diverse population of students you are now teaching?

   a. What type of professional development do you need to help prepare you to teach the diverse population of students in which you teach?
   b. What support from your school administration do you need to help you teach the diverse population of students in which you teach?
   c. How has your district’s Induction program help prepare you to teach the diverse population of students in which you teach?
   d. How do your interactions with your Induction mentor help prepare you to teach the diverse population of students in which you teach?
REFERENCES


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