The socialization of central office administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction

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THE SOCIALIZATION OF CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS
RESPONSIBLE FOR CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

by

Richard H. Christie

A DISSERTATION
Presented to the Faculty of
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For the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Under the Supervision of Dr. Gary Hartzell

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DISSERTATION TITLE

The Socialization of Central Office Administrators Responsible for Curriculum and Instruction

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In particular, I want to thank Dr. Gary Hartzell, chair of my committee who was appropriately demanding and incredibly supportive through this entire process. Also, I appreciate the assistance and support of committee members Dr. Laura Schulte, Dr. Larry Dlugosh, and Dr. Neal Grandgenett.

Most of all, I want to thank my wife Ardeth for her constant love and patience throughout my program of study. Also, I appreciate the constant support and encouragement from my children Kelly, Tori, Jason, and Brandi. I am most indebted to my entire family for their faith in my ability to see this study through to completion.
The purpose of this study was to investigate whether new central office administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCI) experience the encounter stage as described in stage model socialization theory. It sought to identify, categorize, and describe on-the-job experiences ARCIs encounter during the first year of service to a school district.

This qualitative investigation was framed by received theory and utilized modified grounded theory to structure the interview protocols. The received theory was stage model socialization theory. The investigation focused on its applicability in a previously unexamined situation.

The subjects of this study were ten public school central office ARCIs selected through purposeful sampling. Data for this study were collected utilizing 25 questions through three interview sessions (fall, winter, and spring) using a standardized open-ended format. Following the constant comparison protocol, the data from all three interviews were combined for the final data analysis.
The picture of first-year ARCIs that emerged from this study is one of people who experience both positive and negative surprise during job entry. These surprises included:

- the gap between expectations and reality,
- adapting to a new culture,
- developing relationships,
- coping with time pressures,
- addressing ambiguity,
- addressing conflict with teachers and administrators,
- and tension between the existing culture and fulfilling the need for creativity.

The most significant surprises boiled down to the evolution of working relationships with teachers, principals, administrators, and the superintendent. When ARCIs were more successful in developing positive relationships, the encounter period was negotiated more quickly.

It was apparent after analyzing the data collected during this study that sense-making, which depended on the ARCI gathering adequate information, is the primary strategy for addressing surprise. Newcomers would benefit from a formalized and personalized induction process that responds to the immediate needs of ARCIs.

Moving through the encounter period is not accomplished in even increments. It can be described as a combination of ups, downs, and plateaus. An ARCI thus informed may experience less ambiguity.
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Chapter I

Introduction

It is generally accepted that newcomers to any organization must experience a period of adaptation wherein they learn what their specific role in that organization will be. They come to understand the values, norms, and required behavior that permit them to participate as members of the organization (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Regardless of an individual's previous experiences, each job change is a new undertaking; therefore, it appears that some manner of support is essential for a successful transition. The process of providing support that allows a new employee to perform the required job functions satisfactorily and to form good working relationships with the other individuals in the new organization or work group is referred to in the literature as organizational socialization.

Newcomers assuming an initial position or insiders transferring to a position in the same organization often are provided little support in that transition. They are overwhelmed by the culture of the organization (Wanous, 1980) and experience some degree of surprise or role shock (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Unfortunately, this sink-or-swim, learn-on-your-own approach to organizational entry often results in a high attrition rate among new employees. On the other hand, effective organizational socialization occurs when newcomers develop a commitment to the organization (Kotter, 1973; Wanous, 1980). Because research shows that the socialization process plays a major role in determining job satisfaction, longevity, and productivity, it is imperative that it is a positive experience for the newcomer. Like every newcomer, beginning central office...
administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCI) must also go through the socialization process when they assume a new position in a school district. Both their initial and long-range success are directly affected by the socialization process they experience during the first year in the job.

Researchers often approach the study of organizational socialization by defining the steps involved in making the transition from newcomer to fully socialized insider in terms of stages (Fisher, 1986; Wanous & Colella, 1989). The stage models, which typically contain three stages but can have as many as five, are most frequently based on when particular events occur rather than on the simple passage of time. Generally, the first stage is labeled “anticipatory” socialization (Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1980), the second stage is labeled “encounter” (Fisher, 1986), and the final stage is labeled “role management” (Feldman, 1976b). It is in the second stage, which is the focus of this study, that the newcomer actually sees what the organization is like and makes the transition from outsider to insider (Louis, 1980). In other words, it is during the second stage that an ARCI new to the job acquires organizational understanding and develops the relationships necessary for his or her success.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the newcomers to the position of ARCI experience the encounter stage of the socialization process.

Definition of Terms

The Central Office Administrator Responsible for Curriculum and Instruction (ARCI) is the individual at the district-level whose primary responsibility includes the
supervision of curriculum and instructional programs. The job titles commonly include the following: assistant or associate superintendent, director or supervisor of curriculum and/or instructional services, curriculum coordinator, or coordinator of instructional services or education (Pajak, 1989).

Socialization is the process by which an individual adapts to a specific environment (Louis, 1980).

Organizational Socialization is the process by which an individual acquires the knowledge, values, and behaviors necessary for a specific organization (Fisher, 1986).

Stage Model Theory is the process by which an individual makes the transition from a newcomer to a fully socialized member of an organization in terms of stages (Wanous, 1980).

Encounter Stage is the second stage of stage model theory whereby an organizational newcomer begins to master the new job and develops interpersonal relationships necessary for success (Feldman, 1976a). Also, the period of time in which anticipations and expectations encounter reality (Louis, 1980). Generally, although it may last longer in some cases, this is the first year on the job.

Surprise refers to the unexpected and unintended situations a newcomer faces during organizational socialization (Louis, 1980).

Sense-Making refers to the process by which a newcomer assigns meaning to surprise (Louis, 1980).

Grounded Theory is theory that is derived from data that have been systematically gathered and analyzed through a specified process. The researcher begins with an area of
study and allows the theory to emerge from the data. A researcher usually does not begin with a preconceived theory in mind, unless his or her purpose is to extend existing theory. This study is one of these exceptions: stage model theory is being treated as a received theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Received Theory is the process whereby a researcher takes existing theory and introduces that theory into a new situation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The Research Question

The grand tour question for this study was: Does an ARCI experience the encounter period as predicted by stage model theory during the first year of employment? The goal was to explore

1. If the experiences of beginning ARCIs fit the pattern described by stage model socialization theory in the encounter period, and, if so,

2. The nature of the surprises that socialization theory predicts will be embedded in those experiences.

Methodological Outline

This was a qualitative study rooted in grounded theory. Ten public school districts’ ARCIs primarily from Iowa were interviewed over the course of the school year. One ARCI from California and one from Washington were also included in order to determine if their experiences were similar to ARCIs from Iowa. These interviews provided the data necessary for answering the questions posed by the researcher.

Limitations and Delimitations

1. This study was confined to a sample of ten first-year ARCIs.
2. The sample was limited to individuals who were in the first year on the job and were from school districts primarily in Iowa but also included one from California and another from Washington.

3. The sample was limited as it did not include ARClS from large urban inner-city school districts.

4. The study was limited in scope: it only examined the encounter stage of the socialization process.

5. The findings in this particular qualitative study could be subject to other interpretations.

6. The data are all self-reported.

7. There was no intent to generalize the study’s results since it was an exploratory study guided by received theory. Generalization would require a later large-scale survey where questions are based on the themes generated by this study.

8. The researcher’s prior experience as an assistant superintendent could have influenced how data were interpreted.

9. The researcher’s current position as a superintendent could have had an effect on how ARClS responded to certain interview questions because of established relationships between the researcher and the superintendent in the interviewee’s district.

Significance of the Study

The need for and the significance of the study become apparent when a few factors are set forth. First, nearly a third of all current administrators are eligible to retire over the next 5 years (Barker, 1996; Chapman, 1997; Kasper, 1997; Volp, 1995).
Secondly, few educators are actively pursuing administrative positions (Barker, 1996; Chapman, 1997; Harris, 1987; McCormick, 1987). Finally, individuals interested in pursuing an administrative position tend to follow a linear path to the role of ARCI, which essentially begins with a teaching position, is followed by a principalship and eventually leads to a central office position (Bradley, 1983; Chapman, 1997; Freeman, 1991; Harris, 1987). As a result, fewer individuals are aspiring to central office positions (Barker, 1996; McAdams, 1998). Therefore, it is imperative that districts appropriately socialize ARCI's as a means of decreasing the likelihood of attrition in that position.

Implications for practice. The significance of this study also emerges when one considers that by acquiring more knowledge about the socialization of ARCI's, school districts will gain specific information regarding the socialization of those individuals, thereby increasing both the chance for success and longevity in the position. Given that the ARCI performs a number of roles and completes a variety of tasks that are at times ambiguous, it is imperative that an ARCI new to a district learns that district’s values, norms, and culture if he or she is to succeed. Socialization is the means by which that acquisition of knowledge takes place: it is the critical part of “learning the ropes” (Fisher, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Feldman (1976a) suggests that a gap exists between expectations and actual experience. As a result, several authors mention that both informal and formal socialization occur within the school setting, such as mentoring and networking. To what extent do these processes provide an anchor for sense-making and in turn enable the ARCI to better cope with surprise and uncertainty?
A new challenge facing ARClIs is the recent emphasis at both the state and federal level on accountability legislation, specifically the emphasis on testing. Since the legislation is recent, its impact on practice is yet unknown.

The means of socialization also play a critical role in the establishment of relationships between ARClIs and teachers, principals, and superintendents. Pajak (1989) contends that a good working relationship between the ARCI and the people with whom he or she works is essential to the success of the instructional program. In other words, the importance of successful socialization permeates the system, affecting the people and the programs that are central to every school district.

Implications for research. The importance of this study is also evident due to the lack of research on the topic. Organizational socialization is a topic that has generated considerable theoretical writing but little systematic research. Research on the application of organizational socialization in education is even sparser. There are only a handful of empirical, longitudinal studies of organizational socialization and fewer ethnographic studies (Fisher, 1986). Most of these studies are problematic with regard to design, sample, and data collection methodology (Fisher, 1986). Also, these studies typically examine only a few variables in one setting with virtually no replication (Fisher, 1986). In addition, some of the variables and processes discussed in the theoretical presentations have not been researched at all. Hence, the availability of research data is limited.
Organization of the Study

Chapter II provides a review of relevant and significant research, drawing heavily on Edward Pajak's (1989) book, *The Central Office Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction: Setting the Stage for Success*, which is the quintessential source of information on this complex administrative position. Also included is relevant research relating to the socialization process for ARClS. The specific methodology employed during this study is explained in Chapter III. The rationale for the selection of the qualitative research design, the research approach, a series of interview questions, the sample, and the data collection are also detailed. An analysis of the data is discussed in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V presents a summary of the study, identifies implications for research and practice, and offers conclusions and recommendations.
Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This literature review begins with an examination of what we currently know about the position of central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction. This description establishes the necessary foundation for understanding the socialization required for that particular position. This is followed by a review of the major tenets of current organizational socialization theory, ranging from social tactics to surprise and sense-making, with a focus on stage model theory. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the relevant literature findings and a discussion that outlines the need for further study.

A Description of the Position of Central Office Administrator Responsible for Curriculum and Instruction

Before examining organizational socialization and stage model theory as they pertain to the position of central office administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCIs), it is important to establish a foundation from which to work. An in-depth description of the position is both an appropriate and necessary foundation for understanding the socialization required for the position. Of course, further need for this description is evident in the ambiguity and inconsistencies that surround the position, especially those that surface when comparisons are made across school districts.

Edward Pajak (1989) presents the most comprehensive examination of the ARCI. Pajak (1989) contends that, as far as he can determine, his book *The Central Office*
Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction: Setting the Stage For Success is the only one written specifically about the position, and I could find no evidence to the contrary. Hence, a comprehensive review of his findings is in order. Other researchers who offer support for elements of his findings will also be cited.

It is common practice in public education that all but very small school districts employ an individual whose responsibilities include overseeing curriculum and the instructional program. The professional title from district to district for the individual who occupies this position may vary considerably; hence, there is no consistent pattern. These titles commonly include the following: assistant or associate superintendent, director or supervisor of curriculum and/or instruction, curriculum coordinator, or coordinator of instructional services or education. According to the American Association of School Administrators (1971), Freeman (1991), Hopkins (1980), and Pajak (1989), these differences depend more on the size of the district than on the specific responsibilities associated with the position.

Job Description, Role, Duties

For the purpose of this study, the position of the ARCI is defined as the “individual who is responsible for maintaining and improving the overall instructional program of the school district in which he or she is employed” (Pajak, 1989, p. xii). The American Association of School Administrators (1971) reported that the most frequently delegated function by the superintendent is in the area of curriculum and instruction. The ARCI is often the critical link between teachers and educational materials, practices and
methodologies (Hopkins, 1980; Pajak, 1989).

In the existing literature, both practical and theoretical, there is a lack of an easily described conceptual model for the central office curriculum and instruction role (Hopkins, 1980; Pajak, 1989). On the other hand, the more familiar and delineated positions of teacher, principal, and superintendent are relatively well researched and defined in the literature (Pajak, 1989). This difference appears to be due, in part, to the difficulty in describing the work of the ARCI in precise and measurable terms (Pajak, 1989).

While the job description varies widely, it always includes supervision of instruction and instruction-related tasks, such as revising curriculum, upgrading instructional materials and techniques, facilitating inservice and staff development, planning activities, and selecting and recommending textbooks and teaching materials (Oliva, 1998; Pajak, 1989; Zachmeier, 1990). Other duties usually include preparing reports required by government agencies and participation in budget development. On occasion, responsibility extends to community relations programs, personnel functions, and district publications (Pajak, 1989). And appearing in virtually every job description is the catch-all phase that requires the supervisor to perform “other duties as assigned” (Pajak, 1989).

Pajak (1989) found that the position includes not only diverse responsibilities but also fragmented work schedules. Daily work consists of scheduled events, such as meetings and conferences, as well as unscheduled activities, such as responding to
requests from teachers and parents. As a result, long hours and constant motion typically characterize the position. Studies by Donmoyer and Neff (as cited in Pajak, 1989), Freeman (1991), and Sullivan (1980, 1982) support Pajak’s finding that ARCI’s work schedules are comprised of a variety of brief and fragmented duties (Pajak, 1989).

Because the work of the ARCI is characterized as fragmented, diverse, and ambiguous, it is difficult to clearly and concisely describe the position. As a result, several authors maintain that confusion and uncertainty often surround key issues that affect the supervisor’s role. Developing a useful definition of the role is further complicated by the fact that school organizations are characterized by multiple and shifting goals as well as by weak affiliation among participants (Pajak, 1989). These issues, which are typical of loosely coupled organizations (Peters & Waterman, 1981; Weick, 1979; Zachmeier, 1990), often attain individual interpretation and improvisation (Pajak, 1989). Unfortunately, because understanding of the job role is elusive to the public and some staff, the ARCI often feels vulnerable at budget time (Pajak, 1989).

According to Pajak (1989), the diversity and ambiguity that are an inevitable part of the central office instructional administrator’s job also dictate that much of his or her valuable time and energy will be spent dealing with surprise and making sense of what he or she does. Pajak (1989) concludes that meaning created by these activities is focused upon the core value of providing quality instruction to students, through taking a big picture system-wide broad view, and developing in-depth communication and interaction with the people within the school organization.
The role of the ARCI, therefore, is best described as being aimed at reducing the surprise and uncertainty in the ambiguous and unpredictable reality of schools (Pajak, 1989). According to Pajak (1989), the role requires incumbents to incorporate various tasks into their work schedules, including the following: influence and manage the organizational culture; document student achievement; initiate and facilitate changes and innovations; model professional norms and standards; manage conflict; plan and set goals; secure resources and support; plan staff development, support principals engaged in teacher supervision; change instructional practices; initiate public relation efforts. In addition, the ARCI must maintain a positive working relationship with the instructional staff, principals, and superintendent. The following sections provide a specific and detailed description of the duties a typical ARCI must perform.

Managing the Organizational Culture

Pajak (1989) cites Glickman's (1985) position that curriculum supervision is the "glue" that draws together the discrete elements of instruction at the individual school level and ultimately at the district level. The successful ARCI can often achieve instructional effectiveness by breaking down the isolation of teachers in their classrooms and principals in their schools (Pajak, 1989).

Pajak (1989) found that the most effective approach utilized by successful ARCIs is highly collaborative and emphasizes the "common value of benefiting students through instruction" (p.1). He summarizes the work as "creating meaning around the central value of providing high quality instruction to students" (p.2). In other words, when
supervisors actively engage in developing meaning from the diverse elements with which they work, rather than passively disseminating information to teachers, they provide a purpose and a focus to the people within the system.

**Facilitating Change**

Pajak (1989) points out that the various reform reports, beginning with *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and including other, more recent national reports, such as *Time for Results: The Governors’ 1991 Report on Education* (1986) and *What Work Requires of Schools: A Scan Report for America 2000* (1991), have urged broad, sweeping education reform (i.e. vouchers, merit pay, etc.) as ways of dealing with perceived public school problems. The ARCI, however, is often the advocate for evolutionary change in school districts. The difficulty of introducing change into schools and overcoming well-established instructional practices is well documented in the literature (Pajak, 1989; Zachmeier, 1990). Hence, by arguing for evolutionary change, the ARCI is often a contributor to the stability and continuity of the school organization (Pajak, 1989). But even evolutionary change does not occur without resistance, so the ARCI must overcome the momentum of established practice “by keeping the organization vulnerable to new ideas” (Zachmeier, 1990, p. 76). In order to do so, he or she must stay focused on the changes that positively impact student learning (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Pajak, 1989).

**Documenting Student Achievement**

Developing the evidence required to convince various audiences that districts are
changing and that achievement is improving can be challenging for ARClS. Pajak (1989) points out that in well-funded suburban districts, the administrator only needs to point to test scores (both national norm reference and state criterion reference tests) to justify to the board of education and to the public the value of the instructional program. In these districts, students typically score well above average on the standardized tests. In districts serving large proportions of poor and disadvantaged students, environmental and family factors can influence achievement and negatively impact standardized test scores. In these poor, low-achieving districts, the attention is more frequently focused on alternative methods of assessment and on the technical components of the instructional program, such as the use of technology to assist learning (Pajak, 1989).

Developing Norms and Standards

Norms are broad standards and expectations held by members of the group that dictate what conduct is considered appropriate (Pajak, 1989). Essentially, they are an expression of a group’s values (Pajak, 1989). Of course, it is the leaders of the group who bear the responsibility of establishing and reinforcing norms (Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) found in his research that many successful ARClS talk about the importance of maintaining and modeling consistent professional norms. These norms, which make the supervisor’s expectations both predictable and visible, are primarily focused on maintaining and improving the quality of instruction district-wide (Pajak, 1989). As a result, supervisors cite three broad categories of norms that are necessary for the effective operation of the school district: teamwork, equity, and reciprocity (Pajak, 1989).
Managing Conflict

Pajak (1989) concluded that in order for norms to be maintained, especially those of teamwork, equity and reciprocity, conflict needs to be managed. Research conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (1971) supported Pajak’s findings. Effective ARCIs are aware that in organizations where individuals are allowed to and encouraged to express diverse opinion the result is an openness that creates a more productive organization (Pajak, 1989). In an environment like this, however, conflict is inevitable. To a certain degree, conflict has the potential to be beneficial to an organization (Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) found that for an effective ARCI, conflict is necessary at times for reaching the best solution to a problem as well as for establishing mutual respect and strengthening the norm of teamwork. It can also serve as the foundation from which innovative ideas emerge.

At times it is inevitable that conflict boils over. Because long-term conflict can have a devastating impact on the instructional program, the ARCI must take action (Pajak, 1989). However, the absence of line authority may prevent some administrators from taking direct action that will solve an existing problem (Pajak, 1989). Therefore, effective ARCIs must become skilled, active listeners and mediators (Pajak, 1989).

Planning and Goal Setting

District level planning and goal setting is the role of the superintendent, whereas at the building level, such tasks fall to the principals who work with the teachers (Pajak, 1989). Therefore, Pajak (1989) concludes that successful ARCIs are facilitators and
implementers of goals initiated by others. Hopkins (1980) also found this to be the case. This allows for a sense of ownership of the goals by the people who will be accountable for achieving them. As a result, the role of the ARCI is primarily to facilitate the process of planning and goal setting, including curricular, instructional and programmatic goals, which contribute to the clarity of expectations (Pajak, 1989).

ARCI\'s cite at least three facilitating approaches that seem to achieve success. First, many administrators report that they continuously make suggestions, provide material, and introduce information while allowing the group to develop its own direction (Pajak, 1989). Other ARCI\'s formulate tentative plans based on group discussion, which then are used to initiate further deliberations (Pajak, 1989). Yet others take a "hands off" approach with groups and committees in order for the collective wisdom of the group to prevail (Pajak, 1989). This may entail offering support to efforts that the ARCI may personally disagree with. Interestingly, the ability to facilitate seems to be more critical in larger districts than in smaller ones. Hence, the need for formalized planning can be more a function of the size and complexity of a district\'s organization than of its curriculum and instructional needs (Pajak, 1989).

Securing Resources and Support

Providing resources and support for instructional programs is frequently cited as a duty that central office administrators must fulfill (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Hopkins, 1980; Pajak, 1989; Zachmeier, 1990). For most ARCI\'s this entails making the initial selection of materials and textbooks, particularly in districts
where application is system-wide (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Freeman, 1991; Pajak, 1989). More broadly, support involves providing appropriate instructional materials, information, and ideas to principals and teachers at the school building and classroom level (Freeman, 1991; Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) concludes that this support becomes especially important during periods of change. In fact, he found that it is essential to success. Once initial experience is acquired regarding the implementation of a new curriculum or program, teachers and principals become aware that additional resources are necessary (Pajak, 1989). Pajak concludes that success inevitably raises expectations and invariably makes the staff recognize that the possibilities for curriculum improvement are endless. Unfortunately, the resources used to support improvement are certainly limited (Pajak, 1989).

Securing additional resources to improve the instructional program is a universal preoccupation of central office administrators, even though finance is not usually a responsibility of the position (Pajak, 1989). Regardless of the relative wealth of a district, ARCIs find it difficult to justify spending outside the already substantial amounts allocated to instruction. As a result, ARCIs sometimes rely upon federal and state grants, as well as upon gifts solicited from businesses, foundations, parent-teacher organizations, and booster clubs for additional resources. Some ARCIs spend significant time writing proposals to fund special projects (Pajak, 1989).

Planning Staff Development

Staff development planning is another major job function of ARCIs (American
Association of School Administrators, 1971; Hopkins, 1980; Pajak, 1989). One way the central office administrator can assist principals is to provide support and resources for staff development that ties directly to building-focused, district-wide school improvement efforts (Pajak, 1989). Mechanisms frequently used to plan and implement staff development programs include conducting needs assessments and identifying relevance (Pajak, 1989). Although ARCs can help building-level staff by collecting and distributing information, most enhance staff development through the use of in-service sessions.

Research suggests that in-service training is generally more effective when it is led by in-district personnel and when it is ongoing (Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1983; Pajak, 1989). More importantly, effective in-service training is defined as being relevant and directly applicable to the classroom. In other words, teachers must be provided with information and skills that they believe are pertinent to them (Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1983; Pajak, 1989).

The simple existence of in-service programs and written curriculum guides does not mean that an ARCI is successful (Pajak, 1989); however, supervisors must recognize that the active participation of teachers in the process of staff development and curriculum development ultimately contributes to the internalization of the norm of collective responsibility. When teachers accept collective responsibility for the general quality of instruction, they tend to experience professional growth and, as a result, it is the student who ultimately benefits (Joyce & Showers 1980, 1983; Pajak, 1989). As
teachers accept responsibility for their own professional growth and quality of instruction, they function more as professionals (Pajak, 1989). And when they function as professionals, they are more likely to improve the existing curriculum and experiment with new curriculum (Pajak, 1989).

**Supervising Teachers**

Much of the current literature in the field of instructional supervision focuses on working with inexperienced teachers who are eager to please and generally more responsive to directives from administrators (Pajak, 1989). Research by Berry (1977), Corbett (1983), and O'Neal (1986) supports this conclusion. However, ARCIs contend that the real challenge lies in improving the performance of experienced and capable teachers. Pajak (1989) found that many ARCIs assert that focusing on the majority of able teachers who already work satisfactorily will also be the most productive because of the potential for further professional growth in individual teachers as well as the assurance that the quality of instruction is being maintained.

Supervision in education often involves the direct observation of teachers in the classroom, but Pajak (1989) discovered that successful ARCIs spend very little time directly observing teachers. In fact, Pajak (1989) reports that many ARCIs avoid becoming involved in direct supervision in order to avoid interference with the informal working relationship they have established with the faculty. One action on the part of these administrators that is likely to build mistrust is visibly working with principals to establish documentation for teacher dismissals (Pajak, 1989). For the most part, ARCIs
rely heavily on broader organizational processes, such as staff development and instructional support, as means of supervision because they have the potential to affect larger numbers of teachers and students than individual observation does.

Initiating and Facilitating Innovation

Pajak's (1989) work reveals that one of the most important yet difficult tasks that an ARCI faces is that of convincing teachers and principals to objectively evaluate instructional programs and practices which have been in place for years and honestly consider whether or not they are still relevant and up-to-date. Pajak (1989) concludes that this can be especially challenging if personnel at the building level were deeply involved in the original development of the program or curriculum. Another relevant argument regarding the degree of difficulty in getting people to actually change once the need for change is identified rests in the commitments those people have already made to what is in place. This resistance to change is further complicated by the fact that “decision making groups, as well as individual decision makers, will attempt to justify a decision that has negative outcomes when they, rather than other groups or individuals, are responsible for that decision” (Bazerman, Giuliano, & Appelman, 1984, p. 150). Clearly, defending previously approved projects justifies the quality of earlier decisions. This is important when the people who are currently involved are the same people who created and implemented the same thing that is now believed to be in need of adjustment or change. As Pajak points out, it is apparent that a high degree of commitment to a particular program or curriculum can impact a district’s ability to not only affect change
but also adapt to it (Pajak, 1989).

Often, it is not possible to obtain every teacher’s commitment to a new curriculum or program. The level of commitment, which varies greatly among teachers, can be determined by factors such as those set forth in a study by Bazerman et al. (1984), wherein they found that high-responsibility and low-responsibility subjects differed in three areas: their level of commitment to the initial decision, the relationship between the two decisions, and their confidence in the new decision. Rather than spending time enforcing a new curriculum or program, Pajak (1989) found that successful ARClts prefer to encourage voluntary compliance and to rely on more subtle influences, such as colleague-led staff development, facilitation of the implementation of needed changes, and leading by example. Of course, active participation by teachers in curriculum and staff development increases the likelihood that new curriculum and programs will be successfully implemented.

The Central Office Administrator’s Relationships with Teachers, Principals, and the Superintendent

Teachers

Establishing and maintaining good relationships with teachers is an important aspect of the central office administrator’s position. Some ARClts do not have formal authority over teachers, so they must rely on other means of exercising influence. Pajak (1989) found that even when these administrators have line authority, which is the case in a majority of cases (Hopkins, 1980), they rarely rely on it. Instead, their influence is derived from a combination of sources, including expertise, credibility, respect, and
mutual exchange (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Pajak, 1989). Teachers are more willing to respond positively to ARCI's who are perceived to be skilled and effective facilitators and providers of information and support (Pajak, 1989). The relationship between these administrators and teachers is also strengthened by mutual respect and the development of trust. Pajak (1989) concludes that sincere attempts to understand one another must be made and open lines of communication must be maintained. In addition, ARCI's often cite mutual exchange as an essential component of the teacher-administrator relationship. Although it is never intentionally sought, the reciprocity of services provided by both central office administrators and teachers must exist if the relationship is going to be successful. On a pragmatic level, supervisors exchange resources, information, and credit for involvement and commitment from teachers (Pajak, 1989). For example, teachers may willingly cooperate and participate in curriculum committee and in-service planning in exchange for the opportunity to influence curriculum content and materials selection (Pajak, 1989).

Pajak (1989) concludes that the ARCI's relationship with teachers is often characterized by a delegation of responsibility, which central office administrators for curriculum and instruction commonly say they do not only out of necessity but also as a means of building leadership skills among teachers, especially in the area of instruction. These ARCI's also point out that delegation must be complete, not partial, if the task is expected to be completed and if individual approaches are to be recognized (Pajak, 1989). Since identifying and fostering leadership is an important component of the teacher-
administrator relationship, many districts have institutionalized committee structures on special assignment that focus on both personal and professional growth. These structures provide teachers with valuable mentoring and development programs (Pajak, 1989).

Finally, Pajak (1989), who calls on Burns (1978) for support, found that if relationships with teachers are going to be successful, ARCI's must function as transformational leaders. They must model the core values of the district, which are essentially concerned with the well-being of children, and they must focus teachers on the common goal of serving the instructional needs of children.

Principals

Because most of the literature regarding educational supervision is focused almost exclusively on the relationship between ARCI's and teachers, the relationship between supervisors and principals is generally overlooked. Yet, both the American Association of School Administrators (1971) and Pajak (1989) found that it is essential to an ARCI's effectiveness to establish and maintain a good working relationship with principals. This necessity is due not only to the high level of autonomy generally enjoyed by principals but also to the influence principals wield over what does and does not happen in the building. In other words, ARCI's must have the cooperation of principals if programs of instructional improvement are to succeed. Pajak (1989) concludes that this becomes increasingly difficult when one realizes that many principals prefer to handle their duties without involvement from the central office. In addition, evidence reveals that the independence traditionally associated with the principal's position appears to be waning.
(Pajak, 1989). In certain cases, this may increase resistance to policy as well as the open expression of anger and frustration (Pajak, 1989).

Differences in perspective invariably characterize every central office administrator-principal relationship. Principals are inclined to view decisions affecting students and staff in terms of a single school whereas supervisors tend to consider all the schools in the district when making decisions (Pajak, 1989). As a result, the ARCI spends a great deal of time negotiating or directing principals regarding compliance with policies or decisions made by the state department of education, the board of education, or the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). In their work with principals, most ARCIs see the influence they exert as indirect, facilitative, and performing a service function (Pajak, 1989). Instead of deriving their influence from the formal organization and continually giving orders, which ARCIs tend to view as counter productive, they offer support through resources and encouragement (Pajak, 1989). Most ARCIs also report that they prefer that principals and teachers assume more visible leadership functions in the quest for instructional improvement (Pajak, 1989). In effect, the responsibilities of principals and ARCIs overlap, and when functioning properly, the two positions complement one another, and a solid relationship is established (Pajak, 1989).

According to Pajak (1989), ARCIs must attain an understanding of the principals' responsibilities and concerns, and they must establish credibility in order to build a good working relationship. The credibility of a given ARCI depends on multiple factors, including his or her knowledge, human relation skills, accessibility, advocacy, delegation,
and the willingness to share power. Of course, an ARCI’s credibility is enhanced by prior experience as a principal (Pajak, 1989). Pajak contends that there is no evidence that former principals make better central office administrators; however, it does seem to provide initial credibility with teachers and principals (Pajak, 1989). Most likely, this is due to the fact that previous experience makes an ARCI more aware of the problems and concerns that principals encounter on a daily basis (Pajak, 1989). On the other hand, if the central office administrator is lacking prior experience, credibility can be established by demonstrated competence on the job and by refusing to be intimidated (Pajak, 1989). Trust and mutual respect, which develop from openness and honesty in communication and from sincere attempts to understand one another, also serve to increase credibility (Pajak, 1989).

Once credibility is established, Pajak (1989) discovered that a good working relationship can be maintained only if predictability and reciprocity are constant. Essentially, the best central office administrator-principal relationships are characterized by trust and reciprocity that are grounded in understanding and predictability of expectations (Pajak, 1989). Pajak found that keeping the principal informed regarding the ARCI’s whereabouts and activities alleviates the perception of the administrator as a spy. In addition, ARCIs must encourage principals to think of them as their advocates (Pajak, 1989). Clearly, in order to be successful, a delicate balance between advocacy for principal and loyalty to the superintendent must be maintained (Pajak, 1989). However, the most successful ARCIs know that their loyalty rests primarily with the district as a
whole (Pajak, 1989).

In the typical organizational chart of a school district, the line and staff relationships between ARCIs and principals appears straightforward (Pajak, 1989). The hierarchical level of a job has considerable influence on attitudes, behaviors, and leadership practices (Pelz, 1951). The ARCI is sometimes shown as a line administrator, with direct authority over principals, and in other organizations as a staff assistant to the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). Either way, theorists argue that the bureaucratic paradigm may be overly simplified (Pajak, 1989). Research demonstrates that leaders who are able to influence their own supervisors also have more influence with their followers (Pelz, 1951, 1952). If ARCIs are not line authorities, in order to meet their own obligations and coordinate the implementation of new practices, they must learn what can be obtained from whom and how to do so. If they are not in a line position, they must develop the skill to build power bases, establish the right connections, and maintain positive and productive relationships with those above and below them (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Pajak (1989) found that the greatest flaw lies in the chart’s failure to convey the fair amount of autonomy a principal typically enjoys. This autonomy, which in turn directly affects the amount of control the supervisor has at the local school level, varies considerably from one district to another. Pajak (1989) concludes that even though it is possible for ARCIs with line authority and a mandate from the superintendent to dictate policy to principals, most effective ARCIs avoid such an approach because of its potential to negatively affect good working relationships. In fact, Pajak’s (1989) work reveals
almost universal principal resentment to an authoritative approach. The approach that causes the least friction and helps secure cooperation and compliance is one that encourages principals to be actively involved in decisions that affect instruction (Pajak, 1989). Giving principals the opportunity to discuss or even to modify a new policy before it is implemented not only increases the likelihood that the principal will actively support it but also decreases the isolation of local schools from the central office (Pajak, 1989).

In order to form a good working relationship with principals, Pajak (1989) also concludes that ARClS emphasize a team approach to instructional improvement. Without the principal’s cooperation, improvement is difficult. When principals openly resist, improvement is nearly impossible (Pajak, 1989). In other words, principals can prove to be major obstacles when it comes to implementing policies and programs that effect change and improvement in their schools (Pajak, 1989). Again, one way to avoid resistance is to secure the cooperation and involvement of principals by formally extending responsibility for certain aspects of the district’s instructional program and curriculum (Pajak, 1989).

Of course, teamwork becomes equally important when considering the issue of power and how it affects principals, especially in their relationships with supervisors and teachers (Pajak, 1989). By maintaining open lines of communication, ARClS can reduce the threat principals may potentially feel with the empowerment of teachers (Pajak, 1989). At the same time, a teamwork approach may also reduce the natural “two against
one" coalitions that may form in this three-position relationship (Pajak, 1989, p. 139). These natural coalitions seem to be reinforced by the popular dyadic models of classroom supervision in which it is assumed that the teacher and central office administrator comprise the fundamental social unit that effects change. Pajak found that a "triadic model of instructional supervision in which influence is shared among supervisors, principals, and teachers" (Pajak, 1989, p. 138) is perhaps more appropriate. Ideally, the relationship among these three positions would be characterized by a shared responsibility for improving instruction (Pajak, 1989). Such a relationship, one based on teamwork, should expedite school improvements.

Superintendent

Because most superintendents are more comfortable with business matters (Glass, 1992), the responsibilities and duties regarding curriculum and instruction are almost always delegated (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Bredeson, 1996). As reported by Hopkins (1980), Benford (1969) found that most superintendents could do a better job if they delegated those responsibilities, whereas Chase (as cited in Hopkins, 1980) reported that 35% of the superintendents in his study indicated that their greatest need for an assistant was in the area of curriculum and instruction. Regardless, it is the still the superintendent who is ultimately responsible for this area (Zachmeier, 1990).

Pajak (1989) determined as a result of his research that a good working relationship between the superintendent and ARCI is essential to the success of the
instructional program. Because the positions of superintendent and the central office administrator are seemingly interchangeable at times, it is not surprising that an ARCI is commonly asked to stand in as the acting superintendent when the need for one arises. Of course, a close working relationship with the superintendent makes this task easier for that administrator (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Hopkins, 1980; Pajak, 1989).

Pajak (1989) found that although similar in various aspects, the two positions obviously differ in many ways. First of all, in most states the superintendent's position is established by law, and state codes often confer legal authority along with specific duties. Essentially, this means that the superintendent is ultimately responsible for all components of the district and is frequently the center of conflict and controversy (Blumberg, 1985). In most cases, the superintendent is very much the visible symbol of the school system in the community. In contrast, the position of ARCI is less clearly defined, less visible, and less understood than that of the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). Therefore, Pajak's work revealed that it is crucial for the ARCI to clearly establish a professional identity based upon specified areas of responsibility.

Pajak (1989) discovered that a division of responsibilities between the superintendent and ARCI commonly occurs because the superintendent focuses on "outward" elements, or problems of "external adaptation" (Schein, 1984, p. 9), whereas the central office administrator focuses on "inward" elements, or problems of "internal integration" (Schein, 1984, p. 9). The superintendent's attention is mainly focused on
elements in the school system's environment, such as political and financial matters (Pajak, 1989). Because of this external focus, much of the superintendent's audience consists of parents and taxpayers who are concerned about the education of their children as well as the efficiency of the schools (Pajak, 1989). As a result, the superintendent's concerns extend beyond the perceptions and beliefs of educators to the perceptions and beliefs of the whole community. The attention of the ARCI, on the other hand, tends to be directed inward, and the focus tends to be on the instruction of students. The task of managing the problems of internal integration also implies that the ARCIs strictly concern themselves with the perceptions and beliefs of the educators as well as the relationships among teachers, principals, and central office employees.

Pajak (1989) further clarifies the difference between the superintendent and the ARCI by examining their responsibilities in terms of the concepts of "image" and "vision." Essentially, the superintendent's role involves projecting and promoting a positive external image of the school district while securing and maintaining support for the district in the community (Pajak, 1989). The role of the ARCI, however, is concerned with developing and maintaining a positive internal and collective vision that provides a sense of purpose and cohesiveness for the teachers, principals, and other central office administrators (Pajak, 1989; Zachmeier, 1990).

In order for an effective working relationship to be maintained, the American Association of School Administrators (1971) and Pajak (1989) found that the superintendent and ARCI must be in close contact with one another. Not only does close
contact allow for a good working relationship, it also ensures consistency and functional interdependence regarding the external image and the internal vision. Of course, there are a number of additional characteristics identified by Pajak (1989) that make a sound relationship possible:

- informality with a high degree of trust and openness,
- continuous and open dialogue,
- the drive to avoid problems,
- maintaining a “team in which both individuals complement each other fully” (p.167),
- keeping difference of opinion private,
- keeping the superintendent well informed regarding organizational change and innovation,
- the complete delegation of responsibility by the superintendent without the loss of involvement,
- using the superintendent as a reality check against which new ideas can be tested,
- ongoing and consistent encouragement by the superintendent, and
- the availability and use of financial resources.

In most cases, the ARCI serves at the pleasure of the superintendent. Interestingly, the superintendent’s relationship with the board of education also has an impact on the degree of success the ARCI experiences (Pajak, 1989). If the
superintendent is respected by the board, the job of the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction is made easier because it is likely that the division line between policy and administration is clear (Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) found that in cases where the superintendent lacks influence with the board, lines of authority become blurred, and the ARCI may not be clear regarding which proposals require board approval. In his research, Pajak (1989) describes superintendents that, in advance of a board meeting, informally poll board members regarding issues on the agenda. In these situations, the districts are not only relatively free of superintendent/board conflict, but also free of surprises at board meetings. As a result, the ARCI has both a firm grasp on the line of authority and a good working relationship with the superintendent.

Because of their position and relationship with the superintendents, ARCIs are best situated to observe and assess the realities of the superintendent’s role. Pajak (1989) concludes ARCIs should publicly direct credit for successful instructional programs to the superintendent given the risks usually undertaken by superintendents to implement a new program or curriculum. In many organizations, the superintendent’s role is to protect the organization from political interruption, thereby allowing the instructional program to proceed as designed (Pajak, 1989). In effect, the public attributes the success or failure of the instructional program to the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). Consequently, the ARCI tends to be somewhat invisible to the public (Pajak, 1989). Pajak found that invisibility is common for this administrator given the focus and internal integration and
vision, but this phenomenon has been overlooked by most educational supervision theorists, research, and authors (Costa & Guditis, 1984).

Pajak's (1989) research revealed ARCIs often view their invisibility as inevitable and even necessary for their success; however, they are also acutely aware of the implicit consequences of their invisibility. First of all, because much of the credit for instructional programs is publicly directed to the superintendent, many ARCIs are infrequently recognized for their accomplishments (Pajak, 1989). Also, recent state and federal reports regarding education and reform seem to focus upon the more visible roles of teacher, principal, and superintendent. Therefore, when governors and legislators plan educational reform, the role of the ARCI is frequently overlooked (Pajak, 1989).

One source of invisibility for the ARCI is the intangible nature of the instructional programs, as well as the support that administrator provides (Pajak, 1989). This is especially true in regards to members of the public who have a very limited perception of what goes on in school districts. Through his research, Pajak (1989) determined that a strategy frequently played by these administrators as a means of overcoming invisibility is speaking before various community groups and establishing a relationship with the media in order to make the instructional program more visible. He also found that another strategy that decreases invisibility is taking advantage of opportunities at school board meetings to make instructional presentations. Pajak (1989) concludes, however, that invisibility should not be altogether eliminated but rather recognized and reckoned with since it is part of the reality of the central office administrator's role.
Unfortunately, unwanted visibility of the ARCI can result from involvement in controversial issues (Pajak, 1989). Usually, controversy is avoided because of its ability to negatively affect the ARCI’s influence and success (Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) found that invisibility creates a better chance of survival for ARCI during controversy. After all, it is the superintendent who is usually at the center of controversies and is more likely to lose his or her job (Pajak, 1989). Even during controversy and high turnover among superintendents, the invisibility of the ARCI can insulate that individual and provide an avenue for continuity in the instructional program (Pajak, 1989).

**Introduction to Socialization**

In most organizations, newcomers usually enter singularly or in small numbers. Often they are overwhelmed by the culture and traditions of the new organization (Wanous, 1980) or experience some degree of surprise or role shock (Miller & Jablin, 1991). It is apparent to many human resource professionals that the sink-or-swim, learn-on-your-own approach to organizational entry results in high turnover of new employees for organizations. Darling and McGrath (1983) provided a meaningful analogy when they stated, “When we transplant a growing thing, we exercise care to ensure that the plant does not suffer trauma. Unfortunately, the same care is not always exhibited in the transplantation of people” (p. 16). Therefore, forging links between a new hire and the organization is a critical process that organizations need to develop. An element of the transplanting process for people is often labeled socialization.
Definition of Socialization

Because organizational socialization cuts across other areas of organizational behavior, researchers have defined the concept in multiple ways (Feldman, 1981). Because of this ambiguity, Feldman (1981) has found that research on organizational socialization has been hindered. In the early 1950s, E. W. Bakke (1953) defined socialization simply as “the fusion process of matching a person and an organization” (as cited in Wanous, 1980, p. 168). Nearly 25 years later, Feldman (1981) similarly defined socialization as “the process by which employees are transformed from organizational outsiders to participating and effective members” (p. 309). Succinctly, Louis (1980), Schein (1968), and Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define socialization as the process by which newcomers “learn the ropes” or are “broken in.” As cited by Wanous and Colella (1989), Van Maanen (1976) concludes that socialization of a newcomer into an organization is very complex, and his definition of organizational socialization reflects this complexity: “Organizational socialization refers to the process by which a person learns values, norms, and required behavior which permits him to participate as a member of the organization” (p. 97).

Given this definition, it is evident that socialization is necessary for success. It becomes especially important when one recognizes that each organization’s culture is different, and to a degree in large organizations each division of an organization may have a different culture as well (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988). Hence, there can be “subcultures or organizational segments” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 120).

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An organization’s culture is “its personality and far more than a collection of roles mapped on an organizational chart” (Louis, 1980, p. 232). An understanding of “how we do things and what matters around here” is transmitted through an organization’s culture (Louis, 1980, p. 232). When newcomers experience socialization, they are, in part, learning the culture of an organization (Louis, 1980; Schein, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This is important since “culture is often the glue that holds an organization together” (Schein, 1984, p. 40).

Socialization Theory

Within the broad topic of socialization are numerous theories addressing the socialization of newcomers into organizations. This is due, in part, to the breadth of the socialization topic. Researchers and scholars in multiple fields have tended to focus more specifically on organizational socialization, which is the way employees are socialized into work organizations as opposed to occupational or professional socialization (Feldman, 1976a; Fisher, 1986; Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992; Schein, 1987; Wanous, 1977; Weiss, 1977).

Theorists and researchers clearly make a distinction between professional and organizational socialization. Professional socialization provides the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to become a member of a profession, while organizational socialization provides the knowledge, values, and behaviors necessary for a specific organization (Hart, 1991; Schein, 1987; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Of course, professional and organizational socialization often occur simultaneously during the
induction process (Hart, 1991). However, Hart (1991) found that organizational socialization quickly over-powers professional socialization if the two are in conflict.

Organizational socialization focuses on how organizations change newcomers by teaching organization-specific modes of behaving and thinking, while occupational socialization refers to the inculcation of occupational values and skills that may generalize across organizational settings (Fisher, 1986; Parkay et al., 1992; Schein, 1987; Wanous, 1980). Organizational socialization has been discussed from a number of theoretical viewpoints, including social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Reichers, 1987), person-by-situation interactionism (Reichers, 1987), group development (Wanous, Reichers, & Malik, 1984), social tactics (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), psychological contract (Kotter, 1973), contingency theory (Feldman, 1976a), expectancy theory (Lawler, 1973; Vroom, 1964), conflict resolution (Brown, 1983), newcomer surprise and sense-making (Jones, 1983; Louis, 1980; Wanous & Colella, 1989; Weick, 1979), and stage models (Buchanan, 1974; Feldman, 1976a; Feldman, 1981; Wanous, 1980). In order to fully understand organizational socialization theory, it is important to briefly review the major tenets of selected theoretical viewpoints. A short description of each selected for further review follows.

Social tactics. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) view organizational socialization in broad terms. They assert that learning itself is a continuous and life-long process; therefore, the entire career of an individual can be characterized as a socialization
process. From beginning to end, an individual’s career is a series of upward, downward, and lateral transitions from one job to another.

Of course, the socialization process is most intense upon entering a new organization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The tactics employed by an organization to socialize new members can range from the “sink or swim” method to one of carefully constructed formal socialization through training and orientation sessions (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

It is important to note, however, that Van Maanen and Schein (1979) view social tactics as a conceptual scheme or theory of socialization that will require further testing and research.

**Psychological Contract Theory.** According to his psychological contract theory, Kotter (1973) concludes that when an individual joins a new organization, not only does that individual carry certain expectations of what he or she will receive and be expected to give, but the organization itself also carries corresponding expectations. Because these mutual expectations exist, a “psychological contract” is developed between the newcomer and the organization. Essentially, the psychological contract specifies what the newcomer and the organization expect to give and receive from each other. Of course, the expectations may or may not be the same. The degree of matching or mismatching of expectations also influences how successful socialization of an individual will be. It is important that the newcomer be sensitive to organizational expectations, and that the organization identify the expectations of the newcomer. Therefore, the socialization
process must carefully merge both sets of expectations. Darling and McGrath (1983) added to this concept by arguing that a newcomer often attempts to meet expectations by working long hours to master the work or earn the respect of others, but without appropriate socialization, the newcomer can end up feeling unappreciated.

**Contingency Theory.** Feldman’s (1976a) contingency theory proposes that personal and organizational contingencies significantly impact a newcomer’s socialization. In Feldman’s (1976a) contingency theory, process variables and outcome measures are presented in a stage model structure. Two process variables, realism and congruence, impact socialization at the anticipatory stage of socialization, while at the accommodation stage four process variables are described. These variables include initiation to the task, initiation to the group, role definition, and congruence of evaluation.

At the role management stage (Stage 3), two process variables come into play: resolution of outside life conflicts and resolution of demands made on ARClS (Feldman, 1976a). Feldman (1976a) compares these variables to the outcome measures of mutual influence, general satisfaction, internal work motivation, and job involvement. He conducted research with hospital employees to determine which correlations best explain the relationship between process variables and outcome measures (Feldman, 1976a). He concluded that positive correlations existed between the congruence of evaluation and the initiation to the work group variables. On the other hand, a negative correlation existed between the resolution of conflict demands and the resolution of outside life conflicts variables (Feldman, 1976a).
Feldman (1976a) found that the implications for socialization programs were that the programs may not be achieving some of the results expected of them. Feldman (1976a) concluded that what socialization programs most affect are the outcome measures of general satisfaction which relate to potential turnover and absenteeism while these programs have the least effect on the internal work motivation and job involvement outcome measures.

**Surprise and sense-making.** Louis (1980) found that individuals must cope with “surprise” during their organizational entry experiences. She also suggests that surprise, which represents the unexpected and the unintended situations a newcomer faces, is an inevitable part of joining a new organization. Newcomers often attach meaning to surprises that occur in the new organization based on their experiences in other settings (Louis, 1980). As a result, inappropriate interpretations may result. Louis (1980) concludes that newcomers may make decisions to stay or leave an organization based on feelings resulting from surprises early in the job experience.

In order to cope with surprise, Louis (1980) found that newcomers must go through a process termed “sense-making.” Meaning is assigned to surprise as an outcome of the sense-making process and that “sense made of surprise by newcomers may be incomplete until the newcomer can gather adequate organization, interpersonal, and personal information” (Louis, 1980, p. 244).

**Stage Model Theory & Research**

Due to the fragmentation of the research and the breadth of the topic, it is
impractical to describe in detail all studies and theories on organizational newcomer socialization (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Yet, the various theories already described help provide a general framework from which certain trends emerge. For instance, the concept of describing socialization in terms of stages is a common trend. In their comprehensive reviews of the socialization literature, Fisher (1986) and Van Maanen (1976) both focused on studies of organizational socialization using newcomers and separately found that in addition to descriptive studies and studies that concentrate on the mechanisms through which socialization occurs, many studies employed stage models.

One of the most common approaches to the study of organizational socialization has been to employ stage models which attempt to specify the various steps involved in making the transition from newcomer to fully socialized insider (Fisher, 1986; Wanous & Colella, 1989). Reichers (1987) observed that much of the literature addressing newcomer socialization has focused on stage model theory. In fact, the concept of a stage model is quite common in the social and behavioral sciences, including the fields of economics, psychology, vocational psychology, social psychology, and organizational psychology (Wanous, 1980). The list of researchers and authors that describe socialization in terms of stage models is extensive: Bray (as cited in Wanous, 1980), Bourne (1967), Buchanan (1974), Cohen (1973), Feldman (1976b, 1981), Fisher (1986), Greenfield (1977a, 1977b), Jablin (1984), Miller and Jablin (1991), Katz (1980), Kramer (1989), Louis (1980), Merton (1957), Nicholson and West (1988), Porter, Lawler, and Hackman (1975), Reichers (1987), Schein, (1978, 1984), Van Maanen (1976), Wanous...
Stage model theory describes the transition from a newcomer to a fully socialized member of an organization in terms of stages. Although three stages are most commonly described, some researchers suggest there may be four or five. Stage models are most frequently based on particular events that occur during socialization, but a few classify stages in terms of the passage of time (Wanous, 1980). From a broad perspective, events and time can overlap in stage models (Wanous, 1980).

In the stage model literature, there are seven studies that focus on specific jobs or functions. These descriptive studies include Bourne’s (1967) account of army recruits entering basic training; Bray’s (1978) examination of AT&T managers; Buchanan’s (1974) study of managers of five government agencies and three manufacturing companies; Cohen’s (1973) and Schein’s (1967) examinations of graduate students; Feldman’s (1976a, 1976b) research on newly hired hospital employees; Van Maanen’s (1976) study of police recruits; and Kramer’s (1989) research on job transfers. These works generated descriptive models of how newcomers are socialized upon entering a new organization as well as how organizations could effectively impact the newcomers’ experiences during the first several months on the new job (Fisher, 1986; Wanous & Colella, 1989; Zahrly & Tosi, 1989). Unfortunately, the empirical research testing of these models has been fragmented, sporadic, and incomplete (Feldman, 1976a; Fisher, 1986; Wanous & Colella, 1989; Weiss, 1977).

A basic composite three-step stage model is described by Feldman (1976a), Fisher...
(1986), Jablin (1984), Kramer (1989), Louis (1980), Miller and Jablin (1991), Porter et al. (1975), and Van Maanen (1976), but Wanous and Colella (1989) support the contention that Fisher has provided the most comprehensive reviews of stage models.

**Stage One: Anticipatory Socialization**

The first stage in most three-step stage models is labeled “anticipatory socialization” (Fisher, 1986; Louis, 1980). Generally, this stage encompasses all the learning that occurs before outsiders, who are soon to be newcomers, actually enter the new organization (Feldman, 1976a; Feldman, 1981; Parkay et al., 1992). During anticipatory socialization, outsiders anticipate their experiences in the organization they are about to enter, and they prepare (or not) to undertake change (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988). As a result, the outsiders may have feelings of anxiety (Nicholson & West, 1988). The outsider may experience his or her first encounter with organizational life during this stage as well (Kramer, 1989). In a similar three-step stage model, Kramer, who specifically studied job transferees, referred to the first stage as the “loosening phase” (p. 210). It is also important to note that the ease and speed of assimilation into the new organization is expected to increase with more complete and accurate anticipatory socialization (Fisher, 1986).

Since the timeline is usually short from accepting a new position to beginning work, an outsider carries pre-entry expectations into that new position (Feldman, 1976a; Fisher, 1986; Nicholson & West, 1988). Even in a short period of time, the outsider usually attempts to find out as much as possible about the new job and/or the new
supervisor (Feldman, 1976a; Nicholson & West, 1988). In most cases, the pre-entry
expectations held by outsiders, such as quality of supervision, how interesting the work
will be, and promotion opportunities, are almost always inflated and as a result, may lead
to disappointment (Fisher, 1986; Wanous, 1977) and anxiety (Louis, 1980; Nicholson &
West, 1988). The only exceptions to this seem to be those issues that are concrete, such
as pay and working hours (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988; Wanous, 1977).

Wanous (1977) found that realistic job previews help identify individuals who
possess the qualities deemed desirable by a specific organization. Similarly, Feldman’s
research seems to indicate that if a more accurate understanding of the position can be
derived from the selection process, the newcomers can be more accurate in determining
their own expectations once work begins (as cited in Fisher, 1986). Feldman (1976a)
found that realism, which is defined as the extent to which a newcomer can visualize
what life in the new organization will really be like, is a factor that indicates progress
during the anticipatory stage. Essentially, the employees with realistic expectations about
a new organization are less likely to encounter major conflicts between personal life and
work life than employees whose expectations are not so realistic (Feldman, 1981).

Another factor that Feldman (1976a) maintains as an indication of progress is
congruence. Congruence, which is the extent to which the organization’s resources and
the individual’s needs and skills are mutually satisfying, reflects how successful an
individual’s decisions were regarding employment (Feldman, 1976a). At the same time,
congruence reflects how successful the selection process was in identifying a match in the

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areas of attitude, beliefs, abilities, and skills (Wanous, 1977).

Stage Two: Encounter

Feldman (1976a) indicates that the second stage in the organizational socialization process is often labeled “encounter,” although Fisher (1986) labels it “accommodation,” Greenfield (1977a) “situational adjustment,” and Kramer (1989) labels this stage for transferees the “transitional stage.” The second stage, which can last from 6 to 10 months, encompasses an outsider’s first experience with the new organization (Louis, 1980). It is also at this point the outsider sees what the organization is actually like and makes the transition to a newcomer (Feldman, 1976a; Louis, 1980). Van Maanen (1976) calls the “encounter” stage the most crucial for the success of the socialization process. Ideally, this stage is characterized by a decrease in newcomer anxieties and an increased focus on the work group or organization (Louis, 1980). Experiences at this stage greatly impact the newcomer’s long-term view of the new organization (Louis, 1980). It is during the encounter stage that the newcomer begins to master the new and develop the interpersonal relationships that are necessary for success in the job (Reichers, 1987). At this stage, pre-employment expectations can either be confirmed, or in cases where they were over estimated or misrepresented, the pre-employment expectations can be disconfirmed (Feldman, 1976a; Nicholson & West, 1988; Wanous & Colella, 1989).

Additional issues addressed at this stage, according to Feldman (1976a), include the following: role definition, ambiguity, conflict encountered, congruence of newcomers to the organization, performance evaluation, and initiation into the work group. Also, at this
stage it is usual for various degrees of "surprise" and "reality shock" to be encountered (Louis, 1980; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Nicholson & West, 1988). Nelson (1986) found in an ethnographic study of seven school administrators, holding a variety of positions, that without exception all experienced surprise. All study participants reported experiencing a sense of powerlessness due to feelings of isolation and time pressures as a result of a heavy workload. Other unanticipated categories of surprise included: (a) unmet expectations regarding one’s self, (b) difficulty forecasting internal to new experiences, and (c) cultural assumptions (values, beliefs, and attitudes) that were not consistent with insiders.

During the second stage, modeling can be a mechanism for successful socialization. In fact, Reichers (1987) discovered that if newcomers engage in numerous symbolic interactions with insiders, the encounter phase will be accelerated (Kramer, 1989). Feldman (1981) maintains that the work group is an important factor in determining how quickly newcomers adjust to organizational norms and values.

Jablin (1984) found that newcomers perceive that they are receiving less information from supervisors and co-workers than they believe is required for success (as cited in Miller & Jablin, 1991). In order to reduce the uncertainty created by perceived information inadequacy, Kramer (1989) suggests that supervisors and co-workers assist the newcomer in information processing. Miller and Jablin (1991) theorized that newcomers are more likely to focus their information-seeking efforts on supervisors who, unlike other sources, hold the key to determining job requirements and are more reliable.
as an information source. However, in studies conducted by Louis (1983), as well as by Miller and Jablin (1991) and Louis, Posner, and Powell (1983), co-workers were identified as a more available and less confusing source of information for newcomers. Furthermore, co-workers' availability was directly linked to newcomers’ job satisfaction, retention, and commitment. According to Miller and Jablin (1991), newcomers are better able to evaluate the quality of their work by comparing themselves to more experienced co-workers. Finally, Walther (1978) found that given the differences in work-place power, newcomers are likely to focus information-seeking efforts on co-workers and supervisors simultaneously (as cited in Miller & Jablin, 1991). Regardless of which source newcomers focus their efforts on, assistance in information processing obviously helps reduce uncertainty in the work environment.

Nicholson and West (1988) maintain that it is in the encounter stage that the task of “sense-making,” as described by Louis (1980), assumes paramount importance. According to Nicholson and West (1988) as well as to Louis (1980), there are three factors that directly affect this task: change, contrast, and surprise. Change is reflected in the specific difference between an individual’s old versus new role requirement, work environment, and job responsibilities. Contrast manifests itself in the carryover between past work experiences and the current position. Surprise, which can be positive or negative, occurs when a newcomer’s expectations are disconfirmed by the reality of the new position (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988).

Of course, surprise is intensified by inadequate job previews and misleading
pictures that were painted by the new organization during the interview process (Nicholson & West, 1988). Newcomers are often advised to reduce surprise by taking the initiative to seek out information from their supervisor rather than waiting for the supervisor to provide it (Miller & Jablin, 1991). Yet, despite all information-seeking efforts, newcomers, even those who are well prepared, will encounter an element of surprise that is the hallmark of the “encounter stage” (Nicholson & West, 1988).

It is also during the encounter stage that concerns associated with family relocation may surface and create stress (Nicholson & West, 1988). Spouses often require assistance with social networking because they do not possess the automatic contacts of the workplace (West, Nicholson, & Rees, 1987). On the other hand, this issue may be balanced with feelings of excitement and satisfaction (Nicholson & West, 1988). In job changes where appropriate support is given, positive experiences outweigh negative experiences (Nicholson & West, 1988).

Stage Three: Role Management

During the third stage of organizational socialization, which is labeled “role management” (Feldman, 1976a), “change acquisition” (Feldman, 1981), “adjustment” (Katz, 1980; Reichers, 1987), and “tightening” (Kramer, 1989), the newcomer focuses on becoming a fully integrated member of the organization (Fisher, 1986). Essentially, the newcomer becomes an insider with the ability to influence others (Louis, 1980). The factors that most markedly affect the transition to insider are as follows: requirements of the new position, personality of the newcomer, and socialization practices of the
organization (Nicholson & West, 1988). Generally, this stage is characterized by the resolution of conflicts between work roles and family roles, such as schedules and demands on family. Often the “role management” stage requires major family life adjustments, especially where job change involves relocation (Nicholson & West, 1988; Feldman, 1976a; Feldman, 1981). Long-lasting changes typically occur in this stage as well, including mastery of skills and adjustment to the new work group’s norms and values (Feldman, 1981).

Nicholson and West (1988) note that the adjustment to a new position is positively assisted by high novelty of demands in the new position which predispose the individual to undergo personal change and broad job discretion which allows the individual to be innovative in the new role. According to Fisher (1986), certain activities, such as pay increase, promotion, and sharing of secrets, indicate successful transition from newcomer to insider. These signals prove that the individual has grown to fit the scope and demands of the job (Nicholson & West, 1988). Elements like surprise, which marked the encounter stage, have dissipated in the role management stage, and the newcomer now insider settles into a routine (Nicholson & West, 1988).

In Feldman’s (1976a) discussion of the stage model theories of organizational socialization, a distinction is made between successful and complete socialization. Socialization can be judged successful at any point, or any stage, in the process. As long as individuals are not hindered in the advancement toward proficiency in activities or in the resolution of conflicts, their socialization is successful. In contrast, complete
socialization only occurs when a person has proceeded through all three stages of the socialization process (Feldman, 1976a). Feldman also notes that the further along the process is, the greater the chance it will be both successful and complete.

Stage Model Limitations

Although stage models are a common means of approaching the study of organizational socialization, they are not without limitations. Louis (1980) points out that one limitation of stage models is that the process of entering a new organization also involves leaving a prior organization. Several authors theorize that unfreezing, moving away, or letting go is a necessary preliminary step in successfully entering a new organization (Argyris, 1964; Kramer, 1989; Lewin, 1951; Tannenbaum, 1976).

Because stage models define the phases a newcomer experiences during the socialization process without including the personal and situational variables that have a significant impact on that process as well as its outcome, Zahrly and Tosi (1989) argue that stage models have their limitations. For example, individual difference, such as past experiences, initial job experiences, and personality, are not considered at any stage. Zahrly and Tosi (1989) also argue that more research is needed to accurately determine if different socialization stage models operate for different occupational, professional, or demographic groups.

After examining the research regarding stage models of socialization, Fisher (1986) also notes that stage models are not without limitations. For instance, stage models have been the center of much discussion and theory, but there have been few
direct attempts to actually test them. She maintains that the notion of the "anticipatory" stage makes sense; however, she also argues that the subsequent stages are more problematic. Support for this lies in the fact that it is difficult to describe the socialization process in either observable or distinct steps. It is also questionable whether or not stage models can be generalized across organizations and between jobs (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Because of these limitations, Fisher (1986) concludes that stage models should be viewed as more of a guide for learning and change rather than an absolute and distinct phase of an inflexible model.

In addition, Fisher (1986) criticizes the stage models because of their failure to address the stages of job change as well as the stages of individual adjustment. The position the newcomer occupies cannot be treated as a constant because oftentimes, the job itself changes as the newcomer modifies the position through experience, growth, and negotiations (Fisher, 1986).

In summary, the results of research are mixed regarding the effectiveness of stage models as a means of studying organizational socialization. Comer (1991), Feldman (1976a, 1981), Louis (1980), Miller and Jablin (1991), Nicholson and West (1988), Reichers (1987), Wanous and Colella (1989), and Zahrly and Tosi (1987) all recognize that few stage models have been tested empirically. Wanous and Colella (1989) cite studies by both Buchanan (1974) and Feldman (1976a) as examples of stage models that have been directly tested empirically. Fisher (1986) not only agrees that Feldman's empirical work has provided evidence for stage models, but she also suggests that a study
by Graen, Orris, and Johnson (1973) contains some of the strongest evidence for distinctive stage models. However, many of these studies have not been replicated or extended through additional research (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Feldman (1976a) states that the effectiveness of socialization programs remains in doubt without more sophisticated and differentiated studies of socialization programs. Even Fisher (1986) is quick to point out that there is no evidence for distinct stages, which are the same in terms of order, duration, and content for all jobs or all people. Clearly, more empirical work needs to be conducted across different jobs and varied organizations (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Likewise, further research should include more longitudinal studies and case studies of stage model applications (Kramer, 1989).

Although researchers have studied socialization in specific occupational and professional roles, no theorist has adequately described how the specific role-related content is conveyed in most organizational settings (Louis, 1980). It is also important to note that despite their limitations stage models provide a systematic framework for studying organizational socialization. Without the framework of stage model theory, researchers may incorrectly draw conclusions from the limited empirical research that does exist (Feldman, 1981). In regards to educational settings specific to administrative positions, very little stage model research has been conducted. No research was located relating to the position of ARCI.

Taken together, the organizational socialization literature and the very scant literature on ARCIs offer glimpses into the challenges facing beginning curriculum and
instruction administrators, but the picture was fuzzy at best. A study targeted on ARCs was needed to identify specific factors which influence the performance of first-year ARCs, and to suggest ways in which those factors might be more effectively anticipated and dealt with. This review of the literature provided the rationale for conducting this study.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Chapter three describes specific procedures employed in this study. The description includes the rationale for selecting a qualitative research design, descriptions of the population and sample selected, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis approach.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the first year socialization process experienced by the administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCI's) as they assumed that position. The stage model theory of socialization was used to frame this investigation.

Research Design

This study sought to identify, categorize, and describe on-the-job experiences encountered by ARCI's during their first year of service to a school district. A significant portion of this study focused on events that were either surprise experiences or anticipated experiences. It was an exploratory study into an area of organizational socialization that had not as yet been researched. The literature review provided valuable information regarding what is known of the work experiences of the ARCI's, the nature of work transitions, and the characteristics of organizational socialization. The literature review also helped formulate the research questions and determine the methodology (Merriam, 1988). The method employed was three-fold: (a) exploratory in purpose, (b)
short-term longitudinal in scope, and (c) qualitative in approach. The logic used in reaching those conclusions is described below.

**An exploratory study.** Exploratory studies are appropriate where subjects have not been previously researched, have not been studied in depth, and/or for which theory has not been developed (Babbie, 1986; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; McMillan & Schumacher, 1984). The literature points out that this is the case with ARCI’s in their first year of service in a school district. Pajak’s (1989) work constitutes the only comprehensive research available focusing on ARCI experiences, and there are no studies that address stage model socialization theory as applied to new central office ARCI’s.

**A short-term longitudinal study.** The organizational socialization literature stresses that first-year job experiences are a major influence on a newcomer’s job performance in a new organization (Berlew & Hall, 1966; Buchanan, 1974; Toffler, 1981). Research examining central office ARCI’s and organizational socialization longitudinal studies are needed to further develop both the nature of the position and the influence of the socialization process. The examination of a single year does not constitute a long-range study; however, there has been precedent in socialization literature for short-term longitudinal studies focusing on an employee’s first year in an organization (Dean, 1985). The literature does include previous studies that focus on first-year problems faced by teachers (Chester, 1992; Deal & Chatman, 1989; Robinson, 1998; Veenman, 1984; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985), building level administrators (Alvy, 1984; Alvey & Coladarci, 1985; Bogotch & Riedlinger, 1993; Daresh, 1986;
Fowler & Gettys, 1989; Hart, 1991; Hartzell, Williams, & Nelson, 1995; Hurley, 1992; Marshall & Mitchell, 1989; Parkay et al., 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Roberts, 1989), and superintendents (Chapman, 1997; Dlugosh, 1994; Pavan, 1995), but most of these are surveys and/or cross-sectional investigations rather than longitudinal studies.

Two major factors dictated the study’s one-year timeline. First, central office ARCIs in their first year of service to a school district hold that status for only 1 year. Second, 1 year constitutes the natural cycle of a work year for school administrators, including those responsible for curriculum and instruction. Similar events and experiences repeated during the second or subsequent years of service are encountered in a different context and have a different impact on those individuals.

A qualitative study. A dissertation requires employment of research methods that meet the standards of discipline, integrity, and rigor associated with scholarly research.

Qualitative methods fit this particular study for at least four reasons: (a) because the purposes of the study are exploratory; (b) because the individual experiences of the study participants are partially the product of individual interpretation; hence, what comes as a surprise to one newcomer may have been anticipated by another; (c) because a given situation or response may be functional for one newcomer but not for another (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979); and (d) because processes of socialization are cultural in nature (Louis, 1980; Van Maanen, 1976) and individual school district cultures vary. Standardized responses generated through quantitative means cannot be expected to accommodate individual differences that can, in turn, be gathered through qualitative
means. The methods employed in this study were intended to capture the unique points of view of the central office ARClIs who are newcomers to a school district.

The literature reveals that organizational socialization is embedded in the culture of the organization in which it takes place. The related work transition and psychology of change literature further indicate that while there are transitions and surprises that are common to all people, the forms and details of each, as they are experienced by the newcomer, differ as a result of the experiences of that individual (Brett & Werbel, 1978, 1980; Jones, 1983; Louis, 1980). Van Maanen and Schein (1979) contend that it is, in fact, the newcomer and not the organization itself that determines an individual’s socialization experiences.

The discovery of the meaning ascribed to these situations must be a qualitative endeavor. In other words, qualitative research “can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn through more conventional research methods” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11). The focus of attention is on the perceptions and experiences of the newcomers, but it is the total context captured in the data that creates meaning.

Quantitative measures assume that all things are equal, \( Y = f(x) \). With qualitative measures, which are often based on social interaction and personal interpretation, all things can never be equal. Mischler (1979) argues that in social research, the task should be to specify the conditions under which a relationship holds true. As a means of attaining a better understanding of the nuances of human interaction, qualitative methods
of study must be employed. It was from this perspective that this project proceeded.

The Specific Methodology Employed

The qualitative investigation presented in this study utilized a modified grounded theory approach to structure the interview procedure and employed what Glaser and Strauss (1967) term as “received theory” as the means of utilizing stage model theory as the theoretical basis for the research approach.

Basic grounded theory. In order to undertake a modified grounded theory methodology, a basic understanding of grounded theory is necessary. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), “grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents” (p. 23). In other words, those conducting grounded theory studies hope to discover a theory that is grounded in information from participants. The grounded theory approach uses a systematic set of procedures to develop inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. Such a theory is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis.

In grounded theory, a researcher does not begin with a theory and then prove that theory. Rather, a researcher begins with an area of study and then allows the data collection and subsequent analysis to create a theory (Creswell, 1994; Patton, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is expected that the most important research questions will become clear during the course of the investigation.

A traditional grounded theory approach will not accommodate the limitation of a
1-year timeline. The 1-year time limit was dictated by the fact that the first year central office ARCIs hold that status for 1 year only. Even similar events experienced in ensuing years will not replicate that first-year experience. Hence, the natural time limit of 1 school year cycle leads to the need to modify the grounded theory methodology.

Unlike a traditional grounded theory approach, this study was not designed to generate a new theory. The modified grounded theory methods utilized are described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as using an existing conceptual framework, received theory, as a foundation on which to build an understanding of the socialization process for central office ARCIs in their first year of service.

**Received theory.** The primary modification of grounded theory in this study was the use of "received theory." Received theory involves taking an existing theory and applying it to a new situation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In other words, rather than generating a new theory, the researcher employs an existing theory, which in this study is stage model theory. More specifically, the researcher is utilizing received theory to determine whether ARCIs new to a school district have experiences consistent with the encounter phase of stage model theory during their first year of employment. Some researchers see the received theory approach as an improvement over pure grounded theory methodology (Miles, 1979).

**Population and Sample**

The sample for this study was 10 public school central office ARCIs. The selection method was "purposeful sampling.” As Merriam (1988) pointed out, purposeful
sampling is “based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (p. 48). The decision to limit the number of interviewees was based on several considerations.

1. This sample represents all new central office ARCIs that could be located in a reasonably accessible geographic region. These individuals were located by utilizing the resources of state professional organizations, state departments of education, and the informal network the researcher has established through his 33 year career in education. Since interviews needed to be conducted, it was essential that subjects be located within a reasonable distance (200 miles and 4 hours driving time). The districts they served included a mix of small urban, suburban, and rural districts ranging in size from 1,950 to 14,000 students.

Two subjects, however, lived outside the geographic area. I decided to include them because of the shortage of first-year ARCIs to study locally. The fact that they were not working in Iowa also offered a kind of minimal cross-check that the socialization experiences were rooted in the job and the person not in the location.

2. The central office ARCIs selected included both females and males. This provided the opportunity to collect data that would help to establish, or at least suggest, whether the socialization process differs when gender is considered.

3. These participants had at the core of their job responsibility the task of maintaining and improving the overall instructional program. Depending on the size of
the district and the organizational table of the particular school system, these individuals may have had other duties assigned as well.

4. A small sample was chosen to increase the odds that I could build trusting relationships with each individual involved in the study. According to Patton (1986), "the idea in qualitative research is to focus in depth on a small sample of 'information-rich' individuals to learn a great deal about specific issues of central importance" (p. 169).

Data Collection

Working from the idea that quantitative research methods are an inadequate means of fully capturing feelings, thoughts, and intentions of organizational newcomers (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979), I utilized what Patton (1987) describes as a depth interview approach. The purpose of the depth interview is to capture a person's unique perspective. This approach employs open-ended questions, active listening, careful recording of responses and follow-up through relevant questions. Through depth interviewing, I was able to probe below the surface, solicit details and capture a holistic understanding of the interview subject's point of view. By developing trust, data that cannot be readily observed can be secured – such as feelings, thoughts, and intentions.

Data for this study were collected through three interview sessions conducted in the fall, winter, and spring. The multiple interview approach increased the probability of securing accurate data. Clearly, interviews transpiring over a 9-month period of time also
provided for the development of trust and the opportunity to further investigate patterns
and themes that arose in the initial interview. Also, multiple interviews increased the
accuracy of the data through the use of follow-up probes. The data collected described
the extent to which the encounter stage of Stage Model Theory was experienced by
ARCiS during the first year of employment.

Initial interview. The specific interview questions developed for the first interview were drawn from a number of sources:

1. Pajak’s (1989) The Central Office Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction: Setting the Stage for Success was one source. In order to write his book, Pajak devoted much of his time to collecting data through qualitative research and then analyzing that data. The specific categories he used to describe his data served as a source of questions, particularly those relating to the nature of the relationship between central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction and teachers, principals, and the superintendent.

2. The work of researchers such as Daniel Feldman (1976a, 1981) and Meryl Rice Louis (1980) also served as a rich source for questions. These researchers wrote extensively about the experiences of newcomers during the encounter period described in the stage model theory of socialization.

3. The work of other qualitative researchers, such as Carolyn Hughes Chapman (1997), who wrote about the experiences of first year superintendents, Larry Heck (1994) and Barbara Pavan (1995), who wrote about principals, and Robert Nelson (1986), who
wrote about socialization of school administrators, served as additional sources of questions.

Twenty-two questions were initially developed. The research of Chapman (1997), Feldman (1976a), Heck (1994), Louis (1980), Pavan (1995), Pajak (1989), and Nelson (1986) were the sources of specific questions, while Patton’s (1987) question categories provided a means of classifying the questions. These classifications included:

- Experience/Behavior Questions
- Opinion/Value Questions
- Feeling Questions
- Knowledge Questions
- Sensory Questions
- Background/Demographic Questions.

Because of a limited timeframe for this study and because it is desirable to solicit the same information from each subject interviewed, a standardized open-ended interview format was used. The characteristics of this interview format are that the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance and all interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. The strengths of standardized open-ended interviews include:

- subjects answer the same questions, thus increasing the opportunity to compare responses to those same questions,
- it is more likely the data collection will be complete for each subject,
• it permits the researcher's dissertation committee and advisor to review the questions to be used in the instruments, and
• data analysis will be made easier because it will be possible to locate each subject's answer to the same questions rather easily (Patton, 1987).

The interview questions were constructed to be: (a) open-ended in order to minimize the imposition of pre-determined responses, (b) clear to the subject as to what is being asked, (c) sensitive to how the subject may be affected by the different questions, and (d) neutral vis-à-vis the content of what the subject being interviewed says (Patton, 1987).

Conducting the initial interview. Each interview was tape recorded, thereby permitting me to be more attentive to the subjects. Notes were taken during each interview in order to facilitate later analysis. These notes consisted of key phrases, major points, and significant quotes that captured the ARCI's own language (Patton, 1987). Member checks were conducted with all subjects immediately at the conclusion of the interview. Since the 8 Iowa ARCIs were interviewed on site, the member check reviews were conducted by allowing them to read my notes. The two out-of-state ARCIs were interviewed by telephone and those member check reviews were conducted by reading the highlights of my notes to them. In all cases, suggested changes or corrections were immediately incorporated into the notes. The specific questions and rationale for the questions are included in the questions section of this chapter.

Analysis of the initial interview. Within two days of conducting each interview,
the tape was listened through in its entirety. Then the interview was again played and
detailed notes prepared. These notes contained the tape recorder numerical count location
of each phrase and quote included in the notes. This facilitated locating a specific phrase
or quote, if needed, during the data analysis process.

The summary notes for all interviews were placed in a three-ring binder and
appropriately labeled. All audio tapes were labeled and placed in a portable storage unit.
Both the interview notes and tapes are stored in a central location, and are readily
available for review.

Using the data from the first interviews, the constant-comparison method analysis
was employed. The resulting data indicated that asking the same 22 questions in the
second interview would be the best method of data collection during that interview. This
analysis also indicated that the issue of conflict with teachers and other administrators
was not fully explored during the initial interview. Therefore, additional questions
addressing conflict were needed for the second interview.

Second interview. While on site with the Iowa ARCIs for the second interview, I
asked each to review the summary notes of the initial interview to verify their accuracy,
as well as make corrections and additions. In the case of the two out-of-state ARCIs who
were interviewed over the telephone, I verbally reviewed the summary notes with them
prior to their second interview.

The specific interview questions included the 22 used in the initial interview plus
two additional questions designed to further explore the issue of conflict with others. The
questions added included: Question #15, which asked about conflict with a teacher or teachers, and Question #18, which asked the same about other administrators, particularly principals. The specific questions and rationale are included in the questions section of this chapter.

**Conducting the second interview.** Again each interview was tape recorded, notes were taken and member checks conducted. As with the first set of interviews, I included the tape recorder numerical count location of key phrases and quotes in the notes for future reference.

**Analysis of the second interview.** Following the application of the constant comparison protocol, the second set of interview data was integrated with the data from the first set of interviews. A preliminary analysis of the data from both the first and second interviews indicated that the second interview set of questions should be used again in the final interviews with one addition. That data indicated that one additional question was needed that addressed ARCI responsibility for monitoring student achievement. Again the interview questions in their entirety and the rationale for all of the questions are available in the questions section of this chapter.

**Third interview.** I utilized the same protocol for reviewing the summary notes from the previous round of interviews. The same 24 questions asked in the second interview were included in the final interview with the addition of a question (Question #7) regarding the monitoring of student achievement.

**Conducting the third interview.** As before, each of the final interviews was
recorded and the same procedure used for note taking. Member checks were again conducted using the same process earlier described.

Analysis of the third interview. Following the constant comparison protocol, the data from the first, second, and third set of interviews were combined in order to complete the final data analysis.

Interview Questions

This section includes all of the questions used in all three interviews along with the rationale for those questions.

Interview Question #1. Now that you’re (two or three, six or seven, nine or ten months) into your first year as the administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction in this school district, what are your impressions of the position?

Interview Question #2. What did you expect this administrative position to be like?

Interview Question #3. How did you develop your expectations of what this position would be like?

The rationale for questions 1 through 3 was as follows:

Interview questions 1, 2, and 3 had their origins in the findings of organizational socialization research. These questions were intended to determine if a newcomer to an organization had experienced the all too often sink-or-swim, learn on your own approach to organizational entry, or whether the newcomer had been allowed to properly “learn the ropes” (Schein, 1968; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The questions also were intended to
determine if links were forge between the newcomer and the organization (Darling & McGrath, 1983). In effect, were newcomers experiencing appropriate organizational socialization so that they learned the values, norms, and required behavior of the school district they were entering (Wanous & Colella, 1989)?

**Interview Question #4. How would you assess –**

1. Your academic preparation for this position?
2. Your professional preparation for this position?

**Follow-up for Question 4:**

a. How well prepared were you personally to assume this position?

b. Please comment regarding the effects of your prior experience upon your performance in this position.

**The rationale for question 4 was as follows:**

Although not the focus of this study, a newcomer also experiences professional socialization when entering an organization. "Professional socialization" refers to the process by which a beginner acquires the skills and knowledge required for a position (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In contrast, "organizational socialization" refers to the process by which a newcomer learns the values, norms, and behavior needed to fully participate as a member of that organization (Wanous & Colella, 1989). Organizational and professional socialization occur simultaneously during the induction process (Hart, 1991). Hart (1991) found that organizational socialization quickly overpowers professional socialization if the two are in conflict. Question 4 was designed to
determine whether professional socialization may have had an impact on organizational socialization.

**Interview Question #5.** Please tell me about the position of central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction.

**Follow-up for Question 5:**

a. What major responsibilities are assigned to this position?

b. What change or changes have occurred since you assumed your present position?

c. Do the responsibilities assigned to the position create frustrations?
   c-1. If yes, what are they?
   c-2. If no, why not?

d. Did you expect that this/these frustrations(s) would be a factor in this position?

e. Do the responsibilities assigned to the position provide satisfaction?
   e-1. If yes, what are they?
   e-2 If no, why not?

f. Did you expect that the position would hold satisfaction for you?
   f-1. If yes, in what way(s)?
   f-2. If no, why not?

The rationale for question 5 was as follows:
Pajak (1989) concludes that in the existing literature there is a lack of an easily described conceptual model for the position of central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction. On the other hand, he points out that other school district positions, such as teacher, principal, and superintendent, are more clearly researched and defined in the literature. Pajak (1989) found through his research that these differences are due, in part, to the difficulty of describing the work of this administrative position in precise and measurable terms. While the job descriptions of a central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction may vary widely, it always includes supervision of instruction and instruction-related tasks. Pajak (1989) found that the position not only includes diverse responsibilities but also fragmented work schedules and can be a potential source of frustration. These experiences can greatly impact the socialization process. Question 5 was designed to explore this issue.

**Interview Question #6.** Given the tasks and duties you perform as the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction, which do you consider to be the most important?

**Follow Up for Question 6:**

a. Why is that/are those the most important task(s) or duty(ies)?

b. Did you consider that/those task(s) and duty(ies) to be the most important task(s) or duty(ies) in your position?

The rationale for question 6 was as follows:
Because the work of the central office ARCI can be characterized as fragmented, diverse, and ambiguous, it is often difficult to describe clearly and consistently the position and key duties (Pajak, 1989). Also, conflict can influence the tasks and duties performed by the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction. In order for norms to be maintained, especially those of teamwork, equity and reciprocity, conflict needs to be managed. Therefore, the effective administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction must become a skilled, active listener and mediator (Pajak, 1989).

This question was designed to discover the variance in workday responsibilities and the influence of conflict on those responsibilities.

**Interview Question #7. Does your current position include responsibility for monitoring student achievement? (NEW QUESTION IN MAY/JUNE)**

**Follow-up for Question 7:**

**a.** If yes, please comment on that responsibility.

**a-1.** To whom or where are data reported?

**b.** If no, why not.

**The rationale for question 7 was as follows:**

During the September and January/February interviews, there were repeated references to the responsibility for monitoring student achievement. The recent emphasis at both the state and federal level on accountability legislation, specifically the emphasis on test scores and the accompanying sanctions and rewards, has impacted the ARCI
position. New responsibilities have been added as a result of this legislation. This question was designed to determine that impact of this legislation on the ARCI.

**Interview Question #8. Has anything surprised you about the position to date?**

**Follow-up for Question 8:**

a. If yes, what has surprised you?
   a-1. And why was that a surprise to you?
   a-2. How did you make sense out of this surprise?

b. If no, why do you feel this was the case?

In school organizations, the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction who is a newcomer usually enters the school district singularly. Often he or she is overwhelmed by the culture and traditions of the new organization (Wanous, 1980) and experiences some degree of surprise (Miller & Jablin, 1991), which can be positive or negative (Louis, 1980). Louis (1980) found that surprise, which represents the unexpected and the unintended situations a newcomer faces, is an inevitable part of joining a new organization.

Louis (1980) found that newcomers must cope with “surprise” during their organizational entry experiences, usually during the encounter stage. Surprise is often described as the hallmark of the “encounter stage.” Newcomers often attach meaning to surprises that occur in the new school district based on their experiences in their previous school district. According to Pajak (1989), the diversity and ambiguity that is part of the
job of the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction dictates that a portion of his or her time and energy will be spent dealing with surprise and making sense of what they do. Louis (1980) concludes that newcomers may make decisions to stay or leave school districts based on feelings resulting from surprises early in the job experience.

In order to cope with surprise, Louis (1980) found that newcomers must go through a process she termed “sense-making.” Meaning is assigned to surprise as an outcome of the sense-making process and that “sense made of surprise by newcomers may be incomplete until the newcomer can gather adequate organization, interpersonal, and personal information” (Louis, 1980, p. 244). This question was intended to solicit the subject’s views regarding surprise.

**Interview Question #9.** What is your current view of teachers? You can respond with individual examples or with generalizations.

**Follow-up for Question 9:**

a. Has your view of teachers changed since assuming the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction position in your current school district?

a-1. If yes, in what way(s)?

a-2. If no, why not?

The rationale for question 9 was as follows:

This question was designed to address how central office ARCIIs view teachers
and as a result how their view has had an impact on their working relationship with teachers. According to Pajak (1989), establishing and maintaining good relationships with teachers is an important aspect of the ARCIs’ work. Some ARCIs do not have formal authority over teachers, so they must rely on other means of exercising influence. Pajak found that even when these administrators have line authority, they rarely rely on it. Instead, their influence is derived from a combination of sources, including expertise, credibility, respect, and mutual exchange (Pajak, 1989). The relationship between central office ARCIs and teachers is also strengthened by mutual respect and trust. The relationship with teachers can influence the socialization of the new administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction; hence, the reason for including this question emerges.

Interview Question #10. What is your current view of principals? You can respond with individual examples or with generalizations.

Follow-up for Question 10:

a. Has your view of principals changed since assuming the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction position in your current school district?

   a-1. If yes, in what way(s)?

   a-2. If no, why not?

The rationale for question 10 was as follows:

In a school district’s typical organizational chart, the line and staff relationships
between central office administrators for curriculum and instruction and principals appear straightforward (Pajak, 1989). The ARCI is sometimes shown as a line administrator with direct authority over principals, and in other organizations as a staff assistant to the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). Either way, theorists argue that the bureaucratic paradigm may be overly simplified (Pajak, 1989). Pajak found that the greatest flaw lies in the organizational chart’s failure to convey the fair amount of autonomy a principal typically enjoys.

Pajak (1989) found that it is essential to an ARCI’s effectiveness to establish and maintain a good working relationship with principals. This is due not only to the high level of autonomy generally enjoyed by principals but also to the influence principals wield over what does and does not happen in the building. In other words, central office ARCIs must have the cooperation of principals if programs of instructional improvement are to succeed.

According to Pajak (1989), central office ARCIs must attain an understanding of the principals’ responsibilities and concerns, and they must establish credibility and trust in order to build a good working relationship. Also, they must emphasize a team approach to instructional improvement (Pajak, 1989). Without the principal’s cooperation, improvement is difficult. Question 10 was designed to address these issues.

**Interview Question #11.** What were you least prepared for in your current position?

**Follow-up for Question 11:**
a. Is that what you expected to be least prepared for?

**Interview Question #12.** What were you most prepared for in this position?

**Follow up for Question 12:**

a. Is that what you expected to be most prepared for?

**The rationale for questions 11 and 12 was as follows:**

Pajak (1989) found that issues such as managing conflict, adequate planning and goal setting, securing resources and support, managing the organizational culture, facilitating change, documenting student achievement, developing norms and standards, initiating and facilitating innovative relationships with teachers, principals, and the superintendent all have the potential to have an impact on the quality of the work day. Questions 11 and 12 were designed to secure data regarding the experiences related to these areas of a new ARCI.

**Interview Question #13.** Do your days at work vary in quality?

**Follow-up for Question 13:**

a. Do you have good days?

   a-1. If so, would you describe to me what a really good day is like?

b. Do you have bad days?

   b-1. If so, would you describe for me what a really bad day is like?

**The rationale for question 13 was as follows:**

This question was designed to discover the variance in workday quality.

Socialization issues that can influence workday quality include the following: (a) long-
term conflict; (b) fragmented, diverse, and ambiguous job responsibilities; (c) the quality of the relationship with teachers, principals, and the superintendent; (d) academic preparation and prior work experience; and (e) coping with surprise (Pajak, 1989). These issues have been previously addressed in prior questions. This question was designed to explore these issues from another perspective.

**Interview Question #14.** Do you know if you have made a difference?

**Follow-up for Question 14:**

a. If yes, how?

   a.1. What evidence can you cite?

b. Has anyone supported your efforts?

   b.1. If so, who?

   b.2. In what way(s) has he/she/they offered support?

**The rationale for question 14 was as follows:**

If central office ARClIs are undergoing a successful organizational socialization experience, then it seems likely that they will describe how they are making a difference in their new school district. This question was designed to solicit information from newcomers regarding this issue.

**Interview Question #15.** Has there been occasion(s) in your current district when you have been in conflict with a teacher or teachers? (NEW QUESTION IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY)

**Follow-Up for Question 15:**
a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If not, why not?

The rationale for question 15 was as follows:

Differing hierarchical positions promote differing organizational perspectives. An organization’s structural appearance and the clarity of its subsystem interconnections change as hierarchical positions change (Badawy, 1988). Multiple perspectives generate multiple realities. Multiple realities inevitably lead to conflict.

It became clear after the first interview conducted in September that conflict with teachers was an issue that ARCI had to address. Therefore, this question was added.

Interview Question #16. Has your home life and/or life outside of work changed since assuming the position of ARCI in this district?

Follow-up for Question 16:

a. If yes, how? Why?

b. If no, why do you think this is?

c. If I were to speak with your spouse, do you think he/she would say your life has changed since taking this position?

The rationale for question 16 was as follows:

This question captured data regarding the influence of home life and/or life outside of work on the encounter stage of the socialization process. It is also during the encounter stage that concerns associated with family relocation may surface and create stress (Nicholson & West, 1988). Spouses often require assistance with social
networking because they do not possess the automatic contacts of the work place (West et al., 1987). On the other hand, this issue may be balanced with feelings of excitement and satisfaction (Nicholson & West, 1988). In job changes where appropriate support is given, positive experiences outweigh negative experiences (Nicholson & West, 1988).

**Interview Question #17.** Have your skills and abilities grown since assuming this position?

**Follow-up for Question 17:**

a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If no, why not?

c. Has anyone provided you support?

  c-1. If so, who?

  c-2. In what ways?

**The rationale for question 17 was as follows:**

Nicholson and West (1988) note that the adjustment to a new position is positively assisted by broad job discretion, which allows the individual to be innovative in the new role. According to Fisher (1986), certain activities – such as pay increase, promotion, and sharing of secrets – indicate successful transition from newcomer to insider. These signals prove that the individual has grown to fit the scope and demands of the job (Nicholson & West, 1988). Elements like surprise, which marked the encounter stage, will have dissipated and mark the transition to the third stage which is labeled role management. The newcomer has then made the transition to insider and is
able to settle into a routine (Nicholson & West, 1988).

**Interview Question #18.** Has there been occasion(s) in your current district when you have been in conflict with other administrators, including principals?

(NEW QUESTION IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY)

Follow-Up for Question 18:

a. If yes, in what way(s)?

b. If not, why not?

The rationale for question 18 was as follows:

Pajak (1989) found that in order for teamwork to be maintained, conflict needs to be managed. Because long-term conflict can have a devastating impact on the instructional program, the ARCI must take action. However, the absence of line authority may inhibit some from taking the direct action that might solve an existing problem. Therefore, effective ARCIs must become skilled, active listeners and mediators (Pajak, 1989).

**Interview Question #19.** What is your view of the superintendent?

The rationale for question 19 was as follows:

Much of the current management literature frequently references the top-down relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate. Gabarro and Kotter (1993) found that taking the time and making an effort to manage the relationship with one’s superior is critical to the success of a subordinate.

Gabarro and Kotter (1993) also found that most effective managers develop
relationships with their supervisors, which leads to (a) compatible work styles, (b) mutual expectations, (c) a continuous flow of information, (d) wise use of time together, (e) appropriate resource requests, and (f) mutual views of dependability and honesty. All of these issues have a considerable influence on how a subordinate views his or her boss. Given the importance of a successful relationship between the ARCI and the superintendent, the justification for this question evolved.

**Interview Question #20.** Has your view of the superintendency changed since you came to work here?

**Follow-up for Question 20:**

a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If no, why not?

**The rationale for question 20 was as follows:**

In most states the superintendent’s position is established by law, and state codes often confer legal authority along with specific duties (Pajak, 1989). Essentially, this means that the superintendent is ultimately responsible for all components of the district and is frequently the center of conflict and controversy (Blumberg, 1985). In most cases, the superintendent is very much the visible symbol of the school system in the community. Pajak (1989) discovered that a division of responsibilities between the superintendent and ARCI commonly occurs because the superintendent focuses on “outward” elements whereas the central office administrator focuses on “inward” elements. The superintendent’s attention is mainly focused on elements in the school
system’s environment, such as political and financial matters (Pajak, 1989). Because of this external focus, much of the superintendent’s audience consists of parents and taxpayers who are concerned about the education of their children as well as the efficiency of the schools (Pajak, 1989). As a result, the superintendent’s concerns extend beyond the perceptions and beliefs of educators to the perceptions and beliefs of the whole community. The superintendent’s role involves projecting and promoting a positive external image of the school district while securing and maintaining support for the district in the community (Pajak, 1989). This question was designed to explore how these issues may influence how the ARCI views the superintendency.

**Interview Question #21. Describe your relationship with the superintendent.**

**The rationale for question 21 was as follows:**

Pajak (1989) determined as a result of his research that a good working relationship between the superintendent and the ARCI is essential to the success of the instructional program. Because the positions of superintendent and central office administrator are seemingly interchangeable at times, it is not surprising that the central office ARCI is commonly asked to stand in as the acting superintendent when the need for one arises. Of course, a close working relationship with the superintendent makes this task easier for that administrator (Pajak, 1989).

In order for an effective working relationship to be maintained, Pajak (1989) found that the superintendent and ARCI must be in close contact with one another. Not only does close contact allow for a good working relationship, it also ensures consistency
and functional interdependence regarding the external image and the internal vision. This question was designed to explore the nature of the relationship with the superintendent.

**Interview Question #22.** Describe the relationship between the superintendent and the board of education.

The rationale for question 22 was as follows:

The superintendent’s relationship with the board of education also has an impact on the degree of success the ARCI experiences (Pajak, 1989). If the superintendent is respected by the board, the ARCI’s job is made easier because it is likely that the division line between policy and administration is clear (Pajak, 1989). Pajak found that in cases where the superintendent lacks influence with the board, lines of authority become blurred, and the ARCI may not be clear regarding which proposals require board approval (Pajak, 1989). Pajak (1989) describes superintendents who, in advance of a board meeting, informally poll board members regarding issues on the agenda. In these situations, the districts are not only relatively free of superintendent/board conflict, but also free of surprises at board meetings. As a result, the ARCI has both a firm grasp on the line of authority and a good working relationship with the superintendent.

In many organizations, the superintendent’s role is to protect the organization from political interruption, thereby allowing the instructional program to proceed as designed (Pajak, 1989). In effect, the public attributes the success or failure of the instructional program to the superintendent (Pajak, 1989). Because much of the credit for instructional programs is publicly directed to the superintendent, many central office
ARCI are infrequently recognized for their accomplishments. Consequently, the central office ARCI tends to be somewhat invisible to the public. Pajak (1989) found that invisibility is common for this administrator given the focus and internal integration and vision, but this phenomenon has been overlooked by most educational supervision theorists, research, and authors (Costa & Guditis, 1984).

It is the superintendent who is usually at the center of controversies and is more likely to lose his or her job (Pajak, 1989). Even during controversy and high turnover among superintendents, the invisibility of the ARCI can insulate that individual and provide an avenue for continuity in the instructional program (Pajak, 1989). This question was designed to explore these issues.

**Interview Question #23.** When compared to your previous district, are some things done differently in your current district?

**Follow-up for Question 23:**

a. If yes, what things are done differently?

   a-1. Why are these things done differently?

b. If no, why are things done the same?

**The rationale for question 23 was as follows:**

Each school district's culture is different. Hence, an understanding of “how we do things and what matters around here” is transferred through an organization's culture. When newcomers experience socialization, they are, in part, learning the culture of the organization (Louis, 1980; Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). With stage model theory, the
“encounter” stage is when an outsider sees what the organization is actually like and makes the transition to a newcomer (Feldman, 1976a; Louis, 1980).

The encounter stage is characterized by a decrease in a newcomer’s anxieties and an increased focus on the organization. At this stage the interpersonal relationships are established, pre-employment expectations confirmed or disconfirmed. Also at this stage “surprise” and “sense making” are encountered (Feldman, 1981; Louis, 1980; Miller & Jablin, 1991; Nicholson & West, 1988; Wanous & Colella, 1989). Experience at this stage greatly impacts the newcomer’s long-term view of the school district (Louis, 1980). This question was designed to solicit data relating to these issues.

**Interview Question #24.** Do you feel accepted in this district?

**Follow-up for Question 24:**

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

The rationale for question 24 was as follows:

During the “encounter” stage, newcomers develop the interpersonal relationships needed to succeed in the new school district. They feel either accepted or not accepted (Feldman 1976b). This question addressed that issue.

**Interview Question #25.** Taking everything into consideration (nature of the work, frustration, satisfying relationships, preparation, expectations) did you expect to feel as you do about your current position?

**Follow-up for Question 25:**
a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

The rationale for question 25 was as follows:

This question was designed to address the entire spectrum of issues faced during the “encounter” stage.

Data Analysis

As I began the data analysis, I recognized that my prior experience as an assistant superintendent, although not in curriculum and instruction, could influence how I interpret the experiences the subjects describe during the data collection phase. Aware of this potential bias, I took every precaution to avoid allowing my prior experiences to influence my analysis of the interview data I collected. These precautions included (a) utilizing member checks as a means of checking for biased statements, (b) constantly asking myself if I was being over influenced by my personal experiences as an assistant superintendent, and (c) providing a trusted colleague who knew me well with a copy of my final notes and asking that colleague to read and listen for bias in my findings.

On the other hand, I also recognized that my service as an assistant superintendent helped to shape my unique ideas, values, and beliefs. I also believe that those assisted me in the data analysis and reduced the possibility that important facets of the ARCI’s experiences might be overlooked and omitted. Creswell (1994), Merriam (1988), and Patton (1990) indicated a research bias, when acknowledged and managed, serves as a useful analytical tool.
I had in fact moved to a new district when I became a first-time assistant superintendent. Although I kept those experiences in perspective, the empathy gained from that experience was helpful in my analysis.

I also was aware that I had a professional relationship with some of the subject ARCI’s superintendents. Knowing that this could have an effect on what that ARCI told me in regard to certain questions, I made every effort to minimize the potential effects by reassuring the ARCI’s that I would maintain confidentiality of their responses. These efforts included (a) constantly reaffirming that what they shared during interviews remained confidential, (b) minimizing contact with the superintendent while in the district for interviews with the ARCI, (c) avoiding references to my relationship with the superintendent in discussions with the ARCI, and (d) conducting member checks so that ARCI’s saw first hand that only data from their confidential interviews were utilized in the study.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) served as a valuable source for identifying the specific data analysis approaches that were utilized in this study, such as open coding and developing a matrix. I continued to utilize the “constant comparison” methods to determine which themes emerge through the data collection.

With these procedures in mind, the summaries of all interviews were scanned for relevant materials. Then paragraphs, sentences, and words were singled out for analysis. Open coding was used to develop concepts. This was achieved by breaking down data into discrete parts and comparing for similarities and differences. As many concepts as
possible were generated in this phase. This data, in turn, contributed to the determination of themes and patterns (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The next step was to again utilize the constant comparison method. This methodology was utilized because the data sources include multiple interviews. Data derived from one interview was compared to each of the other interviews (Glaser, 1994). By constantly comparing the data derived from coding, I became more sensitive to the variations in the patterns to be found in the data. Sometimes differences were immediately visible in the data. Other times, I purposefully looked for instances of similarity or differences. Making comparisons assists the researcher in guarding against bias by challenging similarities and differences with fresh data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Reduction of the data was accomplished by preparing a matrix that listed each ARCI in the vertical axis and the results of the micro analysis on the horizontal axis. Such a matrix is a coding device that helps determine multiple and diverse patterns of connectivity. Furthermore, this matrix was an analytic tool that helped determine the relationship between macro and micro conditions/consequences both to each other and to the process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Criteria of acceptability. Another issue addressed was what criteria would be utilized to determine the acceptability of the results. I utilized criteria developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998):

- the results will be believable and plausible,
- the results will be comprehensive and will account for most of the data,
• the results will be grounded in the data, and
• the results will be applicable to the area of study and identify areas for further investigation.

Creswell (1994) asserted that when it comes to quantitative methodology, validity can be examined from several viewpoints. These specific viewpoints and their purpose are described as follows:

• content validity measures whether the items measure the content they were intended to measure,
• predictive validity determines whether scores predict a criterion measure,
• concurrent validity measures whether results correlate with other results,
• construct validity measures hypothetical constants or concepts, and
• face validity determines whether the items appear to measure what the instrument purports to measure.

Another source of validating was presenting the thematic ideas to participants for their reaction (Guba, 1981; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In qualitative methodology, credibility measures trustworthiness (Guba, 1981). Trustworthiness as described by Guba (1981) was determined through the following four criteria:

• truth value which measures internal validity was determined through member checks.
• applicability which determines external validity was concluded because this study was conducted in a manner that chronological and situational variations...
in the data were generally irrelevant to the findings.

- consistency which determines reliability was determined by the fact that the interview questions over the course of three interviews produced consistent data.
- neutrality which measures objectivity was determined by the conformability of the data produced.

This study met the aforementioned criteria for trustworthiness. The data are available for review.

**Absence of triangulation.** Readers will note the absence of reference to triangulation in assessing trustworthiness of both the data and the conclusions drawn from them. There are four reasons why triangulation was not applicable in this study. First, socialization experiences among first year central office ARCIIs are subjective in nature. The perceptions of individual administrators cannot be verified through data triangulation methods such as interviews of colleagues, direct observation of subjects, or a review of documents. The only individual who can disclose consistently accurate information regarding surprise experienced during the socialization process is the subject.

Secondly, even if a researcher could observe events that he/she labeled as surprise, the subject may not disclose that event as a surprise experience. The subject, for reasons known only to that individual, may choose to report to the researcher that he or she was not surprised by the event or experience, particularly if the subject desires to appear knowledgeable or in control. Also, the idea of interviewing a colleague or the
district superintendent who frequently would supervise the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction was considered and put aside for three reasons: (a) it is likely that an unintended breach of confidentiality would occur, (b) such a procedure could result in the subject withholding information during the interview to avoid possible embarrassment or unwelcome disclosures, and (c) the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction could foresee evaluation consequences. Since the procedure to be utilized for this study can best generate useful data in an atmosphere of trust, the option of utilizing triangulation was rejected.

Thirdly, it was not likely that any direct observation on my part could have captured the surprise phenomenon.

Finally, there were no documents or records available for review that could have captured the phenomenon of surprise during the socialization process. Also, it was unreasonable to ask the subjects, given their busy, ambiguous work lives to document in writing all of their surprise experiences.
Chapter 4
Presentation of Findings

This study investigated whether beginning central office administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCI) experience the encounter stage as described in socialization stage model theory. It sought to identify, categorize, and describe on-the-job experiences encountered by ARCIs during their first year of service to a school district. A significant portion of the study focused on unanticipated experiences.

This qualitative investigation utilized modified grounded theory methodology to expand upon received theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Received theory involves examining an existing theory in a new context (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In other words, rather than generating new theory, this research examined the applicability of stage model theory in a new setting.

The grand tour question for this study was: Does an ARCI experience the encounter period as predicted by stage model theory during the first year of employment? The goal was to explore

1. If the experiences of beginning ARCIs fit the pattern described by stage model socialization theory in the encounter period and, if so,

2. The nature of the surprises that socialization theory predicts will be embedded in those experiences.
Limitations and Cautions

This investigation was confined to a sample of 10 ARCl's in their first year in that position in their current school district. Eight were from Iowa, one from California, and another from Washington. The latter two provided a crosscheck of experiences compared to the ARCl's in Iowa. The study was limited in scope as it only examined the encounter stage of the socialization process. All of the data were self-reported and are subject to other interpretations.

The Sources of the Findings

Participants were interviewed three times: September; January/February; May/June. The specific questions for the first interview were drawn from the research literature. That interview (September) contained 22 questions, while the second interview (January/February) contained 24 questions. For the second interview, the original 22 were again utilized and two questions regarding conflict were added. The first additional question asked, “Have there been occasions in your current position when you have been in conflict with a teacher or teachers?” The second asked about conflict with other administrators, including principals.

The third interview (May/June) contained the same 24 questions as the second interview with one addition. The twenty-fifth question asked, “Does your current position have as an assignment responsibility for the monitoring of student achievement?”
Presentation of the Findings

Interview integration. The findings from the three interviews are integrated and presented in a question-by-question format. Since this was an evolutionary study – that is, since the study captured the evolving experiences and perceptions of its subjects – the evolution of the answer to each question is important. The totality of the experience is more clearly described than it would be if the findings were presented as the results of interview one and then interview two and then interview three.

Reporting pattern. The reporting pattern is straightforward: The interview question is stated, the responses are reported from each of the three sessions, and hypotheses suggested by the responses are identified. Where appropriate, relevant information from other sources has been folded into the presentation.

While the questions and the informants’ responses are presented one by one, there are several places where some number of questions are clustered because they either are inter-related or they otherwise complement or illuminate each other. In those instances, there is a short introduction and then the presentation of the specific questions, answers, and hypotheses.

Questions 1, 2, and 3

Clustering introduction. Interview questions 1, 2, and 3 had their origins in the findings of organizational socialization research. In effect, they asked whether newcomers experienced “appropriate” organizational socialization so that they learned the values, norms, and required behavior of the school district they were entering (Wanous & Colella, 1989). The questions also sought to identify differences between
expectation and reality for the ARCI s and to determine to what degree they experienced various levels of surprise as a result of these differences.

**Interview Question #1.** Now that you’re (two or three, six or seven, nine or ten) months into your first year as the administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction in this school district, what are your impressions of the position?

Every ARCI interviewed in September stated that the position was complex and challenging. Their impressions of the position were rooted in their surprise at the differences between their expectation and the reality of what the position entailed. “I expected to be applying theory,” one said, “but it seems I’m mostly managing details.” Another mentioned, “The breadth of the job was a surprise.” “I soon learned,” she said, “that [it’s] driven by state mandates and there is little room for creativity.” The most prevalent theme was that each was trying to determine what the job really entailed in order to cope with surprise.

By the mid-year interviews in January/February, most seemed to have come to terms with much of the surprise they had expressed in the September interviews. One woman voiced this perspective when she said: “The things I thought would be most challenging when I took the position now seem rather routine.”

Yet, at the same time, most of the ARCIs were still experiencing surprises, many of which were rooted in others’ resistance to change or lack of progress. One attributed the lack of progress to restrictions associated with a larger district bureaucracy and a strong teachers’ union. She seemed surprised by the limitations those restrictions
imposed. Another opened a new category of deep and complex surprise involving personnel issues that had arisen.

Even though the initial surprise had subsided, recurring concerns still emerged. For example, one woman continued to be frustrated that she spent most of her time on management issues rather than on providing curriculum leadership. Another continued to be surprised by the degree her job was driven by state mandates.

By the May/June interviews, most of the previously described surprises had dissipated for most of them; and the reality of the position had become clear. One observed that the honeymoon was over and some resistance to change she previously had not experienced had surfaced. Another had seemingly resolved the major personnel issues and was moving forward with restructuring his department. Although surprises continued to emerge until the very end of the year, their pace slowed and the more common experience became dealing with issues that once had been surprises and now were continuing concerns. This became apparent in one ARCI’s continued expression of frustration with how slow change was occurring.

Interview Question #2. What did you expect this administrative position to be like?

In September, several said that although they expected the culture of the new district to be different, they thought the job itself would be similar to positions or experiences they had previously had.

Reasonably easy job adjustment might have been predicted. Because 7 of the 10 individual interviewees reported prior district level curriculum and instruction
experience, they not surprisingly stated that they also drew on that experience to develop their expectations for their current position. The 3 who had not had prior district level curriculum and instruction experience had at least previously held administrative positions or quasi-administrative positions -- one with an intermediate support agency (an Iowa Area Education Agency), another as a School-to-Work Coordinator, and the third as an adult school principal. All three indicated that those job experiences were helpful in the new position, particularly in anticipating teacher and administrator reactions that otherwise might have been surprises.

Even with such backgrounds, however, learning to function effectively in the new district’s culture represented a challenge. A majority indicated that their change initiatives were moving more slowly than anticipated, in part because of the culture of their new district.

By January/February, they all felt that they were beginning to feel integrated into their new district’s culture. Several indicated, as expected, that they had been successful in building a strong relationship with the superintendent and the various building principals. However, not all was perfect. The variation among principals remained a challenge, presenting a wide range of responses to improvement initiatives. As one person put it, “Several principals lived up to their reputations of resisting change.”

By June, the acclimation to their various districts’ cultures was nearly universal, and the beginning ARCIIs were better able to meet the expectations of their new position. “I enjoy the role this position offers,” one said, “I’ve been able to expand it beyond the
original job description I was provided.” Another echoed, “there is a readiness here I
didn’t expect to see. A core of principals and teachers are ready to move forward.”

**Interview Question #3. How did you develop your expectations of what this position would be like?**

Most responded that the job description helped define the duties of the position for them and some mentioned that the superintendent had made his or her expectations clear during the interview process or during their first few days on the job. What they learned during their job interviews or from discussions very early in their tenure was that their superintendents’ expectations ranged from “You are expected to maintain the status quo” to “change is your job.” It was very important to each ARCI to know what was expected of him or her because the levels of surprise they were experiencing directly related to the clarity of their understanding.

Several mentioned that they had gleaned useful information from the selection process interviews they had gone through prior to accepting the position. Those where teachers and building administrators were included were especially helpful because they provided information which helped to eliminate some unanticipated surprises.

**Summary.** In summary, the expectation for what the position would be like was primarily developed from four sources: the job description, the job interview, what the superintendent said he or she expected, and a given ARCI’s prior experiences in a similar position. Ten months into the position every ARCI saw the position as complex and challenging and consistent with what they had expected when they took the job. One summed it up best when she said, “I expected it to be like this, but I like a challenge.”
There was consistent evidence of surprise in response to these first three questions. Also, it appeared that surprise seemed to be cyclical—a pattern of resolving surprises only to find new ones emerging. In September, surprises tended to involve the complexity, breadth and challenges of the ARCI position. Some were surprised that the expectations of the position were not yet clear by September. By mid-year, most of the September surprises had been resolved. However, two issues had persisted with several: (a) the time required to address management issues, and (b) the frustration they felt when perceived change occurred too slowly. More significant was a cycle of new surprises emerging, which included the effects of state mandates on the ARCI and difficult personnel issues rearing their ugly heads. By May/June, this cycle of resolving prior surprises and coping with new ones had become a continuing pattern.

Hypotheses. Taken together, the responses gleaned from the data suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Stage model socialization theory is correct. Each ARCI found a gap between what he or she had expected in the job and what was found.

2. Surprise theory is correct. Newcomers always are surprised by one or more elements of the job.

3. Prior experience is helpful in making sense of new situations.

4. Organizational culture exerts a powerful influence, not only on the way things are done in an organization, but on the attitudes and behavior of the leaders in an organization when they are called upon to change what they are doing.
Question 4

Introduction. Although not the focus of this study, a newcomer also experiences professional socialization when entering an organization. “Professional socialization” refers to the process by which a beginner acquires the skills and knowledge required for a position (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). In contrast, “organizational socialization,” which is the focus of this study, refers to the process by which a newcomer learns the values, norms, and behavior needed to fully participate as a member of that organization (Wanous & Colella, 1989). This question was designed to determine whether professional socialization may have an impact on organizational socialization.

Interview Question #4. How would you assess –

1. Your academic preparation for this position?

2. Your professional preparation for this position?

Follow-up for Question 4:

a. How well prepared were you personally to assume this position?

b. Please comment regarding the effects of your prior experience upon your performance in this position.

When asked about their academic preparation, all but two of the ARCIs consistently stated in all three interviews that they felt that their academic preparation had little influence on their current performance. For example, as one woman put it, “everything has changed since I finished my degree.” Others delivered similar messages when they said things like, “my course work was minimal and barely scratched the surface of what I needed to know” and “I hold a doctorate in curriculum and nothing in
that program was helpful.” Only two felt that their academic preparation had served them well.

Nonetheless, the lack of academic preparation stirred a motivation in one ARCI to pursue a degree. He enrolled in a doctoral program as a means of seeking more updated relevant course work in curriculum and instruction. His desire to pursue a doctorate had largely been influenced by his desire to be better prepared for his current position.

On the other hand, every ARCI interviewed consistently indicated that his or her professional experience was very helpful. The experience described was wide and varied, but each contributed in some way to the ARCIs’ collective preparation:

- experience as a teacher and/or principal;
- prior central office or intermediate agency administrative experience;
- involvement in professional organizations such as Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and School Administrators of Iowa (SAI) and the conferences and workshops sponsored by these organizations;
- reviewing the professional literature;
- utilizing the internet and other technologies;
- working with consultants; involvement in regional curriculum alliances; and
- the support of mentors.

Five specifically described their involvement in a network or consortium of other ARCIs and/or consultants and/or mentors as being very helpful. These networks were often informal and in addition to those offered by state or national professional organizations.
Overall, a majority of the ARCIs, whether asked in September, January/February, or May/June, felt they were well prepared. Their answers tended to focus on whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied in their previous position; whether or not there had been difficulties encountered during the move to the new community; and how quickly they were able to develop relationships within their new district and community. Three felt those experiences were critical to success in their new position.

On the other hand, 3 of the ARCIs felt that when they originally accepted their new position they were personally prepared for the position, but learned through the first year of service that this may not have been the case. One indicated she was “not prepared for the loneliness experienced.”

Summary. In summary, during all three interviews, a majority of ARCIs felt that academic preparation had little influence on their current performance, while their previous professional experience was frequently very helpful. By the end of the year, this same majority of ARCIs indicated that the most helpful professional experiences were derived from their involvement in a network or consortium of other ARCIs and consultants. Also during the May/June interviews, mentors appeared to be important to several ARCIs. The influence of personal preparation varied from satisfaction with their prior position, through how quickly new relationships were developed, and if there were difficulties in relocating to the new community.

Hypotheses. After analysis, the responses of the ARCIs suggest the following hypotheses:
1. Stage model socialization theory is correct. Successful socialization is dependent on how quickly new relationships are developed with the work group.

2. Prior experience is helpful in making sense of new situations.

3. Academic preparation has little or no effect on making sense of a new situation.

4. Consortia or networks of other ARCI's or consultants or mentors are helpful in making sense of new situations.

Question 5

Introduction. This question was designed to determine whether the ARCI's moved from old to new role requirements, work environments, and job responsibilities as described by Louis (1980) and Nicholson and West (1988).

Interview Question #5. Please tell me about the position of central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction.

Follow-up for Question 5:

a. What major responsibilities are assigned to this position?

b. What change or changes have occurred since you assumed your present position?

c. Do the responsibilities assigned to the position create frustrations?
   c-1. If yes, what are they?
   c-2. If no, why not?

d. Did you expect that this/these frustrations(s) would be a factor in this position?
e. Do the responsibilities assigned to the position provide satisfaction?

   e-1. If yes, what are they?

   e-2. If no, why not?

f. Did you expect that the position would hold satisfaction for you?

   f-1. If yes, in what way(s)?

   f-2. If no, why not?

In September, all ARCIs interviewed described their single most important job responsibility as supervision of curriculum and instruction. By January/February that job responsibility moved to the second place and had been replaced by complying with state requirements. By May/June, that emphasis had again shifted to developing the curriculum or school improvement process and the accompanying professional development.

Other major responsibilities most commonly listed included leading the textbook adoption cycle, developing standards, and developing benchmarks and assessment. For the 8 from Iowa, the recent passage of accountability legislation also made the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) and Annual Progress Report (APR) important responsibilities. The CSIP and APR seemed to demand considerable time during July through September, particularly during the initial year of implementation. Two of the Iowa ARCIs did not have responsibility for the CSIP and APR as a part of their job descriptions, but their responsibilities in curriculum and instruction were influenced by those documents. The California and Washington ARCIs indicated that
meeting the requirements of their states’ standards and assessment mandates were also a major responsibility.

The “other” less important assigned responsibilities listed by the ARClIs varied considerably. These responsibilities included:

- entitlement programs
- the Iowa Phase III program
- the district’s technology plan
- facilitating grade level meetings
- supervising elementary principals
- investigating complaints from parents and the community
- the Safe and Drug Free Schools grant
- grant writing
- mentoring new administrators
- evaluating itinerate teachers
- supervising technical and applied programs
- supervising special education or at-risk programs
- helping with a bond issue campaign
- making staffing decisions
- conducting data analysis
- supervising principals.

Most of these individually listed responsibilities were limited to only 1 or 2 ARClIs. Beyond the development and supervision of curriculum, the Iowa CSIP and
APR or another state’s equivalent, and professional development activities, the ARCI positions these people held had no consistent character.

So numerous and wide-reaching were these duties that half of the ARCIs stated that they did not know that one or two particular things were their responsibility until they were on the job for several months. Some of these surprise duties included:

- assisting with the design of a new high school
- mediating a technology conflict
- supervising a failing elementary school
- supervising special education
- being expected to write grants
- handling all parent complaints.

A majority was consistently frustrated by the scope of their responsibilities.

Across the board their frustrations included:

- lack of opportunity for long-term planning
- lack of time
- scope of assigned responsibilities
- coping with state compliance issues
- lack of contact with students
- dealing with unhappy teachers
- lack of follow through on the part of building staff
- continually dealing with management issues.

The most common of these frustrations related to the lack of time.
As difficult as it may have been, having to deal with frustrations wasn't really a surprise. During the first two interviews (September and January/February), all but one consistently indicated that they expected to experience frustrations in their new positions. Eight of the 10 administrators had held similar positions in their previous districts, and their prior administrative experiences had helped them anticipate the frustrations they faced. But several of the ARCIs indicated that the frustrations were sometimes more intense than anticipated. As one of them expressed it, "I expected frustration, but not to the magnitude I'm experiencing them."

At the same time, frustrations did not spoil the job for them. Nine of the 10 indicated that their positions provided satisfaction. The one who responded in the negative indicated that she was not sure she had done anything important yet. Positive feedback was the greatest source of satisfaction, whether it came from the board, superintendent, other administrators, staff, parents, or community members.

Summary. In summary, over the course of the year, the ARCIs developed a clearer picture of their role requirements and work responsibilities by experiencing all three factors that led to sense-making: change, contrast, and surprise. This sense-making, in turn, led to greater satisfaction and less frustration in the job. This evolution was consistent with how Stage Model Theory predicts newcomers will deal with frustrations when they occur (Louis, 1980; Nicholson & West, 1988).

Hypotheses. The trends in these responses suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Stage model socialization theory is correct. Sense-making leads to greater satisfaction and less frustration.
2. Surprise theory is correct. Each ARCI was surprised to learn new job responsibilities emerged after taking a new position.

3. Surprise theory is correct. The scope of responsibilities was a primary surprise.

4. Even when newcomers have previously held similar positions in other organizations, they do not anticipate the magnitude of the surprises to be experienced.

5. The most common frustration for ARClS is the lack of time.

Question 6

Introduction. This question was designed to discover the variance in workday responsibilities and the influence of conflict on those responsibilities by offering a different, more in-depth perspective on statements offered in the previous question.

Interview Question #6. Given the tasks and duties you perform as the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction, which do you consider to be the most important?

Follow Up for Question 6:

a. Why is that/are those the most important task(s) or duty(ies)?

b. Did you consider that/those task(s) and duty(ies) to be the most important task(s) or duty(ies) in your position?

During the September interview, the ARClS listed the following as their most important duties:

- developing and implementing curriculum (4);
- developing and implementing staff development (4);
• aligning curriculum, benchmarks, assessments, and staff development (2);
• leading the district’s planning effort (2);
• developing standards and benchmarks (2);
• developing committee structures (1);
• supervising school-to-work programming (1);
• supervising principals (1).

These responses showed the variability of the job from district to district since no one duty or responsibility was listed by more than 4 ARCIs.

One interesting feature of the results, however, was the variability of job priorities within a given district over time followed by the ultimate emergence of a small core of central duties. By January/February, the ARCIs most frequently listed complying with state requirements (5) and developing and implementing curriculum (4) as their most important duties. Compliance with state standards had emerged as the most important job function, while developing and implementing curriculum remained a high priority. Beyond that, no one duty or responsibility was listed by more than 1 ARCI.

By May/June, the most important duties had shifted to building relationships with teachers while developing a sense of team (5), developing and implementing professional development activities (3), and meeting compliance issues (2). In the end, it appears that the ARCIs had come to see developing relationships, trust, and collaboration as essential. Five consistently articulated this during the May/June interviews.

Summary. By May/June, the ARCIs had come to see minimizing conflict with all constituent groups, and building collaborative relationships and trust with principals and
teachers as keys to their success. The actual job tasks they listed as important centered on compliance with state requirements and development of curriculum.

All but 2 of the ARCIs had said that they had held similar or somehow related positions in their previous districts but they all reported more significant responsibilities in their new district. There could be at least two explanations for this. First, it could be a function, for some at least, of moving to a larger district. Second, it could again be evidence of the job's variability from district to district. The functions they assumed here had also been handled in their previous districts, but not by the person holding the curriculum and instruction title.

**Hypotheses.** Taken in totality, the responses suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Stage model socialization theory is correct as it describes the encounter period. Newcomers invariably find a gap between what they expect and what actually is their major job responsibilities.

2. At another level, as the theory predicts, a major interpersonal task emerges in learning how to minimize conflict and build collaborative relationships with their new colleagues.

**Question 7**

**Introduction.** Pajak (1989) had suggested that districts must develop evidence to convince various constituent audiences that they are changing to meet new challenges and that student achievement levels are improving. With the current emphasis on documenting and reporting achievement gains, it seems logical that such responsibility would fall to the ARCI. The purpose of this question was to determine the extent to
which the responsibility for monitoring student achievement is a major ARCI responsibility and, more importantly, what frustrations that responsibility generates.

**Interview Question #7. Does your current position include responsibility for monitoring student achievement?** (NEW QUESTION IN MAY/JUNE)

Follow-up for Question 7:

a. **If yes, please comment on that responsibility.**

   a-1. To whom or where is data reported.

b. **If no, why not.**

Nine of the ARCI s had responsibility for monitoring student achievement, although 1 shared that responsibility with the Assessment Director. The one exception said that he was not sure who had that responsibility. He indicated that the district’s guidance counselor was responsible for administering the tests and reporting the results to the staff, administration, and Board of Education, while he was responsible for reporting student achievement data to the State.

They all were also responsible for reporting the data to various audiences. When asked to identify those audiences, most consistently reported them to be the board of education (7), the state education department (5), building staff and administrators (5), and the community (5). Of course, they all made note of the frustration implicit in reporting to audiences that are demanding different ends, and designating which of those audiences is the priority. One illustrated this point clearly when he explained, “The state wants quantitative information, while parents want to know specific information about their child, including information beyond test data or grades.”
Summary. All but 1 of the ARCIs was assigned the monitoring of student achievement as a major responsibility. They all were responsible for reporting the data to various internal and external audiences. They all felt the frustration implicit in reporting to audiences that are demanding different ends, and designating which of those audiences is the priority.

Hypothesis. Taken in sum, these responses suggest the following hypothesis:

Responsibilities requiring ARCIs to report to multiple and varied audiences create frustration.

Question 8

Introduction. This question was intended to solicit the subjects' views regarding surprise and sense-making.

Interview Question #8. Has anything surprised you about the position to date?

Follow-up for Question 8:

a. If yes, what has surprised you?
   a-1. And why was that a surprise to you?
   a-2. How did you make sense out of this surprise?

b. If no, why do you feel this was the case?

Every informant described experiencing both positive and negative surprise, some of which were revealed in his or her answers to previous questions. Positive surprise examples included developing positive relationships with the board and superintendent as
well as a high level of cooperation among employees. Overall, their answers indicated that positive surprises occurred on a regular basis during the first year in a new district.

The negative surprises could be divided into five clusters:

- the lack of adequate administrative help, time, or resources;
- feeling the pressure of state standards and testing;
- how quickly an issue can become controversial;
- the effort required to get the curriculum processes in place; and
- dealing with too much paperwork and managerial detail.

The most significant comments were generated by their underlying concern for meeting state achievement goals. This was reflected in comments such as, “I was surprised the curriculum was as weak as it was” and, “I didn’t realize how much time it would take to begin to see results.” These were serious concerns and it appeared evident that these negative surprises needed to be resolved or the new ARCIIs were likely to become disillusioned with their new districts or with the position itself.

In all cases where either negative or positive surprise was experienced, the ARCIIs appeared to go through the process of sense-making. This conclusion is, of course, consistent with the research of Louis (1980). Experiencing sense-making happened in many facets of the job, and had a direct impact on the level of frustration with which each ARCI was coping. Some mentioned sense-making occurring in regard to specific tasks associated with the position, such as daily interactions with teachers and principals, while others focused on sense-making in the position overall. “I look at this job as a work in progress,” one said, “and I’m never going to get to the point that everything is done.”
Summary. Surprise was a common experience. These surprises were both positive and negative and were influenced by the ARCI's experiences in their prior districts or the expectations they had developed during their job interviews. In nearly every case, these surprises were being resolved through sense making.

Hypotheses. Taken in conjunction, the data suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Surprise theory is correct. Surprise is a common experience among all newcomers in a job, regardless of education or previous professional experience.

2. Surprise theory is correct. The nature of the surprises newcomers experience is influenced by their professional history or by the expectations developed during job interviews.

3. Surprises experienced are both positive and negative.

Question 9

Introduction. Since working relationships influence the socialization experience (Kramer, 1989; Pajak, 1989; Reichers, 1987), this question was designed to address how central office ARCI's view teachers and how that view affects their working relationship with teachers.

Interview Question #9. What is your current view of teachers? You can respond with individual examples or with generalizations.

Follow-up for Question 9:

a. Has your view of teachers changed since assuming the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction position in your current school district?
a-1. If yes, in what way(s)?

a-2. If no, why not?

As the year began, all but 2 of the ARCI's expressed positive feelings about teachers, giving them credit for “keeping the best interest of students in mind” and for “wanting to do well and make a difference.” No one portrayed teachers as perfect, but a majority was very positive.

These feelings were still strong midyear. In January/February, all expressed positive feelings about teachers, praising such attributes as a willingness “to give of themselves in ways others can’t understand” and “to develop professionally” as well as a “desire for high expectations for student performances.”

By the end of the year, these positive feelings remained constant. All again expressed positive feelings about teachers, which were best expressed by an ARCI when she said, “Teachers invest a great deal of their life into teaching.”

In September, most talked about their specific approaches to building credibility, respect, and mutual benefit with teachers. They mentioned such things as getting into classrooms and working closely with teachers in order to build a positive relationship.

By midyear as well as through the end of the year, there was continued discussion of strategies for building credibility, respect, and mutual benefit with teachers, but not the same level as expressed in September. It appeared that in a few cases, the honeymoon was over. These individuals expressed urgency about accountability, which led to comments such as “some teachers don’t see the connection between accountability and the classroom” and “we still need to raise teacher classroom performance.”
In September and again at midyear, several also expressed concern about state mandates and relatively low teacher pay. They mentioned that “teachers have more leverage in the marketplace because of the shortages,” and they expressed concern over the fact that “private sector compensation can be over valued by some potential teachers.” Perhaps this concern for teachers was best illustrated by an ARCI who said, “Teachers work hard, while underpaid, and are not well respected.” These perspectives continued to be expressed through the entire year.

The importance of relationships and informal influence was apparent throughout the year. No ARCI expressed a desire to assert formal authority over teachers, not even the 2 who possessed direct supervisory authority -- but changes were on the way.

In September, 2 ARCIs had expressed initially negative views of teachers, but those appeared to be influenced by protracted contract negotiations in one district and perceived teacher reluctance to embrace change in the other. By January/February, the negative list had gotten longer as 6 described teacher behaviors in ways that could be construed as negative. By the end of the year, negative views had receded to beginning of the year levels, as 3 expressed such views.

Throughout the year, ARCIs commented on such things as a “frustrating union mentality,” a reluctance to change or “think outside the box,” “a lack of accountability for student success,” and a “lack of professionalism.” This negativity and frustration was also illustrated in 1 ARCI’s comments regarding teachers: “Some teachers feel they need to be paid for anything they do after school. I remember doing extra work and not expecting to be paid. That frustrates me.”
Summary. The vast majority of ARClIs consistently viewed teachers positively and wanted positive relationships with them. Although several of the ARClIs had line authority, all seemed to recognize that their influence is derived from building credibility, respect, and mutual benefit. It also seemed that as the year progressed, some ARClIs also expressed what could be construed as negative statements about teachers. These negative statements tend to fall into the broad categories of a lack of professionalism, avoidance of accountability, and resistance to change.

Hypothesis. Although not every ARCl had exactly the same experience, the evidence suggests the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. During the encounter period, there is an increased focus on the workgroup.

Question 10

Introduction. This question was designed to explore the relationship between ARClIs and principals. This relationship is essential to an ARCl’s effectiveness, in part due to the high levels of autonomy generally enjoyed by principals. It is essential to ARClIs that they have the cooperation of principals if programs of instructional improvement are to succeed. Many principals would prefer to handle their responsibilities without the involvement of central office supervision.

Interview Question #10. What is your current view of principals? You can respond with individual examples or with generalizations.

Follow-up for Question 10:
a. Has your view of principals changed since assuming the central office administrator responsible for curriculum and instruction position in your current school district?

a-1. If yes, in what way(s)?

a-2. If no, why not?

Five of the ARClS had prior experience as building principals. Two, in fact, had been building principals immediately prior to assuming their current positions. One had served as junior high principal in conjunction with district-wide curriculum responsibilities, while the other had been an adult school principal. These experiences tended to influence how each went about developing trust and a good working relationship with the principal he or she worked with.

In general, responses in September centered on some aspect of understanding the principals' responsibilities and concerns, thus demonstrating empathy with the issues principals face on a daily basis. Responses that best reflected this included such comments as “principals are over burdened” and “principals must work hard to balance the needs of students with the demands of the community.”

Clearly becoming the major focus for principals was the improvement of student learning while balancing managerial roles. One openly acknowledged that the principals she worked with had a clear understanding of curriculum and instruction. Others likewise mentioned the principal’s role in student achievement and the impact that role has on principals who are frustrated with the pressures of balancing managerial roles with educational leader roles.
Throughout the year, the ARCIs expressed a continuing desire to establish credibility and trust with principals. They indicated that they had high levels of respect for principals, which allowed for a relationship to develop. As the year progressed, however, certain characteristics of both principals and the principalship drew more of their attention.

In January/February and again in May/June, several commented on how difficult the principal’s job is when considering the workload and time demands. One said it best when he said, “Principals are pulled so many directions by the community, teachers, and students. They are easily caught up in the detail and lose sight of the big picture.” They noted that principals are only human, but also acknowledged shortcomings that affected their ability to perform their duties. One took this to heart when she said, “Principals are overwhelmed by demands on their time. I thought focusing on instruction was just a matter of prioritization. Now I’m not sure that’s the case.” In other cases, they recognized that perhaps the job is nearly impossible and expressed the empathy they felt for those who served as principals.

Their responses changed little from January to June. A majority repeated their assessment of how difficult the principal’s job was becoming. They mentioned the need for principals to be versatile and to be a mediator in many situations. One ARCI even admitted, “Their role is difficult, especially the high school principalship – I wouldn’t want the job.”

By the end of the year, their general view of principals had become more positive; however, several in the May/June interviews reported disappointment in some of the
principals. One captured this feeling when she said, “I’m disappointed in the professionalism of principals here; they blame unpopular decisions on the central office. That attitude is embedded in the culture here and the lack of a relationship with each other.”

Prior experience as a building principal seemed to have some effect upon the ARCIs’ relationship with principals. Those who had prior experience seemed to be more sensitive to the issues and challenges facing principals. There was one exception, however, a woman who was most distressed by her relationship with principals. She often indicated that although sympathetic to their plight, she was disappointed with their work ethic. Her desire upon taking the ARCI position had been to have a close relationship with principals. This had been her prior experience, as both a principal and an ARCI, and she was distressed that a closer relationship had not evolved.

**Summary.** In summary, the ARCIs interviewed were empathetic of the difficult role that principals play and wanted to maintain good working relationships with them. One issue discussed by 7 of the 10 ARCIs was the difficulty many principals had in balancing the management demands with their instructional leadership role. Several mentioned that principals allowed recurrent management functions to consume what the ARCIs perceived as an inordinate amount of their time, and, as a result, instruction suffered. And, although the quality, attitudes, or performance of the principals with whom they worked disappointed several ARCIs at various times over the course of the year, a majority consistently expressed high regard for the overall quality of the principals they worked with.
Hypotheses. Taken in combination, the responses gleaned from the data suggest the following hypotheses.

1. Prior experience as a building principal has a positive effect upon the ARCI's relationship with principals. Those who had prior experience seemed to be more sensitive to issues and challenges faced by principals.

2. Stage model socialization theory is correct. During the encounter period, there is an increased focus on the workgroup.

Questions 11 and 12

Clustering Introduction. Pajak (1989) found that issues such as managing conflict; adequate planning and goal setting; securing resources and support; managing the organizational culture; facilitating change; documenting student achievement; developing norms and standards; initiating and facilitating relationships with teachers, principals, and the superintendent all have the potential to affect the quality of the work day. Questions 11 and 12 were designed to secure data regarding the experiences related to these areas of a new ARCI.

Interview Question #11. What were you least prepared for in your current position?

Follow-up for Question 11:

a. Is that what you expected to be least prepared for?

Interview Question #12. What were you most prepared for in this position?

Follow up for Question 12:

a. Is that what you expected to be most prepared for?
As might be expected, the responses to these questions were very individualized. Each person’s preparation level was the result of his or her own unique and professional experience. Several areas for which they felt the least prepared seemed to fit many of the categories outlined by Pajak.

All year long, ARCIs described sources of conflict dealing with ineffective subordinates, administrative staff who did not like one another, distrust of the central office, moving change too rapidly and stirring resistance, dealing with a union attitude, and attempts by the board members to micro manage. As time passed, most of these conflicts were resolved, minimized, or managed. Three talked at length about dealing with the political aspects of their jobs. One described getting into trouble by not fully understanding the history and politics of the district and therefore inadvertently violated accepted practices. Another struggled with central office politics and the resulting alliances. A third had to constantly work around board and superintendent conflicts. She eventually had to step into the leadership void created by the forced resignation of the superintendent. All 3 made it clear that politics had a negative impact on their socialization in the new district.

The desire for adequate planning and goal setting was indicated in the words of 1 who made it clear that she felt she must fulfill “the expectation that I am now an expert on everything.” For Iowa ARCIs, the CSIP process with a September 15 deadline impacted their planning and goal setting. In fact, 3 characterized the CSIP and the ambiguous directions from the Department of Education as a frustration. One felt that the AEA’s resources were not fully utilized by his district to meet statutory goals; while
several others talked about not being able to adapt to their predecessors’ timelines for implementing district academic improvement plans. Several mentioned the lack of financial support for curriculum and instruction as an issue. In all cases, these issues seemed to negatively impact the new ARCl’s workday quality.

Initially, several ARClS felt they were unsettled by the new district’s organizational culture because they felt they didn’t have all of the knowledge necessary to successfully address all aspects of the job. One said that “there are many things I don’t know; therefore, I’m often out of my comfort zone.” All in all, by the end of the year, most new ARClS felt they were in some way managing the organization’s culture. Evidence to that effect emerged in statements regarding the successful adaptation to the position and all it entailed. “I took the initiative to structure my own position,” one said, expressing desires to appropriately assimilate into the organizational culture.

Since change is often difficult to achieve, particularly when new to an organization, several struggled with it. One consistently described his role in developing a new organizational structure, while another talked about dealing with resistance to change and having to be patient in pushing for change.

Several were comfortable helping in the development of norm and standard. However, others did not feel they were adequately prepared to deal with many elements of this task. One talked about dealing with the frustration of state reporting, while another discussed managing multiple tasks and conflicting goals. Yet another talked about developing a structure for change.
During all three interviews, there was no mention of documenting student achievement, which appears to be different from Pajak's findings about "least prepared" issues.

One common experience seemed to be efforts to successfully initiate positive relationships. A couple mentioned specific examples of relationships that had been successfully initiated and developed, whether that relationship was with a subordinate or a supervisor, and 2 others also noted an overall positive impression of relationships that had been initiated. "I immediately felt warmth and acceptance, and I feel like I belong," one said. In fact, only 1 seemed to struggle in this area later in the year. "People," he said, "seemed surprised when I asked them to move forward with my agenda."

One area in which they did feel well prepared was in human relations. All the informants made it clear that they expected to be well prepared to deal with working with people, the curriculum and assessment issues they faced, the reporting required by the state, and lengthy ambiguous job descriptions.

Summary: The individualized responses by ARCIs indicated that each person's preparation level was the result of his or her own unique professional experiences. ARCIs often felt least prepared in the areas of managing conflict, adequate planning and goal setting, managing the organizational culture, and facilitating change. Meanwhile, a majority was comfortable with developing norms and standards and initiating relationships. Finally, ARCIs felt well prepared to work with people and to document student achievement.

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Hypothesis. After analysis, the responses of ARClIs suggest the following hypothesis:

Issues such as managing conflict; adequate planning and goal setting; securing resources and support; managing organizational culture; facilitating change; documenting student achievement; developing norms and standards; initiating and facilitating relationships with teachers, principals, and superintendents all affected the quality of the work day.

Question 13

Introduction. This question was designed to discover the variance in workday quality and the possible causes of this variation. Socialization issues that can influence workday quality include the following: (a) long-term conflict; (b) fragmented, diverse, and ambiguous job responsibilities; (c) the quality of the relationship with teachers, principals, and the superintendent; (d) academic preparation and prior work experience; and (e) coping with surprise (Pajak, 1989). These issues had been addressed in prior questions, but the goal here was to explore them from another perspective.

Interview Question #13. Do your days at work vary in quality?

Follow-up for Question 13:

a. Do you have good days?
   
a-1. If so, would you describe to me what a really good day is like?

b. Do you have bad days?
   
b-1. If so, would you describe for me what a really bad day is like?
Workday variances are a part of life. In every interview, the ARClIs indicated that their workdays varied in quality and each was able to describe both good and bad days.

When asked whether they have good days, all stated that they definitely did. Mainly, their good days were those days when they had positive and productive contact with teachers, and/or principals, and/or students. Most cited specific examples of interactions with teachers and principals, including developing a vision statement with principals and conducting a science institute that was attended by 92% of the teachers when only 50% was expected. Although not mentioned as often as working with teachers, principals, and students, other descriptors of good days frequently included "when things get done" or "being able to find solutions to problems." Sometimes they responded more at the feeling level, commenting on such things as receiving inspiration and motivation from the actions of others or sharing the same emotions as those around them, including joy and laughter.

As might be predicted, bad days were usually defined as those days when things that made for a good day were absent. Most described the bad days as not accomplishing tasks, or when little got done, or dealing with conflicts that did not seem to have an immediate solution. Several talked about such things as not being able to locate data or having to respond to unplanned tasks.

As in all of our lives, good and bad were frequently mixed in the same day. One woman said that she didn't have bad days, "only bad minutes," while another indicated that she "sometimes has good and bad days at the same time." She went on to describe one specific example when a parent complaint on a book was received and she developed
a well-documented and conciliatory response (a good day) that was rejected out of hand by the parent (a bad day).

**Summary.** A good day was a day when an ARCI’s expectations for the position were confirmed, usually through positive and productive contact with teachers and/or principal and/or students. On the other hand, bad days confirmed negative surprises, were filled with unaccomplished tasks, or put the ARCI into unexpected conflict.

**Hypotheses.** Taken in total, the responses suggest the following hypotheses:

1. Stage model socialization theory is correct. Workday quality affects successful negotiation of the encounter period.

2. Surprise theory is correct. Conflict is a major source of surprise.

3. Successfully completing the encounter period depends on the quality of the relationship with the work group of principals and teachers.

**Question 14**

**Introduction.** If ARCIs are undergoing a successful organizational socialization experience, then it seems likely that they would describe how they are making a difference in their new school districts. This question was designed to solicit information from newcomers regarding this issue.

**Interview Question #14.** Do you know if you have made a difference?

**Follow-up for Question 14:**

a. If yes, how?

   a.1. What evidence can you cite?

b. Has anyone supported your efforts?
b.1. If so, who?

b.2. In what way(s) has he/she/they offered support?

In September, most were tentative in answering this question. They talked about it being “too early to tell” or “in a few small ways.” A few were able to describe making a difference, such as when people were “doing what they agreed to” or “when teachers tell me I did something to provide them help.”

This feeling continued into midyear for most of them. In January/February, 6 of the 10 were still saying things like they didn’t know if they were really making a difference. Even when some did respond with an affirmative answer, they were tentative about the impact they were having; they indicated that they were making a difference “in a few small ways.” The remaining 4 were able to confidently respond in the affirmative, citing specific areas they feel they’ve made a difference in, such as new teacher induction program, or citing specific positive feedback from others.

By late spring, however, a slight majority, 6, was beginning to feel that they were making a difference. That feeling was largely rooted in what others told them, but they also were frequently able to cite specific examples of where they were making a difference. Many noted positive feedback from their associates as evidence that they were making a difference. One ARCI said, “People tell me my work is good and ask if I’m staying in the district. They want me to stay.” Perhaps the most comprehensive response was from the person who said, “I hear I’ve made a difference from the superintendent, community members, board members, and AEA staff.” Others described feedback that contained more specific data such as survey results, improved test scores,
and positive teacher response to ideas and suggestions. One knew he was making a difference “when I offered a Guided Reading class, 23 teachers signed up and there was no compensation offered.” Of course, the tentativeness that emerged in earlier discussions was still apparent in some, although the number who expressed it had diminished. For instance, one said, “People have told me I’m making a difference, but I haven’t seen hard data yet.”

**Summary.** By the end of the year, the ARClS were more specific when asked whether anyone offered support by listing teachers, parents, the superintendent, principals, board members, and other central office administrators as sources of support. The most frequent offers of support included written or verbal positive feedback.

It is also apparent that 1 year may not be enough time for ARClS to truly know if they are making a difference. In September, when asked if they were making a difference, all were tentative. By January/February, some could cite evidence that they may be making some difference, although it was very limited. By May/June, there was a little more evidence that some difference was being made. These responses might indicate that organizational socialization was not as successful as indicated by other questions.

**Hypothesis.** The trends in these responses suggest the following hypothesis:

One year is not enough time for ARClS to know if they are making a difference.

**Question 15**

**Introduction.** The purpose of this question was to determine whether conflict with teachers in the new organization affected the encounter stage of the socialization process.
Pajak (1989) concluded that in order to develop teamwork, conflict needs to be managed. Therefore, effective ARCIs must be skilled in addressing conflict.

**Interview Question #15. Has there been occasion(s) in your current district when you have been in conflict with a teacher or teachers?** (NEW QUESTION IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY)

**Follow-Up for Question 15:**

a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If not, why not?

In the midyear interviews, when the question was asked for the first time, 8 of the 10 described instances of conflict with teachers. Typically, the conflict had been minor or didn’t linger. Those included such issues as a denial of an Iowa Phase III Project and difficulty in reaching consensus in committees such as the Phase III Committee and the Technology Committee. In 2 instances, the ARCI seemed to defuse the conflict quickly. “Yes, there has been conflict,” one said, “but it didn’t last. I made some teachers uncomfortable, but we just keep talking and it doesn’t linger.” Although most conflict was described as minor, some issues that were more serious in nature did arise, including a teacher’s refusal to teach the adopted program or curriculum.

Sometimes, ARCIs found themselves caught in the middle of others’ conflicts. One reported that she had dealt only with issues where teachers had been in conflict with one another.

Before the end of the year, however, several had experienced deeper conflict with teachers. “I have pushed for deeper change than most teachers were willing to
undertake." "Some teachers have approached board members, but the superintendent, principal, and some teacher leaders have supported me." Along the same vein, another reported that "teachers have refused to implement the recently adopted math materials. I met and listened to their concerns and addressed them immediately." In fact, several pointed to teachers' refusals to implement approved curriculum as a source of conflict.

Summary. In summary, in January/February, at least 8 of the 10 ARCIIs reported conflict situations with teachers. Generally that conflict was somewhat minor and most often involved committee work. The most significant area of conflict involved teachers refusing to teach the adopted curriculum. By the end of the year, this issue had grown. Four reported conflict that involved resisting implementing the adopted district curriculum or benchmarks.

Hypothesis. Taken in sum, the responses suggest the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. Conflict interferes with socialization. The most challenging conflicts dealt with teachers who resisted implementing the adopted district curriculum or benchmark measures.

Question 16

Introduction. This question was designed to capture data regarding the influence of home life and/or life outside of work on the encounter stage of the socialization process. These stressors are often felt early.

Interview Question #16. Has your home life and/or life outside of work changed since assuming the position of ARCI in this district?

Follow-up for Question 16:
a. If yes, how? Why?

b. If no, why do you think this is?

c. If I were to speak with your spouse, do you think he/she would say your life has changed since taking this position?

In September, all but 2 ARCI's interviewed said that their lives outside of work had become more stressful since assuming their new positions. This was true regardless of gender.

The numbers were unchanged midyear. The major stressors included less time to dedicate to responsibilities at home, late nights at work and less vacation, a situation involving a mother's health, and the lack of friends in the new location. "Here I don't have any friends," one said. "Previously, I had a circle of friends to support me."

Perhaps 1 woman best summed up the stress when she said, "there are three of us now --- me, my husband and the job."

By the end of the year, 7 felt that things had improved. Their comments indicated that several factors led to this improvement, including their own greater understanding and acceptance of the job, an adaptation to the situation by family members, and a diminishing number of crises and time-consuming issues. One said, "Earlier in the year the 60+ hours work weeks were getting in the way. Things are slowing down now. Conflicting time demands are part of the job." Another said, "Things have slowed down. We remodeled the house and my wife has adjusted to teaching."

In 4 cases, the new ARCI did not have a spouse. Each of the other 6 reported that the spouse would say his/her life has changed since taking this position. Some listed
changes that were for the better, including comments like, “She would say I’m not working as hard and our quality of life has improved” or “he says I’m happier. I’m better able to separate my professional life from my home life since I no longer work in the district where I live.” Of course, there were others who gave neutral or more negative responses to this question, including comments like, “She says I’m busier and more involved in activities outside the home” and “He would say I’m not as happy as I was in my old position.”

**Summary.** All ARClS experienced home or family life stress, both positive and negative, during their first year in a new district. In September, 8 had reported that their home lives and lives outside of work had become more stressful, but only 3 were saying that in January/February. By the end of the year, things had improved for 7, but 2 indicated that home life stressors had contributed to their decision to retire. The remaining person’s job was eliminated; hence, a whole new set of stressors were affecting his home life. Also, it appears that gender did not influence the pressure, volume, and intensity of home life or life outside of work stressors.

**Hypothesis.** Taken in combination, these responses suggest the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. Home and family life does impact the quality and rate of socialization during the encounter period.
Question 17

Introduction. The purpose of this question was to determine whether the ARCIs grew to fit the scope and demands of their new positions.

Interview Question #17. Have your skills and abilities grown since assuming this position?

Follow-up for Question 17:

a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If no, why not?

c. Has anyone provided you support?

c-1. If so, who?

c-2. In what ways?

Across the year, in all three interviews, all but 2 ARCIs indicated that they felt their skills had grown since taking their new position. The skill sets mentioned as having grown included:

- engaging the community,
- developing leadership skills,
- managing detail,
- working with adults,
- working more effectively with principals,
- dealing with difficult personnel issues,
- managing complex tasks,
- improving organizational skills,
• establishing relationships,
• working with a team,
• setting priorities,
• acquiring research and assessment skills, and
• developing vision.

The other 2 ARCIs suggested they still might not have grown, which indicates that they are still progressing through the encounter stage – again suggesting, as indicated in responses to Question 14 above, that 1 year may not be enough for many new ARCIs to work their way through the encounter period of organizational socialization. One mentioned what appeared to be a rather specific skill when he said, “I need more support in developing my computer skills.” And the other mentioned a more global skill when she said, “I grow when I’m challenged and I haven’t been given enough challenge here.” In these cases, the transition from the encounter to the role management stages could be delayed.

When asked who supports their efforts, 6 of the new ARCIs over the course of all three interviews listed the superintendent and other administrators. Occasionally, other members listed AEA staff, an Internet support group, and the office staff as supporting their efforts. One suggested that he didn’t need support when he said, “I’ve been doing the job for 8 years and I know how to function well in the position.” Yet in June, he lamented that he, “hadn’t noticed any support.” This contradiction was apparently explained by the fact that his position had been eliminated between the second and third interview.
Summary. The vast majority of ARCIIs consistently reported that they had grown during the course of the year. Themes regarding their growth included the broad area of working well with adults, setting priorities, and developing vision as well as leadership skills. The 2 who consistently reported a lack of growth, as it turned out, left the position within 2 years of assuming it. It would appear that these two individuals did not successfully work their way through the encounter period.

When asked who supports their efforts, a majority of ARCIIs listed the superintendent and other administrators.

Hypothesis. Although not every ARCI had exactly the same experience, the evidence suggests the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. Supervisory support, in this case the support of the superintendent and other administrative staff, contributes to a newcomer’s ability to smoothly move through the encounter stage.

Question 18

Introduction. The rationale for this question, which addresses conflict with other administrators, was similar to the rationale for the question that addressed conflict with a teacher or teachers. It was designed to help determine whether conflict with other administrators would influence the encounter stage of the socialization process.

Interview Question #18. Has there been occasion(s) in your current district when you have been in conflict with other administrators, including principals?

(NEW QUESTION IN JANUARY/FEBRUARY)

Follow-Up for Question 18:
a. **If yes, in what way(s)?**

b. **If not, why not?**

Both midyear, when this question was first asked, and again at year’s end, 6 of the 10 ARCIs described instances of conflict with another administrator. The plurality of conflict was with principals. Sometimes the ARCIs felt that the conflict grew out of personal feelings in those who had themselves wanted the ARCI position. “One principal, who was an applicant for my position, has attempted to retain some curriculum authority,” said one ARCI. “The issue lingers and the relationship needs to be further developed.”

Sometimes it grew out of power struggles as described by one ARCI: “I’ve been in conflict with the Junior High School Principal since I arrived. At every opportunity, including administrative meetings, he points at things he thinks I’m doing wrong. To co-exist, I must stand up to him. He is a manager and I’m a big picture thinker. He is retiring this year.” Another described general conflict between the central office and principals: “There has been tension over centralized versus site-based decision authority.”

But not all conflict was with building personnel. During the course of the year, 2 ARCIs described conflict between departments within the district’s central office. One example: “There is on-going conflict between the Curriculum Department on one side and the Business Office and the Human Resource Departments on the other.”

By the end of the year, only 3 had “not yet” experienced conflict with another administrator. Yet even 2 of these described what they called a difference of opinion.
they experienced with a principal. The third seemed to go out of his way to avoid conflict. “I try to communicate with principals daily,” he said. “Therefore, there is less likelihood of conflict. If I see something brewing, I try to ‘get a read’ on the situation and correct the things immediately.”

**Summary.** It appears that conflict with principals and other administrators influenced socialization of some new ARCIs. The effects were different from the conflict with teachers previously discussed. With other administrators, there appeared to be less active listening and mediation as there was with teachers when conflict had occurred. Some of the conflict was due to the ongoing tension that exists between central office and building level administrators. In several cases, a resolution to some of the conflict was the retirement or termination of a principal.

**Hypothesis.** Taking all responses into account, the following hypothesis emerges:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. Conflict with colleagues, in this case other administrators, affects the socialization of new ARCIs.

**Question 19**

**Introduction.** Much of the current management literature frequently references the top-down relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate. Given the importance of a successful relationship between the ARCI and the superintendent, the justification for this question evolved.

**Interview Question #19. What is your view of the superintendent?**

In September, the new ARCIs’ views of their superintendents were generally very positive:
• "he is open and willing to talk about tough issues,"
• "our values match and we agree upon what needs to be done,"
• "he knows what needs to happen in a good school and we can get there together," and
• "he is brilliant and sees things that are needed for change."

Clearly, in September, they all were striving to build a positive working relationship with their superintendent. Even then, however, 2 had several concerns. They felt that the superintendent could become overly involved to the point of controlling and that the superintendent did not offer any new ideas. A third was concerned because her superintendent was opposed by influential people in the community, one of which had just been elected to the board. Her concern centered on whether this conflict would affect her or her position.

By midyear, the new ARCl's views of their superintendents continued to be positive. "The district is fortunate to have him," one said. "He has enough talent to be successful in a large district." Another had grown more positive during the year. "I'm a tremendous supporter of the superintendent," she said. "I've supported all changes he has made. Six months ago I would not have expected that to be the case."

All was not perfect, of course. During the course of the January/February interview, several minor concerns about the superintendent emerged, which included apprehension about his reluctance to function well as a member of a team, a concern that a new superintendent was overwhelmed, and a bit of anxiety over a difference of opinion of how change takes place.
Overall, however, the new ARCI's views of the superintendents continued to be very positive. Eight of the 10 had specific positive comments to make at the end of the year. "My current superintendent has qualities I have not seen in the previous four superintendents I worked with," one said. "He is building a positive school culture." Another stated, "He is very talented, political, well liked, and accessible. When push comes to shove, he always backs his people." And, finally, a third said, "She is a respected and admired visionary leader who is very strategic."

**Summary.** This is the first of a series of questions that asked about the relationship between the superintendent and the ARCI. Almost all of the ARCI's interviewed appeared to have a good relationship with their superintendents from the very beginning. Through January/February and May/June, the superintendent and ARCI relationship seemed to continue to grow and maintain a positive perspective.

**Hypothesis.** After analysis, the responses of the ARCI's suggests the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. A positive relationship with one's supervisor, in this case the superintendent, enhances socialization during the encounter stage.

**Question 20**

**Introduction.** This question was designed to explore any evolution in how ARCI's viewed the superintendency.

**Interview Question #20.** Has your view of the superintendency changed since you came to work here?
Follow-up for Question 20:

a. If yes, in what ways?

b. If no, why not?

The ARCIs' perceptions of the superintendent over the course of the year are displayed in Table #1.

Table 1

Changes in ARCIs' View of Superintendent

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<th>Subject</th>
<th>September</th>
<th>January/February</th>
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Yes = View Changed  No = View Did Not Change
Let's first discuss this question from the perspective of the ARCIs who believed their perception of the superintendent had not changed. In September, 4 of the 10 reported that perspective. This observation was supported by the following comments: “I worked with him when I held another position in the district, I knew what to expect” and “I’ve just confirmed what I already thought.”

By midyear, once again 4 ARCIs indicated that their thoughts had not changed, but note that these were the same individuals in 3 of the 4 cases. Quotes supporting this conclusion are as follows: “I didn’t expect him to know much about curriculum and I was right. That is why he hired me.” “He’s similar to my prior superintendent – he works hard and works well with people.” “My perception has proven to be accurate.” Clearly, these 3 ARCIs, during the course of the first semester, were confirming the perception they had developed early in their tenure. In May/June, the number of ARCIs who indicated that their view of the superintendent had not changed dropped to 2. These 2 had consistently reported during the course of the year that their view had not changed.

On the other hand, several ARCIs provided data that their view of the superintendent had changed. For a majority of these 6, their perception changed in a positive manner, which is apparent in comments like, “I now view my superintendent as more personable and collaborative” and “It is possible to carry on a vision and work with people without being consumed by budget issues.”

By January/February, the number of ARCIs who indicated that their perception of the superintendent had changed remained at 6. and once again, these changes appeared to be quite positive. The most pertinent comments that shed further light on this
observation included: “My view has changed. Early in the year, I didn’t fully understand his capacity. I underestimated him because he is so unassuming.” “Our relationship has changed some. I admire him more because I now understand his capacity.” “She doesn’t behave like other superintendents I know. She delegates and holds me responsible.”

Only one answered “no” in January/February after answering “yes” in September. This contradiction seems to simply be a contradiction that has no apparent explanation.

By May/June, 8 ARCIs indicated their view of the superintendent had changed, including an increased level of respect and admiration and a greater appreciation for what the position of superintendent entails. Many also mentioned that their relationship with the superintendent had changed as well as their perception of him or her. One ARCI even commented, “We began as professional colleagues and have come to be friends.”

Interestingly, as the data reveal, this question was answered with a consistent response by 7 of the 10 ARCIs. Through all three interviews, only 2 interviewees consistently answered that their view of the superintendent had not changed. On the other hand, 5 of the 10 consistently answered that their view had changed.

Summary. In summary, the ARCIs’ views of the superintendent changed generally for the better. Since superintendents tend to be externally focused, while ARCIs tend to be internally focused, several were pleasantly surprised to find that their superintendents had a good grasp of teaching and learning.

Hypothesis. The trends in responses suggest the following hypothesis:
Stage model socialization theory is correct. The relationship with one’s supervisor is essential for socialization during the encounter period. ARCI’s view of the superintendent became more positive during the course of their first year of service.

**Question 21**

*Introduction.* A good working relationship between the superintendent and the ARCI is essential to the success of the instructional program (Pajak, 1989). This question was designed to explore the nature of the relationship with the superintendent, as it is during the encounter stage that the new ARCI develops the interpersonal relationships necessary for success in the new position (Reichers, 1987).

**Interview Question #21. Describe your relationship with the superintendent.**

In September, all of the ARCIs described a positive and close working relationship with the superintendent. The themes that seemed to run through this relationship were trust, openness, and collaboration. The ARCIs who seemed to be most enthusiastic about their relationship with the superintendent mentioned such things as “we trust each other’s judgment and openness” and “it is an open relationship where we can tell each other what needs to be done.”

With several new ARCIs the relationship was positive but appeared to still be developing. “At first I wasn’t sure how open he would be,” one said, “but he has proven to be very much so.” Another said, “Right now our relationship is task focused. I’m trying to determine what I need to check with him about.”
During the January/February interviews, as had been the case in September, they all described a positive and close working relationship with the superintendent. The themes of trust, openness, and collaboration were unchanged:

- "It [the relationship] has revolved from formal to having fun. He knows I would not betray a confidence,"
- "It boils down to trust. He believes that I get him the information he needs,"
- "It’s an open, positive relationship that’s comfortable. She provides me the authority to get the job done and seeks my advice on key matters,” and
- "It’s give and take. We joke. I know my boundaries. I may be the only one in the district that regularly challenges him.”

At the end of the year, all but 1 of the ARCIs seemed to be very confident in their relationship with the superintendent. In many cases, the relationship with the superintendent had developed into a friendship that was characterized by a sharing of beliefs, an openness to ideas, and ability to question one another respectfully. Positive feedback on evaluations as well as mentoring that they received from the superintendents provided evidence that the relationship between them and their superintendent was a positive one. One ARCI even stated, “I never felt such a close relationship in my prior job.”

By the end of the year, several had decided that the superintendency is a much more difficult job than they had first thought. That discovery in some ways changed their view of the superintendent. One said, “I appreciate his skills more now” and another said, “He is more vulnerable than I first thought. He is trying hard to maintain his
influence with the board. He does not have as much control as I first thought.” One even stated, “Because of the demands, I don’t know why anyone would want that job.”

**Summary.** Through September and into January, all ARCIIs were focused on developing a close working relationship with the superintendent. In most districts, that relationship was well on the way, and in others it was still emerging. By May/June, it appears a more in-depth relationship had been established. The division of responsibilities based on that relationship did not emerge as yet between the superintendent and ARCIIs.

**Hypothesis.** Taken in conjunction with one another, the responses of the ARCIIs suggest the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. The relationship with one’s supervisor, the superintendent in the case of ARCIIs, does positively effect the encounter stage of socialization.

**Question 22**

**Introduction.** The superintendent’s relationship with the board of education also has an impact on the degree of success the ARCI experiences (Pajak, 1989). If the superintendent is respected by the board, the job of the ARCI is made easier because it is likely that the division line between policy and administration is clear (Pajak, 1989).

This question was designed to explore these issues.

**Interview Question #22.** Describe the relationship between the superintendent and the board of education.
The ARCIs’ description of the relationship between their boards and superintendents across the year fell into one of three categories: (a) as an open, trusting relationship; (b) as an evolving relationship; (c) as a difficult relationship. Table 2 describes the categorization of those relationships over the course of the year examined.

Table 2

Categories of Superintendent/Board Relationship

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<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
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**Difficult** – Hard to please, satisfy, or manage.
**Evolving** – To achieve gradual change.
**Trusting** – Confidence in integrity, ability, and character.

In September, 5 described the relationship between the superintendent and board in their districts as open and mutually trusting. They mentioned trust, respect and
honesty as characterizing terms. In addition, they saw a shared commitment to education
as an attribute of the relationship. One mentioned that “the superintendent is committed
to educating and developing the board and vice versa.”

Two characterized the relationship between their board and superintendent as
evolving, and their comments reflected this. They both seemed to indicate that a positive
progression was taking place. “The relationship has been difficult but not negative,” one
said, “We are going through a transition from a period of stability to one of less stability.”

In the remaining three districts where the relationship was classified as difficult,
the ARIs cited factors such as the election of particular board members; the vying for
power among the superintendent, the board members, and the board secretary; and
dissatisfaction over how specific issues were handled by the superintendent as reasons for
the current state of the relationship.

In January and February, 6 reported that their districts’ boards and
superintendents had developed an open and trusting relationship, which was a slight
increase from September. One said, “Our board is very professional. They understand
the role of both the superintendent and board. There has been no micro-management.
There is a trusting relationship.” Another mentioned that “The board and superintendent
enjoy an extremely professional and cordial relationship. The board hired her to be the
district’s CEO. They defer to her opinion on matters.”

In January and February, the number of ARIs who indicated that the relationship
was evolving also increased slightly. “The board gave him a good evaluation and
extended his contract,” one said. “However, the board is divided and they don’t trust one
another. Occasionally this laps over into the board/superintendent relationship.” Another said, “Little issues are discussed at board meetings. The chain of command is not always used.”

And, finally, the number who reported that the relationship was difficult decreased in comparison to the September data. In this district, the ARCI said, “It’s like fingernails across the blackboard. It’s not good at all. The superintendent has been bought out and the elementary principal is on the chopping block.”

The 6 districts classified as trusting, evolving, and difficult in January/February retained those same classifications in May/June. “The mutual respect between the superintendent and board contributed to the district moving forward,” one said. “I think they trust each other. They have a good working relationship,” said another. And 1 more stated, “It is very positive. They respect her work and the organization she is developing.”

By midyear, 3 districts retained the classification of evolving. “It is better in some respects,” said one. “The board is difficult to deal with because of personalities and dynamics. This is a difficult time to be a superintendent because the board cannot agree with one another. They are several people who don’t see eye-to-eye. This relationship is hard to read. With his predecessor, it was easy to read – the relationship had broken down.”

And, at the end of the year, 1 still qualified the relationship as difficult: “He is gone, bought out; there is a leadership void.”
Summary. The relationship between the board and the superintendent who oversaw each of the ARCIs fell into one of three categories: (a) open, (b) evolving, and (c) difficult. An open relationship implied a positive and trusting relationship; while an evolving relationship described one wherein the foundation for an open relationship may have existed but there were lapses into micro management or circumvention of the established authority line. It was evident in those situations that the relationship between the superintendent and board had either maintained or improved. In the district described as difficult, the superintendent’s contract was bought out early in the year. In this situation there continued to be continuity in the instructional program.

Hypothesis. Taken in sum, these responses suggest the following hypothesis:

A positive relationship between the board of education and the superintendent enhances the opportunity for ARCIs to move through the encounter stage of socialization.

Question 23

Introduction. Each school district’s culture is different. Hence, an understanding of “how we do things and what matters around here” is transferred through an organization’s culture. When newcomers experience socialization, they are, in part, learning the culture of the organization (Louis, 1980; Van Mannen & Schein, 1979). With stage model theory, the “encounter” stage is when an outsider sees what the organization is actually like and makes the transition to an insider (Feldman, 1976a; Louis, 1980).

This question was designed to solicit data relating to these issues.
Interview Question #23. When compared to your previous district, are some things done differently in your current district?

Follow-up for Question 23:

a. If yes, what things are done differently?

a-1. Why are these things done differently?

b. If no, why are things done the same?

In September, the ARClIs who had changed districts noted that the culture was different in their new district. Generally, the new district was described as being more complex, with more procedures or “hoops,” as being more polished or better, or a place where relationships between administrators and teachers or among administrators were better, and where communications were better or worse than they had been in the prior district. When asked why things were done differently, those who had a response tended to relate their answers to (a) the size of the district or (b) the quality of the leadership.

The culture was still perceived as different in their new district at midyear. Specifically, 1 described the new district’s culture as “Being more focused on instruction and less on micro management,” because “the current district is a more professional community. Also, in the current district the positive working relationship is a function of the quality of leadership provided by the superintendent and board.” A second indicated that, “In my current district, there is more planning, more community involvement, and more focus on student learning. There is greater consensus on what needs to be done.” A third noted the impact of the superintendent/board relationship and culture when she
said, “The board and superintendent relationship is more positive. This superintendent does a lot more telephone diplomacy and one-on-one visits.”

By the end of the year, the ARCIs’ descriptions of how things were done differently in their new districts were both positive and negative. They made note of such things as the decision making process, the number of meetings with supervisors, the relationship between the superintendent and the board, management style, and union strength. One pointed to differences that could easily be identified as negative when he answered, “Yes, night and day. In my prior district there was a willingness to provide resources and support. People were more valued. There is a constant message in my current district that people are not valued or trusted.” On the other hand, another maintained that things were better in the current district when he explained, “In my prior district there was graft and corruption. There was also a lack of trust between central office and the buildings. My current district is more relaxed, people are happier, and there is civility and respect.”

Summary. By May/June the ARCIs had determined the degree to which their new district did things differently. At least 3 ARCIs clearly stated that their new district was superior to their prior district. On the other hand, 3 ARCIs seemed to think their prior district held values or had a culture that was in some ways superior to their current district. Finally, 4 saw no or only small differences between their current and old districts.

Hypothesis. Taking all responses into account, the following hypothesis emerges:

Organizational culture exerts a powerful influence on socialization.
Question 24

Introduction. During the "encounter" stage, newcomers develop the interpersonal relationships needed to succeed in the new school district. They feel either accepted or not accepted (Feldman, 1976b). This question addressed that issue.

**Interview Question #24. Do you feel accepted in this district?**

**Follow-up for Question 24:**

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

In September, every new ARCI answered that he or she felt accepted in the new district, although a few were tentative in a portion of their response. There was some evolution of feeling by midyear. Seven responded that they felt accepted in their new district. One of the remaining 3 hesitated and responded, “I’m getting there.” She also stated that teachers told her “they were glad she was there.” She went on that she didn’t feel the principals would express such a positive opinion. She said, “I think principals don’t know me yet. I thought they would be my biggest supporters, but I don’t know where I stand with them.” The second responded with a yes, but then said, “On a scale of 1-10, it feels like a 5. I have not yet had a chance to build the relationships I need to bring about change. I don’t yet feel fully a part of the district.” The third also responded that she felt accepted by them and said, “I’ve been trying to figure that out. I’m not sure.”

Those who responded without hesitation that they felt accepted drew their evidence from personal conversations, successful conflict resolution, requests for
assistance from principals and teachers and an acceptance of the ARCI's decisions. "I certainly feel accepted at the district level," one said. "I have good relationships with the principals and I have their trust. I'm still working to gain the trust of the teachers."

Things had smoothed out for nearly all by the end of the year. By May/June, 9 of the 10 felt accepted in their new district by all levels of employees, including teachers, superintendents and the board. One summed it up well when she said, "I feel accepted because of the positive feedback I get from teachers, principals, the board, and central office administrators." Only 1 didn’t feel accepted by the end of the year, but she thought she knew why: "Because I think differently, I am only tolerated at times. I have to be patient."

Summary. By the end of the year, nearly all the new ARCIs felt well accepted in their districts. One seemed to struggle all year with developing interpersonal relationships. By June, she decided that she had to take the initiative in developing those relationships or she felt she might not be able to stay.

Hypothesis. After analysis, the responses of ARCIs suggest the following hypothesis:

Stage model socialization theory is correct. A major task in the encounter period is learning about the organization and its groups, learning to function in the work, locating oneself in the organization, developing relationships with others, and gaining the acceptance of co-workers.
Question 25

Introduction. This question was designed to address the entire spectrum of issues faced during the “encounter” stage. Will ARCIIs experience one or more of the issues predicted by researchers, including experiencing anxiety, developing interpersonal relationships, confusing pre-employment expectations, defining his or her role, as well as experiencing the following: ambiguity, conflict, and surprise?

Interview Question #25. Taking everything into consideration (nature of the work, frustration, satisfying relationships, preparation, expectations) did you expect to feel as you do about your current position?

Follow-up for Question 25:

a. If yes, why?

b. If no, why not?

In September, 9 of the 10 stated that, taking everything into consideration, they expected to feel as they did about their current position. For 2, things were better than they had anticipated. These 2 indicated that they hadn’t expected to feel as good about this position as they did. “This job feels very good,” one said. “I didn’t expect to feel as comfortable as I do.”

The positive level dropped midyear. Six of 10 responded that they still felt as they expected to about the position. “I am not surprised how I feel about this position,” said one, “I work through issues and build consensus. I have expected what I’m feeling.” A second said, “My prior experiences made the job predictable,” while a third explained, “I knew what I could expect when I came here, in spite of the issues here. I was unhappy
in my previous district. I felt my curriculum and leadership skills would be used here and they are."

However, in January/February, 2 more ARCIIs responded negatively -- or at least less than positively -- to the question than they had in September. A total of 4 indicated that they felt a bit more apprehensive about the position than they expected to by midyear. For instance, one said, "I don't know. Some days are up and some are down, and my feelings follow. In my prior job, I always felt positive." Another lamented, "I still have mixed feelings. I still don't know if it will work. I still attend the retirement planning meeting." Yet another was distraught that the position was not what she expected: "Probably not. I feel lonely here. I lack a personal support system in this job. I haven't been able to develop friends."

By the end of the year, half of the ARCIIs responded that when taking everything into consideration, they expected to feel as they do about their current position. The other 5 found that their experiences had been different from what they had expected. The members of the latter group mentioned a sense of disappointment with the reality of the job. They said things like, "I hoped for more. Some of my discomfort has to do with validation and compensation;" "Some days it just doesn't seem to be worth it. I am under utilized. They say they want change but I am not sure;" and "Dealing with personal issues has overridden the total feeling of satisfaction with the job. I never expected to feel this way." On the other hand, one indicated that things were still better than he had expected when he said, "I didn't expect to feel as positive as I feel today. What I thought the job was is different than I am now experiencing."
Summary. By the end of the year it appeared that all of the ARClIs had experienced one or more of the issues predicted by researchers, including anxiety, developing interpersonal relationships, confirming pre-employment expectations, role definition, ambiguity, conflict, and surprise. Furthermore, individual ARClIs experienced many of those issues at different times in the year as evidenced by the September, January/February, and May/June data. It was also clear that in job changes when appropriate support was given, positive experience outweighed negative experiences (Nicholson & West, 1988).

It is also noteworthy to mention that of the 10 ARClIs in this study, 3 left their positions and districts at the end of the year. One had his position cut while the other 2 decided to retire between the January/February interview and the May/June interview. The man whose job was cut served as a shared ARCI between two districts. He was notified by one of those districts in February that his position in that district was being eliminated. He was surprised by that decision. Since his position in the other district was only half time, he was forced to seek another position. Both retirees made it clear from the September interview forward that retirement was a possibility, although both talked in terms of at least 2 years down the road. One man had said in September that he "had previously planned to retire" but was "drafted to fill this specific role and accomplish specific things. The superintendent was clear about this expectation for me in the position. I will serve as long as I'm wanted and needed." By May/June he indicated the time had come for the district to select someone who could plan more long term. He submitted his retirement paper to take advantage of a retirement incentive offered by the
district. The woman’s decision to retire was determined by two issues: (a) the never
ending treadmill of state mandates, and (b) her husband had retired and the demands of
the job were interfering with their common interests and understanding that there is more
to life than hard work and the demands of human energy and time.

Hypothesis. Although not every ARCI had exactly the same experience, the
evidence suggests the following hypothesis:

Job changes, when appropriate support is given, result in positive experiences
outweighing negative experiences.

A Summary of Hypotheses Drawn From the Data

When the responses were considered as a whole, a number of patterns emerged
that led to the generation of several hypotheses. Through clustering of these patterns, the
hypotheses were sorted into three categories: (a) those relating to stage model
socialization theory, (b) those relating to surprise theory, (c) those relating to the specific
job experience of district level administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction.

Stage Model Socialization Theory

While not encompassing all of stage model socialization theory, the results of this
study essentially reflected the theory’s major tenets. Because this was an exploratory
study and because the sample was so small, no firm conclusions can be drawn.
Nonetheless, the interview data generated evidence supporting these stage model
hypotheses:

• Each ARCI found a gap between what he or she had expected in the job and
  what was found. (Questions 1-4)
- Prior experience is helpful in making sense of new situations. (Questions 1-4)

- Organizational culture exerts a powerful influence, not only on the way things are done in an organization, but on the attitudes and behavior of the leaders in an organization when they are called upon to change what they are doing. (Questions 1-3)

- During the encounter period, there is an increased focus on the workgroup, which often includes teachers and principals. Influence is derived from building credibility, respect, and mutual benefit. (Questions 4, 9, 10, 24)

- Academic preparation has little or no effect on making sense of a new situation. (Question 4)

- Consortiums or networks of other ARCIs or consultants or mentors are helpful in making sense of new situations. (Question 4)

- Sense making leads to greater satisfaction and less frustration. (Question 5)

- Newcomers invariably find a gap between what they expected and what actually were their major job responsibilities. (Question 6)

- At another level, as the theory predicts, a major interpersonal task involves learning how to minimize conflict and build collaborative relationships with their new colleagues. (Questions 6, 24)

- Perception influences action and shapes relationships. ARCIs who held positive views of teachers developed positive relationships with teachers. (Question 9)
• Workday quality affects successful negotiation of the encounter period. (Question 13)

• Conflict interferes with socialization. Conflict situations ARClS experienced with colleagues, both teachers and administrators, were examples of an element of this component. (Questions 15, 18)

• Home and family life impacts the quality and rate of socialization during the encounter period. (Question 16)

• Supervisory support, in this case the support of the superintendent and other administrative staff, contributes to a newcomer’s ability to smoothly move through the encounter stage. (Question 17)

• A positive relationship with one’s supervisor, in this case the superintendent, enhances socialization during the encounter stage. (Questions 19-21)

• Organizational culture exerts a powerful influence on socialization. (Question 23)

• A major task in the encounter period is learning about the organization and its groups, locating oneself in the organization, and gaining the acceptance of co-workers. (Question 24)

**Surprise Theory**

The results of this study did not illuminate all aspects of surprise theory, but those components of the theory that did appear were supported by the data. The interviews produced evidence to support these hypotheses.
Newcomers always are surprised by one or more elements of the job. In this case, the scope of responsibilities was a primary surprise. (Questions 1-3, 5)

Even when newcomers have previously held similar positions in other organizations, they do not anticipate the magnitude of the surprises to be experienced. (Question 5)

Surprise is a common experience among all newcomers in a job, regardless of education or previous professional experience. (Question 8)

The nature of the surprises newcomers experience is influenced by their professional history or by the expectations developed during job interviews. (Question 8)

Surprises experienced are both positive and negative. (Questions 8)

Conflict is a major source of surprise. (Question 13)

Specific to the ARCI Job

The work of the ARCI is characterized as fragmented, diverse, and ambiguous. As a result, it is inevitable that much of an ARCIs time and energy is spent dealing with surprise and sense-making. The interview data points out some of the job related issues faced by ARCIs.

- The most common frustration for ARCIs was the lack of time. (Question 5)
- Responsibilities requiring ARCIs to report to multiple and varied audiences create frustration. (Question 7)
• Prior experience as a building principal has a positive effect upon the ARCIs relationship with principals. Those who had prior experience seemed to be more sensitive to issues and challenges faced by principals. (Question 10)

• Issues such as managing conflict; adequate planning and goal setting; securing resources and support; managing organizational culture; facilitating change; documenting student achievement; developing norms and standards; initiating and facilitating relationships with teachers, principals, and superintendents all affected the quality of the work day. (Questions 11-12)

• Successfully completing the encounter period depends on the quality of the relationships with the work group of principals and teachers. (Question 13)

• One year is not enough time for ARCIs to know if they are making a difference. (Question 14)

• A positive relationship between the board of education and the superintendent enhances the opportunity for ARCIs to move through the encounter stage of socialization. (Question 22)

• Job changes, when appropriate support is given, result in positive experiences outweighing negative experiences. (Question 25)
Chapter 5
Summary and Discussion of Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether new central office administrators responsible for curriculum and instruction (ARCI) experience the encounter stage as described in stage model organizational socialization theory. It sought to identify, categorize, and describe on-the-job experiences ARCIs encounter during the first year of service to a school district. A significant portion of the study focused on events that were unanticipated.

This qualitative investigation was framed by received theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and utilized modified grounded theory to structure the interview protocols. Received theory involves taking an existing theory, in this case stage model organizational theory, and investigating its applicability in a previously unexamined situation. Rather than generating new theory, the investigation aims at testing, extending, and illuminating a theory already commonly accepted in the field.

The grand tour question for this study was: Does an ARCI experience the encounter period as predicted by stage model theory during the first year of employment? The goals of this study were to explore

1. If the experiences of beginning ARCIs fit the pattern described by stage model socialization theory in the encounter period and, if so,

2. The nature of the surprises that socialization theory predicts will be embedded in those experiences.
Do Beginning ARCI's Encounter Period Experiences Fit the Pattern Described by Stage Model Organizational Socialization Theory?

The direct answer to this question is yes. Whether hired into the district as a new employee or rising to the position through the ranks, beginning ARCI's experience the encounter stage of the socialization process as organizational theory predicts. That is, they learn the values, norms and required behaviors that permit them to function as members of their organizations.

Because every ARCI and every school district's culture are unique, ARCI's experience socialization as they learn the culture of the new school district and individually react to it. It is during the encounter stage that the ARCI sees what the new district is actually like and makes the transition from newcomer to fully socialized member. As the research predicted (Feldman, 1981; Kramer, 1989; Louis, 1980), an ARCI's anxiety first intensifies and then moderates as he or she learns both the range of acceptable behaviors and which behaviors the organization prefers. Pre-employment expectations are either confirmed or disconfirmed as the reality of the position is recognized.

In order to address Question 1, I will first present findings that confirm previous research and theory and then follow with what I found that previous research had not addressed. I will address implications for theory and practice later in this chapter.
Findings Confirming Previous Research

First and foremost, the majority of the ARCIs experienced appropriate organizational socialization. By successfully negotiating the encounter stage, they were in a position to learn the values, norms and required behaviors of the school district they were entering. The results of this study bore out what organizational socialization theory predicted these newcomers would experience.

The ebb and flow of adjustment. Adjustment to a new job proceeds at a different pace for every individual – partly because of individual differences and partly because the same job on paper can actually be quite different from one organizational setting to another. However the configuration of the job and the nature of the person in it differed, all experienced adjustment in the same way. Adjustment is not linear in the sense that it begins and then moves inexorably forward. Instead, it accelerates in response to some events or conditions and decelerates in response to others. Surprises can throw newcomers off-track and require them to stop and try to make sense of a situation before moving forward in their adjustment process. This universal phenomenon occurred among these ARCIs, as will be apparent in the discussion that follows.

A gap between expectation and reality. Another universal finding was that all the ARCIs found gaps between their expectations and the reality of their jobs. This gap was sometimes wider than might have been expected because there is no standard conceptual model for the job. ARCIs’ job descriptions vary widely and work schedules are ambiguous, diverse, and fragmented (Pajak, 1989).
Eventually, however, all were able to successfully bridge those gaps. The bridging occurred quickly in some cases and took longer in others, but was eventually accomplished in every subject’s experience. The ARCIs often relied on the support of teachers, other administrators and particularly the superintendent in doing so.

**The effects of prior experience.** To successfully adjust to their new positions, they had to make sense of the gaps between job expectations and job realities. Socialization theory argues that prior administrative experience provides a touchstone for sense-making in a new organizational culture. These ARCIs brought one of two types of prior experience, either (a) cultural/organizational experience or (b) specific job experience. That is, they either had served in an administrative position in the same district previous to becoming the ARCI there or they had served as an ARCI in another district. Both experience types were equally useful – though not sufficient alone – in making sense of the situations and people they encountered as they grew into their new positions.

This study confirmed Pajak’s (1989) assertion that an ARCI who previously served as a building principal did not necessarily proceed through the encounter period more successfully (Pajak, 1989). The ARCIs who lacked principal experience compensated by being more focused on building relationships, something that is a core element in the building principalship (Evans, 2001; Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1995).

**The impact of organizational culture.** Organizational culture’s effects were evident in their encounter experiences, particularly for those who came from other
districts. Several noted that the culture in their new district was more positive than it had been in their prior district. In these cases, the culture reflected a community that had more trust in the board of education, which in turn had more trust in the superintendent, who had more trust in the ARCI. Likewise, it seems the principals and teachers also placed more trust in the ARCI. These trusting relationships are an example of the Pelz Effect. In the early 1950s, Pelz found that those who had the trust of those above them and more often were able to influence their superiors also had the trust of people lower in the hierarchy and were more able to influence them (Pelz, 1951). The natural work teams of these districts, from the board and superintendent to the principals and teachers, were almost predestined to support the new ARCI and help to minimize negative surprises.

The ARCIs who moved into a new district also were searching for pre-existing trusting relationships and only took the position when there was evidence that such relationships existed. These ARCIs were able to move more quickly from dealing with the surprises that often came from conflict to focusing on the work they valued – benefiting students through instruction. In September, when asked if anyone had supported his effort, 1 ARCI said, "It is difficult to list someone who has not." Parents, the superintendent, and the board were all part of his support group. The support grew throughout the year, helping to minimize the impact of surprises.

A focus on the work group. Learning to work with others in various work groups was a difficult but critically important task for new ARCIs. Newcomers intently focus on the work group during the encounter stage (Louis, 1980) and the experience is accelerated by an increase in symbolic interactions with other group members (Reichers,
1987). This is what happened to the ARCI in this study. Positive interaction with the
work group, most often teacher leaders and key principals, did accelerate the encounter
stage. Not all of the interactions were positive, however. Always looming in the
background were resistant teachers and principals. As 1 ARCI put it, “Several principals
lived up to their reputations of resisting change.” Another made a similar statement
about teachers. Dealing with resisters in fact slowed the successful negotiation of the
encounter period.

Time pressures. Part of socialization is coming into sync with the rhythm and
time flow in the new job. Usually there is a sense of too little time, and this feeling
universally impacted ARCI socialization in this group. A lack of time appears to tie back
to what Pajak (1989) found: that the ARCI position included not only diverse
responsibilities, but also a fragmented work schedule. As a result, long hours
characterize the position and are a reality with which ARCIs must learn to cope. If the
ARCI does not learn to cope then time pressures can lead to feelings of being
unappreciated. Unless addressed, bailout or burnout may occur.

Experiencing ambiguity. Things that are new are unfamiliar. Situations that are
unfamiliar are uncertain. Consequently, ambiguity is a feature of socialization (Louis,
1980).

One common job responsibility among ARCIs was reporting achievement data to
multiple and varied audiences. The general data categories to be reported were uniform
because statewide standards and reporting requirements have emerged over the last few
years. The only ambiguity was the difference in expectations for reporting data in the
local districts. The audiences to be reported to often were very different from one
another. This led to some confusion, which complicated ARCI adjustment.

In a majority of cases, the ARCIs did not hold line authority over teachers and
principals. At the same time, and perhaps because of that, several experienced significant
deflicts with individual principals and teachers. There were instances where teachers
resisted teaching the district adopted curriculum and principals did not comply with the
ARCI’s decisions or even with decisions made in group settings, even when that principal
had been a party to the decisions. In 1 case, the principal was openly defiant and
regularly confronted the ARCI, even in administrative meetings. In most of these
situations, principals and teachers had previously been allowed to “do their own thing” or
at least resistance was not new behavior. In nearly every case, the ARCI was surprised
that resistance often continued even after addressing the issue. These administrators
found that other teachers and central office administrators were helpful in resolving this
ambiguity. The superintendent’s support was key. In 1 case, the only apparent resolution
was the principal’s planned retirement at the conclusion of the year.

In several cases, working in a central office with multiple administrators was a
new experience. These individuals sometimes experienced ambiguity related to
overlapping responsibilities and on occasion had to address conflict resulting from these
overlaps.

Even when subjects had prior experience working in a multi-administrator central
doctrine, the difference in the organizational structure, the personalities of the other
administrators, the leadership style of the superintendent, and the organizational culture
led to ambiguity and occasionally to conflict. Again, the ARCIs found that teachers and other administrators were helpful and the superintendent critical in resolving this ambiguity. Often, and unexpectedly, either the superintendent’s personality or leadership style proved to be a source of ambiguity. Once this ambiguity was addressed, movement through the encounter period accelerated.

Leaving one organization and entering another are two parts of a single experience, and ambiguity is experienced throughout (Louis, 1980). This was evident among the subjects in this study. Several referenced their prior position -- hence their old culture -- to explain the ambiguity they found in their new culture. Ultimately, they had to give up this practice. Unfreezing, moving away, or letting go is crucial to successfully negotiating the encounter period (Argyris, 1964; Lewin, 1951; Tannenbaum, 1976).

**The inevitability of conflict.** Differing hierarchical positions promote differing organizational perspectives. An organization’s structural appearance and the clarity of its subsystem interconnections change as hierarchical position changes (Badawy, 1988). Multiple perspectives generate multiple realities. Multiple realities inevitably lead to conflict.

This study reaffirmed that conflict is inevitable. Pajak (1989) found that for an effective ARCI, conflict is necessary at times for reaching the best solution to a problem as well as for establishing mutual respect and strengthening the norm of teamwork. Brown (1983) theorized that there is an appropriate level of conflict. Too little conflict is as unhealthy as too much, like “group think” (Janis, 1982) for example. Moderate amounts stimulate creativity (Schein, 1978). Most ARCIs noted that moderate conflict
combined with positive relationships stimulated creativity within the work team. On the other hand, 2 complained that there was little room for creativity because of state and federal accountability mandates. One complained that "the job is not as fulfilling as it once was." Again, this study reaffirmed that those ARCl's who were most adept at managing conflict were better able to accomplish assigned tasks by utilizing members of the work team and stimulating creativity.

Conflict, especially with teachers and principals, most certainly impacts an ARCl's socialization. During the course of this study, conflict was minimized whenever a positive working relationship developed with teachers and principals. The ARCl's most successful in developing those relationships moved through the encounter period more successfully than those who were less successful. Also, those ARCl's who were more successful at developing relationships experienced less anxiety and were better able to utilize work group members - both teachers and principals - to complete the work assigned. This conclusion confirmed Pajak's (1989) finding that in order for teamwork to be maintained, conflict needs to be managed.

In this study, the ARCl's who managed conflict best were the most skilled listeners and mediators. At times, it is inevitable that conflict boils over. Because long-term conflict can have a devastating impact on the instructional program, the ARCl must take action even though the absence of line authority may inhibit some from taking the direct action that might solve an existing problem (Pajak, 1989). Therefore, effective ARCl's must become skilled, active listeners and mediators (Pajak, 1989).
Balancing home and work. This study produced some evidence that transitioning ARCl's experience occasional stress related to family issues. The encounter stage causes newcomers to address non-work issues. Concerns associated with family relocation may surface and create stress (Feldman, 1981; Nicholson & West, 1988). Spouses who have changed their residence may require assistance with social networking because they do not possess the automatic contacts of the work place (West et al., 1987). On the other hand, the employee may balance the stresses generated by these factors with his or her own feelings of excitement and satisfaction (Nicholson & West, 1988). In job change where appropriate support is given, positive experiences outweigh negative (Nicholson & West, 1988). Every married ARCl in this study worked through family issues with little or no assistance from co-workers.

The importance of relationships. Major socialization tasks involve establishing an identity, locating oneself in the organization, getting a sense of who the important players are in that organization, and developing positive relationships with co-workers (Feldman, 1976a; Louis, 1980, 1982). This study confirmed other studies citing the need for a close and positive working relationship between the ARCl and the superintendent (American Association of School Administrators, 1971; Pajak, 1989). This research also confirmed that a positive relationship between the board of education and superintendent minimizes conflict, thereby accelerating the socialization process (Pajak, 1989).

During the course of this study, the ARCl's' description of the relationship between their boards and superintendents fell into one of three categories: (a) an open, trusting relationship; (b) an evolving relationship; (c) a difficult relationship. Table 2,
which is on page 148, describes the categorization of those relationships over the course of the year examined.

Most intriguing were the three districts where the relationships were classified as difficult even for a portion of the year. The ARCIs in those districts cited conflict factors such as the election of particular board members who had an “ax to grind;” the vying for power among the superintendent, the board members, and the board secretary; and dissatisfaction over how specific issues were handled by the superintendent as reasons for the current state of the relationship. Intermittent periods of “difficult” relationships between the superintendent and board of education caused those ARCIs to experience more encounter period difficulty.

The closer the working relationships that emerged during the encounter period between the ARCI and the superintendent, the more successfully the ARCI moved through that stage. Those ARCIs whose relationships with the superintendent were less well-developed experienced more challenges during the encounter period.

One single special case was an ARCI whose superintendent was bought out during her first year. She, in fact, stepped into the leadership void and built her own positive relationship with the board of education.

During the course of the year in nearly all cases, the ARCIs’ relationships with the superintendent continued to improve. As that relationship grew, the ARCIs’ movement through the encounter period became more positive. By the end of the year, all but 1 was very confident in their relationship with the superintendent.
In all cases, except the one previously mentioned, the superintendent was the key to the ARCI's successfully moving through the encounter period.

Findings Outside the Received Theory's Established Framework

As much as this study confirmed established socialization theory, it also provided some findings not currently embraced by that theory. It's not possible at this moment to know whether these elements are exclusive to ARCI experience or if they represent something that most people encounter in job entry. I will describe these findings here and then discuss their implications later in the chapter.

Academic preparation's lack of effect. This study produced some evidence that academic preparation has little or perceived no effect on an ARCI's ability to make sense of a new situation. For these people at least, academic preparation did not support the socialization process.

The subjects' academic preparation ranged from a Master's degree in School Administration to a Doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. All but 2 consistently stated in all three interviews that their academic preparation had little influence on their current performance. In fact, 1 lamented that "I hold my doctorate in curriculum and nothing in the program was helpful."

Although several subjects stated unequivocally that their academic preparation had little or no positive effect, others seemed to frame that view in their experiences during the encounter period. It may be that several ARCI's were feeling enough disconnect between their past and present experiences to not adequately judge the true effects of what was happening to them and what was going on around them.
Connection with outsiders. This study also provided evidence that consortiums or networks of other ARCIs or consultants or mentors proved helpful in making sense of new situations for several subjects. The impact of networking is significant because it was early in the encounter period that many ARCIs depended on networks that extended beyond the district boundaries. These networks, which were often regional and sometimes driven by membership in a professional organization, provided ARCIs with information and perspectives that enhanced their own performance. As time passed, the dependence on outside consortiums and networks was in part replaced by the workgroup of administrators, teachers, and the superintendent.

A gap between human values and reality. No job exists in a void. All jobs are embedded in human relationships, and people do not leave their human needs outside the workplace. In fact, one of the values of work is the positive association with respected others (Evans, 2001; Garbarro, 1990; Robbins, 2003).

Several of the ARCIs often experienced a gap between human needs and reality. When such a gap is not resolved, the encounter period is extended or, at the extreme, the ARCI may consider leaving the district. For example, 1 ARCI described the void she felt because of the lack of a deep personal relationship with the superintendent, central office colleagues, and principals. These relationships, which she viewed more as friendships, had sustained her in her prior district.

Most of the ARCIs also found a gap between the values they had that led to their need to lead change and the apparent values of the elements of the organization resisting
change. Some were able to address this gap and more quickly negotiated the encounter period. With several, however, the opposite occurred.

**Question 2**

Is There a Set of Surprises Embedded in the Beginning ARCI’s Experience?

As with Question 1, the direct answer to this question is yes. As research predicts (Louis, 1980), the ARCIIs in the study all experienced a cycle of surprises in combination with sense-making. Most of them were successful in negotiating this cycle with the support of the superintendent, principals, and teachers in their new organization. This is a common experience among organizational newcomers.

Louis (1980) found that individuals must cope with “surprise” during their organizational entry experiences. She also suggests that surprise, which represents the unexpected and the unintended situations a newcomer faces, is an inevitable part of joining a new organization. Newcomers often attach meaning to surprises that occur in the new organization based on their experiences in other settings. As a result, inappropriate interpretations may result. She concludes that newcomers may make decisions to stay or leave an organization based on feelings resulting from surprises early in the job experience.

In order to cope with surprise, newcomers must go through a process Louis (1980) termed “sense-making.” Meaning is assigned to surprise as an outcome of the sense-making process and that “sense made of surprise by newcomers may be incomplete until the newcomer can gather adequate organization, interpersonal, and personal information” (p. 244).
Findings Confirming Previous Research

The ARCIs' surprise experiences were cyclical. Surprises emerged as new values, norms and required behaviors of the new district were experienced, the surprise was negotiated through sense-making, and then the cycle repeated itself. When adequate sense-making did not occur, the surprise interfered with successfully negotiating the encounter period. One woman, for example, said, "I'm surprised by the degree curriculum and instruction decisions are driven by state mandates. It seems I am always working on the fly."

The surprises that emerged during this investigation also fit into three broad categories: (a) those relating to stage model socialization theory, (b) those relating to surprise theory, and (c) those relating to an ARCI's specific job experiences.

Stage Model Theory. Surprises confirming stage model socialization theory were the most numerous. Nearly all ARCIs experienced one or more of the issues predicted by researchers, including anxiety, developing interpersonal relationships, ambiguity, and conflict. These issues were, in turn, a surprise category. Anxiety was common to issues relating to interpersonal relationships, conflict, and adapting to the new organization's culture. Often anxiety was present as a result of addressing a surprise.

Surprise Theory. While developing interpersonal relationships, ARCIs likewise faced surprises. How quickly new relationships did or did not develop gave rise to surprise. Many were pleasantly surprised when a strong relationship quickly developed with the superintendent. In a few cases, the same was true for the ARCI's relationship with the board of education.
The potential for conflict was ever-present, yet a constant source of surprise. Conflict with co-workers, teachers, and principals was often unanticipated. In several cases, ARCI's were surprised that some teachers were resistant to implementing the mandated district benchmarks, curriculum, or accountability measures. Prior to the new ARCI's arrival, these teachers had been allowed to partially implement adopted curriculum and give only lip service to mandates. Because of the stakes, the potential for conflict over these issues was high. The ARCI's prior experiences might have prepared him/her for dealing with this behavior; however, predicting exactly when it will occur, who will be involved, and what the specific issues will be is not easily done.

Several ARCI's were surprised that they were in conflict with principals specific to whether the ARCI would influence curriculum and accountability at the building level or the principal would control both. When this occurred, it usually involved a principal who had not been previously challenged on this issue, or the organizational culture supported principals having greater influence with building level staff and/or weak central office oversight. Often the principal had served the district for many years and was retiring or within a few years of retirement. One woman characterized such a relationship when she said, "I have been in conflict with the principal since I arrived." She continued, "In meetings, he always takes the opportunity to point out my miscues. To coexist I need to stand up to him. We always see everything differently. He's a manager, and I'm a big picture thinker. He's retiring at the end of the year."

Since only 4 of the 10 ARCI's in this study had themselves ever been principals, some of this surprise in the remaining 6 subjects can be explained by the lack of
experience. Yet, even the ARCIs with principal experience encountered conflict with principals. However, they were able to resolve the conflict more quickly because of the credibility they enjoyed from having served in that role and/or from possessing a clearer understanding of how the threat was perceived by the principal.

**Job experiences.** Surprise theory (Louis, 1980) helps to explain some of what these ARCIs experienced. New ARCIs attach meaning to surprises based on their experience in their previous districts or positions. One common category of surprise includes those relating to the job description or scope. These surprises were common to all. In fact, each ARCI was surprised by the scope of the new position and described it almost without exception as larger than anticipated. One woman described it best when she said, "The breadth of the job was a surprise." The most prevalent theme was that each was trying to determine what the job really entailed in order to cope with surprise. Furthermore, every subject in this study was surprised to learn that new, unanticipated job responsibilities emerged after taking the new position.

Surprise was a common experience among all newcomers in this study, regardless of education or previous experience. Even when ARCIs had held similar positions in other districts, or had experience in another administrative role in the same district, they did not anticipate the magnitude of the surprise experienced. However, the nature of the surprise experienced was influenced by an ARCI’s professional experiences or by the expectation developed during the job interview.
There is also a category of surprise that relates to the ARCI job itself. The most common frustration for ARCIs is the lack of time. Likewise, requiring ARCIs to report student test results to multiple and varied audiences creates frustration.

Additional Findings

This study produced findings that lie outside both the received socialization and surprise theories. I will describe these findings here, and then discuss their implications later in the chapter.

Tension between integration and innovation. There was tension between being integrated into the existing culture and fulfilling the call for innovation and creativity. The expectations laid out by the superintendent were contradictory for some ARCIs. Several were given status quo directions but came with a change oriented innovative agenda. Others were asked to bring about change but their orientation and approach were status quo. These differences were often a source of conflict, ambiguity, and time pressures. Often the gap between expectations and reality widened, which became a source of surprise for ARCIs.

Isolation. Being an ARCI is analogous to being the Maytag repairman in that he or she can be the loneliest person in town (Pajak, 1989). A problem for several ARCIs was a sense of being isolated, which led to mistakes that had consequences weeks or months later. One ARCI felt isolated from principals that resulted in feeling disconnected from those same principals. Two others felt the same disconnect with other central office administrators. Often they had little opportunity to work with these
colleagues. These ARCIIs previously had experiences in more collaborative environments. This feeling of isolation impedes movement through the encounter period.

Matching individuals with the organization. The selection process also influences the socialization of new ARCIIs. The more involved the superintendent was in the selection process the more successfully the ARCI navigated the encounter period. In fact, the ARCIIs who appeared to be the least connected with the superintendent were those in whose selection the superintendent did not actively participate, either by choice or because the superintendent himself or herself had not yet been appointed.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Taken together, the evidence supporting socialization theory and the suggestion of additional socialization facets in the ARCIIs experience hold some interesting implications for theory and practice.

Implications For Practice

The superintendent’s role in socializing ARCIIs. Superiors play a critical role in the socialization process, and their expectations influence a newcomer’s behavior. During the course of this study, it became clear that encounter period job descriptions and work schedules can be managed with the superintendent’s assistance, who in every case was the ARCI’s direct supervisor.

If superintendents made new ARCIIs aware that they need to be more intentional in using their prior experience to make sense of their new experiences, they would likely be more successful in negotiating the encounter period. This seems consistent with
arguments advanced by Louis (1980) and by Miller and Jablin (1991), who theorize that meaning is assigned to surprise as an outcome of the sense-making process.

Since the gap between expectations and reality can be anticipated, it can be addressed. The superintendent is in the best position to do so. The superintendent sets the ARCI's specific job tasks, or at least the general direction of his or her work. Seven of the superintendents had served their current district for at least 3 years and understood how that district's culture would impact the new ARCI during the encounter period.

A superintendent can minimize the negative impact by developing a formal induction that contains what Parkay et al. (1992) call a "tripod of support," which consists of training, networking, and coaching. There was no evidence in this study that a superintendent developed any one component much less the entire tripod. Implementing this tripod would certainly accelerate adjustment (Kramer, 1989). If all had done so, all ARCIs might well have moved through the induction process with less confusion and stress.

Connections with insiders. Many states are more recently supporting formalized induction models for teachers. Few are doing so for administrators, and then usually only for principals. Even formalized induction models for superintendents are more common than those for ARCIs or similar second-level central office positions. The implementation of a formalized induction program with a component focused on providing adequate organization, interpersonal and personal information needs to be considered for all new ARCIs. This would provide an anchor for sense-making, which in turn would enable the ARCI to better cope with surprise. Likely, the most effective
mentor would be the superintendent, given the hypothesis that socialization is enhanced through a positive relationship with the superintendent; it is a short step to formalize that process through a more formalized mentoring and induction plan. The desired outcome is an internal commitment to the organization rather than compliance with organization practices.

Entry plan. Another strategy for addressing some of the issues a new ARCI is likely to experience during the encounter stage is to develop an entry plan. Many administrators starting a new position either formally or informally develop such a plan. A formal approach would be to develop a written plan with the input and support of the ARCI’s supervisor, while an informal approach would be to intuitively develop such a plan.

An entry plan is most commonly used by new superintendents, but would be helpful to new ARCIs as well. In the case of new superintendents, such a plan often includes a specific strategy for interviewing members of key groups: the board of education, the administrative staff, as well as selected teachers, parents, students, and community member leaders. Specific data can best be collected through a structured interview using techniques common to qualitative research (Neely, Berube, & Wilson, 2002).

Such a plan must also link to a vision of what components make an effective curriculum and accountability system, guided by an understanding of teaching and learning, supported by a positive culture, and favor collaboration. An entry plan must be well designed or it may only promote current norms and practices, thus limiting the
newcomer's motivation to pursue needed change and reform. With the approval and collaboration of the ARCI's superintendent, an entry plan would provide the means to systematically approach many of the issues raised in this dissertation. In order to inform policy and practice, we need direct studies of entry plans specific to ARCI's. It would also be helpful to know more about how entry plans fit into the broad framework of induction.

**Internal supports.** Some researchers advocate fostering linkages between newcomers and insiders through formal programs, such as buddy systems and mentor programs (Louis, 1980). Mentoring programs are common in school districts with administrative positions where there exist multiple positions with similar duties, such as principals. A specific program model such as Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL), which was developed by the Far West Laboratory for Education Research, can be utilized in these settings (Anderson, 1988).

Since ARCI's positions are most frequently singular, it is more difficult to develop a mentoring program. Three of 10 ARCI's in this study had in-district colleagues doing similar work. In those three instances, there were indications of informal mentoring relationships. There was no evidence of formal mentoring programs. In nearly every case, particularly with the 7 ARCI's without colleagues doing similar work, the natural relationship was with the superintendent.

Whether informal or formal, a colleague or the superintendent, it is quite clear that a culture mentor as opposed to a job-specific mentor is most needed, and hence should be considered.
Louis (1980) also suggests that the appraisal process can assist in encounter period adjustment by serving as a source of timely formal and informal feedback from the ARCI’s supervisor. In fact, Louis advocates that an early appraisal could serve as a collaborative sense-making session. No ARCIs in this study made reference to the appraisal process, much less saw it as a potential aid in sense-making. This issue most certainly should be the subject of further research.

This study pointed out that nearly every ARCI upon starting to work in the new district found a job responsibility had not been conveyed to him or her or was added after beginning work. This contributed to a sense of being overwhelmed. It is likely that even after completing the socialization process, the position will attract more assignments as the years progress. It would be important that the ARCI have the opportunity to renegotiate his or her job assignments with the superintendent. The ARCI is a unique position that changes constantly because of federal and state policy changes and reforms initiated at the district level. It is a position that either has great potential or can overwhelm an individual. The superintendent is the key to new ARCIs coming in with their eyes wide open – and to see that they receive the appropriate socialization to be successful.

State and federal accountability legislation. Major sources of ARCI frustration have been the recent emphasis at both the state and federal level on accountability legislation, specifically the emphasis on test scores and the accompanying sanctions and rewards. Furthermore, sanctions appear to be more prevalent than rewards. Such requirements were developed fairly recently in the states in which these ARCIs were
located. This is particularly true of Iowa, where 8 subjects were serving. Most of the ARCI's indicated that such requirements cause the job responsibilities to overly focus on testing, compiling data and reporting results, thus leaving little room for creativity or teaching and learning issues specific to the ARCI's current district. Such requirements lead to potential feelings of job dissatisfaction. These feelings in turn appear to impede successfully moving through the encounter period.

In most cases, the audiences to whom ARCI's must report achievement data are determined by board policy, state code, or state regulations. This is a reality of the current political climate in this country and all states. Given that this reporting is non-negotiable, little can be done to eliminate this frustration. What can be managed is how this reporting occurs. Therefore, if the superintendent makes clear in discussion of basic job functions with the ARCI that this is an expectation, some of that frustration may be circumvented. More importantly, if the reality that this job function is non-negotiable, critical, and a large piece of the ARCI's responsibility is made clear during the interview process, then some of the surprise that occurs during the encounter period should be minimized.

Quality of the work day. The quality of the workday can be more often positive if the surprises that result from the gap between expectations and actual experiences are anticipated and strategies are developed to address those surprises. These strategies need to include:

- Working with the superintendent to identify the most essential job functions and narrowing the job description for the first year to those items;
• Developing internal and external support groups;
• Developing a strategy for dealing with teacher and principal resistance;
• Quickly developing trusting relationships with principals, teacher leaders, and the superintendent; and
• Accessing workshops to address unrealistic notions about facilitating change (Parkay et al., 1992).

Relationship with teachers. The more positive ARCIs were in their relationship with teachers, the more successful they were in moving through the encounter stage. The quicker positive relations developed, the more likely that the ARCI’s tasks that depended on assistance from teachers were successfully completed. Hence ARCIs must be provided support in creating positive relationships with teachers and be more proactive in developing strategies for doing so.

Implications for Theory and Research

The importance of this study is also evident due to the lack of research on the topic. Organizational socialization in educational settings is a topic that has generated considerable theoretical writing but little systematic research.

New information emerged in the course of this study raised interesting theoretical questions and might provide reason for further investigation. These questions are important because they may shed light on whether educational organizations have dimensions that differentiate the socialization their employees experience from that of newcomers in other fields.
Academic preparation’s lack of effect. The findings suggest that an ARCI’s prior academic preparation has little or no effect on his or her ability to adjust to the new job. There is limited evidence that the demands of a new position often cause incoming school leaders to abandon the skills and knowledge they acquired in their informal educations (Dlugosh, 1994; Hart, 1991).

This is an effect, however, that is difficult to measure. Among other researchers, Feldman (1976a) and Louis (1982) argue that one socialization task that newcomers face is learning the specifics of a job. Academic preparation may have facilitated that process by arming them with some necessary technical knowledge, but the preparation could not be comprehensive because the university in which the preparation occurred could not replicate the context within which the job would be experienced. This compels an alternative question: would the encounter period experience have been more difficult than it was if the ARCIs had not had the preparation?

This is a factor as yet neglected by researchers, which seems unusual considering the weight given to academic preparation in current administrative training programs. It could be a fruitful area for further research.

Considering recent trends toward alternative certification in education, it might be interesting to see if new ARCIs who come into the field with preparation different from those in this study would fare as well or better. For example, one might investigate the impact of preparation in organizational behavior, conflict management, or organizational communication on a person’s ability to adjust to the job – especially since bringing change, resolving conflicts, and building relationships are such integral parts of a
newcomer's challenge. Business has long sought bright, committed, social, quick
learners in their recruiting, believing that a person with such characteristics can be taught
the technical aspects of any job (Goleman, 1999).

Connections with outsiders. The findings suggest that networking with other
ARCI and mentors helped make sense of the culture of the new district. Networks were
occasionally mentioned in the socialization literature, but it was usually limited to
principals (Parkay & Hall, 1992).

Given how important networking can be as a factor in successful organizational
communication and operation, it seems strange that it hasn't drawn researcher attention
before now. Therefore, this area may provide the foundation for further studies.

A gap between human values and reality. The findings also suggest that an ARCI
will experience a gap between human needs and reality, and will likewise struggle with
resistance to change. These issues are addressed in part by how a new district responds
to newcomers' attempts to cope. John Wanous (1980) suggests that an organization
responds to a newcomer in three ways: reinforcement (confirms behavior), none
reinforcement (ignores behavior), and punishment (actively discourages behaviors).
Such a hypothesis is worthy of testing in educational settings.

Gender-based differences. There are occasional references to gender-based
differences in the principal socialization research (Hart, 1991), but this issue did not
emerge during the course of this investigation, nor is it addressed in the literature specific
to the ARCI position. However, careful exploration might yield important results.
Specific research questions that could generate additional data could include: (a) do
women experience more ambiguity? (b) do they use mentors differently? (c) do they experience more stress and anxiety? (d) do they receive less support? There is research evidence that males and females have differing socialization experiences (e.g., Nicholson & West, 1988), differ in the way they build and maintain workplace relationships in leadership situations (e.g., Robbins, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1986; Yuki, 2002), and differ in their approaches to workplace communication (e.g., Tannen, 1995). All of which suggests that a gender-specific study might pay substantial dividends for both research and practice.

Tensions between integration and innovation. Like gender-based difference, this issue needs to be the subject of research specific to ARCIIs.

Isolation. Little research exists on this topic and none was found specific to the ARCI; hence, it has potential for further investigation.

Matching individuals with the organization. The degree the selection process influences the socialization of new ARCIIs is an important factor. Wanous (1980) points out the potential advantages and pitfalls of using the selection process as a substitute for some component of the socialization process. No studies specific to ARCIIs are to be found, so additional research in this area is suggested.

Anxiety. The role of anxiety in socialization, much less the effects of such anxiety on the encounter period, has not been adequately explored. No studies were found during the literature review that addressed the topic.

Further research needed. The findings from this study, combined with concepts from the existing literature, would be useful in constructing a questionnaire for a
quantitative study -- perhaps a survey with a large sample of beginning ARClts in districts representing all sizes as well as urban, suburban, and rural make-up. Also, more longitudinal research needs to be conducted to confirm or disprove the findings of such studies.

Smaller and more focused studies using both qualitative and quantitative designs are needed specific to the ARCl’s position to further test and refine hypotheses and further develop concepts and theories (Nicholson & West, 1988; Wanous & Colella, 1989). Furthermore, many of the hypotheses observed or inferred in this study need to be cross-validated in order for the research to become more useable.

More research is needed to determine the degree to which the experiences of the ARClts in their first year are common to a large number of individuals in the same circumstances. Identification of widespread patterns would be helpful in developing induction and intervention programs that may in turn contribute to high quality ARClts remaining in their positions for longer periods of time. Longevity of ARClts is essential in meeting the increased demands districts face to increase student achievement and meet state and federal accountability requirements.

Conclusions

The picture of first-year ARClts that emerged from this study is one of people who experience surprise during job entry. These surprises can be both positive and negative and which they are has as much to do with the people as with the job itself. This is similar to what Louis (1980) found in her research.

Surprises experienced during job entry focused on:
• the gap between expectations and reality,
• adapting to a new organization's culture,
• developing interpersonal relationships,
• coping with time pressures,
• addressing ambiguity,
• addressing conflict with teachers and other administrators,
• and tension between the existing culture and fulfilling the call for innovation and creativity.

Again, some of the surprises were positive, others were negative, and all were interesting.

ARCIs were frequently surprised by the behavior of teachers, principals, other central office administrators, and board members; but largely in situations divorced from instruction and student achievement. The most significant surprises that dealt with people often boiled down to the relationship developed with the members of the key work groups (teachers and principals), as well as the superintendent. When ARCIs were more successful in developing these relationships, the encounter period was negotiated more quickly and with fewer surprises.

A few of the surprises were more significant than others. One of these was the gap between expectations and reality of the job. This was due in part to the fact that there is no standard model for the job. The lack of time is another. Time is a critical commodity needed to address significant socialization issues, such as learning the values, norms, and required behaviors that permit new ARCIs to function effectively in their new
positions. Yet another is adapting to the new district’s culture, which often requires the assistance of the superintendent.

As was the case in the literature, it was apparent after analyzing the data collected during this study that sense-making is the primary strategy for addressing surprise. Socialization practices facilitate sense-making and in the process encourage adaptation to the local culture. Sense-making is dependent on the ARCI gathering adequate information. Likewise, newcomers would benefit from a formalized and personalized induction process that responds to the immediate needs of ARCIs. Only in timely response to specific needs can information provided by insiders facilitate sense-making.

It is clear that moving through the encounter period is not accomplished in even increments. It can, in fact, be described as a combination of ups, downs, and plateaus. If an ARCI is thus informed, he or she may experience less ambiguity. In fact, problems that create downs or plateaus can be viewed as opportunities for professional growth (Parkay et al., 1992).
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